Once Upon a Time in Za'atari Refugee Camp: Music and Syrian Displacement in Jordan



Graihagh Cordwell

St John's College

Faculty of Music

University of Oxford

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Hilary Term 2024

For Hashem,

who taught me the joy and love of

singing to the man in the moon

Ghurba

Ghurba is bitter and shadowy
But she has become sweet
The nights have lit us up
So, let the guitar ring
And the oud sound out
Let the drum beat
And the violin play
A canvas of beautiful tones
And the canvas is painted in us

‘Walid’
Za’atari Refugee Camp
2021

Table of Contents

Table of Contents **iv**
Abstract **vii**
Acknowledgements **viii**
List of Figures **xii**
List of Tables **xv**
List of Abbreviations **xvi**
Guide to Spelling and Transliteration **xvii**
Author's Note **xix**
Introduction The Story of Syrian Displacement in Jordan **1**
An Overview of Displacement in Jordan 14
Za'atari Refugee Camp: Between a Camp and a City 21
Conceptualising Forced Migration 36
'Where People Go, Music Goes': Music and Migration 46
The Dynamism of Arab Musical Culture 52
How to Tell the Story of Za'atari: Research Methodology and Strategies 60
Thesis Overview 71
Chapter 1 'Always Remember You Are Syrian': Music, Weddings, and Memory **77**
From Dera'a to Za'atari 79
Observing Hawran from a Distance 82
Terminologies of Testimony: Understanding the Multiple Meanings of Al-Balad 90
'I Remember Every Detail': Memory and Weddings 96
Practising Hawrani Weddings in Za'atari 105
Conclusions 125
Chapter 2 *Taghyīr al-Jaww*: Performing, Listening, and Storytelling **128**
Introduction 128
We Express in Order to Change: Arab Narrative Traditions in Za'atari 131
Narrative Ethnography, Storytelling, and *Antropoesía* 140
Creating the Hakawātīyeh of Za'atari 144
Some Ethical Concerns of Narrative Ethnography 149
Ayman: 'Singing to Live, Living to Sing' 153
Iman: 'The Writing on the Caravan Walls' 175

Maryam: ‘Mind Rooms’ 195
Discussion: The Framework of Taghyīr al-Jaww 217
Conclusions 223
Chapter 3 The Role of Music in Humanitarian Programming 225
Introduction 225
Music for Cultural Education 229
Music for Social Cohesion and Consolidation 247
Music for MHPSS 258
Music for Representation and Empowerment 275
Conclusions 294
Chapter 4 Corona, Technology, and Music-Making in Za’atari 296
Introduction 296
Experiencing Corona in Jordan 297
Some Perspectives on Technology and Music-Making 303
Infrastructural Vulnerabilities in Za’atari 305
Precarity and Flexibility 310
Online Performance Practices by Musicians 311
Online Music Programming in NGOs 317
Corona: An Opportunity? 329
Conclusions 334
Chapter 5 Who Speaks? Relationships, Infrastructures, and Positionalities in Ghurba 336
Asymmetry or Empowerment? Relationships Between Syrians and NGOs 337
Researcher/Aid-worker: Relationships Between NGOs and Academics 350
Diktūrā Mahaba: Relationships Between Syrians and Academics 366
Conclusions 381
Conclusions 386
Musical Dynamism and Multivalency 386
Negotiating and Mediating Displacement Through Music 388
Music as an Effective Humanitarian Tool in Ghurba Contexts 390
Methodological Approaches to a Study of Displacement 394
The Future: For Research and for Syrians 395
Appendix I Song Texts 400
Appendix II Logframe: Dream Day Activities and Outputs 405

Appendix III Glossary **407**

Bibliography **418**

Primary Sources 418

Secondary Sources 428

Abstract

Established in 2012 for those fleeing the armed conflict in Syria, Za'atari Refugee Camp is located in north Jordan and is home to some 78,000 Syrians. It is now the largest camp for Syrian refugees in the world. Za'atari has a thriving musical culture. There are community gatherings, weddings, parties, concerts, and social events. Musicians regularly perform at events both inside and outside the camp. Residents also perform and compose songs documenting their experiences. Syrians listen to and enjoy a wide range of musics and sounds, including different forms of Arabic contemporary music, Western classical instrumental music, and recordings of recitations of the Qur'an and the call to prayer. Non-governmental organisations operating in the camp support various music activities, from music lessons in theory and instrumental instruction to music therapy sessions, Zumba, and the Brazilian martial art, capoeira.

My thesis brings the different musical practices of Za'atari into focus to tell the story of the role of music in contexts of displacement. Traditional conceptualisations of forced migration have depicted refugees as passive victims of circumstance, and refugee camps as liminal or exclusionary spaces. Recent scholarship has sought to challenge these depictions, revealing the ways in which refugees act as creative agents who use music to negotiate and mediate their everyday lives in displacement. In this thesis, I explore the different layers of Za'atari's musical culture to show how Syrians use music to articulate understandings and experiences of displacement in myriad ways.

Through examination of weddings, everyday performance and listening practices, the use of technologies in music-making, and the use of music in humanitarian programming, I argue that Za'atari's musical culture is dynamic, multivalent, and complex, and demonstrate the everyday creativity and agency of Syrian refugees. I also claim that music programming can play an effective role in empowering displaced communities when it is approached in sensitive, sustainable, and participatory ways. By telling the different musical stories of Za'atari, this thesis aims to uncover the integral place of music in contexts of displacement, and the value of the lens of music in the study of migration and humanitarianism.

Acknowledgements

It is fair to say that most doctoral projects are a labour of love. This DPhil has been no exception. The last five or so years have witnessed many ups and many downs: I have traversed countries, moved house more times than I can count, negotiated a global pandemic, and faced some of the most challenging personal moments of my life. But it has all been made possible by many people who have shown me love, support, and generosity. It is impossible to name every single one of them, but I hope that what I write here will go some way to expressing my gratitude.

First thanks must go to my supervisor, Professor Jason Stanyek. His intelligence, wisdom, and endless faith in me, particularly in my more unconventional ways, have been of the utmost value. Most of all, his advice to keep my head above the parapet that first meeting in his office at St John's College back in 2018, which has sustained me throughout this DPhil. I am also grateful to Professor Mohamed Saleh Omri, as well as Professor Laura Tunbridge, Professor Zuzanna Olszewska, Professor Samantha Dieckmann, and Dr Joseph Browning for their feedback at the earlier assessment stages of the DPhil.

I am extremely thankful to the Arts Humanities and Research Council (AHRC) for fully funding my doctoral studies. My fieldwork in Jordan was kindly funded by the British Federation for Ethnomusicology's Fieldwork Grant, AHRC's Research Training Grant, the Graduate Research Award at the Faculty of Music, and various grants from St John's College. St John's, which has been my home in Oxford, has funded my Arabic lessons throughout the years and provided crucial grants for the purchase of equipment, books, and conference travel. I was also grateful to receive support from the St John's

Hardship Fund and the University of Oxford's COVID-19 Scholarship Extension Fund, both of which enabled me to stay in Jordan throughout much of the pandemic until local restrictions eased and I was able to resume fieldwork. A very special thanks also goes to the British Federation of Women Graduates, who awarded me the Marjorie Shaw Award, the funds for which helped me to complete this project.

In Jordan, there have been countless people who enabled me to bring this project to life. I owe immense thanks to Mohamed El-Amin and Haneen Wahbeh from UNHCR in Za'atari for granting my first permit to the camp and for pointing me in the direction of my future partner NGOs, Questscope and the Lutheran World Federation. To the Amman team at Questscope, who believed in me from the beginning and facilitated the majority of my research in Za'atari, namely: Ahmed Abu Nimreh, Hanan Abed, Ziad Al-Jazzazi, Mohamed Turkman, Dr Curt Rhodes, Hisham Al-Hadrab, Maen Rayyan, Cedar Zraiqat, and, most of all, Haneen Al-Fayoumi, who began as a colleague and ended up as one of my dearest friends. To the Lutheran World Federation team, both in Amman and in Zarqa, especially Islaam Al-Shdefat, Jo Spoors, Mohanad Saif, Hadeel Aljaber, and Maysa Khoury. I also extend my thanks to Emily Daughtry at The Catalyst Foundation for her guidance, Lauren, Hussein, and Ramzy at Capoeira al-Shababi for their openness and enthusiasm, and to Duaa Mahmoud for opening my eyes to Za'atari for the first time.

This project would not exist without the residents of Za'atari. There is a saying in the region: there is no goodness like that of Syrians. This is more than true of those whom I had the honour of meeting and working with in Za'atari. They have shown me endless goodness, hospitality, love, friendship, laughter, empathy, and loyalty throughout the years. I simply do not deserve them. Although by no means a complete list, I owe my heartfelt gratitude to the following: A'la Shahoud, A'ladin Ghazawi, Abdulbari,

Abdullah Khasawneh, Abdullah Khateeb, Abdulnaser, Abdulkareem, Abu Joud, Alaa, Amjad, Asma, Basel Qadah, Barakat, Daham, Eyman, Ghalia, Hashem, Heyan, Helal, Husain, Jaber, Kafa, Mahmoud Shabanh, Manal Eweijan, Manal Ahmad, Mervat, Mohamad Al-Diri, Mohamad Hariri, Mohammad Al-Hariri, Mohamad Al-Shawamrea, Mohamad Alrajabi, Mohanad Heraki, Mohanad Qasim, Mufleh, Nadine, Noaf, Nour, Shireen, Tayma, Wa'ad, Yousef, Zaad, Zaher, and Zakaria. I am also indebted to the many Syrian facilitators at LWF's community centre in Zarqa, including Abu Salaam. Their openness and willingness to share their stories form the heart of this thesis: I hope I have done them justice.

It has been a pleasure to see many of my Syrian friends fulfil their desires to move on from Za'atari and build new lives elsewhere, be it in Jordan in the cities of Irbid and Amman or further afield in Germany, Albania, France, Türkiye, and even Mexico. It is my abiding wish for all Syrians, in Za'atari and elsewhere around the world, to secure the future they have for so long hoped in a place of their choosing, and to live their lives in safety, freedom, justice, equality, and peace.

In Amman, I owe everything to the Ebbini family. They made Jordan my home and welcomed me as one of their own: Auntie Reema, Marwan, Leen, Maha, Luay, Tata Nabila, Tant Hiyam, Oday, and especially, Noor. Noor is the reason I went to Jordan in the first place, and she has offered immeasurable help to me throughout this entire doctorate, providing guidance and advice, translating lyrics, analysing songs, and not to mention being a steadfast friend and sister. So much of this thesis is her. I also thank Tsonka Al-Bakri, Melissa Scott, the Misbah Language Center, and the team at the Mind Clinic.

I have been grateful to have wonderful friends across the world who have known and loved me at different stages of my life. To Haneen, for being there through the good and bad, and showing me more love than I deserve. Also, to her son Hashem, to whom I dedicate this thesis. To Mike, who has offered more support than he can ever know, not least lending me his apartment in the early stages of writing up. We may not have married as our colleagues wished, but I have gained a brother and friend for life. To Alice Rose, Annie Page, Bilal Hindi, Carol Jones, Emma Kavanagh, Erika Vega, Gwennie von Einsiedel, Irene Gaydon, Laura Cretney, Laura Ghiretti, Louise Morgan, Matt Collins, Rebecca Buxton, and my fellow yogis at ShineOm. Together, their guidance, support, and much needed laughter have kept me going over the last five or so years. Special thanks go to Laura C, Louise, and Matt for proofreading, and to Emma for devising the plan that helped me to finish this DPhil and motivated me along the way.

Finally, I am thankful above all to my parents. They have supported me in every possible way throughout all my endeavours. My mother, who has read and edited so many dissertation drafts through the years, might as well be an ethnomusicologist herself. I am beyond grateful for their unfailing love and acceptance in this and everything I do. And I promise this is the last academic degree I will make them suffer through.

List of Figures

1.1	Seating area, World Refugee Day, Za'atari.	3
1.2	Stage area, World Refugee Day, Za'atari.	4
1.3	Audience members, World Refugee Day, Za'atari.	5
1.4	Laith and Walid in character for World Refugee Day play, Za'atari.	6
1.5	Mijwiz performer, World Refugee Day, Za'atari.	10
1.6	Dabke performance, World Refugee Day, Za'atari.	11
1.7	Fayez leading the dabke, World Refugee Day, Za'atari.	12
1.8	Map of Jordan.	15
1.9	UNHCR Jordan Situation.	20
1.10	View of Za'atari camp from top of waste-water plant.	22
1.11	Map of Za'atari Camp Infrastructure and Facilities.	23
1.12	Painted caravans in Za'atari.	25
1.13	Questscope Youth Centre, Za'atari.	25
1.14	Caravan in Za'atari painted to denote use as mosque.	26
1.15	Sports field in Lutheran World Federation 'Peace Oasis', Za'atari.	26
1.16	Donkey drawn cart, Za'atari.	27
1.17	Inside a grocery shop, Za'atari.	28
1.18	Shams Elysée, Za'atari.	28
1.19	Kharub Street, Za'atari.	31
1.20	Domestic residences, Za'atari.	31
1.21	The Categorisation of Arab contemporary music.	56
2.1	Map of Syria and the Governorate of Dera'a.	80
2.2	Map of districts in the governorate of Dera'a.	80
2.3	Screenshot of video of saharāt in the camp sent to the author via WhatsApp.	88
3.1	Ḥakawātī performing for LWF, World Mental Health Day, Za'atari.	139
3.2	Shop in downtown Amman.	158

3.3	A gathering in QS, Za'atari.	170
3.4	Dancing during a gathering, Za'atari.	172
3.5	A café in downtown Amman.	174
3.6	Garden in private residence, Za'atari.	184
3.7	Mural in Za'atari.	187
3.8	Screenshot of video of woman singing in Za'atari.	191
4.1	A music caravan in QS, Za'atari.	234
4.2	Inside second music caravan in QS, Za'atari.	234
4.3	Inside music caravan in LWF 'Peace Oasis', Za'atari.	235
4.4	Music class in QS, Za'atari with male youth.	238
4.5	Whiteboard in QS music caravan showing the opening melody to 'Mawṭinī' written out in solfège using Arabic script.	238
4.6	Music for Life concert in QS, Za'atari.	246
4.7	Female youth playing capoeira instruments in LWF's Peace Oasis, Za'atari.	253
4.8	Female youth practicing capoeira in LWF's Peace Oasis in Za'atari.	253
4.9	Music therapy session with female youth led by Ibrahim in Dayr Yusuf Community Centre in Irbid.	264
4.10	Transcription by the author of the song 'Abu Hayba' used in QS Music Therapy sessions in Za'atari Refugee Camp.	266
4.11	Drumming/leadership exercises in Dayr Yusuf in Irbid.	267
4.12	Meditation exercise using ocean drum in Music Therapy session in QS with male youth.	271
4.13	Whiteboard in QS Music Therapy caravan spelling out names of instruments in Arabic and English, and the lyrics to 'Abu Hayba'.	274
4.14	Tariq and the author in QS music caravan, Za'atari.	275
5.1	Al-Jazeera broadcasting 'Khalīk Bel Bayt' by Fairuz.	301
5.2	Public bus delivering bread during the lockdown in Mecca Street, Amman.	302
5.3	COVID-19 testing and quarantine facility in Za'atari.	304

5.4	Recording studio built in private residence in Za'atari.	317
5.5	Pre-recorded online music theory class for LWF explaining tuning for the oud.	322
5.6	Pre-recorded online music theory class for LWF explaining tuning on the oud.	322
5.7	Training video produced by the author for LWF.	324
5.8	Pre-recorded listening activity for LWF with two instructors playing the oud and ṭabla.	325
5.9	QS music therapy facilitators preparing for online implementation in QS music caravan, Za'atari.	330
5.10	'Washing Hands' episode of LWF's 'Al-ḥadīqa al-ma'lūmāt' series.	333
6.1	Screenshot of video of women singing in Za'atari.	378
6.2	Screenshot of interview with music student.	386
6.3	Screenshot of interview with the author.	386
6.4	Screenshot of interview with Haroon.	387

List of Tables

2.1	Structure of ‘Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil ‘Ala Umo’.	110
Appendix II	Logframe: Dream Day Activities and Outputs	407

List of Abbreviations

BNLWG	Basic Needs Livelihoods Working Group (of the UNHCR in Za'atari)
GoD	Governorate of Dera'a
GoJ	Government of Jordan
IBV	Incentive-based Volunteering
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MHPSS	Mental health and psychosocial support
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoI	Ministry of the Interior
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
QS	Questscope
SRAD	Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate
TFG	The Field Guide for Barefoot Psychology (Niconchuk et al. 2020)
ToT	Training of trainers
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Guide to Spelling and Transliteration

The transliteration of Arabic words in this thesis mainly follows the system employed by the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) but with a number of modifications. These modifications are primarily used in order to maintain the pronunciation of the colloquial spoken Levantine Arabic. For example, the feminine *tamarbuta* is rendered as 'eh' not 'a'. There are, however, a few cases where I transliterate the tamarbuta as 'a' to reflect the standard accepted transliteration or where the pronunciation is also such in the local Arabic (e.g., *misbaḥa*, the Islamic prayer beads). Other transliterations follow accepted standards in the relevant scholarship, such as *muazzin* or *dabke*. Place names like Za'atari or Dera'a are rendered to reflect local transliterations. Common phrases also follow colloquial transliterations (*Inshallah*, *Mashallah*, etc.). With regards to *iḍāfa* constructions that are pronounced with an elision reflect the spoken Arabic (e.g., Rif as-Sham not Rif al-Sham). Similarly, song lyrics are transliterated as per their pronunciation in performance. All the song lyrics that appear in the thesis are included in full in an appendix. In accordance with IJMES guidelines, commonly used Arabic words and names appear without diacritical markers and in conventional spelling.

All Arabic words are italicised, except for those commonly used in English (Islam, Bedouin, hijab, abaya), as well as names and proper nouns. I have only italicised the first appearance of non-English terms and do not italicise these in subsequent occurrences. I have defined a word on its first appearance. For most Arabic words, I have used Arabic plurals, demonstrating as such where relevant. However, in some cases I have used English plurals where this is the norm (*oud, ouds*). I have also included a list of abbreviations that appear frequently throughout the thesis. A glossary of terms is included

as an appendix. All translations from Arabic to English, unless otherwise stated, are my own.

Author's Note

Since the initial submission of this thesis on 2 May 2024, there have been huge shifts in Syria's political landscape including the long-awaited fall of the Assad regime. This thesis reflects the political situation in Syria at the time of submission in May 2024 and should be read in the context of Syria prior to the events of December 2024.

However, I do want to briefly acknowledge the importance of the recent changes in Syria for the Syrian people, including those who contributed to this project and who never stopped striving for the liberation of their country from authoritarian rule. It has always been the intention of this work to give space to Syrian voices and stories, and to advocate for Syrians' rights to determine their own futures and the future of their country. As the situation in Syria continues to evolve, my wish for all Syrians everywhere remains the same: peace, justice, and freedom.

Introduction

The Story of Syrian Displacement in Jordan

22 June 2021. I arrive at the Questscope Headquarters in the trendy Jabal al-Weibdeh district of Amman. It is early in the morning, still only about 7.15am, but the sun is blazing bright, and the temperature is steadily climbing. I approach the sleek black iron fencing surrounding the perimeter of Questscope's office and see a large group of its employees gathered outside. They smoke cigarettes, puff on vapes, and sip dark Arabic coffee from paper cups. At this time of day, they are usually a more subdued bunch, still half asleep before setting off on the long journey into the field. But today there is a palpable energy. I spot my friend and colleague Hala. Entering through the gates, I join her on the steps that lead to the office's main entrance. We sit together and look out at our colleagues who chat and laugh loudly with one another, clearly looking forward to the day ahead. I reveal to her that I, too, am excited for our trip today. Replying in her lilting Palestinian Jordanian accent, Hala says, 'Me too, my dear. And I think it will be really good for your research, *Inshallah* (God willing)'.

It is World Refugee Day, an international day designated by the United Nations to honour refugees around the globe. Questscope (QS), a non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Jordan, are holding festivities in their Youth Centre inside Za'atari Refugee Camp. Za'atari is the world's largest Syrian refugee camp located in the north Jordanian desert. World Refugee Day will mark one of QS's first major events in the camp since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (or simply 'corona', as it is called in Jordan). I have only been able to visit the camp a handful times since March 2020, so it is also an important day for me. (Hala and I even joke about how we have put on make-

up and worn nice tops for the event, and we end up taking a few selfies together as if to commemorate our efforts).

We set off in a convoy of shiny silver SUVs, heading north from Amman. Two or so hours later, a vast expanse of white caravans emerges in the distance along the desert skyline. We pass road signs directing cars forward to the Syrian border or right to the entrance of Za'atari. In our Hyundai rental, we turn right then begin to follow the long and neatly tarmacked road that winds further into the desert towards the entrance of the camp designated for NGOs. The road is flanked by tanks and groups of heavily armed soldiers. We eventually reach a large gate that protrudes from the concrete walls and barbed wire that surround the perimeter of the camp. At the entrance, we are met by Jordanian policemen, to whom present our credentials. Today they seem to show little interest in us, and we are quickly waved through the gate. For the following ten minutes or so, we battle with Za'atari's rugged and rocky terrain, the tarmacked roads outside the camp now a distant memory. We pass markets, shops, hundreds of bicycles, a few donkey-drawn carts. Many camp residents are making their way to work, and they often stop to stare at our cars as we drive past them, occasionally waving at us through the windows.

Eventually, we arrive at the QS compound, located in District Four of the camp. The compound, consisting of several brightly painted caravans, is clean and cheerful. As I step out of the car, I immediately smell freshly baked bread and oil for frying wafting through the air. The courtyard to the right-hand side of the NGO's plot has been decked out with traditional Bedouin-style seating. On the steel awning overhead, three flags fly: the first is the QS logo, the second is the logo of the United Nations Population Fund

(UNFPA) – one of QS's main funders – and the third is the Jordanian flag (see Figure 1.1).

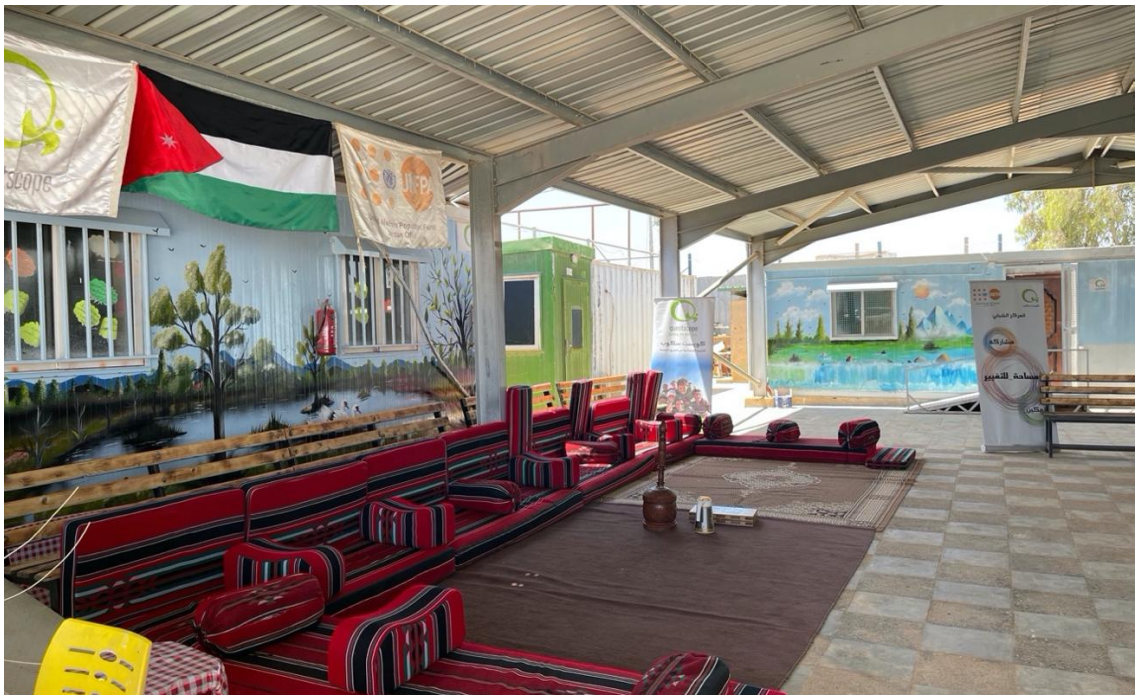


Figure 1.1. Seating area, World Refugee Day, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 22 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

The seating faces a makeshift stage area erected right in front of the steel caravans usually reserved for sports and arts activities. A large monitor, *org* (electric keyboard) and microphone are set up centre stage. Two musicians are readying themselves to perform. Most of the NGO's employees, including myself and a few representatives from UNFPA who have been invited to the event, sit in the Bedouin seating area. Others, mainly Syrian residents of Za'atari who work with QS, are bunched up on benches either side of the stage. I am glad when one of them, Amar, joins us on the floor seating. Once everyone is settled, Tariq and Uthman begin performing, Tariq on the org and Uthman on the *rubābā*, a long necked bowed instrument popular throughout the Arab world, particularly in Bedouin cultures (see Figure 1.2).

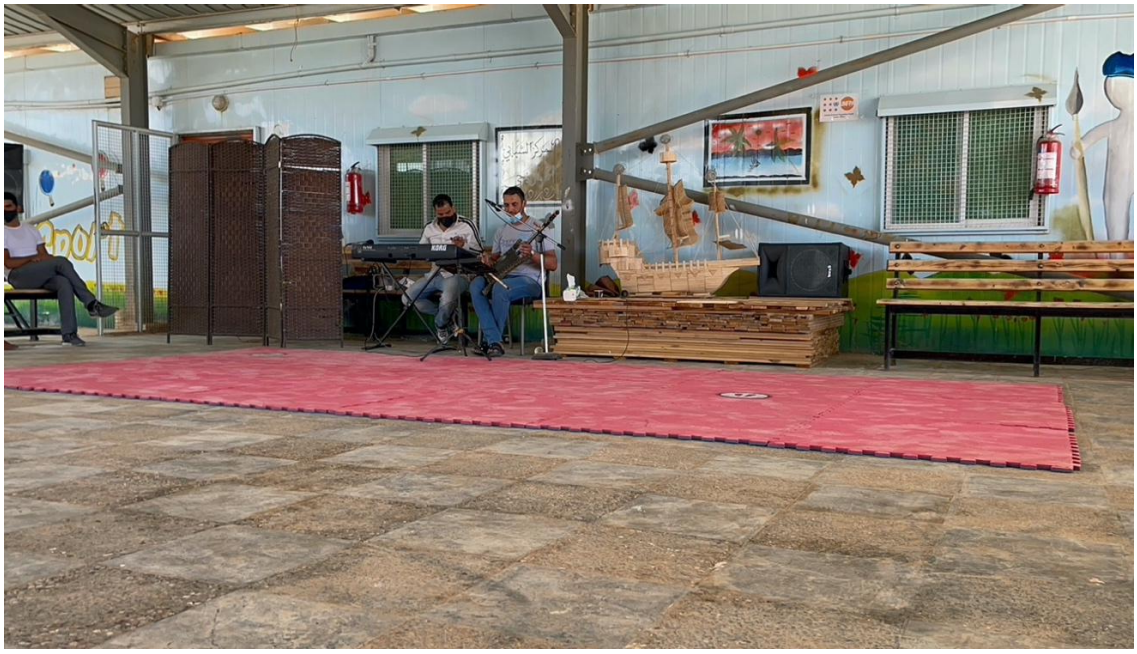


Figure 1.2. Stage area, World Refugee Day, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 22 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

I have known Tariq for some time: he is a popular musician in Za'atari and works as a music teacher for youth with QS. I have never met Uthman before – in fact, I have met very few male musicians from the camp. With a bright blue surgical mask pulled below his mouth onto his chin, Uthman plays the rubābā and sings into the microphone, performing popular songs and well-known folk tunes. Tariq and Uthman play for about ten minutes. The audience clap and sing along, shouting out in praise and admiration (see Figure 1.3).



Figure 1.3. Audience members, World Refugee Day, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 22 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

When Tariq and Uthman's set is over, the two musicians fiddle around with the org and move the microphone to another part of the stage. As they do, Laith, a young Syrian man from Za'atari who works with QS on their mentoring programmes, quietly and inconspicuously sits cross-legged on the floor stage left. The audience hardly notice him. Laith silently sets a chessboard in front of him and begins to play alone (chess is a popular pastime among men in the camp). After a few moments, Walid, another well-known musician in Za'atari and music teacher for QS, enters from behind the room-divider placed at the back of the stage. He carries an *oud* (a short-neck lute) and takes a seat to the right of Laith. Wearing a dark coloured *shamāgh*, the traditional headdress worn by

men across the Middle East, and a large dark pair of sunglasses, he sits in front of the microphone and begins to strum on his oud (see Figure 1.4).[1]



Figure 1.4. Laith and Walid in character for World Refugee Day play, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 22 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

Laith and Walid sit in silence until they are suddenly interrupted by their colleague Hussein. Hussein is ordinarily a quiet, neatly dressed, and studious young man – he even styles himself as '*sadīq al-kutub'* (a friend of books). But here, he enters loudly, wearing the typical clothing found among youth and teenage boys in the camp: a black Adidas t-shirt, black rolled up sweatpants, sneakers, and a black baseball cap worn at an angle. He has even drawn fake tattoos onto his arms. In a high-pitched voice, Hussein shouts

[1] A shamāgh is also known as a *kuffīyeh* and is usually made from a square cotton scarf in white, red, or black. The kuffīyeh has become a symbol of Bedouin culture and, in more recent years, of Palestinian solidarity.

something unintelligible at Laith, dumps his backpack down onto the floor in an exasperated manner, and sits down scrolling through his mobile phone.

Over the next ten minutes, the Syrians perform a short comedy-drama play. It has been written by their colleague, Basma, and depicts the lives of four Syrians who live in Za'atari: two young men (Laith and Hussein), a musician called Abu Saalem (Walid), and the musician's wife (played by a young woman named Rawan). Speaking in the accents of the Dera'a area of Syria from which a large proportion of the Za'atari population hails, Hussein complains to his friend about life in the camp and his desire to live in Europe: 'I'd want nothing more than for someone to pick me up and kick me out of these *bilād* (countries). In Europe, I would feel like a human […] And I could marry a blonde woman!' Hussein tries to convince Laith to join him on his trip by explaining the riches and ease of life that await them in Europe; any differences between their culture and European culture would quickly slip away, he claims, because, as the Arabs say, '*min 'ashar al-qawm 'arbayīn yawm ṣar minhum'* (If you spend 40 days with a people, you will become one of them). Laith is unconvinced, so the pair decide to visit their friend and musician, Abu Saalem, to seek his advice.

At the musician's house, we see Abu Saalem before his friends arrive. We are introduced to his so-called 'nagging' wife, played by Rawan. She emerges wearing the traditional female clothing from Dera'a known as the *shurish,* a long black velvet dress with gold embroidery and black headscarf. Rawan's face is adorned with black patterns to represent the ancient practice of *deq,* the permanent facial tattoos prominent among female Arab and Kurdish groups in Syria and across the Arab world. Her appearance prompts laughter and a round of applause from the audience. Rawan chastises Abu Saalem for lounging about and playing his oud when he should be working, paying back

their debts, and replacing the gas for the stove. Abu Saalem dismisses his wife – '*Yā ṣabāḥ an-naq*!' (Oh, what a morning of nagging!) – and begins to play and sing as she talks, prompting Rawan to exit stage right, sighing as she goes.

Laith and Hussein soon arrive, and Hussein wastes no time announcing his plans to journey to Europe. After a series of jokes about how his wife would probably disapprove, Abu Saalem jumps up energetically and passionately imagines a future life of stardom in Europe as '*Beethoven Al-Arab'* (Beethoven of the Arabs). Rawan re-enters several times, interrupting him and listing the jobs that still need doing around the house. Abu Saalem ultimately declines Hussein's offer. The two young men leave, and Abu Saalem turns back to his oud, singing songs that depict the opportunities and richness of Europe now beyond his grasp.

A few moments later, Laith returns to Abu Saalem's house. This time he is alone. Abu Saalem is deeply consumed in his oud and does not even notice his friend's arrival. Just as we expect the comedic action to continue, Laith reveals that Hussein is dead: he has drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in his attempt to flee to Europe in a dinghy. Sombre piano music begins to play through the large loudspeaker. Rawan enters, dropping a plate of toma

toes as she learns the news. She thanks God that her husband had not joined Hussein. Abu Saalem rises to his feet, turns to the crowd, and says:

> Why? Just because he went to look for a future?
> What did he ever do wrong?
> Just because he went to look for life? For happiness? To be far away from war?
> Why?
> Because he went…to search for a homeland?

A recording of Abu Saalem's voice soars out of the loudspeaker singing the song 'Mawṭinī'. Meaning my home or my homeland, 'Mawṭinī' was the unofficial anthem of Palestine until 1996 and has been the national anthem of Iraq since 2004. It is also popular across the Arab world and speaks of dedication to and longing for the glory, beauty, safety, and comfort of one's homeland. The actors rise and invite the audience to join them in song. The crowd, Syrians and their Jordanian colleagues alike, sing and cry together in unison.

A few speeches from figures within QS and UNFPA follow, in which they praise the Syrian actors for their creativity and for speaking up for the plight of refugees around the world. We are then summoned across the compound to a series of long tables that have been laid full of freshly prepared *mensaf* (chicken and rice dish), *kibbeh* (fried balls of ground meat and bulgur wheat), and *tabbūleh* (Levantine salad).[2] Thankfully, another awning has been installed over the courtyard where the food tables are set up; by this point, the afternoon desert sun is beating down and the air is heavy with heat.

The festivities continue well into the afternoon with hours of lively and joyous singing and dancing. Tariq resumes his place at the org, sets a heavy beat going. Soon enough, he is joined by another musician I have never met, an older gentleman dressed in a red shamāgh headdress, and a white ankle-length robe known as a *thawb*. He plays the *mijwiz,* a high-pitched, double-piped single-reed instrument. Uthman holds a microphone to its base to amplify its sound even more (see Figure 1.5).

[2] Although mensaf is traditionally considered the national dish of Jordan, it is in fact eaten across the Levant region. Many Syrians in the camp who originate from the southwest of Syria, particularly the area of Dera'a, often refer to any large dish with meat (usually chicken), rice, and sauce as mensaf. I say more about Dera'a and those from Dera'a living in Za'atari further on in this introduction and in Chapter 1.



Figure 1.5. Mijwiz performer, World Refugee Day, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 22 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

Accompanied by the mijwiz, Tariq sings many of the songs heard at parties, weddings, and celebrations in the camp. Walid also takes his turn; he has changed from his costume into a t-shirt embroidered with the Jordanian flag. With Tariq now back playing the org, Walid belts out Issa Al-Saggar's 'Rudi Sha'rātish' (Let down your hair), a popular song played and performed at weddings across the Levant region, with lyrics in the Bedouin dialect. A group of men, some similarly dressed in white thawb, others in tracksuits and jeans, form a line and begin to dance the *dabke*, a traditional circle dance performed throughout Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and Jordan (see Figure 1.6).



Figure 1.6 Dabke performance, World Refugee Day, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 22 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

Initially, only a few men dance. But as afternoon continues, the dabke line grows longer (sometimes reaching 20 people) and the foot movements more elaborate. At times, men break out from the line in duos and trios to perform other typical Arabic dance moves while the rest form an arc around them, clapping and cheering them on. Employees from QS who have travelled to the camp from Amman, including some of my female colleagues, also join the dabke line. But Syrian women from the camp in attendance do not join; Za'atari has a strong patriarchal culture, and it would be seen as inappropriate for women to dance with or in front of men. Instead, some of the Syrian women sit on the Bedouin cushions, watching the men and Jordanian employees dance, clapping in time to the music. Hala and I join them there, though I frequently get up to film and take photos. Other women busy themselves with cleaning up plates and balancing huge silver trays of food on their heads past the dabke line on the way to the compound's small kitchen.

At one point, a project manager from QS, Fayez, takes the lead position as the *awwal* (first) at the head of the dabke line. Where one would usually find the awwal twirling a set of *misbaḥa* (Islamic prayer beads), in his right hand, Fayez, wearing a thick fabric face mask, holds a black and green cotton lanyard printed with the QS logo. The ID pass that enables him to come and go from the camp spins round and round in the air as he dances (see Figure 1.7).



Figure 1.7. Fayez leading the dabke, World Refugee Day, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 22 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

A few weeks later, I interviewed the author of the World Refugee Day play, Basma. Basma, originally from Damascus, is in her late thirties and lives in the camp with her husband and young children. She explained that the idea for the play was born from the news two days prior to the celebrations that a boat carrying Syrian refugees in the Mediterranean Sea had sunk, killing 15 souls. Basma thus wanted to 'use all the good things about music' to tell stories about the difficult, and seldom discussed, aspects of life as a refugee (interview with the author, 7 July 2021). Basma's play and the wider

events that took place as part of QS's celebrations on World Refugee Day tell a number of interesting but complicated stories about the place of music in contexts of displacement. The performances of Syrians that day highlight not only the trauma, sadness, grief, loss, and challenges of life in a refugee camp, but also the joy, celebration, culture, creativity, and agency therein. The World Refugee Day events do much to demonstrate the dynamic and complex nature of Za'atari's musical culture. They bring to light the complicated and messy entanglements of music, conflict, displacement, and international aid. This thesis attempts to unravel some of these entanglements.

Based on fieldwork carried out in Jordan between 2019 and 2022, this thesis looks at the case of music in Za'atari Refugee Camp in order to tell the stories of the lives of Syrians who have been affected by conflict and displacement. The aim of this work is to highlight the integral place of music and the arts in refugee camps and to show how the wider humanitarian community can support refugees in contexts across the Middle East in sensitive, sustainable, and creative ways. This introduction outlines the primary context of the thesis, including the history of displacement in Jordan, the case of Syrian movement to the country since 2011, and an overview of Za'atari Refugee Camp. It also discusses key themes that are relevant to a study of music in a refugee camp, namely: theorisations of forced migration and refugees, the place of music in migration processes, and music in the Arab world. In doing so, I assess the literature from across disciplines, such as migration studies, anthropology, social sciences, human geography, ethnomusicology, applied ethnomusicology, music therapy, community music, to name but a few. The latter part of the introduction sets out my research methodology and outlines the thesis' structure and chapters.

An Overview of Displacement in Jordan

Thirteen years ago, in March 2011, huge numbers of Syrians in the governorate of Dera'a in southwest Syria took to the streets in protest of Bashar al-Assad's brutal regime and decades of authoritarian rule in Syria. As revolutionary sentiment intensified and spread across the country to Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Damascus, and Latakia, the Assad regime met protesters with violence, launching major military operations to suppress the resistance. Over the subsequent years, a bloody conflict escalated between government forces, opposition groups, religious and sectarian factions, and international actors such as Russia, Iran, the United States and much of Europe fighting within Syria's borders.

The protracted nature of the Syrian conflict prompted Antonio Guterres to describe it as 'the most dramatic humanitarian crisis the world has faced in a very long time' (Guterres 2014). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 14 million Syrians have been displaced since the onset of the armed conflict: 7.2 million within the country, and around 5.5 million to Türkiye, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan (USA for UNHCR 2024). In February 2024, sources suggested there could be anywhere between 640,000 and 1.4 million Syrian refugees in Jordan alone (UNHCR 2024c; Syria Nationality 2024; MoPIC 2021). In response, there has been a huge proliferation of academic research on the case of Syrian refugees in Jordan, adding to the ever-growing body of literature and interest in migration across the Middle East.

The story of Syrian movement to Jordan is part of a longer history of migration in the region. Migration has often been perceived as an inherent characteristic of the Middle East. According to Dawn Chatty, dispossession and forced migration have 'indelibly marked the landscape' of the region, leading to a general 'acceptance of mobility as normal rather than an aberration' (2010: 24 and 37). Charting the historic and

contemporary movements of ethnic communities from the late Ottoman period through to the twenty-first century, Chatty claims that ‘migration is the story of history’ in the region (ibid: 8). Jordan, a country bordered by Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Palestine (see Figure 1.8), has a significant place in this history.



Figure 1.8. Map of Jordan. (United Nations Geospatial 2018).

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has a population of around 11 million but it is estimated that there are almost 3 million refugees living in the country: Palestinians since the 1948 *Nakba* (meaning catastrophe), the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians by Zionist forces; Iraqis following the 2003 War on Iraq; Syrians from 2011 onwards; and Yemeni, Libyan, Somalians, and Sudanese groups (UNHCR 2024b). As a result, Jordan is said to hold the second highest number of refugees per capita in the world (ibid).

Despite this history, Jordan's stance towards refugees is complex. Like many other Arab states, Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Geneva Convention),[3] the treaty that defines who is a refugee and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibility of asylum granting states. Historically, the reception of migrants in Jordan and other Arab states has been framed around a pan-Arab discourse of hospitality or guesthood (*ḍayfa*) and generosity (*karam*): in principle, fellow Arabs are received as visitors or guests (*ḍayūf,* sing. *ḍayf*) regardless of the reason for their arrival in the receiving state (Sassoon 2009; Chatelard 2010a). In reality, this ideology has no legal meaning and results in substantial variances in how different groups are treated, a lack of civil, social, legal, and economic rights for ḍayūf, and refugees being unable to formally integrate into the receiving state (Mason 2011; Al-Qaralleh 2022; Davis et al. 2017; El-Abed 2014; Gutowski 2022; Turner 2015, 2023). The Government of Jordan (GoJ) has gone some way to providing protection to refugees, such as the 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the GoJ and

[3] The 1967 Protocol was added to the 1951 Convention in order to expand the Convention to apply universally and to protect all persons fleeing conflict or persecution.

UNHCR.[4] The MoU basically allows UNHCR to carry out its services to refugees within the Kingdom, thereby forming an 'alternative protection regime' for refugees (Turner 2023: 881; Zaotti 2006; Olwan 2009).[5]

There are many explanations for Jordan's employment of the framework of ḍayfa and karam. Some commentators claim it acts as a 'discretionary toleration regime' that enables the GoJ to assert state control over its borders and the mobility of non-citizens (Chatelard 2009: 13; Mason 2011: 359). Others attribute Jordan's stance to the country's past experiences with protracted refugee situations, such as the case of Palestinian and Iraqi refugees (Peteet 2007: 6; Sassoon 2009: 6-7; Mason 2011: 358; Turner 2015: 392). It is estimated that there could be more than three million Palestinians living in Jordan, most of whom have been granted citizenship and comparative levels of political, social and economic rights (Minority Rights Group 2023; Chen 2009: 50; Mason 2011: 358; Pérez 2011: 4; Lindholm Schulz 2003).[6] However, increasing discrimination against Palestinians has been documented in Jordanian nationalist discourse, as well as political marginalisation by the ruling Hashemite regime, which has led to communal tensions (Pérez 2011: 4; Zahran 2012: 3; Achilli 2014: 240; Bocco 2010: 235; Chen 2009: 54). As a result, scholars like Julie Peteet argue that the Palestine situation has exposed the

[4] This does not apply to Palestinian refugees, who are under the mandate of UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency).
[5] The Memorandum of Understanding is a confidential document that is not available to the public. Some have criticized the MoU for not being enforceable and for poorly representing the refugee recognition regime (see Turner 2023; Clutterbuck et al. 2021; Lewis 2023).
[6] There are exceptions. Other Palestinian refugees, such as those from Gaza who arrived since 1967, those who arrived via other territories like Egypt, or Palestinians from Syria have a tenuous legal status and, for many reasons, are excluded from citizenship and thus from access to health insurance, local tuition at public universities, government jobs, and property rights (Feldman 2012: 159).

limitations of the pan-Arab sentiments of ḍayfa and karam, and has determined the response of Arab states to consequent flows of refugees (2007: 642).

The limitations of Jordan's refugee policy have implications for understanding the context of Syrians in the country. First, in terms of determining the number of Syrian refugees in the Kingdom. UNHCR states that there are around 640,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan, but the GoJ has suggested that the number is as high as 1.4 million (UNHCR 2024c; Syria Nationality 2024; Lenner 2020: 283; MoPIC 2021). There are several reasons for these variances. There were Syrians in Jordan prior to 2011 who came to the country for legal work and economic activities, and the two countries have historically shared tribal, kinship, family, cultural, and geographical ties (Achilli 2015: 3; Nevo 1986: 140; Mansour-Ille et al. 2019: 278; Betts et al. 2017: 8-9; Chatty 2017a: 338; Chatty 2017b: 239; Krafft et al. 2018).[7] Of the Syrians who did arrive after 2011, not all are registered fully with UNHCR: Palestinians from Syria are banned from seeking asylum in Jordan; Syrians are unable to proceed with registration if they have false or missing documents (in some cases, Jordanian authorities confiscated legal documents at the border); the process of refugee registration and individual refugee status determination (RSD) in Jordan is complex; and many Syrians found local accommodation in Jordan via kinship ties without registering with UNHCR or settled in informal unofficial tented settlements (Krafft et al. 2018: 4; JIF 2018: 11; Chatty 2017a: 338). Although data from UNHCR solely encompasses formally registered refugees, the GoJ considers *all* Syrians

[7] There is contention regarding how many Syrians were in Jordan before 2011. King Abdullah II estimated the number to be around 750,000, but some believe this figure is far too high (Bank 2016: 3). Chatty reports that there were 600,000 or so Syrians who were in the country because of business or kinship ties and were already residents (2017a: 338). Other commentators rely on the 2004 census, which reported there were 33,000 Syrians in Jordan at the time (Krafft et al. 2019).

in its figures, whether registered as refugees or not (Lenner 2020: 283; Krafft et al. 2018: 4).[8] Nevertheless, the language of 'refugeehood' (as opposed to guesthood) is widespread, and the designation 'refugee' is used both in everyday and official settings (including UNHCR) in relation to Syrians in Jordan (Turner 2023: 883 and 885).

Second, in terms of Jordan's approach to managing Syrian refugees. In the initial period following the 2011 uprising, Jordan – unlike Lebanon and Turkey – was open and tolerant to Syrian refugees, and most Syrians settled in urban areas following tribal links, family members, or employment opportunities (Chatty 2017b: 239; Betts et al. 2017: 8; Mansour-Ille et al. 2019: 257). But in the summer of 2012, Jordan opened a camp for Syrians on the outskirts of the border city of Mafraq, and from then on, all new Syrian arrivals were taken at the border for processing and entry into official camps (Al Jazeera 2012). The first camp was Za'atari Refugee Camp. Soon after, other camps were opened, such as the Emirati Jordanian Camp in 2013 and Azraq Camp in 2014 (see Figure 1.9).[9]

It is interesting that Jordan decided to open camps given the initial openness towards Syrians and the fact that other Arab states did not establish camps for Syrian refugees. In Lebanon, for example, over 1 million Syrians crossed the border in the initial period after the 2011 uprising, mainly settling in cities (Chatty 2017b: 231). In contrast to Jordan, Lebanon did not establish camps, citing fears that doing so would create another situation similar to Palestinian refugees and risk violence being perpetuated towards Syrians (who

[8] Refugee registration and the process of refugee status determination in Jordan is highly complex. See Turner (2023) and Sieverding and Calderón-Mejía (2020) for more.
[9] Azraq camp was created and opened in 2014 supposedly in an attempt to solve problems of overcrowding and security concerns in Za'atari at the time. The GoJ attempted to present Azraq as a kind of 'ideal' refugee camp that built on the lessons learnt from Za'atari. See Gatter (2018, 2023) and Alshoubaki and Zazzara (2020) for more on Azraq and other camps in Jordan.

experience significant hostility in Lebanon) if refugees were enclosed in a small place like a camp (Chatty 2017b: 231; Turner 2015: 4; White et al. 2013).[10]



Figure 1.9. Refugee Camps in Jordan Situation. (UNHCR 2023).

10 For more on the non-encampment of Syrians elsewhere in the region and for detailed explorations on the differences between Jordan's asylum policy and that of other Arab states and states that have absorbed Syrian refugees, see Turner (2015, 2023), Betts et al. (2017), and Chatty (2017a; 2017b).

Why did Jordan decide to open camps for Syrians? Some argue the decision helped Jordan to cope with the increased influx of refugees crossing the border and to 'channel incoming flows' (Doraï 2017: 6; Mansour-Ille et al. 2019: 257). The GoJ likewise cited increased numbers of Syrian refugees and the consequent strain on resources (Turner 2015: 395; Crisp et al. 2013). Others, however, believe camps enable Jordan to control Syrians, curtail their numbers, restrict their freedom in urban areas, prevent them from naturalising, and contain potential 'security threats' (Achilli 2015: 5-6; Mansour-Ille et al. 2019: 258; Turner 2015: 389; Hoffmann 2018: 37). For the GoJ, camps also serve as a visual reminder to the international community of Jordan's refugee 'burden' and to raise the profile of funding for Syrians in the Kingdom (Turner 2023: 883; Mansour-Ille et al. 2019: 258; Hoffmann 2018: 37). For the international community, spatially containing and separating refugees in camps enables successful identification of the most vulnerable refugees and effective administration of advanced assistance, aid, and facilities (Verdirame et al. 2005; Chatty 2017b: 232).

Za'atari Refugee Camp: Between a Camp and a City

Located just 9km from the border with Syria in the desert of north Jordan near to the city of Mafraq, Za'atari Refugee Camp was opened on 28 July 2012. Initially, Za'atari was run by the Jordanian Hashemite Charitable Organisation (JHCO), a pseudo-governmental aid and relief organisation, but management of the camp was eventually handed over to

UNHCR in 2013.[11] Today the camp is jointly administered by UNHCR and the GoJ, namely the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD). Together they coordinate services in partnership with nearly 40 NGOs and agencies to provide protection, community empowerment, basic needs, education, food, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), shelter, and energy services to the camp population (UNHCR 2024f). Sprawling across the Jordanian desert, Za'atari covers an area of over 5km^2 and is divided into 12 districts (see Figure 1.10 and Figure 1.11). While numbers have reduced over the years (at its peak, Za'atari's population was over 200,000), UNHCR stated in March 2024 that the camp was home to 78,006 Syrians (UNHCR 2024c, 2024d).



Figure 1.10. View of Za'atari camp from top of waste-water plant. (Photograph by the author, 1 February 2019, Za'atari, Jordan).

[11] Some have cited political conditions in the camp as a reason for this change over. See Killian Clarke (2018) for an overview of political mobilisation in Za'atari and the impact on refugee management in Jordan.

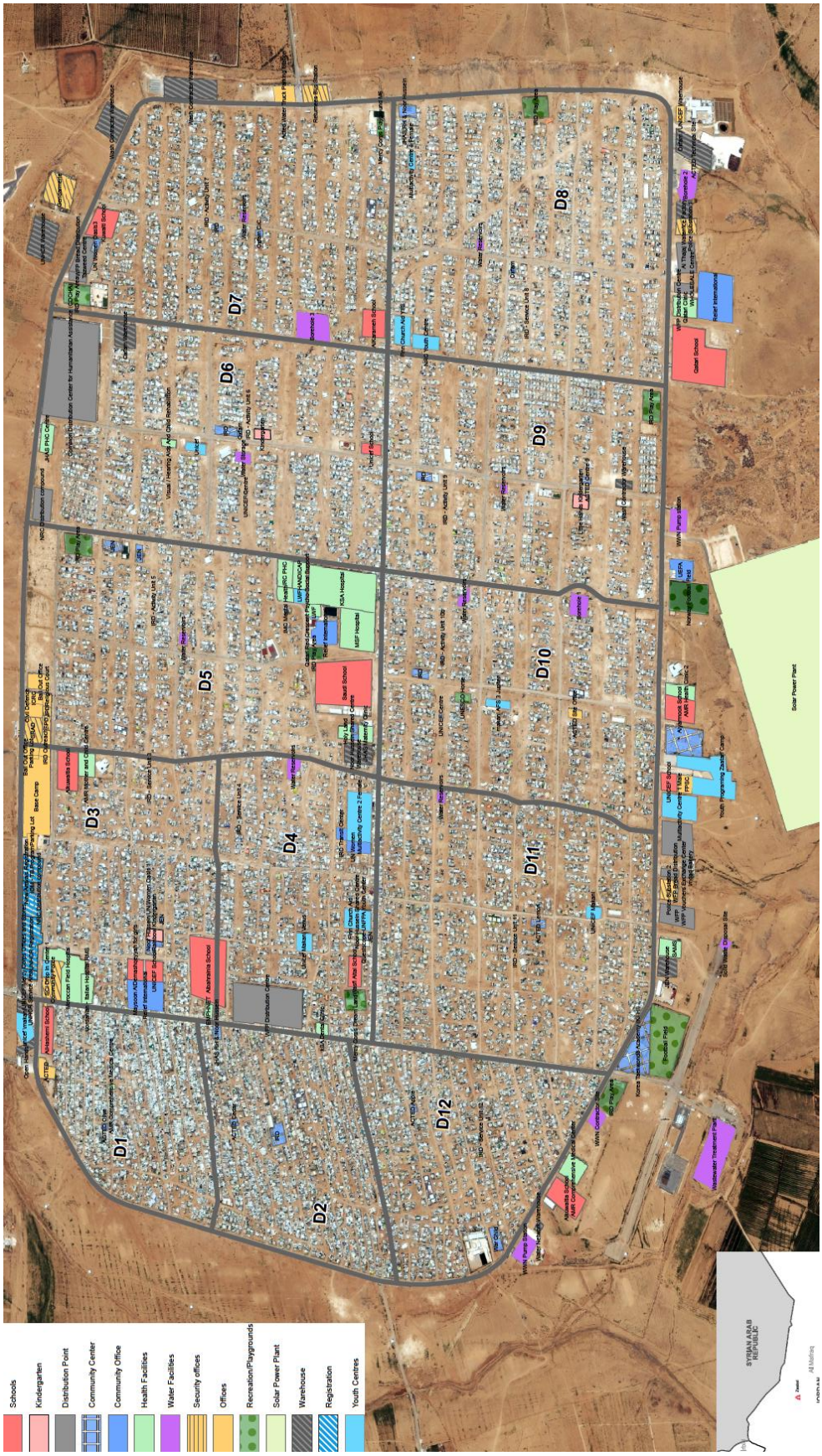


Figure 1.11. Map of Za'atari Refugee Camp Infrastructure and Facilities. (UNHCR 2019).

Za'atari began as a small collection of tents but has grown into a large settlement made up of prefabricated shelters (known as caravans). There are approximately 26,000 immobile caravans in the camp: each caravan is about 21m^2 in size and each household is allotted a 10x10m plot on which they fit caravans, tents, and other installations (Barakat 2016). Caravans are supplied with wastewater and water supplies (Al-Shoubaki 2022: 9). Syrians make innovative renovations and extensions to their caravans, from gardens and guest rooms to courtyards and large kitchens, and both residents and organisations commonly paint caravans in bright colours and designs (see Figure 1.12) (UNHCR 2024f; Hart et al. 2018; Aburamadan et al. 2020; Al-Shoubaki 2022: 8-10).

Organisations also use caravans within their facilities, which are numerous: there are 32 schools, 13 kindergartens, 6 primary medical health care facilities, 58 community centres, a camp-wide wastewater system, as well as several mosques, libraries, sports fields, parks, and even the largest solar power plant ever built in a refugee camp, which covers an area the size of 33 football fields (see Figures 1.13, 1.14, and 1.15) (UNHCR 2024f; KfW 2018). The main mode of transportation in the camp is bicycles or make-shift 'taxis' made from covered carts pulled by donkeys (see Figure 1.16).



Figure 1.12. Painted caravans in Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 1 February 2019, Za'atari, Jordan).



Figure 1.13. Questscope Youth Centre, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 6 October 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).



Figure 1.14. Caravan (left) in Za'atari painted to denote use as mosque. (Photograph by the author, 1 February 2019, Za'atari, Jordan).



Figure 1.15. Sports field in Lutheran World Federation Peace Oasis, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 21 October 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).



Figure 1.16. Donkey drawn cart, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 23 August 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

The camp has a busy economy with several market districts, supermarkets, malls, restaurants, and shops (see Figure 1.17). There are over 1,000 small businesses in Za'atari, including barber shops, salons, wedding dress rentals, produce stands, bicycle repair shops, food establishments, and a whole host of other businesses. The main market stretches nearly 3km in length through the centre of the camp, earning its name 'Shams Elysée', a play on the Arabic name for Damascus and the Parisian boulevard (Carlisle 2022) (see Figure 1.18).



Figure 1.17. A grocery store, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 23 August 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).



Figure 1.18. Shams Elysée, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 1 February 2019, Za'atari, Jordan).

A key aspect of Za'atari (and one with which this thesis is primarily concerned) is its social-cultural life. Za'atari's musical culture is vibrant. Community gatherings,

weddings, parties, concerts, and social events with music and traditional customs, abound. Residents also engage in a variety of individual performing and listening activities. Professional musicians (almost exclusively male) regularly perform at the venues and events both inside and outside of the camp. Other residents, including women, also play and make music, composing songs documenting their experiences, traumas, the war, and life in the camp. Syrians listen to and enjoy a wide range of musics and sounds, including different forms of Arabic contemporary music, Western classical instrumental music, and Qur'an recitation (*tajwīd*) and the call to prayer (*adhān*). In Za'atari, the adhān is performed live by a *muazzin* (the person who calls the prayer) through loudspeakers from mosques five times per day.

Non-governmental organisations operating in the camp also support various music activities. Both Questscope (QS) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) implement daily music lessons in dedicated music caravans, which include music theory, instrumental instruction on the org, oud and *ṭabla* (frame drum), as well as singing activities. QS even runs the camp's only specialised music therapy course. Both organisations run Zumba and other music-sport based activities, and in the past, different organisations offered Brazilian capoeira, until the practice was shut down by the MoI (Hast 2019, 2021).

Other arts, sports, and hobbies form important parts of the culture of Za'atari. Chess and backgammon are popular games played by many residents, and chess tournaments are regularly held across the camp (UNHCR 2020b). Several NGOs have even included chess within their programmes of educational and psychological support (Chess Without Borders 2025; Relief Web 2014). The camp also has a comprehensive library network that offers reading services, book clubs, story time and storytelling programmes, writing

workshops, internet and media training, and multimedia programming (Fisher 2020a). Indeed, the traditions of reading, storytelling, poetry and prose are particularly prevalent in Za'atari: friends and family regularly gather in private residences to recite poetry and tales alongside performances of music. NGOs have capitalised on these traditions, offering a range of activities that utilise storytelling, narrative therapy, and creative writing as tools for healing, development and change (MeWe 2024; Nichonchuk et al. 2020; Questscope 2019). In terms of sports, football is widely played throughout the camp: the UEFA Foundation, LaLiga, and other organisations provide regular football training and tournaments for girls and boys in Za'atari (UEFA Foundation 2020; LaLiga 2024).

In many other ways, life in Za'atari is extremely challenging. Although Syrians have made considerable efforts to renovate their homes, residents still live in cramped and vulnerable living conditions (see Figures 1.19 and 1.20). Caravans are particularly susceptible to the extreme weather conditions of the desert, with regular flooding in the winter, and soaring temperatures in the summer (Al-Shoubaki 2022: 103). Concrete construction is mostly forbidden throughout the camp, except for in schools, police stations, and NGO compounds (Soulié 2018). Although Za'atari's solar power plan was initially intended to provide 12 hours of electricity per day, UNHCR reduced electricity supply to 9 hours per day, supposedly in an effort to 'manage costs as electricity demand has soared' (Carlisle 2022).



Figure 1.19. Kharub Street, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 23 August 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).



Figure 1.20. Domestic residences, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 1 February 2019, Za'atari, Jordan).

The GoJ's asylum policy prohibits Syrians in Za'atari from the right to work, citizenship, and freedom of movement (Turner 2015). Syrians in the camp must obtain permits and permissions from the camp authorities (referred to simply as *al-mufawwaḍīyeh* in Arabic, literally meaning commission or delegate) to exit and return to the camp. Permits are difficult to obtain, and those that are issued are restrictive, limiting trips to certain areas or time periods. Alternatively, Syrians exit and return to Za'atari unofficially via routes known as *al-sātir.* In Arabic, *sātir* refers to something that protects, conceals, or keeps apart (like a block or barrier). Through al-sātir, Syrians do come and go from the camp, often journeying to other cities and areas of Jordan like Amman, Irbid, and Mafraq, for unofficial work or for recreational activities. It appears that al-mufawwaḍīyeh is aware of Syrians' movements via al-sātir. While movements via al-sātir are mostly unproblematic, illegal exits from the camp are policed (albeit erratically and unpredictably). Syrians face harsh punishments for violating movement restrictions, and risk being forcibly returned to the camp, being transferred to other camps such as Azraq (many commentators claim Azraq is used as a detention facility for Syrians (JIF 2018: 14)), or even deported back to Syria (Achilli 2015: 5; Bank 2016: 4; Sieverding and Calderón-Mejía 2020: 112)

Additionally, Jordan places restrictions on Syrians engaging in formal employment. Because Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention, Syrians in the country are not automatically granted the legal right to work (Kattaa 2016: 72). The process for Syrians to obtain legal work permits is heavily bureaucratic and expensive (Stave et al. 2021: 12). Scholars posit that restrictions on Syrians stems from socio-economic tensions and concerns about Syrians taking jobs (there is high unemployment across Jordan), and Jordan's attempts to reduce its reliance on low-wage foreign labour (Chatelard 2010a;

Turner 2015; Betts et al. 2017; Alshoubaki and Harris 2018). As a result, many Syrians have worked informally outside the bounds of Jordanian labour law with low wages and poor working conditions including child labour, which is common among Syrian children in Jordan (Kattaa 2016: 73).

Jordan has established some policies and measures to support the economic livelihoods of Syrians. According to UNHCR, there are four income-generating possibilities for Syrians in Za'atari: work permits; private businesses on the local market; incentive-based volunteering (IBV); and home-based businesses (UNHCR 2022: 2). The 2016 Jordan Compact made between the GoJ and the international community saw the establishment of the Za'atari Office for Employment inside the camp, operated by UNHCR, SRAD, the International Labor Organisation, and the Ministry of Labor, which grants a proportion of work permits to Syrians so that they can engage in legal employment outside the camp. As of June 2023, there were around 3,000 active work permits issued for Syrians in Za'atari (UNHCR 2023a). IBV involves Syrians working within NGOs to support the implementation of humanitarian programming, holding positions from cleaners to security guards, teachers, supervisors, and engineers, for which they receive cash benefits. However, some have critiqued the efficacy of these policies, claiming that Syrians' wider socio-economic rights are still restricted (Al-Mahaidi 2021; Barbelet et al. 2018; Lenner and Turner 2024; Burlin 2019; Huang and Gough 2019).

Other aspects of Jordanian law complicate socio-cultural life in Za'atari. For instance, policies are in place that mandate local mobile network providers in Jordan to limit phone signal and connectivity across the camp, and all communications are monitored by the authorities. It is difficult to ascertain more details about this policy (and indeed others implemented in the camp) because detailed information is either not made

public or is not written down. However, such surveillance does not appear to lie in Western frameworks of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2019). Rather, they reflect broader politics of surveillance across the Kingdom and the GoJ's restrictive policies towards refugees. In recent years, increasingly restrictive laws have been put in place across Jordan in relation to media and civic groups, and authorities have become repressive in civic spaces (Human Rights Watch 2024b). There have also been concerns in the past regarding the potential 'security threats' posed by Syrians such as possible connections to extremist groups in Syria and worries that camps provide armed militants with territory, resources and recruits (Terry 2002; Salehyan 2007; Tobin 2018).

While Za'atari does provide basic health facilities, studies suggest Syrians face barriers accessing healthcare, and that costs, limited resources, changing policies, and poor health literacy impedes the delivery of clinical health services to Syrians in the camp (Al-Fahoum et al. 2015; Al-Rousan et al. 2018; Alzaben et al. 2022). Mental health is a major concern. After more than a decade living in a camp, Syrians in Za'atari face significant emotional, psychological, and social challenges such as complex trauma disorders, extreme poverty, disrupted education, child labour, and forced or early marriage (UNICEF 2019; Al-Akash and Chalmiers 2021; Al-Hourani et al. 2019b; Al-Duraidi et al. 2024; Matsumoto et al. 2019; Momani et al. 2023; Al-Kisilu and Darras 2018).

Socio-cultural challenges in the camp extend to issues surrounding gender. The place of women and girls in Za'atari is complicated. Za'atari is often seen as a patriarchal society, which signifies men as the head of the household and protectors of the family, dominating political, social, and economic spheres (Yalim and Critelli 2023; Al-Makhamreh and Lwando-Hundt 2008; Nasser-Eddin 2017). Research suggests that there

are gender disparities in Za'atari. Around half of the camp population is female, but less than half of those women are engaged in employment: in 2023, only 10% of the 3,000 active work permits in Za'atari were for women, and women account for only 35% of those engaged in IBV (UNHCR 2023a). Furthermore, nearly two in five girls in Za'atari are married under the age of 18, and since 2019 there has been an 11.8% surge in child marriages (Oxfam 2022). NGOs report a lack of economic or career pathways for Syrian women and frequently encounter difficulties recruiting women and girls to take part in projects and programmes (UNFPA 2021). Many of these issues appear to have been compounded during the COVID-19 pandemic, with research suggesting a rise in domestic violence, early marriage, and mental health challenges since the onset of the pandemic (Alzaben et al. 2022). However, in recent years, scholars have come to question perceptions of the place of women and girls in refugee camps, and many argue that there are disparities between how NGOs and refugee communities perceive gender issues (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014a, 2014b; Al-Akash and Chalmiers 2021; Turner 2012). For example, in their research on early marriage in Za'atari, Ruba Al-Akash and Morgen Chalmiers (2021) find that Syrians actually view early marriage as beneficial for girls because it offers opportunities for upward social mobility, increased financial stability, and protection from the risks facing unmarried young women, whereas NGOs present early marriage as a violation to women's rights (2021: 296).

Another concern for NGOs is funding for Za'atari's humanitarian response. In the past, Za'atari has received wide-spread attention and relatively stable funding. But that support is diminishing, and organisations face uncertainty maintaining their operations (UNHCR 2023c; Davis 2024; Taysee 2024; Earl et al. 2024). The combination of political and financial uncertainties, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, has

compounded stress, fear, and protection risks among the camp's population, especially youth who continue to face obstacles that limit livelihood prospects and opportunities (Alzaben et al. 2022; Shakatreh and Mansour 2023).

Conceptualising Forced Migration

Defining and describing the figure of the refugee – a person who has been forced to flee and cross borders – has long presented methodological and legal challenges and intricacies. As Matthew Gibney argues, 'Even attempting to define forced migration demands careful consideration' (2014: 48). The Geneva Convention defines a refugee as a person who:

> Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (1951: 14)

Some have sought to expand the 1951 Refugee Convention classification, defining the refugee as an individual whose relationship with the state has broken down and whose needs are unprotected following generalised violence, famine, environmental catastrophe or poverty (Shacknove 1985; Gibney 2004). Others define refugees according to their reliance on humanitarian assistance (Harrell-Bond 1986), or their appeal for alternative political membership or citizenship (Price 2009).

Debates about who is a refugee are highly complex and encompass various legal, political, and philosophical dimensions. But it is important to explore how scholars in

anthropology and forced migration studies have interpreted these definitions. For the past 15 or so years, Giorgio Agamben's (1998) concepts of bare life and *homo sacer* (meaning sacred man) have widely influenced depictions and understandings of the refugee and refugee camps. According to Agamben, homo sacer is a figure who cannot be sacrificed but can be murdered with impunity (1998). The most complete materialisation of homo sacer is in camps (or what Agamben terms 'states of exception') understood as mechanisms that supposedly imprison entire categories of people and strip them of their rights (1998: 167-170). Accordingly, refugee camps have been framed as liminal or exclusionary spaces (Agamben 1998; Agier 2011, 2014; Turner 2005, 2010; Malkki 1995).[12]

Many have questioned this depiction. David Turton argues that the distinction between refugees and other migrants is methodologically and ethically problematic; 'it is impossible to distinguish "forced migration" in the real world because all migration involves elements of both compulsion and choice' (2003: 8). For Turton, the language of 'forced migration' thus has a 'dehumanising effect' that dismisses the agency of forced migrants and suggests they have 'no scope for independent rational decision making; that they are simply passive victims of circumstances' (ibid: 10). Roger Zetter (1991, 2007) similarly criticises the act of 'labelling' refugees as a distinct category: he argues that

[12] While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to assess the mechanisms governing the representation and portrayal of refugees in the mainstream media and press, it is fair to say that the image of the refugee as victim is propagated in public spheres, too. In recent years there has been a proliferation of research on media representations of refugees. Studies find that news reporting, particularly in the West, tends to negatively represent refugees as a problem or 'crisis' to host communities; Syrian refugees, for instance, are framed as victims, burdens or threats (Elsamni 2016: 8).

labelling stereotypes refugees and establishes asymmetrical relationships of powerlessness and difference, deliberately constructed to exclude and disempower.

Labels and depictions of powerlessness and victimhood appear to be perpetuated by humanitarian agencies and governments. Scholars posit that the system of humanitarian aid fundamentally relies on the portrayal of refugees as passive victims of circumstance in order to sustain public interest and funding (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014; Harrell-Bond 1986; Cabot 2016). According to Helen Cabot, representations of refugees as vulnerable and tragic figures 'may be useful for their capacity to tug on heart-strings and speak to wider publics' (2016: 647-648).

It is worth noting how Syrians understand these categorisations. Indeed, Stephanie de Tapia argues that the language of migration should be 'contextualised according to the field as closely as possible' (2010: 128-129). The Arabic terms for displacement within legal and academic frames include *nuzuḥ* and *hijra*. A refugee is referred to as *lāji'* (male) *or lāji'eh* (female), *and lāji'yīn* (plural) (see IOM 2020). Technically (and legally) speaking, the protection status of the majority of Syrians in Jordan is asylum seekers, but the common designation (both in everyday settings and officially in the GoJ and UNHCR) of Syrians is 'refugees' (Turner 2023: 885). In most cases, Syrians find the term 'refugee' problematic. While many acknowledge the legal aspects of being a refugee in Jordan, most do not personally identify as a refugee. Amar, a man in his late 30s explains: 'Look, in terms of politically being a refugee then yes, OK, I'm a refugee. But I try to think in a different way. No, I'm *not* a refugee. I'm a human and I'm living […] Everyone around me loves me because I'm a person, not because I'm a refugee' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). In highlighting the political aspects of the term 'refugee', others argue it serves as a category of difference between Syrians and

those in Jordan with citizenship, as Deema, a young woman argues: 'Whenever I go outside the camp, I really feel like I am a refugee, because I'm not on the same level (*mustawa*) as everyone else' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021).[13]

Many Syrians maintain that the term 'refugee' is a category of difference imposed on them by others. Syrians feel this process removes individual identities. For instance, Maher, a man in his 30s who arrived in Za'atari in 2014, argues: 'In the beginning, it took me a long time to get used to my new name: lāji'. I felt my name had become lāji' and I was no longer Maher' (interview with the author, 11 July 2021). Amina, a 19-year-old living in the camp, goes as far to insinuate that the term 'lāji'' and the associated system of designating and registering refugees as such strips Syrians of their humanity:

> In the camp, if you go to any place [official], they won't ask you 'What's your name?', they'll say 'Give me your ID number' […] [In the camp], I am just a number (*raqm*). *Raqm al-mufawwaḍīyeh.*[14] I'm just a refugee, not even a person'. (Interview with the author, 11 July 2021)

An alternative term widely used by Syrians in Za'atari is *ghurba.* Ghurba is often translated as strangeness, foreignness, weirdness, alienation, estrangement, or homesickness. But the concept of ghurba is far more complex and multi-layered. In her studies of Sudanese women in the US, Rogaia Abusharaf describes the expression as 'more than physical separation or even exile, for it has powerful psychological

[13] By using the term 'mustawa', which literally means level or standard, Deema is referring to the comparative level of rights she has in comparison to others who have such rights (Jordanians or others with Jordanian citizenship).
[14] Raqm al-mufawwaḍīyeh, literally meaning commission number, is the term used to refer the ID number given to Syrians by the camp authorities when they register in the camp.

dimensions' (2002: 128). On one level, these dimensions evoke a psychological state of 'loneliness, loss, uprootedness, nostalgia and yearning for the familiar' and 'the sense of alienation one finds away from family and friends back home' (ibid). But on another level, ghurba can be understood as people, in spite of their differences, coming together to create diverse and alternative ideas about belonging, longing, and identity, and to make sense of their sentimentality (Abusharaf 2002: 129; Mahdi 2019: 191-105). Through his explorations of Sufi evocations of the term, Walid Khachab even claims that ghurba is in fact 'the very foundation of civilisation'; it is about 'becoming oneself – one with-self – after being exposed to the 'other'' (2010: 68). As such, Syrians will often say '*ana fe ghurba'* (I am in ghurba), or '*bil ghurba…'* (in ghurba) to describe and frame their feelings, actions, thoughts, beliefs, and inner processes since leaving Syria. Ghurba thus denotes the diversity of individual and group musical experiences through which Syrians come to express or understand themselves in relation to other people and places. In this way, ghurba reveals 'a set of alternative ways to describe the experience of migration (both physical and conceptual)' (Deebi 2011: 115).

Discussions about how to define experiences of refugeehood or ghurba have extended to the spaces refugees inhabit, such a camp (*mukhayyim,* pl. *mukhayyimāt*). Traditionally, refugee camps have been understood as states of exception, exclusionary spaces, or 'non-places' that lack symbolic meaning and strip refugees of their political and social agency (Agamben 2004; Diken 2004: 85-87 and 87-89). However, in recent years, scholars have sought to demonstrate the deep symbolism of refugee camps, the role refugees have in shaping them, and how camps are 'something more than merely a device of bare life and relegation that supposedly excludes refugees from any form of meaningful social existence' (Fresia and von Känel 2015: 250). Julie Peteet maintains

that camps are not 'spaces of passivity in which refugees wait hopelessly'; rather, refugees 'inevitably stamp their own imprint on camps, rendering them multiply inflected and often contradictory places […] where everyday life unfolds' (2005: 29). In this way, Peteet claims that camps emerge as dynamic spaces with 'multiple functions and meanings' (ibid). Others have illuminated the social and political acts of refugees in camps. Patricia Owens (2009) demonstrates how refugee life in camps is politically meaningful through the example of refugees sewing their lips together as a form of protest in Woomera detention camp in Australia. Marion Fresia and Andreas von Känel have explored the integral role of refugee schooling for the social life of camps in sub-Saharan Africa (2015: 250). Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2018) examines refugee writing, poetry and photography in order to alter perceptions of refugees and camps. In doing so, she argues:

> I have repeatedly insisted that the lives of people who have been affected by displacement *are* lives, that this *is* life, not just a 'shadow of life.' And that, just as the images, sounds and rhythms of our lives include those related to conflict and dispossession, so too do they include celebrations, joy, leisure, and of the seemingly routine every-day and every-night. (2018)

By revealing the multifaceted experiences of refugee life, research has also taken an intersectionalist and interdisciplinary approach. The editors of *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies* (2014) advocate for a reframing of migration studies as a discipline: 'The most exciting research is that which draws on insights from both the migration and forced migration studies traditions and does not delineate between the two categories of migrant' (2014: 4). Elsewhere, lenses such as gender and sexuality have gained substantial traction with scholarship demonstrating the role of gendered

practices within migratory movements, migration discourse, and migration policies (Abu-Lughod 2002; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014a, 2014b; Greatbatch 1989; Indra 1999; Jansen and Spijkerboer 2011; Moser and Clarke 2001; Nawyn 2010; Ritholtz and Buxton 2021, 2022; Ticktin 2011; Turner 2012).

There has also been ample discussion of the frameworks that have distinguished different types of refugees, namely refugees in camps and refugees outside camps. Migration studies have shown particular interest in refugees outside camps in urban areas; indeed, evidence suggests that the majority of the world's refugees actually live in urban areas (UNHCR 2020a). However, Mohamed Doraï argues that the study of refugees in camps is as fundamental as ever (2010: 67-68). UNHCR states that 22% of the world's refugees still live in camps (in Jordan, for example, around 128,000 Syrian refugees live in camps) (UNHCR 2021) and some believe that the number of refugees inside camps could be even higher, particularly when one considers refugees who live in unofficial camps or the evolution of camps into large sprawling areas (Doraï 2010: 67). For many, encampment thus remains fixed as a central pillar of refugee policy for both states and aid agencies (Bakewell 2014: 134; Peteet 2005: 29). This appears to be the case in Jordan. Dina Mansour-Ille et al. argue that the continued existence of closed off camps in Jordan underscores the GoJ's policy of controlling Syrian refugees (2019: 258). This is supported by the fact that the GoJ has made it increasingly difficult for Syrians to leave camps; for a time, Syrians were able to leave camps freely to settle in urban areas but since 2015 exiting the camp has become highly policed and restricted (Achilli 2015; Turner 2015, 2023). In the case of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, camps are similarly not merely temporary measures, but rather 'lasting for decades' (Alshoubaki and Zazzara 2020: 126 and 136).

The case for framing refugee camps as legitimate sites for research has been stressed by scholarship investigating the evolving nature of camps (Agier 2002; Malkki 1995; Doraï 2010; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2013). UNHCR defines refugee camps as 'temporary facilities built to provide immediate assistance and protection to people who have been forced to flee their homes due to violence, conflict or persecution' (UNHCR 2021). But often camps are not temporary. Hind Al-Shoubaki argues that while the camp may begin as a temporary shelter, it 'transforms gradually into permanent settlements […] forming a unique urban entity' (2022: 6). This is the case for many large-scale refugee camps that have evolved into city-like phenomena or 'city-camps' (Agier 2002: 318). For instance, UHNCR describes Dadaab Camp in Kenya (established in 1991 for those fleeing the Somalian civil war) as a 'refugee complex' of three camps that 'resemble naturally-grown towns' (UNHCR 2024a). Similarly, Za'atari has been described as an 'instant' or 'entrenched' city (Soulié 2018; Cutini et al. 2017; Kaddour et al. 2022; Ledwith 2014; Maani 2017). City-camps like Dadaab and Za'atari are said to share attributes with urban areas, including population size and density, architectural features, economic structures, and social, cultural, and religious dimensions (Agier 2002: 318-320; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2013: 132-135). Although camps are sometimes geographically isolated, they can be interconnected to cities and the wider urban environment through mobility or transnational connections, shared social practices, histories, and urban practices like shopping or accessing services, which requires refugees to go in and out of camps (even if only temporarily) (Doraï 2010: 68-70; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2013: 134-135; Horst 2002).

Of course, designating camps as cities comes with some caveats, not least in terms of the physical, social, political, and economic limitations of refugee camps, such as their

material exclusion through walls, fences, and checkpoints, and the lack of certain legal frameworks, rights, and mobilities that often characterise urban life (Peteet 2010: 22; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2013: 132-134). The notion of mobilities is key. Doraï notes that refugees in camps often experience 'different scales of mobility' (2010: 69), and there are several political, social, and cultural factors that impact freedom of movement, the right to work, and access to services, infrastructures, and education (see Long and Crisp 2010; Betts 2023; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Qasmiyeh 2013; Gidron 2024; Mason 2011; Scalettaris 2009; Kavak et al. 2024; Adey et al. 2014; Recchi and Safi 2024).

It is perhaps questions concerning agency, mobility, space, place, and socio-cultural life that continue to position city-camps like Za'atari as intriguing case studies for the study of forced displacement. Although nearly 30 years old, Liisa Malkki's seminal work on Hutu refugees in Tanzania exposes the significance of refugee camps for speaking to many of 'the profound riddles and questions' that sit at the core of anthropology: displacement and the existence of refugee camps, Malkki claims, force us to address key anthropological concepts of culture, society, and community (1995: 2 and 4). In examining the differences between Hutu refugees in camps and cities, Malkki shows how notions of identity, homeland, and history 'come to be influenced by the local, everyday circumstances of life in exile' (ibid: 3).

Za'atari, too, presents a host of riddles and questions about forced migration and the lives of refugees in the Middle East. How do Syrians navigate their lives in the city-camp of Za'atari? What can we learn about displacement by looking at Za'atari as a complex place with multiple functions and meanings? How do refugees put their own stamp on

Za'atari? How do local asylum policies affect socio-cultural life in the camp? How do aid agencies operate in this space?

The vast existing body of work on Za'atari also underscores the camp's importance as a unit of study to explore conflict and displacement. Scholars have assessed a wide range of aspects in life in the camp, from housing and urbanisation (Aburamadan et al. 2020; Dalal 2015; Giebel and Kolbe 2019; Hart et al. 2018; Kaddour et al. 2022; Ledwith 2014; Szeto 2023), healthcare, sanitation, mental health, including the impact of COVID-19 (Al-Fahoum et al. 2015; Al-Rousan et al. 2018; Alzaben et al. 2022; Bouchghoul, et al. 2015; Melloni et al. 2016; Salim et al. 2021; Shakatreh and Mansour 2023; Smadi et al. 2018), and technology and media (Maitland and Xu 2015, Olaimat 2022; Yafi et al. 2018).

Others have turned to livelihood and political concerns such as aid and humanitarian practices in the camp (Fricker 2019; Jaber and Nashwan 2022; Pasha 2021), law and employment policies (Achilli 2015; Lombardini and Mager 2019; Riach and James 2016; Turner 2023), security and camp politics (Clarke 2018; Saleh 2020; Sullivan et al. 2014), education (Kloetzer et al. 2018; Delprato et al. 2020), and experiences relating to gender (Jabber and Zaza 2016; Mryan 2016, 2018; Turner 2018). In recent years, scholars such as Karen Fisher (2020a, 2020b, 2022), Masaya Kashu (2022), and Susanna Hast (2019, 2021) have explored social and cultural life in Za'atari, covering topics from food to literature, sport, and capoeira.

This thesis asks how other aspects of everyday life and culture, namely music, figure in the wider life and infrastructure of Za'atari. I add to the existing literature on Za'atari by using a musical lens to shed light on the lives of refugees still living in camps and to address key questions about the nature of social and cultural life in a refugee camp. In

this way, my study enriches not only to the body of literature on Za'atari but also musical scholarship regarding the place of music in the migration process.

'Where People Go, Music Goes': Music and Migration

In addressing some of the conundrums at the heart of studying refugees, music offers a particularly interesting way to examine forced migration. Ethnomusicologists have extensively acknowledged the place of music in the migration process: as Adelaida Reyes states, 'Where People Go, Music Goes. They are inseparable' (1999: 14). In their assessments of migration, ethnomusicologists have predominantly addressed diasporic migrant communities in large urban areas as in the notable monographs by both Kay Shelemay (1998) and Mark Kligman (2009) of Syrian Jews in New York, John Baily (2015) of Afghans in Peshawar, London and California, and Su Zheng (2010) of Chinese Americans in New York. Traditionally applied to exiled Jews, diaspora has historically been seen as a dispersed group of ethnically homogenous people contained within a nation-state other than their 'homeland', with which they maintain a unilateral link (Faist 2010: 9; Bruneau 2010: 48).

Renewed perspectives on diaspora look beyond the conflation of cultural processes with the borders of the nation-state by virtue of what James Clifford has seen as the 'ability to recreate a culture in diverse locations' (1994: 305-306). Diaspora is in fact inherently heterogeneous, and music, according to Mark Slobin, 'mirror[s] the density of experience that characterises diasporic life' (1994: 244). Reflective of Roger Brubaker's conceptualisations of diaspora as a 'category of practice' wherein individuals make various claims, articulate projects and appeal to loyalties that may, or may not, be distinct from their ethnicity or homeland (2005: 12), scholars such as Tina Ramnarine have demonstrated how not all members of putative diasporas adopt a diasporic stance; instead,

Ramnarine argues that diasporic music-making should be understood 'as musicians working as individual agents in their everyday environments' (2007: 7).

Concepts of individual agency distinct from a nation-state have been developed through the lens of transnationalism. Linda Basch et al. define transnationalism as 'the processes by which migrants forge and sustain multistranded relations that cross national boundaries by linking together their societies of origin and settlement' (1994: 7). Music studies accordingly understand transnationalism in myriad ways, as transculturation, hybrid music styles, the world music market, and the multidimensional musical identities migrants exhibit (see Kartomi 1981; Erlmann 1993; Stokes 2003). According to Simone Krüger and Ruxandra Trandafoiu, transnational practices reconfigure migrant communities as fluid networks defined not by place but by 'social relations' (2014: 20). Byron Dueck's 'social imaginary' is built on a similar principle: a social imaginary exists outside of nation-states and brings together people from different places who share a set of expressions that are then made manifest in musical performances and 'texts' (2011: 22-23).

Ethnomusicologists have also turned their attention to contexts of forced displacement. A leading scholar in this area is Adelaida Reyes. In contexts from Vietnamese refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines to Sudanese refugees in urban settings in Uganda, Reyes (1989, 1990, 1999, 2010) has explored forced migration as a distinct ethnomusicological context to other forms of migration. Although some three decades old, Reyes' 1999 monograph on the Vietnamese refugee experience does much to elucidate the underexplored musical experiences of refugees. By tracking all stages of the Vietnamese refugee journey from camps in the Philippines to resettlement in the United States, she attempts to demonstrate how different environments affect musical life

in varying ways (1999: 11-12, 173). In a similar way to Malkki's study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Reyes argues that Vietnamese communities in camps exhibit a heightened sense of national identity compared to those in urban areas; music in camps mainly functions to preserve nationality and perpetuate a sense of belonging to the Vietnamese 'homeland' (ibid: 35). For instance, Vietnamese refugees play 'sad songs' as true expressions of how they feel about their circumstances, 'traditional' music in an attempt to preserve 'purity', or music of a distinctively 'Vietnamese' character (ibid: 47, 69).

Others have focused on displaced communities outside of camps. David McDonald (2009, 2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2019, 2020 – see also McDonald et al. 2013) has explored the case of Palestinian refugees, looking at the relationship between music and national identity amongst Palestinian musicians in Jordan and the Palestinian Occupied Territories: music among Palestinians is used as a form of resistance and protest, and to signify national belonging. In her work with displaced Zulu, Swazi and Tembe-Thonga communities in the South African borderlands, Angela Impey (2002, 2008, 2018) has exposed the importance of traditional songs, dances, and ritual processes for retaining local knowledge about the environment and maintaining a sense of belonging to the land.

Increased interest in contexts of forced migration has led to a growing body of research pertaining to what Timothy Rice (2014) calls 'ethnomusicology in times of trouble'. Several scholars explore the role of music among minority groups, in contexts of war, conflict and violence, and in social, political, economic, or environmental crises (Cusick 2010; DeNora 2013; Hemetek et al. 2004; Kartomi 2010, 2014; O'Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010; Pettan 1998; Ritter and Daughtry 2007; Sykes 2018). The fields of applied ethnomusicology, music therapy, community music and music-conflict transformation studies have likewise been concerned with these 'times of trouble',

highlighting the therapeutic and socio-cultural capacity of music for those who have suffered the trauma and loss of conflict, displacement, violence, persecution, injustice, or discrimination (Beckles-Willson 2013, 2014, 2021; Bergh 2007; Bergh and Sloboda 2010; Cohen 2005; Grant et al. 2010; Haskell 2015; Howell 2015; Impey 2002; Pettan 2010; Pilzer 2015; Sweers 2010; Robertson 2010; Tan 2010, 2015; Urbain et al. 2008). For example, the ethnomusicologist Svanibor Pettan (2010) worked with Bosnian refugees in Norway to bring together the refugee and host community through music. And in KwaZulu Natal, Impey devised a cultural tourism programme that documented the cultural heritage of communities, empowered forcibly displaced women, and promoted their well-being (2002: 22).

Music therapists have been concerned with the ability of music to relieve refugees' psychological symptoms of trauma and ameliorate experiences of stress upon arrival in a new environment (Abdulbaki 2020; Beck et al. 2018, 2021; Bernard et al. 2023; Gulbay 2021; Heynan et al. 2023; Lenette et al. 2016; Lenette and Sunderland 2016; Mallon and Antik 2021; Parker et al. 2021; Parker and Mufti 2016; Vouioukalou et al. 2019). In their music therapy project with Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon, Vegar Storsve, Inger Westby and Even Ruud (2010) drew on community music frameworks by Brynjulf Stige et al. (2010) whose community-based approach to music therapy focuses on the creation of relationships within a musical community to improve long-term health and wellbeing; the 'Hope and Recognition' project in Lebanon therefore aimed to improve the mental health of Palestinian children and foster communication between different religious and political refugee groups.

Traditionally, forced migration has been understood by some ethnomusicologists as qualitatively different from other forms of migration. For instance, Reyes claims that

music is a response to refugees' 'distinct' cultural and psychological needs over other migrants (1999: xiv, 7-10). Reyes' basis for musical differentiation between the two categories rests on the relationship to the country of origin: refugees, she claims, are 'forced' to leave whereas migrants choose to (1999: 171). Similarly, in establishing a 'typology for considering the relationship between music and migration', John Baily and Michael Collyer argue that 'the circumstances of migration are likely to have a profound effect on how music fits into the migrant experience' (2006: 172).

In recent years, ethnomusicologists have sought to reframe ideas about forced displacement. Jonathan Shannon (2019, 2022), Dunya Habash (2021), Evrim Ögut (2021a, 2021b), Ioannis Christidis (2020, 2022), Ed Emery (2017), Hussein Hajj (2016), and Tom Western (2020) have all examined Syrian displacement, predominantly Syrians in urban areas across Greece and Türkiye. Through notions of enactment, emplacement, space, place, agency, affect, negotiation, mobility, voice, sound, and citizenship, this scholarship creates space for thinking about the musical agency and creativity of refugee musicians and communities. For example, in her work in Istanbul, Habash unearths the 'inner worlds' of Syrian musicians in the city in order to expose their agency in creating new musical opportunities: Syrians find new jobs, establish new performance practices like street performance (which is not a common practice in Syria), open up music schools and studios, and form ensembles with other Syrians living in Istanbul (2021: 1374). By exploring how new forms of music-making enable male musicians to adapt and integrate to their new lives in Istanbul, Habash reveals how 'agency, resistance and resilience can also be an unspoken inward negotiation' (ibid: 1372). Shannon likewise assesses the negotiations involved in public street performances by Syrian male musicians in Istanbul, claiming that street performances offer a 'source of comfort and nostalgic remembrance'

(2019: 2171) and help Syrians in the process of 'navigating their lives' and 'mediating their experiences' in a new city (2022: 2).

Ögut and Western have considered the political functions of Syrian music-making in displacement. In her work on the impact of changes in place and space on music, Ögut suggests that public performances by Syrians in the main squares and streets of Istanbul emerge as 'political acts' that 'fill the city centre loudly with [Syrian] sounds and voices' against a backdrop of complex 'political voicelessness' in Türkiye (2021a: 8). Western frames music-making by various displaced groups, including Syrians, in Athens as 'sonic strategies' that 'flesh out' acts of citizenship, activism, and solidarity in the face of discriminative Greek asylum policies (2020: 303).

This research is instrumental in exposing the meaningful place of music for Syrians in displacement. One aspect that is ripe for further study is the place of music-making by Syrian women. In reviewing Reyes' contribution to the study of music and migration, Christidis claims that the subject 'refugee' appears in Reyes' work as 'gender-neutral'; gender and other classifications such as class or age are revealed through demographic data rather than critical ethnographic discussion (2021: 23). In other cases, however, lack of detail about women's music-making may in fact be as a result of the gendered nature of some performance practices: Shannon and Ögut, for example, admit that limited numbers of women participate in street performance in Istanbul (Shannon 2022: 6; Ögut 2021b: 12). Accordingly, they remind us that there are several social, cultural, political, and economic factors that affect participation by men and women in musical activities.

This is not to say that research has not explored women's music-making in contexts of forced displacement. Impey (2008, 2018) uncovers the place of the women's mouth harp and the practice of walking songs in the context of land dispossession and eviction

in western Maputaland in South Africa. She demonstrates how walking songs highlight the experiences of women following the loss of land, the long-term social and economic implications of social rupture on women, and the empowering capacity of musical heritage for generations of women living in borderlands. By tracing women's narratives, Impey aims to 'make audible' the voices of those whose experiences in borderlands have been omitted from political and socio-cultural discourse (2018: 4). Alenka Bartulović and Miha Kozorog (2017) have similarly amplified the voices of women refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) in Slovenia. In their work exploring the different music-making and organisational activities by women refugees since the 1990s, Bartulović and Kozorog illustrate how women from B&H are 'creative agents': they reinvent traditional musical genres and negotiate identity transformations of gender and power relations within the heterogenous Bosnian refugee community and in the face of strict Slovenian migration policy (2017: 39).

The Dynamism of Arab Musical Culture

In a study of the role of music in a Syrian refugee camp, it is essential to outline the wider cultural context of Syrian and Arab musical culture. Arab culture has long been of fascination to ethnomusicologists, from twentieth century ethnographic collections of recordings to early broad overviews of the history and common musical characteristics of music across the region as in Henry G. Farmer's seminal work (Danielson and Fischer 2002: 23; Farmer 1929). Edward Said, however, criticises early accounts of Arab culture for their Orientalist and essentialist approaches, and for supplanting local histories with European narratives purporting to be world histories (1991: 21). More recent musical scholarship on the region has thus sought less ethnocentric or totalising depictions of the

Middle East, considering regional and local differences, variances in types of music or genre, and socio-political and cultural factors.

Scholars have exposed the diverse nature of music across locales in the wider Middle East, North Africa region (MENA). Take, for example, Martin Stokes' (1992) work on Türkiye, Ruth Davis (1986) on North Africa and Andalusia, Scott Marcus (2007), Virginia Danielson (1997), and Salwa El-Shawan (1980) on Egypt, to name but a few. While there are works like those by A.J. Racy (2004), Christian Poché (1995), and David McDonald (2013) that cover Syria and the Levant countries including Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine, Shannon claims that the majority of research prioritises Egypt, reflecting 'both the common sentiment that Egypt is the cultural leader of the Arab world and the relatively greater openness of Egypt to foreign researchers' (2006: 38). Shannon alternatively positions Syria (especially Aleppo and Damascus) as the home of classical Arabic music, arguing that music in Syria has shaped debates about Arab society and culture; contemporary Syrian culture is constructed through divergent understandings of the past, with individuals embracing authenticity and modernity in multiple ways and in different spaces (ibid: 13, 204). Shannon thus reveals the rich and diverse nature of Syrian culture both in Syria and in Syrian diasporic communities.

The work of those previously cited such as Shelemay (1998), Kligman (2009), Habash (2021), Ögut (2021a, 2021b), and Western (2020) similarly focus on the diverse nature of Syrian music-making among Syrian communities in both Syria and the diaspora, uncovering aspects of religious, professional, and political musical performance by Syrians in locales from Damascus to New York and Istanbul to Amman. Shayna Silverstein (2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2019a, 2019b, 2021, 2022, 2024) joins this body of literature, examining dabke, contemporary Syrian Art music, and music and protest

chants within the Syrian revolution. In doing so, Silverstein traces the entanglements of contemporary and traditional Syrian culture with politics and postcolonial geographies and histories. In doing so, she reveals the 'mechanics, techniques, and lived experience of cultural practices' for different groups of Syrians (2019: 257).

Beau Bothwell (2013a, 2013b, 2018a, 2018b, 2020) similarly assesses the political functions of Syrian culture, focusing predominantly on the role of popular music and Syrian radio before and during the conflict and in US broadcasting to the Middle East. His research demonstrates how different radio broadcasts have been used by the Syrian state to convey political messages about the Assad regime, and by Arab-American stations to influence public opinion among Arab listeners towards the US (2013). By exploring the auditory practices of radio, Bothwell also illuminates how listeners in both Damascus and the Syrian diaspora create 'locally relevant meaning out of music and radio' thus constituting Syrian soundscapes as 'heard and voiced in innumerable contrasting and contradictory ways' (2013: 1 and 9).

Others have interrogated aspects such as a religion, like Tala Jarjour's (2018) study of Syrian Orthodox chant in Aleppo, Sarah Bakker Kellogg's (2015) exploration of liturgical performance in the Dutch Syriac Orthodox diaspora, and Melissa Scott's (2021) research on the role of the Islamic call to prayer to understand how Syrians in Jordan hear and make sense of their surroundings.

Along with research on Syria, scholarship on Arabic music has sought to expand knowledge of the lived experience of cultural practice through the genres and types of music performed and listened to across the region. A great deal of scholarly interest in music in the MENA lies in Classical Arabic music, which many consider to be the most 'authentic' representation of Arab musical culture (Adileh 2011; Danielson 1996;

Frishkopf 2010; Shannon 2001; Unity Centre for Arab Studies 2004). According to Jordanian scholar Noor Ebbini, the 'idealism' of Classical Arabic music as the 'pinnacle of musical development' has led social and scholarly discourse to view contemporary music as inferior, 'vulgar' and commodified, or lacking in artistic integrity (2022: 101). Forms of Arab popular music have of course been discussed by many scholars (Burkhalter 2012; Burkhalter et al. 2013; Danielson 1996; El-Shawan 1980; Grippo 2010, Hammond 2017; Landau 2012; Nooshin 2012; Racy 1981; Frishkopf 2020). But Ebbini maintains that there is no unanimous definition of what constitutes 'contemporary' in Arab musical culture; modern scholarship tends consider the commercialised 'Arab-pop' industry as indicative of all contemporary Arab composition, thus overlooking the myriad genres and styles of music that exist in Arab musical culture today (2022: 102). Ebbini therefore constructs a categorisation of Arab musical culture that avoids equating 'contemporary' to 'popular' and instead considers all the musical categories and genres listened to and enjoyed in Arab musical culture today (ibid: 102). Her framework consists of three main sub-categories (Instrumental Art Music, Popular Music, Alternative Music) and is further divided into 'meta-genres' (See Figure 1.21) (ibid: 103).

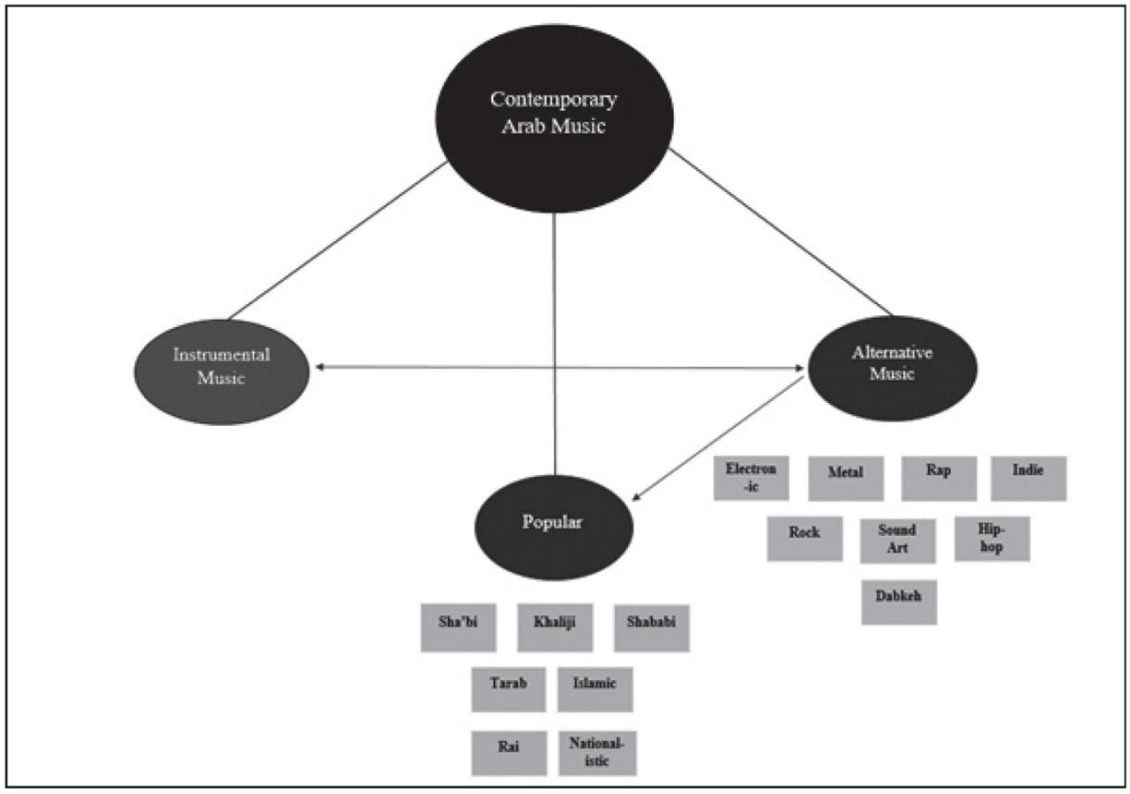


Figure 1.21. The Categorisation of Arab contemporary music. (Ebbini 2022: 103).

While some of the meta-genres of Ebbini's model have certain regional or geographic origins (such as Algerian *raï* or *khalījī* from the Gulf regions), her categorisation is based on musical features and characteristics, as well as the commercialisation of each genre in the Arab world. Under this rubric, Ebbini exposes the 'intersecting dynamism of the Arab musical culture' and demonstrates how 'contemporary music is the leading category amongst Arabs, and the most broadcasted on radio, television, and music streaming software' (2022: 100-101, 102).

Research on the Arab musical culture has also identified key socio-political and cultural themes. Many scholars have assessed music across the region through themes such as music and the role of mass media (Armbrust 1996; Frishkopf 2010; Stokes and Davis 1996) or music and power and politics (Burkhalter et al. 2013; Nooshin 2009). Two additional themes that have received particular attention are gender and religion.

The relationship between music and religion in the Arab world is complex. While the Arab world is, in fact, made up of many different religions and religious groups, scholars have mostly focused on Islam; more than half the countries in the MENA region have populations that are approximately 95% Muslim or greater (Pew Research Centre 2009: 16). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give a complete history of Islamic opinions on music (see work by Amnon Shiloah 1995). But it is the case that music and musical performance have been an important and contentious issue in Islamic thought from the start of Islam (Salhi 2014: 1). Many reason this with the fact that no clear reference is provided in the Qur'an as to whether music or the act of playing music is inherently *ḥarām* (forbidden, illegitimate, sinful) or *ḥalāl* (legal, allowed, acceptable) (Otterbeck 2012: 229; Al-Faruqi 1985). Perspectives on music have consequently been varied and complex. Many renowned Muslim theologians have imposed restrictions on music and music listening throughout the ages (Otterbeck 2012: 227; Ebbini and Al-Bakri 2021: 2); some musical instruments (especially string and wind instruments) have been considered problematic or illegitimate whereas others, like the *daf,* a frame drum, are permitted; and some have defined certain celebratory songs praising Allah and the prophet Muhammad as ḥalāl (Otterbeck 2021: 17).

Accordingly, many conclude that music's illegitimacy is a case of interpretation and preference. Factors dictating music's permissibility can include the values of an individual scholar, music's relation to other social issues, or the context in which music takes place (Otterbeck 2012: 230; Ebbini 2022: 111; Shannon 2001: 64). Jonas Otterbeck states that modern beliefs take into account time (*zaman*), place (*makān*), and company (*ikhwān,* literally meaning brothers) when evaluating 'what benefits or temptations music might bring' (2012: 231). Similarly, Shannon explains that music's permissibility is

based on ‘whether the music feeds listeners’ spiritual needs or rather leads to irreligious thoughts or motivations’, and to what extent performance style or presentation constitutes the music as ‘vulgar’ or ‘inappropriate’ (2001: 64-66).

Debates about music are also a matter of terminological considerations. The term *‘musīqa’* (music) is not employed in Arabic in the same way as in English. Kamal Salhi explains that musīqa ‘does not apply to all types of artistic vocal and instrumental arrangements of sounds, tones, and rhythms’ (2014: 2). This is particularly the case for religious practices like the adhān (the Islamic call to prayer) and recitation of the Qur’an (tajwīd). Ebbini and Tsonka Al-Bakri argue that the term ‘music’ as it is understood from a Western perspective cannot be compared to these practices and instead use the terms ‘religious music’ or ‘music in Islam’ (2021: 2). Others delineate between ‘music as an art form’ and ‘music as a form of recitation’ (Shokouhi and Yusof 2013: 373). Given these distinctions, Ebbini and Al-Bakri claim that music in Islam ‘can be comprehended as a tool supporting the mystical reproduction of kalām Allah (God’s words)’ (2021: 2).

There has been ample academic discussion of the adhān and Qur’anic recitation (Faruqi 1985, 1989; Frishkopf 2009, 2018; Hirschkind 2006; Nelson 2001; Rasmussen 2001, 2010). The adhān is performed five times a day by a muazzin (pl. *muazzinīn*), the person who calls the prayer to indicate prayer times. Al-Bakri et al. argue that the adhān is not only part of ‘the theological heritage of Islam’ but also part of the ‘Arabic musical heritage’ (2019: 167). They highlight the ‘influence of particular aesthetic taste and local musical impact onto the Islamic ritual’, thereby constituting the call to prayer as an ‘inseparable part of everyday life’ (ibid: 182). Anne Rasmussen (2010) makes similar claims in her studies of recitation of the Qur’an in Indonesia. While she acknowledges the distinctions many make between music and recitation, Rasmussen suggests that

‘Qur’anic recitation and musical performance (both vocal and instrumental) exist side by side and are sometimes made by and for the same actors’ (2010: 25).

Performance is an important aspect of the adhān. Al-Bakri et al. frame the adhān as a ‘performative act’ in which muazzinīn play a central role: while certain aspects of tempo, pronunciation, placement of ornamentation, location, and bodily orientation are performed according to set rules, other aspects like rhythm, choice of melodic line, dynamic, and the *maqām* (mode) on which the prayer is called, can be determined by each muazzin (ibid: 175). The adhān also varies according to locality, society, and local tastes (ibid: 183). Accordingly, Al-Bakri et al. suggest it may be possible to construct a ‘sonic map’ of the adhān that considers different styles of the call to prayer in different places (ibid). In Jordan, for example, a designated recording of the call to prayer is broadcast through the central mosque in Amman, from where it is circulated to and played simultaneously by all mosques throughout the Kingdom. Scott (2021) has assessed how this process of ‘unifying’ the adhān is experienced by displaced Syrian musicians living in Amman. Scott argues that the unified soundscape of the adhān in Jordan differs from polyphonous and diverse renditions in Syria. As such, she situates the adhān as a way for understanding the subjectivities of Syrian communities living in Jordan.

Another aspect to consider in debates about music and Islam is gender. As Laudan Nooshin notes, across much of the Middle East and Central Asia ‘social anxieties over music (and dance) are paralleled with anxieties concerning gender, particularly in relation to women’ (2009: 3). For instance, some conservative views on the permissibility of music in Islam draw parallels between women, music, and ‘loose morals’, or immorality (see Robson 1938). However, Nooshin and those such as Rasmussen, Veronica Doubleday (1988, 2008), and Karin van Nieuwkerk (1995, 2012) have sought to unpack

some of the misconstrued anxieties surrounding women, music, and religion through their explorations of different Islamic communities. Collectively, they have uncovered the gendered meanings invested in musical instruments, the place of technology in women's music-making in Iran, the case of female singers and belly dancers in Egypt, female musicians in Afghanistan, and professional female reciters and singers of the Qur'an in Indonesia. Rasmussen's work examining the role of Muslim women in Indonesia as professional Qur'an reciters and singers, for instance, shows how women participate in 'every aspect of religious life and performance' (ibid: 16 and 19). Rasmussen thus argues that it is in fact Orientalist frameworks that 'otherise' Muslims and Islam, particularly women: the Western imagination, she claims, 'hides the Muslim woman under a black cloak' (2010: 15-16). Van Nieuwkerk makes a similar claim in her study of Egyptian female dancers and singers by attempting to 'de-exoticise' their trade and creating 'more understanding of their livelihood' (1995: 1).

How to Tell the Story of Za'atari: Research Methodology and Strategies

The thesis embarks on a study of music in Za'atari Refugee Camp in order to unearth the relationship between music, migration, camps, conflict, and other themes such as gender, religion, and politics. By telling different stories about music in Za'atari, I aim to elucidate how the musical culture of a refugee camp is dynamic, multivalent, and complex, and the diverse ways in which Syrians use music to negotiate, mediate, and articulate their everyday lives in displacement. In this thesis, I bring the different musical practices of Syrians in Za'atari into focus. In Chapter 1, I discuss wedding customs and traditions. Chapter 2 explores individual performing and listening practices by men and women. In Chapter 3, I examine music programming in NGOs in the camp. Chapter 4 discusses the relationship between music and technology in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, Chapter 5 delves deeper into how different relationships, politics, and infrastructures shape Za'atari's music culture. By charting these different thematic areas, I argue that:

(1) Za'atari's musical culture is dynamic, multivalent, and complex;
(2) Syrians in Za'atari use music to negotiate, mediate, and articulate understandings of displacement in a variety of ways;
(3) Music plays an effective role in humanitarian programming in refugee camps, but only when it is approached in sensitive, sustainable, and participatory ways that empower communities; and
(4) Approaching displacement through the lens of music reveals the everyday creativity and agency of those who have been affected by conflict and displacement.

These statements are informed, in part, by the fieldwork I carried out in Jordan between 2019 and 2022. But it is fair to say that my interest in Jordan, Za'atari, the Middle East, and forced displacement more broadly began long before this study came to life. I have always maintained an interest in music and contexts of conflict and displacement. My own ancestors fled Germany in the early 1940s, settling on the Isle of Man. At the bachelor's and master's level, I studied music in internment camps on the Isle of Man during the Second World War, and displaced musicians working in the city of Manchester in the United Kingdom, respectively. My focus on the Middle East came about in part in my master's, during which I learnt more about the Arab musical culture and had the pleasure of meeting of my Jordanian friend and colleague, Noor Ebbini (previously cited)

who sparked my interest in Jordan and Za'atari camp as a potential unit of further study. My first trip to Jordan was in early 2018, and it was then that a friend of Ebbini's who worked with an NGO managed to somehow take me on my first ever trip to Za'atari. It was during that initial trip that I stumbled upon a capoeira session run by members of the organisation Capoeira Al-Shababi (I describe this organisation later in this thesis) in LWF's compound in the camp. Encountering a Brazilian martial art form being performed by young Syrian girls in a caravan in the middle of the Jordanian desert thus triggered a 5-year endeavour to untangle the complex meanings tied up in different music-making activities by Syrians in this context of displacement.

I visited Jordan again later that year, attending Ebbini's wedding, and embarking on Arabic language lessons. My experiences that summer were instrumental in educating me about Arab culture. My main period of fieldwork for this project followed, beginning in June 2019. While I had established a good grasp of Arabic by that point (I continued lessons at Oxford in the interim period), I was determined to improve my language skills not least because I was concerned about how using a translator would impact my relationships in Za'atari and my ability to build trust with Syrians (see Beaudry 2008). I also wanted to concentrate on colloquial Levantine Arabic, the spoken version of Arabic across Jordan and Syria (as opposed to the more formal Modern Standard Arabic). I attended lessons at a small language centre in Amman where lessons took place entirely in Arabic and in conversational style between teacher and student.

The mission of conducting fieldwork in Za'atari presented a whole host of challenges that began with the process of applying for access to the camp from the relevant authorities. I had heard anecdotes about how researchers in Za'atari in the past were permitted to come and go from the camp without any restrictions, particularly when the

camp was administered by JHCO before 2013. In 2019, however, gaining access was far more bureaucratic: any proposed activity in the camp had to be endorsed by the relevant sector working group (for my research, this was the Basic Needs and Livelihoods Working Group, or BNLWG, of UNHCR) and then presented to al-mufawwaḍīyeh for final approval. I made an application online to the BNLWG via a Google form.[15] I was initially worried about how my application would be received: several researchers have noted the complex and precarious process of attempting to secure permissions from government and camp authorities (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014; Ruano-Posada 2014). However, the BNLWG approved my research in September 2019 without any requirement of formal presentation to al-mufawwaḍīyeh, and I was granted a two month permit by SRAD, which I later learnt is the norm for academic researchers.[16]

When the BNLWG approved my research, they suggested that I establish connections with NGOs that provide music programming in the camp so that I could secure long-term access to the camp beyond the two-month permit. That suggestion was beyond helpful as I ended up collaborating with two NGOs for some two years: Questscope (QS) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). I began working with QS in October 2019, and with LWF in the December of that same year. Between October

[15] In 2019, this application was made via Google Form. The form is no longer active, but the link at the time was: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdioyRwAIQ6YDzS36FUjwchmuUIwVHQcD9vCgogY05LJXjPQg/viewform?c=0&w=1 (Accessed 23 September 2019).

[16] Although I was not required to present my research and application to al-mufawwaḍīyeh prior to approval, on my first trip to Za'atari I was required to collect my permit from the local police station in the camp where I was asked to present my passport and answer a series of questions from a Jordanian security official. Most of these questions focused mainly on fascination with my Isle of Man passport, which football team I supported, which university I studied at, and whether I was married. I was accompanied by a colleague from the organisation Questscope (with whom I went on to work in the camp – see above), and he had a good working relationship with the official, so I suspect this impacted the type of interrogation I received.

2019 and July 2021, I made frequent trips to Za'atari with QS and LWF, as well as to other locations in Jordan such as LWF's community centre in Zarqa, a city in the north of Jordan. On all these occasions, I travelled in QS and LWF transportation (both organisations had permits for vehicles to enter the camp).

It is worth saying a little more about the nature of my fieldwork in Jordan and how my experiences shaped this form of this project. There is a significant body of literature regarding the challenges of doing research in refugee camps particularly in terms of the power dynamics between researchers and refugees (Bloch 1999; Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007; Impey 2002; Jacobsen and Landau 2003; Krause 2017; Pettan 2010; Scheper-Hughes 1995; Seeger 2008, 2010; Tan 2010, 2015; Vogler 2007). A prominent concern is ensuring no (further) harm is caused to refugees who have been affected by conflict and displacement have been (and continue to be) exposed to extreme trauma and loss. Scholars have demonstrated that displaced persons often fear taking part in research and the potential consequences of their participation in research projects (Krause 2017: 12). These feelings are compounded if researchers are associated with NGOs: refugees may fear how their information will be used, feel obliged to take part in research, or fear repercussions if they do not (Krause 2017: 4 and 10; Bloch 1999: 379; Vogler 2007: 57-58; Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007: 287; Jacobsen and Landau 2003: 8). Furthermore, relationships between researchers and NGOs can be complex: NGOs fear that researchers will be critical of their administrations or assume that researchers only care about their own research projects and thus exert control over researchers (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007: 280 and 285; Seeger 2008: 280).

I attempted to address these concerns in a number of ways. Guided by the core ethical principles of Do No Harm, I took time to build relationships of trust, respect, and

familiarity with Syrians before inviting anyone to speak with me 'formally' in an interview. I spent a substantial amount of time in the kitchens or offices of the QS and LWF compounds with the Syrians who worked in the organisations. We drank coffee and spent hours chatting with one another about life in the camp and in Jordan, life before the 'events' in Syria,[17] colleagues' families and friends, but also the minutiae of everyday life from our favourite films and songs to what we planned to eat for dinner that day. While I sometimes felt frustrated or worried that I was not 'doing fieldwork', I came to realise that these formative interactions were fieldwork and that they were crucial not only for helping me to get to grips with residents' accents (many in the camp come from one area of southwest Syria where the accent varies from the Ammani Arabic I was used to hearing and speaking), but also in building relationships of trust and friendship with Syrians in the camp.[18] It was during these informal interactions I started to really learn something about the musical culture of the camp: my Syrian colleagues often played songs or videos on their phones and laptops while we chatted, featuring their favourite songs or recordings of cultural events and musical customs from Syria. When I did invite Syrians to take part in an interview, I conducted them entirely in Arabic and adopted the form of free-flowing unstructured interviews with open-ended questions in order to encourage reflexivity, and to allow my interlocuters to express thoughts and feelings (O'Reilly 2012: 120).

---

[17] In Za'atari, many Syrians refer to the conflict and events from 2011 onwards as just that: the events *(al-aḥadāth*). Others may also sometimes use the term '*thawra'* (revolution) or '*ḥarb'* (war), depending on the context.

[18] The Ammani accent is a modern variant of Jordanian Arabic spoken widely across the capital Amman and other parts of the country, particularly among young populations (Al-Wer 2002: 65). It is characterized by certain vowel and consonant variables, diphthongization, and the use of English terminologies and vocabularies (Al-Wer 2002; Alshaboul et al. 2022).

During all my interactions with Syrians, it was never my intention 'to ferret out "the facts"' (Malkki 1995: 51). Rather, I listened to and was led by what my informants 'deemed important' (ibid). In doing so, much of my fieldwork was an improvisational practice (Malkki and Cerwonka 2007). Malkki and Allaine Cerwonka understand improvisational ethnography as 'forms of flexible intellectual openness and principled efforts to understand, knowledge and competence, and also forms of creativity and imagination' that includes 'all possible techniques in an open, flexible, highly context-dependent and time-sensitive repertory of possibilities' (2007: 180-181). For instance, while my research techniques did include interviews, photography, note-taking, and participant-observation, this project has also made significant use of individual and group conversations, meeting with NGOs, phone calls, WhatsApp messages, interactions in the workplace, car journeys, games and jokes (such as playing with filters on Snapchat), and performing and singing with different members of the camp in a way that resembled aspects of performative ethnography in that I came to interrogate how different subjectivities (of audience, performers, and myself as the researcher) are engaged and transformed through performance (Wong 2008).

I also adopted a politically-committed and applied approach to fieldwork in my endeavour to address power imbalances and empower Syrians (American Anthropological Association 2012; Impey 2002, 2018; Jacobsen and Landau 2003; Krause 2017; Pettan 2010; Scheper-Hughes 1995; Seeger 2008, 2010; Sheehy 1992; Tan 2010, 2015). Ethnomusicologists have emphasised the integral place of applied methodologies in wider ethnomusicological practice by identifying the various roles ethnomusicologists occupy in working for the betterment of communities they study, from action to advocacy and administrative (Pettan 2008: 90). It is not a question of

whether ethnomusicologists should intervene, but rather *how* (Pettan 2010: 178). As such, in my collaborations with QS and LWF, I was contracted on an unpaid basis as a 'music consultant and trainer' meaning that I worked to support the organisations' music programming in Za'atari. I spent considerable time in the QS and LWF headquarters in Amman writing, editing, and translating proposals and reports for the organisations' music (and non-music) projects. I designed and implemented new music projects in Za'atari, and provided classroom support to music teachers on the ground in the camp. Working in this applied capacity also meant I was embedded in the wider humanitarian structure and afforded insight into the politics of aid and assistance. These experiences informed much of my findings, as manifest in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, where I discuss the nature of musical interventions run by NGOs, and the different factors that determine how and why projects are implemented

Nevertheless, I did encounter immense challenges in my fieldwork. My collaborations with QS and LWF, for instance, were fraught with complexities, most pertinently with regards to control exerted over my movements and research. I was not permitted to leave the confines of my partner NGOs' compounds while I was in the camp. I did not ever visit any private residences, and I rarely left the confines of the QS and LWF compounds. I was also told that there were policies by al-mufawwaḍīyeh that required me to leave the camp by 4pm at the latest. This impacted what I was able to observe. I was unable to participate in or observe many of the cultural events that take place in the camp such as weddings, parties, and community celebrations because most of them happen at night when I was not permitted to be in the camp. As a result, I had limited interaction with male musicians who perform at the types of events that happen at nighttime in the camp. While I got to know some male musicians via my partner NGOs

(many are music teachers within humanitarian aid programmes), I was unable to personally experience the tradition of Syrian burlesque and male music-making in the camp more generally. Of course, my interactions with men in the camp were tempered by gender and other factors such as age and appearance more broadly. In contrast, I became very close with Syrian women and I learnt a great deal about women's music-making in the camp.

My partner NGOs also controlled when I was able to travel to the camp, and what activities I undertook while in camp, including who I was interviewing and when, and which programmes I was observing. More often than not, I was ushered into music lessons or other activities like Zumba provided by the NGOs: I observed music classes with youth aged 10 through 18 in Za'atari on nearly all of my visits to the camp throughout my fieldwork. While sometimes frustrating, the ability to observe music lessons and other humanitarian programmes in-depth like this, informed my understandings of the place of music within the wider system of aid and assistance provision to Syrians, as evidenced in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

Perhaps one of the most significant challenges was the impact of COVID-19 (or simply 'corona' as it is known in Jordan and throughout the Middle East). The restrictions implemented by the Jordanian government under martial law from March 2020 onwards essentially prevented me from making any trips to Za'atari to carry out in-person fieldwork in the initial period of corona. I did make a handful of trips to the camp towards the end of 2020, but I was not able to conduct any interviews during these trips or observe musical activities (at any rate, restrictions on gatherings meant there were very few such events taking place at the time). Online research was not a viable option: the policies of communication surveillance and limited internet connectivity in the camp made remote

research with Syrians in Za'atari logistically and ethically problematic, potentially compromising the ability of my research participants to give informed consent.

During corona, my fieldwork therefore took on a very different shape to what I had initially envisaged. Although Jordan's corona-related policy was unpredictable to say the least, between March 2020 and the summer of 2021 I was able to spend time in the QS and LWF headquarters, and my fieldwork in this time focused much more on humanitarian programming. I also worked with my partner NGOs and my Syrian colleagues to overcome challenges to remote music programming in Za'atari. I was eventually able to get back to in-person fieldwork in Za'atari in June 2021, and over a period of two or so months, I conducted interviews with Syrians in Za'atari, before my contracts with my partner NGOs came to an end. This meant that I was not able to conduct as many interviews with Syrians I had hoped, but nevertheless, the interviews I did conduct with, along with those conducted with NGO project managers and donors or funders to programmes, emerged alongside all my interactions over the previous two years as vital components in informing my understanding of life in Za'atari.

In fact, most of the challenges I encountered during fieldwork ended up shaping much of what I learnt about music in Za'atari and thus the format and content of the chapters to follow in this thesis. My experiences during corona, for instance, working alongside NGOs and Syrian colleagues to implement music projects online enabled me to observe the flexibility and resourcefulness of Syrians in the face of precarity, thus leading to my discussion of Syrian music-making and the role of technology in Chapter

4.[19] Conducting interviews with Syrians in the aftermath of corona also meant I was able to discuss refugees' experiences of the pandemic in detail and learn more about the ways they overcame certain obstacles. Other fieldwork challenges – such as being unable to experience Za'atari's nighttime culture, lack of contact with male musicians, working with NGOs, etc. – enabled me to delve deeper into the politics, relationships, and infrastructures that shape Za'atari's musical life, as manifested in Chapter 5, where I look at interactions between Syrians and NGOs as well as between NGOs and donors, between NGOs and researchers, and between Syrians and researchers to assess the extent to which Syrians are empowered through music-making. Elsewhere, as in Chapters 1 and 2, the various factors that brought about restrictions on my fieldwork in terms of attending events or conducting interviews, mean I have been able to explore other research approaches such as testimony and witnessing (Malkki 1995; Gilbert 2005) and narrative ethnography and storytelling (Stoller 2016, 2017; Pengelley and Irwin 2017; Symons and Maggio 2014; Halstead 2016; Rosaldo 2013; Kusserow 2016).

As such, my fieldwork and the research strategies I employ throughout this thesis constitute an archive of stories about the lives of Syrians in displacement. It is no coincidence then that the title of this thesis ('Once upon a Time in Za'atari Refugee Camp') references the opening line of stories told the world round. A similar variation is used in the 2020 documentary 'Once upon a time in Iraq', directed by James Bluemel. Bluemel's five-part documentary tells the story of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq through

[19] Chapter 4 also formed part of a conference paper I presented in 2022 at the 21st Quinquennial Congress International Musicological Society in Athens, Greece, where myself, Ioannis Christdis, and Melissa Scott formed a panel to explore ideas about music, technology, and forced displacement, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

first-hand testimony of Iraqi and American civilians, journalists, and soldiers who recount their individual experiences of before, during, and after the invasion (Nicholson 2020).[20] The documentary therefore emerges as a 'unique personal archive' that creates 'in-depth and multi-faceted portraits' of the Iraq war (Keo Films 2020). Likewise, my thesis constitutes multifaceted portraits and stories of Syrian displacement, including those of Syrians living in Za'atari, of me the researcher, of actors within aid agencies, and of other scholars from across disciplines. In this way, I aim to tell the diverse stories of music-making in a refugee camp, thereby revealing the integral place of music in contexts of displacement.

Thesis Overview

In his research on methodology in the social sciences, John Law claims that standard research methods have 'limits' and assume that the world can be understood through specific or determinate processes (2004: 5). Law instead posits the concept of 'elusive realities', defined as the metaphors and images for what is impossible or barely possible, unthinkable or barely thinkable (ibid: 6). Some of these elusive realities might refer, for instance, to the 'slippery', 'complex', 'messy', and 'disordered' aspects of research (ibid). By asking what social science research could look like 'after method', Law reveals a 'slow and uncertain', 'risky and troubling' approach to research that will, as a result, reveal different perspectives of the world (ibid: 10).

---

[20] Also of note is Bluemel's 2016 documentary 'Exodus: Our Journey to Europe', produced in co-operation with Marie Gillespie at the Open University. The documentary is pieced together using footage filmed by Syrians on camera phones as they film their journeys from Syria to Europe. See https://connect.open.ac.uk/society-psychology-and-criminology/exodus-our-journey-to-europe (accessed 12 April 2024).

To explore Za'atari's musical culture, each chapter of this thesis reveals a different layer or elusive reality of music-making in the camp. Accordingly, each chapter sheds light on different actors or characters, different performance practices and functions, different narrative devices and perspectives, and different intersections and entanglements of music with aspects such as gender, age, politics, and many other themes. The fragmented and uneven nature of this approach is entirely intentional, serving to mirror the multiply inflected and contradictory nature of a refugee camp, my challenging and often uncertain fieldwork experiences, and the diverse and sometimes contested meanings and experiences of music in different contexts.

In Chapter 1, I focus on wedding celebrations in Za'atari. Although I could not attend weddings myself due to some of the restrictions I encountered during my fieldwork as outlined above, weddings and wedding traditions were a frequent topic of discussion in many conversations and interviews about music and culture with Syrians. Weddings thus emerged as a significant unit of study, revealing 'a vast panoramic terrain of interrelated domains that are historical, social, and economic, as well as ceremonial, emotional, and aesthetic' (Racy 2019: 21). These domains also included ideas about identity, home, heritage, and Syria. As such, in this chapter I use weddings as a way to explore how Syrians articulate and understand notions of identity, belonging, the past, and heritage in Za'atari. My discussion of weddings is brought to life through the eyes and ears of Syrians by drawing on their oral histories and testimonies of wedding customs in Syria and in the camp. In doing so, I follow the work of Malkki (1997) and Shirli Gilbert (2005) who claim that testimony and witnessing can reveal the different explicit, implicit, and uneven sharings of experiences of those living in contexts like refugee camps. I argue that through weddings, Syrians invoke divergent instantiations of *balad* (which is usually

translated as territory, state, nation, country, town, or city). Based on ideas of the refugee camp as a 'symbolic site' (Malkki 1995) and diaspora as a 'category of practice' (Brubaker 2005), I claim that Syrians formulate different identities and articulate different projects and loyalties that relate to balad in divergent ways, on both general (communal, national, emotional) and specific (individual, regional) levels.

Chapter 2 turns to the everyday musical practices of different Syrians in Za'atari, including professional male musicians who perform at events inside and outside the camp, female composers who write and perform songs about their life experiences, and women who listen to different genres of music at home or at work. I draw on the techniques of narrative ethnography such as storytelling and poetry in order to demonstrate how 'ordinary people tell themselves stories about who they are, what they care about, and how they hope to realise their aspirations' (Rosaldo 1989). Through storytelling and poetic forms, I aim to explore the knowledge, experiences, thoughts, emotions, beliefs and perspectives of Syrians in Za'atari in order to give a sense of locally lived life in displacement (Stoller 2016, 2017; Pengelley and Irwin 2017; Symons and Maggio 2014; Halstead 2016; Rosaldo 2013; Kusserow 2016). In this chapter, I tell the stories of three invented characters from Za'atari – Ayman, Iman, and Maryam. These characters are composites of several Syrians in the camp and represent the multiple experiences of different people with whom I worked. Ayman represents the lives of male musicians in the camp, and Iman and Maryam represent women from Za'atari who use music in different ways. By exploring the musical lives of individual women in Za'atari, I also hope to elucidate experiences of gender in displacement and to 'lay to rest some stereotypes' about Arab and Muslim women (Abu Lughod 2013: 5-6). Through stories and extended ethnographic poems, I argue that different everyday individual music

practices engender a process of *taghyīr al-jaww,* literally translating as changing the atmosphere but more broadly understood as the diverse transformative acts of music-making in displacement. I illustrate how Syrians in Za'atari use music in divergent ways to negotiate and mediate their experiences in displacement including: to change their social and economic circumstances, to broaden their horizons beyond the camp, to process and understand the emotions and events of their lives, or to travel, mediate, or as a 'change of scenery'.

Chapter 3 explores another way in which music is used to mediate experience, instead focusing on humanitarian programming. In this chapter, I analyse music projects run with QS and LWF in Za'atari to explore how humanitarian organisations use music to meet the varied needs of the Za'atari community. By attending to a wide range of literature across disciplines including music therapy, applied ethnomusicology, community music, and music and conflict transformation studies, I demonstrate how projects in Za'atari such as music theory and instrumental instruction, music therapy, Zumba, and capoeira, provide cultural education for Za'atari's youth, cultivate social cohesion, support mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, and empower women living in the camp. I also discuss some of the problems involved in using music in contexts of displacement, looking at complex aspects such as gender in Zumba and capoeira, and the politics of employing different musical genres across programmes.

Chapter 4 presents a case study of music during corona (the term used to describe the COVID-19 pandemic in Jordan and the Middle East). Corona offers an interesting lens to understand aspects of music-making such as the use of media and technologies. In a time where many around the world turned more consistently to the use of digital technologies and the internet in music-making, corona in Za'atari exposed and

exacerbated many of the vulnerabilities faced by Syrians in Za'atari, particularly in terms of their access to and use of technologies in their performance and listening practices. In this chapter, I look at some of those challenges as well as the ways in which Syrians overcame these challenges. Based on ideas of precarity and flexibility (Steingo 2017; Awad and Tossell 2018), I show how Syrians in Za'atari exercise various forms and levels of creativity, flexibility, adaptability, and opportunity in their music practices in the face of precarity. However, I maintain that flexibility often emerges in different and unequal ways according to different factors within the precarious environment of the camp. Through this discussion, I also shed light on ideas about the place of technologies in migration contexts, showing how Za'atari's cyberspace is a 'complex space' (Nooshin 2018) that is neither wholly democratising nor constraining.

The final chapter of this thesis, Chapter 5, peels back yet another layer of Za'atari's musical culture, this time focusing on the impact of different relationships, positionalities, and infrastructures in the wider camp environment. I assess the impact of the various interactions between Syrians and NGOs as well as between NGOs and donors, between NGOs and researchers, and between Syrians and researchers on music-making activities in the camp. I also interrogate the impact of political infrastructures such as IBV, other wider methodologies in humanitarian programming such as ToTs (training of trainers), and research methodologies such as applied ethnomusicology. While these relationships and infrastructures are present throughout other areas of the thesis, this chapter formalises these interactions in order to consider in more detail the extent to which music programming can be an empowering force for those in camps. I claim that the ability of music programming to empower Syrians varies considerably according to who is leveraging a given project, how they are leveraging it, the way in which a project is

structured, and the different identities and positionalities behind different types of programming. By interrogating my own role in these activities, I also argue that ethnomusicologists have an integral role in either disrupting or reinforcing stereotypes about refugees and displacement. In assessing my own positionality in the camp alongside the work of NGOs, I hope to bring together the seemingly disparate worlds of humanitarianism, the arts, and academic research, showing how these worlds are intertwined in the ghurba environment.

Chapter 1

‘Always Remember You Are Syrian’: Music, Weddings, and Memory

Summer 2021. In a sunny patch of land in the middle of the QS courtyard, Amar is hunched over his phone. His friends and colleagues, including Anas, Wasim, and Mustafa are also with him. Some of the men sit on brightly coloured plastic IKEA chairs, while some stand around them, leaning on the backs of the chairs. Amar’s fingers move repetitively in a pinching action as he zooms in and out of something on his screen. As he swipes across his phone, Anas shakes his head and turns the phone round periodically to his friends. The group are deep in conversation, showing each other their phones, and talking in rapid and low voices.

I know the men well, so do not feel nervous about approaching them. I have spent countless afternoons with them sharing cups of coffee and discussing all manner of things, from the restrictive asylum policies of European countries to the question of why I have not yet married and had children. But today they are subdued. I make my way over to where the men sit and greet them tentatively. I ask what is gripping their attention on their phones. Looking up at me over his shoulder, Amar beckons me with a hand motion to bend down closer to look at his phone screen.

On an open WhatsApp conversation is a collection of photos. Amar helpfully taps to enlarge them. The photos show what appear to be the ruins of a house made from the yellow-white stone common across much of the region. The house is empty and dilapidated. Doors, windows, and exterior walls are missing, and crumbling brick and rubble cascade down the sides of the house. In his usual mumbling style of speech, Amar

explains that this is his house in Dera'a.[21] He zooms in, pointing out bullet holes and bomb damage. I ask him how old the photos are, and he tells me that a family member has sent them to him recently. Anas likewise shows me photos of his house also in ruins, clearly long ago deserted. He points out the damage of artillery and battle fire to the place he once called home. In both sets of photos, I cannot help but notice the vibrant green earth growing below their former homes, and bright pink *majnūneh* (bougainvillea) flowers blooming among the rubble.

Staring at the photos, I struggle to know what to say. I have never seen the homes in Dera'a of Syrians who live in Za'atari, and this is the first time that my male Syrian colleagues have ever spoken to me explicitly about the direct impact of the armed conflict on their lives; my conversations with Syrian men in the camp about Syria have, until this point, been relatively general, including few personal details and consisting mainly of descriptions of the parties and celebrations that Dera'a is known for. I try to adequately express my sympathies but also feel compelled to explain my surprise upon seeing how fertile the grass surrounding their homes seems. Anas turns and smiles at me. He has the kind of smile that somehow puts you instantly at ease. Looking up at me, he says something along the lines of, 'Ah, but Dera'a is super green! It's not Jordan, you know!' He then launches into a series of tales about the beauty of Dera'a and his life before the events in Syria. The others join in. Mustafa pulls up photos of how his house used to look, and searches for pictures of the lush Dera'a countryside on Google to show me the place he, too, once called home.

---

[21] Dera'a is also styled Daraa, Deraa, Der'a, Dar'a, or Dara'a.

A few months later, I am sitting with Mustafa's sister, Wedad, in one of the air-conditioned caravans in QS's Centre in Za'atari. This caravan is usually reserved for employees from Amman for meetings, but because the weather is so hot today I have asked to use it for interviews. Wedad is in her mid-thirties and works in QS as a mental health counsellor. Throughout our conversation, the air-conditioning chimes on and off as the generators cut out and whir back to life several times. In the caravan next to us, other QS staff are leading a music therapy session; the sounds of melodicas, orgs, drums, hand bells, and children singing reverberate loudly through the steel walls to the point that we sometimes struggle to hear each other talk. Against this soundscape, Wedad shares her perspectives on the importance of culture for Syrians in the camp, and one statement stands out: 'They should always remember: You are Syrian. You are not just a refugee in a camp' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021).

From Dera'a to Za'atari

Reflecting the vignettes above has led me to consider the extent to which Syrians in Za'atari understand and articulate 'Syrian' identities. How do Syrians in the camp 'remember that they are Syrian'? What does that 'remembering' look or sound like? And how does Dera'a fit into all of this? According to UNHCR data, 80% of the Za'atari population is from Dera'a in south Syria, with the remaining 20% hailing from Damascus (Dimashq or, as it is also known, Sham), Rural Damascus (Rif Dimashq or Rif as-Sham), Homs, or other areas (UNHCR 2023a). Covering a total area of about 3,700km^2, Dera'a is one of the 14 governorates of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Governorate of Dera'a (GoD) is in the southwest and is bordered by Jordan to the south, Lebanon to the west, Türkiye to the north, and Iraq to the east (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The GoD is divided into three districts: Dera'a district, Izra' district, and Al-Sanamayn District.



Figure 2.1. Map of Syria and the Governorate of Dera'a. (OCHA Humanitarian Altas 2017)

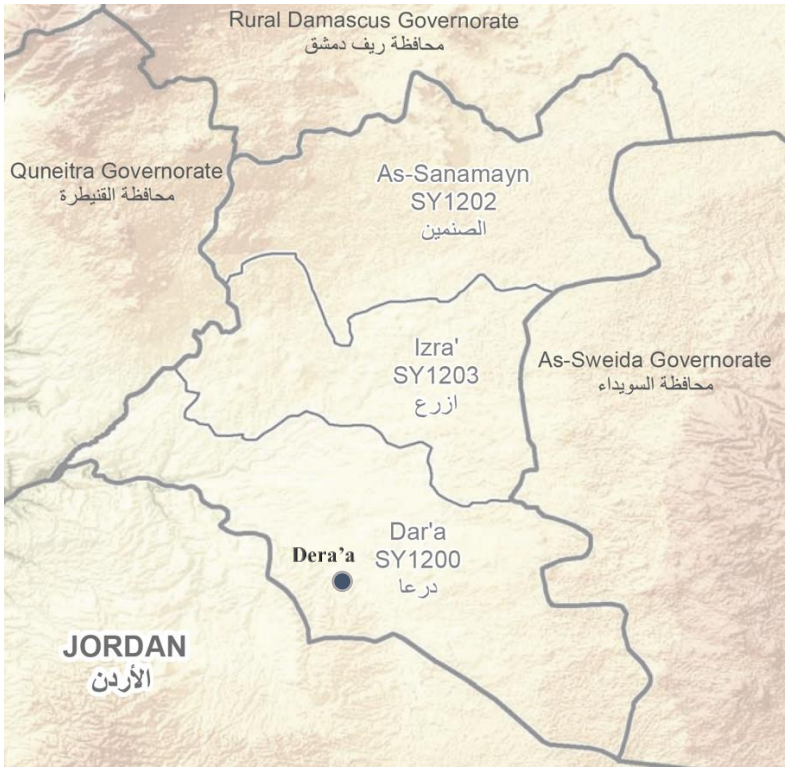


Figure 2.2. Map of districts in the governorate of Dera'a. Location of Dera'a city has been highlighted by the author. (OCHA Humanitarian Altas 2017)

The capital city of the GoD is in the Dera'a district and is also called Dera'a. The city of Dera'a lies approximately 90 km from the south of Damascus, 13km from the north Jordan border, and 55km from Za'atari. Prior to 2011, the population of the entire GoD was about 1.05 million (UN Habitat 2014: 2). While Dera'a city is the main urban centre of the governorate, the city has not historically held the dominant population of the GoD: rather, most of the population was distributed elsewhere in secondary towns and villages in other districts (ibid). Nevertheless, Dera'a city did have an administrative and economic role due to its strategic location on the highway that links Syria and Jordan (ibid). Outside of the urban centre of Dera'a city, large parts of the GoD are rural; agriculture and construction were the two main economies throughout the governorate prior to the conflict (ibid: 4).

The GoD has historically been considered part of the ancient Hawran region, which spans parts of southern Syria and north Jordan. The Hawran region has a long past of Roman, Hellenistic, Nabatean, Islamic, and Ottoman influences, and has been recognised for being rich in arable and agricultural land, thus gaining its reputation as the 'breadbasket' of Syria (Bakkour 2022; Khoury 1987; Provence 2003; Peters 1977; Braemer 2011). Made up of extended Bedouin tribes and a mix of Muslim, Christian, and Druze groups, Hawran is known for its distinct culture (described as Hawrani), including dialect, architecture, dress, food, art, and music. The Dera'a and Hawran regions have also been known for their socio-political legacies, particularly since 2011. Dera'a held the first protests in opposition to the Assad regime in March 2011 and has often been referred to as *al-mahd al-thawra* (the cradle of the revolution). The region has also been a key battleground between Syrian regime forces, the Free Syrian Army, and extremist groups (Balanche 2018; Lesch 2017; Laub et al. 2023; Phillips 2016; Al-Zoabi 2020).

While the Hawran region historically spans parts of both Syria and Jordan, in Za'atari the designation Hawrani is often synonymous with the specific region of Dera'a. Wedad arrived in Za'atari in February 2013. She, like many others, argues: 'Hawrani [culture] is just from Dera'a; there's none of it in Sham. We're Hawrani, from Dera'a' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021). For many Syrians from Dera'a in Za'atari, community and group events are an important opportunity to practise Hawrani customs and enact Hawrani identities. This includes wedding celebrations and large parties (which feature performances on Arabic instruments such as mijwiz, org and dabke) as well as *saharāt* (informal late-night gatherings with friends or informal performances), which usually take place in private residences and feature performances on the oud, ṭabl, or rubābā. In addition, those from Dera'a in Za'atari speak in the Hawrani dialect, make Hawrani food, and often keep marriages within respective clans and families from Dera'a living in the camp.

The apparent connections between Hawran, Dera'a, and Za'atari suggest that the Hawrani identity and culture is in some way significant for a large proportion of Syrians in the camp, and for the way that Syrians formulate understandings of 'home' or what it means to be Syrian in ghurba. In this chapter, I explore the ways in which Syrians in Za'atari articulate culture and identity by examining the place of Hawrani cultural and musical customs and traditions in the camp.

Observing Hawran from a Distance

The English, Arabic, and French language literature on Hawran focuses on geography, tribal and religious groupings, architecture, and history, particularly the region's ancient Bedouin, Nabatean, Byzantine, and 'modern' twentieth-century legacies (Butler and Ali Moussa 2021; Braemer 2011; Peters 1977; Provence 2004; Salih 1977; Shaker 2021;

Alzoubi et al. 2022; Abd al-Karim et al. 1988; Abu Rashid 1961). Since 2011, geopolitical accounts of Hawran and Dera'a have been concerned with the region's political role in the Syrian conflict and consequent struggles between groups for control (Balanche 2018; Lesch 2017; Bakkour 2022; International Crisis Group 2012; Phillips 2016; Al-Zoabi 2020). There are a number of works in both Arabic and English that explore Hawrani musical culture, such as Mohamad Abu Hadur's (1979) work on popular song in the Hawran region and Akram Rafaa Naser's (2021) catalogue of popular songs from the governorate to the west of Dera'a called As-Suwayda, specifically the volcanic area known as Jabal al-Arab or Jabal al-Druze. Naser's work underlines the agricultural importance of southwest Syria through the harvesting and farming songs sung among farmers to cultivate teamwork, joy, and lessen fatigue (2021: 97). He claims that the presence of agricultural songs in both the mountainous Jabal al-Arab area of As-Suwayda and the wider plains of Hawran indicate '*waḥdat al-thaqāfeh*' (cultural unity, my translation) between the two regions (ibid). Kathleen Hood (2002) has also investigated music across the Hawran plain looking at the case of Druze wedding songs. Hood suggests that while Druze songs express a specific 'Druze-ness', they also express a pan-Arab identity that draw on folk traditions from across Syria and Lebanon, and traditions shared by Christians, Druze, and Muslims across the country (2002: 50, 67). In her research on folk songs in weddings in Homs, Najla Kalach (2020) likewise shows how wedding rituals are similar across the Middle East but claims that 'folk customs vary from region to region within Syria' (2020: 234).

These works suggest it is possible to draw parallels between culture in Hawran and culture in other areas of Syria, which has been extensively explored in the comprehensive body of scholarship on Syrian culture more broadly. This scholarship, set out in the

introduction to this thesis, includes examinations of Syrian food, architecture, dance, religion, sound, and music, and is therefore relevant to a discussion of Hawrani culture. Dabke dance and the commercial genre of *sha'bī* music are two particularly interesting examples.

Although dabke and the corresponding musical genre is popular across Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, Silverstein demonstrates how the traditional dance enjoys prominence in Syria where it is considered a folk dance that embodies the Syrian nation-state across different social, cultural, religious, and political groups (2019: 245). Dabke typifies wedding celebrations in Syria but is also performed in a variety of public and private spaces, from the home to restaurants and nightclubs (Silverstein 2016). The dance also has links with Syrian politics, featuring at the demonstrations throughout 2011 and 2012 as well as emerging as a way for young Syrian Muslim women to negotiate gender dynamics and the complex moralities of the female body (Silverstein 2012, 2016; Cooke 2016).

The commercial genre of sha'bī music has also been framed in diverse ways. Sha'bī translates as popular or folkloristic. Andrew Hammond thus argues that the commercial genre of sha'bī music has come to be understood as the music 'of the people' across the Arab world (2017: 7). Originating in Egypt with the singer Ahmad Adawiya, sha'bī music contrasts with the refined, poetic lyrics of Classical Arabic music, instead featuring Egyptian colloquial dialect, simple folkloristic melodies, and lyrical commentary on everyday social issues such as love, traffic, poverty, and national struggles (Ebbini 2022: 105). Commonly associated with the working class, sha'bī music makes use of several musical devices such as the *mawwāl* (vocal improvisation), heavily ornamented but steady percussive rhythms, simple and repetitive melodies, fast tempo to entice *raqṣ*

sharqī (belly dancing), call and response, and high vocal registers (ibid). The sha'bī ensemble can include the oud*, qānūn* (plucked zither), ṭabl, *riqq* (hand-held frame drum), and mijwiz (also called a *mizmār*) but has increasingly embraced electronic instruments like the org*,* which can produce reedy tone qualities and stylistic or rhythmic embellishments to melodies (ibid). In addition, sha'bī music contains several folkloristic elements such as the *hitaf*, a forceful male sound made as a sign of welcome, and the *zaghārīt* (also referred to as *zaghārīd*), a high-pitched ululation performed across the Middle East by women at celebrations such as weddings as a way to honour the bride and groom. As James Grippo describes it: 'the overall presentation of sha'bī is raucous and loud' (2010: 148).

There is, however, a certain degree of contention surrounding sha'bī music. Shannon, for example, argues that conservative listeners often frame sha'bī as 'immoral, debased, and inappropriate', particularly in comparison to 'classical' repertoire (2021: 64). Grippo similarly explains how sha'bī music in Egypt is sometimes viewed as the 'antithesis of Egypt's elite cosmopolitanisms' and 'the cultural backwardness of the uneducated masses' (2010: 145). Nevertheless, sha'bī music has come to constitute one of the most popular music genres across the Arab world that incorporates both urban and folk styles, evoking a strong sense of identity for many Arabs (ibid). Sha'bī is widely performed at wedding celebrations, which have provided the main performance occasion for sha'bī singers for generations (ibid: 149). More recently, new sha'bī styles such as electro-sha'bī and local variants in Algeria, Iraq, Tunis and Morocco have emerged (Ebbini 2022). There is also an increasing number of female sha'bī singers, and the genre has featured in socio-cultural and political movements across the Arab world (Zuhur 2022; LeVine and Otterbeck 2021; Touati 2020; Pratt 2020).

In Za'atari, the task of rooting out cultural features such as dabke and sha'bī to understand how they constitute Hawrani identity is a difficult one. This is in part due to restrictions on my time in the camp that meant I could not attend important cultural events such as weddings, parties, or saharāt because they mostly take place at night-time and outside of NGO centres. Challenges of this kind are common for researchers in refugee camps. In her work with Karenni refugees in camps in Northern Thailand, Pia Vogler (2007, 2016) highlights the various 'mechanisms of exclusion' that prevented her from observing the nocturnal life of refugees and the impact of these mechanisms on her perceptions of the Karenni culture. For Vogler, night-time is a crucial aspect of social life that is often missing from anthropological studies of displacement:

> Darkness might impact on social relations and hierarchies. The evenings and early night hours may actually bring those members of the refugee community together who are separated during the day. These can be families, friends and lovers within the community, but also refugees and security personnel. Furthermore, certain actors might only leave their bamboo huts under the shelter of darkness. (2016: 3)

Given the potential significance of night-time life in refugee camps, Vogler demonstrates how the imposition of curfews on aid-workers and researchers alike essentially renders refugee settlements *terra incognita* (2016: 1). In Karenni camps, for instance, 'Westerners' (both aid-workers and researchers) rarely attend community events at night-time, and even if they are able to negotiate access, Vogler claims that many would choose not to, instead following 'an agenda that foresees personal leisure time at the end of the day' (ibid: 19). Although she suggests that researchers should find ways to 'negotiate accessibility to nocturnal research settings' (ibid), Vogler admits there are serious risks of doing so; she concedes that should the Thai authorities have

discovered her after curfew in Karenni camps, it would have caused ‘grave problems’ for both her refugee and NGO hosts (Vogler 2008: 195; Jolliffe 2016).

The situation is not dissimilar in Za’atari. There were a few instances when I was able to negotiate access to areas outside of NGO compounds during day-time hours. Occasionally, I slipped out unnoticed with Syrian colleagues to visit nearby markets or to buy food. Syrians would even joke about dressing me up in an abaya (the long dark robes worn by women) and hijab so that they could smuggle me into their houses at night. On other occasions, I accompanied NGO employees with whom I had travelled on a given day to meetings in other areas of the camp. Along with car journeys to and from the camp entrance to QS and LWF’s respective centres, I savoured these small excursions for giving me some at least some insight to life outside the confines of NGO compounds. But given the questionings my Syrian colleagues and I received following short 30-minute absences when we would abscond to a local market, the notion of overstaying curfews or being in the camp at night simply raised too many dangers and risks for myself and Syrians.

I was able to partake in and observe a number of cultural events that took place within NGO centres during day-time hours that reflected wider night-time cultural practices in the camp. One example is the events of World Refugee Day in June 2021 that I described in the opening to the thesis. Many of these events, while framed within a humanitarian context for a specific purpose, drew on several customs and traditions practised throughout the camp: the men dancing dabke; the musical performances on the org, oud, mijwiz, ṭabl, and rubābā; the preparation of mensaf and kibbeh; the traditional shurish dress and deq facial tattoos; and games of chess. In addition, Syrians in Za’atari would regularly send me videos or recordings of events they attended at night-time during my

absence from the camp or would post photos and videos on their social media feeds (this was particularly the case with working musicians in the camp) (see Figure 2.3).[22]

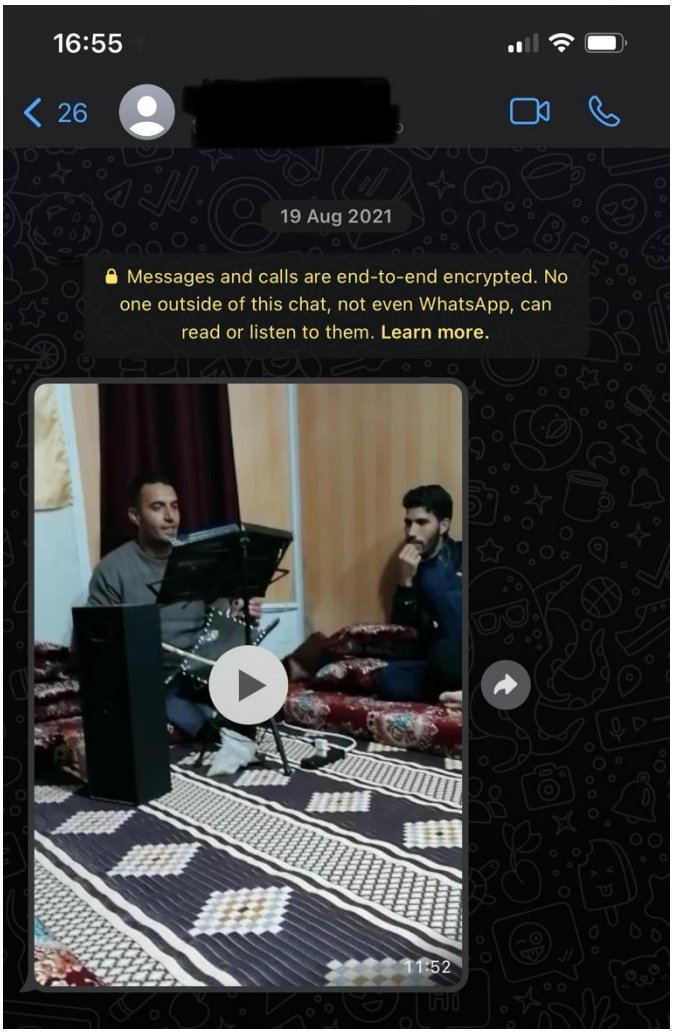


Figure 2.3. Screenshot of video of saharāt in the camp sent to the author via WhatsApp (Communication with the author via WhatsApp, 19 August 2021).

But one of the most substantial and rich form of my observation of customs and traditions came through testimony. In my casual conversations, everyday interactions,

[22] The task of securing permission from Syrians to use photos and videos posted on social media for use in this thesis is complex, so I have not included them here.

and formal recorded interviews, discussions frequently involved talk of Syria, its music, and connections with ghurba, including the different customs and traditions, how they are remembered, and how they are practised in the camp. In her work at the intersection of history and musicology, Shirli Gilbert (2005) highlights the value of testimony and testimonial material produced by witnesses to offer insight into how communities imprisoned under Nazism responded to and interpreted what was happening to them. Gilbert demonstrates how first-hand personal accounts of experiences are 'particularly useful for their descriptions of life as it was understood and interpreted at the time' and for revealing the 'urge on the part of their creators to document and bear witness' (2005: 120). However, testimony can present several problems for the musicologist, particularly in relation to individuals 'in the aftermath of traumatic experience': individuals may not be able to describe experiences in detail; some may emphasise some events while misinterpreting or omitting others; there may be discrepancies and inconsistencies between testimonies; and some may struggle to convey or deal with memory (ibid: 121). Musical texts (such as songs) have distinct issues, lacking information about origin, lyrics, context, composers, or use (ibid: 123).

In her work with Hutu refugees, Malkki does not view testimonial 'discrepancies' as ethnographic pitfalls. In emphasising the value of refugee camps as a unit of study, Malkki instead shows how the 'transitory, nonrepetitive, anomalous' features of such fieldwork reveal 'accidental communities of memory' (1997: 91). According to Malkki, accidental communities of memory do not refer to local or national communities, but rather a 'less explicit and often more biographical, microhistorical, unevenly emerging sense of accidental sharings of memory and transitory experience' (ibid). Examples of accidental communities of memory include those who have experienced war together or

people who have lived in a refugee camp for a certain period (ibid: 92). In doing fieldwork with accidental communities of memory, Malkki advocates for the modes of testimony and witnessing: the anthropologist should not be seeking a 'key or a code to unlocking important mysteries about "a culture"' or to know 'everything', but rather should be 'an attentive listener' affirming their connection to the many 'ideas, processes, and people one is studying' by acting as a witness (ibid: 96).

In the sections that follow, I aim to act as a witness to the different explicit, implicit, and uneven sharings of memory and experiences of Hawran and Syria in the testimonies of Syrians in Za'atari. By witnessing their experiences through testimony, I attempt to unveil the divergent, sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory, ways that Syrians understand and articulate cultural identity in ghurba.

The Terminologies of Testimony: Understanding the Multiple Meanings of Al-Balad

A term that reoccurs throughout many testimonies of Syrians in Za'atari (both those from Dera'a and those from elsewhere in Syria) is balad. In Arabic, the term 'balad' has various translations and uses, including: a territory, state, nation, country, town, or city. The *'al'* before balad simply denotes the definite article. In Za'atari, Syrians use balad to denote different meanings. First, Syrians use al-balad to describe the specific country of Syria. For instance, when Amina, who is from Dera'a, discussed whether she would ever return to Syria, she argued: 'No, [I wouldn't go back] […] In al-balad, there are no opportunities for me: Syria doesn't need me as I am now' (interview with the author, 11 July 2021). Anas, who was born in Dera'a but studied for several years in Damascus, similarly uses balad to refer to the nation-state of Syria, but adds the suffix *'*i*'* (*baladi*) to denote the first-person pronoun possession, therefore meaning 'my country'.

Syrians in Za'atari also use balad to refer to the region of Dera'a. In nearly all my conversations with Syrians from Dera'a in Za'atari, balad referred to the wider Dera'a region: 'That's how it was in al-balad' [Dera'a], 'Oh, you know al-balad [Dera'a] is very green and agricultural', or 'Yes, I'm from al-balad [Dera'a] too' were common phrases. As with Anas's use of the possessive pronoun to designate Syria as 'my country' (baladi), Syrians in the camp use the possessive pronoun to demonstrate belonging to the region of Dera'a. Wasim was still living in Dera'a in 2015 until he managed to cross (the then-closed) border between Jordan and Syria and join his family in Za'atari. He had, in fact, already fled to Jordan and registered in Za'atari as early as 2013 but had decided to return to Dera'a after just 20 days in the camp. Wasim then re-entered Jordan in 2015 at the grace of 'a kind security personnel' at the border (interview with the author, 27 July 2021). Wasim was often guarded with me regarding the details of his life in Dera'a from 2013 to 2015, but he did insinuate some kind of involvement with *Al-jaysh al-sūrī al-ḥurr* (the Free Syrian Army), who are active in the Dera'a region, and he regularly expressed his pride in the GoD for its political role in the revolution. In our discussion of Dera'a politics, Wasim used baladi to describe his affiliation with the region of Dera'a: 'The regime came in 2013 and took control. They controlled us […] The only important thing is that [the regime] leaves Dera'a […] Syrians are dying, and now the regime army is in baladi' (interview with the author, 27 July 2021).

Balad also describes specific areas or locations within the GoD. Dera'a Al-Balad is actually the name of the southern half of Dera'a city. However, Syrians in Za'atari will mostly use balad to refer to the town or village they are from in the GoD. When Anas explains the difficulties he faced marrying his wife (who he met in the camp) he uses balad to refer to a village: 'I met my wife in QS […] She's from a different balad to me,

so it was really hard to marry her because we're not from the same place […] People still usually only marry people who they know [through family relations etc.] (interview with the author, 4 August 2021). In Wedad's recollections of wedding traditions in Dera'a, she similarly uses balad to mean village when describing the wedding band procession (*zaffeh*): 'The zaffeh took them from place to place, and they would walk through the balad and everyone would sing behind them' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021).

Where these instantiations of balad refer in some capacity to Syria, regions within Syria, or areas within regions, balad also has a more general meaning of any country or nation state. Sometimes balad would refer to Jordan, as in Oday's usage when we were discussing the challenges Syrians have in obtaining work permits: 'That's the law here [that we can't get permits]. I mean, I'm not trying to say anything bad about al-balad, but they [the GoJ] don't permit us to work' (interview with the author, 1 August 2021). Other times, balad was used in reference to my country of origin, the Isle of Man, as Anas stated when he was drawing parallels between village life in the GoD and island life on a small island like the Isle of Man: 'It's like *baladik* (your country) that you told me about. You know everyone there' (interview with the author, 4 August 2021).

While these instances demonstrate how balad represents a general descriptor to refer to a geographical place or country where someone is born or lived, other uses of balad do not denote geographically defined areas. Rather, balad can describe a feeling. For many, this feeling is one of safety or feeling 'at home'. For example, Oday explains how he dislikes leaving Za'atari on trips or excursions because he feels at home in the camp: 'I'm in baladi here [in the camp]' (interview with the author, 1 August 2021). His wife, Deema, corroborates this view. Although she does not use the word balad specifically when describing feeling at home in the camp, Deema does explain how Za'atari represents a

place of safety – even if she has ambivalent feelings about that safety being a refugee camp: 'That place [a camp] is unfortunately the only place of safety you have. So, you stay in that place because it is safe for you, but at the same time it's not well suited to you' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021).

Others use balad to describe how Za'atari does not engender feelings of being at home. As Rawan argues: '10 years later, you're still not in al-balad. You're not living in a house (*bayt*)' (Rawan, 7 July 2021). In this statement, Rawan makes clear links between understandings of balad and the physical properties associated with a house. The Arabic for house is bayt (pl. *buyūt*) or *dār* (pl. *diyār*). But the terms also mean home. For many in Za'atari, the lack of buyūt in a physical sense impacts the extent to which Za'atari becomes an emotional home: 'We're not living in buyūt. We're living in caravans and there is something missing' ('Deema', interview with the author, 16 August 2021). Others demonstrate how bayt, in a similar way to balad, has connotations beyond a physical dwelling place or area. As Amina reveals: 'It's not that I haven't seen nice things in Jordan. I have. And it's not that I haven't met nice people in Jordan. I have! But for it to become *bayti* (my home)? […] There is no way I could ever have a second bayt' (interview with the author, 12 July 2021).

Amina and Rawan's use of bayt shows how balad is often used in conjunction with other terms related to concepts and experiences of home, country, and belonging. Another example is *waṭan*. Walid, who played Abu Saalem in the World Refugee Day play, is also from Dera'a. He explains his understandings of waṭan as follows:

> Waṭan is safety, any place of safety. Sometimes a person is waṭan. For many people, waṭan is your mum or dad, or even baytak [your house]

> […] I even made prison[23] my waṭan, with the people that were there […] Even in that place, I made it my waṭan because I would sing. See! We come back to singing! I was singing […] It's just like your research […] The place that I was in, I made it a waṭan […] I can see you're even writing the word waṭan [in your notebook] […] Listen: waṭani [my homeland] is Syria. I'm Syrian. I was born in Syria […] But now, for example, I don't have a bayt in Syria. So, where is my waṭan? There isn't one. I have to make my own waṭan elsewhere. (Interview with the author, 21 August 2021)

It is interesting that Walid uses the terms 'waṭan' and 'bayt' here rather than balad. There may be several reasons behind this choice. Waṭan (pl. *awṭān*) is commonly understood in Arabic as homeland, nation, or a home or native country or land. Equivalent terms in English might include motherland or fatherland. The genre of *al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh* (nationalistic music) thus refers to musical compositions and songs that express nationalist sentiment; songs in this category are dedicated to specific rulers, countries, or cities, and often feature musical idioms specific to a country or region (Ebbini 2022: 108-109). The associations of waṭan with nation or homeland are particularly strong in Pan-Arab ideologies, as in the famous pan-nationalist poem and song 'Bilād al-'Arab Awṭānī' (The Arab Lands are my Nations) by Fakhri Al-Baroodi. Pan-Arab ideology and sentiment similarly emerge in Walid's musical choices, as in the nationalistic song 'Mawṭinī' he performed during the World Refugee Day celebrations, and in one of his

[23] Walid was incarcerated in Syria before he fled the country, initially to Lebanon and then to Za'atari in Jordan. He did not reveal the reason for his incarceration, and I did not feel it was appropriate to ask. He did, however, intimate that he had attempted to avoid conscription to the regime army while in Syria, which may have led to his incarceration. Civilians from Dera'a were also imprisoned and tortured for participation in anti-regime protests.

own compositions called ‘Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani’. I have translated the song's title as ‘I love you my country’, because this is the English translation Walid himself provided. Walid composed the song as a teaching tool in his role as a facilitator on QS’s music projects (interview with the author, 21 August 2021). I say more about the song’s place in education in Chapter 3. The lyrics are:

(Chorus)	I love you, I love you	*ḥabaytak, ḥabaytak*
	My country, I love you	*yā waṭani, ḥabaytak*
	From my heart, I miss your love	*min qalbi mishtāq al-mughram*
	From my longing, I called you	*min shawqi nadaytak*
(Verse 1)	You are my first love	*inta a‘shqi al-awwal*
	And no matter how hard you try…	*a‘nak ma bitḥawal…*
	To keep me away	*muhma biāmi a‘nak ṭawil*
	I will return to your house	*ana raja‘ a‘ baytak*
(Verse 2)	I sang to your dirt (earth)	*la-trābak ghaneyt*
	And I called your name	*wa bi-ismak nadayt*
	I sang to your eyes	*la-a‘yūnak ghaneyt*
	I never forgot you	*abadan ma nsītak*

Dima Issa’s (2023a, 2023b) work on Fairuz and Arab diasporic communities may shed light on the links between emotional sentimentality and waṭan. Born to a Syrian Orthodox family in 1935, the Lebanese singer Fairuz is perhaps one of the most iconic vocalists and musicians of Arab popular music. She is known for performing a variety of styles and genres, including traditional, folk, nationalistic, classical and modern styles, and for experimenting with fusions of Arabic and Western musical styles. While many enjoy listening to Fairuz at all times of day, she is particularly associated with the morning time or travel. Issa claims that Fairuz’s music opens up opportunities for

‘redefining concepts of homeland or al-waṭan’ (2023a: 1). Based on Said Bensaid’s work that frames al-waṭan as an affective rather than political concept (2013: 149-174), Issa argues that Fairuz’s lyrics represent an idealised, imagined, paradisiacal, and ‘pre-modern’ idea of homeland for Arab listeners (2023a: 2-4). Walid could therefore be making similar affective associations between his own music and an idealised version of homeland or wider pan-Arab nation: in the song, Walid does not name a specific country but rather sings of a broader love and longing of a homeland or home. In addition, the song demonstrates one of the ways in which Walid ‘makes a waṭan’ through music, as he explained in his earlier testimony: take, for instance, the lyrics ‘I sang to your eyes’ or ‘I sang to your earth’. Walid was, however, in a minority of those in Za’atari who used waṭan. I thus suspect his choice is a personal one that may be tied up with some of the musical associations with the term ‘waṭan’.

It is clear that Syrians understand notions of balad in divergent (sometimes contradictory) ways that are wrapped up in a whole host of ideas about identity, nationalism, loyalty, and belonging. Furthermore, there are obvious entanglements between instantiations of identity and cultural practices including music, particularly weddings. In the following sections, I explore the links between al-balad and wedding celebrations in Za’atari. As per Hood’s (2002) framework of exploring the ‘traditional’ Druze wedding model and how that model is changed in ‘modern’ weddings, I first outline how weddings were practised in Dera’a, and then explain how those customs are practised in Za’atari.

‘I Remember Every Detail’: Memory and Weddings

‘I was only in the 5th Grade when my brother got married, but I remember every detail’ (‘Wedad’, interview with the author, 5 August 2021). Statements like Wedad’s were

commonplace among Syrians from Za'atari when talking about weddings. Speaking about weddings and marriage customs prompted many Syrians with whom I spoke in Za'atari to recall myriad detailed and intimate personal memories of Hawrani wedding customs and rituals, particularly the music involved. In his studies of Arab weddings, A.J Racy posits the important role weddings play in Arab communities in the diaspora: 'Speaking about weddings usually brings to mind a variety of related experiences and memories: of the venue, the limousine, the bride's dress, the jewelry, the food, and the music played' (2019: 21). In this section, I explore memories of wedding customs and traditions in Dera'a as a rich domain for understanding instantiations of balad in Za'atari.

One of the most frequently recollected details of weddings in Dera'a is the size and scale of marriage celebrations. Weddings in Dera'a are often big, community affairs that involve the entire village. As Wasim explains: 'Everyone would take part. You know, everyone who lived in the balad. There would be a huge party if someone got married or if someone got engaged. Any occasion, they would have a party […] If you had [a party], like 1 million people would come!' (interview with the author, 27 July 2021). Anas similarly insinuates the large scale of Hawrani weddings: 'The main thing in Hawrani weddings? There are a million people! You don't even know anyone there, and you can barely even fit' (interview with the author, 4 August 2021).

The high attendance at weddings from residents within a balad suggests that weddings in Dera'a are a 'social institution' that 'reflect the community's shared societal values […] and contribute to the organicity or interconnectedness with the larger social system' (Racy 2019: 22). In Palestinian marriage customs, weddings have historically been a means of re-establishing ties with neighbours and the village as a whole, where the entire village is invited and expected to attend (Granqvist 1935). According to Wedad,

this is also the case in Dera'a whereby an important societal value of weddings was the confirmation of relationships between residents in a balad: 'everyone' in the balad would attend because a 'special kind of respect' existed between neighbours who were not direct kin (interview with the author, 5 August 2021). This 'special kind of respect' even impacted the different customs or traditions practised within a given wedding celebration: 'Like, if someone in the balad died […] even your neighbour would cancel or delay a wedding, or they would do the wedding simpler. There was that level of respect for everything' ('Wedad', interview with the author, 5 August 2021).[24]

The scale of Hawrani weddings also extends to the length of time of a marriage celebration. Syrians in Za'atari remember wedding celebrations in Dera'a not as one event, but rather a series or collection of events that take place over an extended period of time. As Wedad recalls:

> In Dera'a there was a culture of week-long wedding celebrations […] My brother's wedding was a week. Every day a gathering, every day mijwiz and ṭabla […] I was only in the 5th Grade when my brother got married. But I remember every detail: how the zaffeh went from place to place, how they walked through al-balad, and how everyone was singing behind them. (Interview with the author, 5 August 2021)

There appears to be some contention between testimonies about the exact length of wedding celebrations. Wedad says you could spend 'two to three months greeting guests' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021), but Deema remembers weddings in Syria

[24] The period of mourning in Islam usually lasts for 40 days but can last for longer, and it is seen as disrespectful to carry out celebrations or parties in this period.

constituting ‘two or three days of celebrations’ (interview with the author, 16 August 2021).

Weddings in Dera’a consisted of several different events and customs. One of these is the zaffeh procession of the married couple through the balad. The zaffeh is made up of a group of musicians who ‘sing and play folk instruments’ and form part of the ‘ritual procession, which may take place outdoors on the way to the festive wedding celebrations indoors, or on a rooftop, or in a khaymah (tent)’ (Racy 2019: 28). While scholars have identified different types of zaffeh across Egyptian and Palestinian communities (Racy 2019; Zubaida 2019), nearly every Syrian with whom I spoke in Za’atari associates the zaffeh with the ṭabl and mijwiz. Ṭabl is often used to describe the set of drums played by musicians and community members in the zaffeh – this might include the *ṭabl baladi* (large double-sided drum) and the *darbūkkeh* (hand drum) (Racy 2019: 27). The mijwiz is a central instrument in Arabic folk music. According to Racy, double-reed instrument is predominantly played by men ‘often of a relatively modest social and economic status’ and is considered the ‘instrument of festivity par excellence’, accompanying dances at village weddings (Racy 1994: 39). Racy claims that the physical properties and performance techniques of the mijwiz mean it is ‘perfectly suited for rendering the village dance-related songs’: it has a narrow range and high tessitura well-suited to male voices; it can execute highly accentuated motivic styles as well as metric styles that correspondence to different types of dance; and it creates a driving energy that can incite

an ‘overwhelming urge to dance’ or feelings akin to a ‘magic spell’ (Racy 1994: 49-50; Racy 2010: 3).[25]

Additionally, the mijwiz plays a role in gendering wedding rituals. As with many wedding celebrations around the world, events and customs within marriage rituals are gendered (Campbell 2002; Hood 2002; Rasmussen 1995; Nasir and Fatimah 2021; Sugarman 1997; Weiss 2019; Van Nieuwkerk 2012). Islamic wedding rituals such as the *ṭulba* (a group of men from the groom’s side who go to the bride’s house to ask her male relatives for her hand in marriage), the *ḥinna’* (the dying of the hands of the bride), the *ḥammām* or *ghasīl al-ʿarīs* (the bathing of the groom and his friends), and the *zaffet al-ʿarīs* (the groom’s procession to take the bride) are examples of gendered events in wedding celebrations (Jad 2009: 40, 42; Hood 2002: 100-101). As Hood demonstrates in her studies of Druze traditions in Suwayda, musical aspects of weddings are likewise gendered with the use of different instruments between genders as ‘reflective of societal hierarchies’ (2002: 88). In the patrilineal Druze society, only men play instruments like the mijwiz, while women exclusively play percussion instruments (ibid: 89).

The same appears to be true of weddings in Dera’a, particularly in relation to the mijwiz and ṭabl. As Wedad describes: ‘For men, there is the mijwiz. There is always the mijwiz for the groom’ (interview with the author, 5 August 2021). Deema explains how at the ḥinna’ event, women sit and sing ‘all the old songs’ accompanied solely by the ṭabl (sing. ṭabla): ‘We bring the ṭabla and we beat it, and we sing […] Only we [the women] do this, during the ḥinna’ […] or like when they put on the *dibl* (rings) we sing for them

[25] According to Racy, the technique of circular breathing which is used on the mijwiz enables the performer to produce a continuous, uninterrupted sound that supposedly entrances listeners (1994: 49-50; 2010: 3).

– for the bride and groom' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). Hood suggests that the gendered division of musical instruments may reflect the 'low status of women in the patrilineal group' owing to the fact that women play instruments that are considered 'low in the hierarchy of instruments' (2002: 87). Other scholars have noted the gendered division of instruments in terms of the relationship between music, gender, and Islam. Doubleday, for instance, notes how the relative seclusion of women in Islamic societies has 'precluded the development of respectable public female instrumental traditions' (2008: 16), and Miriam Rovsing Olsen demonstrates how women in some Arab-Islamic groups do not play wind instruments owing to the association of such instruments with virility (2002: 306). Syrians in Za'atari imply that the division of instruments is a case of maintaining female modesty within private domestic spaces. In fact, certain instruments are used in women's events but in different ways. For example, while the mijwiz is central to men's wedding celebrations, Wedad notes how 'there is mijwiz for the bride, too, but it's just a recording on a speaker' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021). According to Wedad, women only use a recording of the mijwiz as opposed to having a male mijwiz performer 'so that we can sing the same songs, but there is no guy there looking [at us]' (ibid).

Some musical features of weddings appear among both genders, such as dabke. Silverstein describes dabke as a 'curvilinear group dance performatively linked with an upbeat dance music genre of the same name' that is 'typically practiced at wedding celebrations, restaurants and nightclubs, and other social settings' (2019: 245). Performances of dabke usually feature a distinct set of dance song genres, a *muṭrib* (vocalist), and the inclusion of mijwiz and ṭabl (ibid). The dabke line is headed by the awwal (first) who leads the repetitive dance sequence, which can involve hundreds of

dancers (based on the size of the gathering) who hold hands as they dance. There are many styles of dabke, but the heavier sha'bī (folkloristic) style is understood as 'a form of street culture that resonates with the popular and populist aesthetics of the Syrian working class' (ibid: 245-246). This style of dabke is most popular across Dera'a. Although Silverstein notes that 'sustained traditions of patriarchy and gendered privilege' mean that men are usually the most 'conspicuous' performers of dabke, she claims that women are also participants in the dance (ibid).

The testimonies of Wedad and Deema appear to corroborate the fact that women perform dabke in Hawrani weddings: according to Wedad, while musical customs vary between genders in terms of live performance or recorded music, the dabke between the two groups is 'the same' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021). However, owing to the strong patriarchal values found across the Dera'a region, it is fair to assume that men and women do not dance in the same dabke line in wedding celebrations – while men and women from the same family may theoretically hold hands, it would be considered inappropriate for members of the opposite sex (particularly those who are not related) to do so. In instances where I observed dabke in Za'atari – like World Refugee Day on 2021 – men and women did not dance in the same dabke line.[26] As such, I suspect that what can be interpreted from Wedad's testimony is that she believes the style of dabke danced

[26] Mixed weddings (where men and women are together at the same event) are slightly different. In Jordan, I found that mixed gender weddings (irrespective of the origins of the families) tended to take place among the middle-upper class or those who were (broadly speaking) less conservative. In these instances, men and women may dance together. But even then, men and women (particularly older generations) would rather not join hands with 'unfamiliar' men. Younger generations, including those who are less religious or conversative, seem to be less concerned with holding hands with the opposite sex.

by women resembles that of men in wedding celebrations, and not that men and women dance together.

While musical practices within Hawrani weddings clearly function to '"engender" the social patterns and hierarchies at weddings' (Racy 2019: 24), other Syrians in Za'atari recall the role of music in weddings in Dera'a as delineating other social or financial hierarchies, as Oday explains:

> You know, in Syria, everyone goes to weddings […] In fact, we show off by bringing the best muṭrib, the best percussionist, the best mijwiz and rubābā players – we would really show off! If you have money, you brag about it by bringing the best musicians [to the wedding] […] And that's all of Hawran […] We love to celebrate. (Interview with the author, 1 August 2021)

Oday's testimony is interesting in that it demonstrates some of the ways memories of weddings are uneven between testimonies. Oday was the only Syrian with whom I spoke who mentioned the presence of the rubābā in wedding celebrations. The lack of mention of the rubābā in women's testimonies may be because the instrument is not played (at least live) in their wedding celebrations. Conversely, given that Oday situates music as a way for Syrians within a village to brag about their financial status, it could well be that only some villagers are able to pay for a rubābā player in addition to other musicians. Indeed, Oday notes how various financial customs vary between different villages within the Dera'a region, such as the *mahr*, the wedding dowry:

> The customs of one village are different from another. What is permitted in one place, isn't in another. From village to village. Imagine that! […] My village is only small, with just 10,000 people […] Compared to other villages, this is small. There is one village, Herak, next to mine, and [the

> mahr] is only 60,000![27] Imagine. But the mahr in my village is 100,000 […] But you go somewhere else, and it is 150,000 or 200,000 maybe. (Interview with the author, 1 August 2021)

What emerges in these testimonies is how recollections of Hawrani wedding traditions speak to different understandings of balad, from wider references to the Dera'a region or broader Hawrani customs, to specific rituals in different villages or between men and women. Syrians' memories are also overlapping and uneven: while some memories are shared among Syrians (like the scale and social importance of weddings), other memories differ between individuals (like instrumentation and financial or gendered aspects). In this way, memories of weddings in Dera'a resonate with Malkki's framework of mythico-history (1995). Malkki defines Hutu historical narratives as mythico-history not to imply that the history is 'mythical in the sense of being false or made up' but rather because this history is concerned with 'ordering and reordering of social and political categories, with the definition of self in distinction to other'; the history is the refugees' conceptions of their own history (1995: 55 and 56). Hood makes a similar claim in reference to Druze weddings, arguing the information gathered from her interlocuters shows how 'memory can be a layered structure, with the model of the wedding serving as the foundation upon which events from actual weddings are layered, each layer coloring and affecting successive layers' (2002: 125). In Za'atari, too, Syrians

[27] I assume Oday is referring here to Syrian Pounds ('SYP') or *līra* in Arabic. However, it is extremely difficult to estimate the relative value of these figures or exchange rates because of extreme inflation and financial fluctuations and difficulties in Syria both before and following 2011. Some estimates suggest that at the end of 2010 1 USD = 46.8 SYP, meaning that 150,000SYP would have been about 3200 USD, a relatively large amount for the average Syrian at the time (https://usd.fxexchangerate.com/syp-2010_12_31-exchange-rates-history.html, Accessed 16 March 2024).

remember wedding customs and traditions on different levels and in different ways. And as I explore in the following section, these layers of memory affect the practice of Hawrani weddings in the camp.

Practising Hawrani Weddings in Za'atari

Hood suggests that the collective ceremonies that are Druze weddings represent a 'prime context for creating and recreating people's collective memory' (2002: 198). The wedding is an 'ideal vehicle for the community to maintain and verify its own ideals and to project an image of its own future' (ibid). The same might be said of weddings in Za'atari. Anas states: 'We brought some customs with us from Syria, of course. But here, these customs have developed, based on the situation [in the camp]' (interview with the author, 4 August 2021). The act of 'bringing customs' from one's country of origin, as insinuated here by Anas, has gained considerable traction in the anthropological and ethnomusicological literature on migration. Scholars in migration studies have consistently emphasised the ways in which cultural practices are preserved in contexts of displacement, how music functions to maintain distinctive national identities, or as an act of nostalgia or remembrance (Baily 2015; Lagerkvist 2013; Landau 2011; Malkki 1995; Reyes 1999; Shelemay 1998; Stokes 2003; Shannon 2015). Studies also demonstrate how traditions differ or transform in the migration environment, often focusing on the transculturation or hybridity of musical styles in diasporic communities as cultures come into contact, or how different environments affect musical development in different ways (Kartomi 1981; Erlmann 1993; Stokes 2003; Reyes 1999).

It is possible to trace similar themes in weddings in the Za'atari context. According to Wedad, many Hawrani wedding customs are carried out in the 'same way' in Za'atari as in Dera'a: 'We do it the same way here: a big, open, simple space where we put mijwiz

and everything […] We'll put the same muṭrib to sing on the speaker. We'll play and sing the same songs. We've memorised how things will take place […] Like my father's family does their weddings here exactly the same as in Syria' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021). Deema also highlights how women's wedding rituals and customs are upheld in the camp: 'In weddings, we sing all those songs that we've been singing for ages – I mean, not us, but others, our people [in the past]. But today, we still sing them' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021).

Preserving traditions may be particularly important in the ghurba context. In their research on Syrian weddings in the northern governorate of Irbid in Jordan, Mahmud Wardat and Omar Al-Khateeb argue that wedding ceremonies for Syrians in Jordan function as 'a means of preserving and strongly attaching to their heritage which reveals their adherence to their national identity' (2020: 104). In Druze society, Hood suggests that wedding repertoire is important to ensure the 'continuance' of the community in a way 'that is sanctioned by the Druze society and values' (2002: 92).

Farah is from Dera'a and arrived in Za'atari in 2013. She is in her early thirties and has five young children. Farah claims that Hawrani wedding songs are crucial for the Za'atari community:

> Yesterday, we had a wedding [in the camp]. We're all on the same level. No one is better than the other. Never. Everyone the same. We're all wearing the same thing. All singing the same thing. And I sang them a Hawrani song! I wanted to sing something sha'bī so that people can return to the past. So, I chose a Hawrani song […] It was 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo'. I really love that song, so I sang it. And all the women – I swear to God – were staring directly at me […] And I let people sing along with me […] You see, these Hawrani sha'bī songs,

> that's our *turāth* (heritage). Our Syrian turāth. And everyone who was there listening, journeyed back. (26 July 2021).

The concept of turāth is particularly interesting when exploring the practice of Hawrani customs in Za'atari. According to Shannon, turāth – commonly translated into English as 'heritage' – is widely understood as 'the inherited customs and traditions of the forefathers' (Shannon 2006: 78). In Syria, turāth is often divided into two categories: *turāth klasīki* (classical heritage), which includes the cultural production of Arabs from the Umayad to Abbasid eras between 750-1250 CE, and *turāth sha'bī* (popular heritage), the urban and rural practices of the non-elite classes (ibid: 78-79). However, Shannon argues that within each of these categories, distinctions are fluid and sometimes contradictory (ibid: 79). As such, he interprets turāth as a 'tradition' involving a 'process of cultural selection and memory that implies modes of reasoning about the past, conceptions of selfhood and social identity, and attitudes towards the future' (ibid). Shannon therefore highlights how heritage features heavily among Syrians in their attempts to 'find or impose order on their experiences, and to construct narratives of the past' (ibid).

The wedding songs sung by women in Za'atari constitute turāth sha'bī, the rural practices of non-elite Syrians, like the villagers and townspeople of al-balad. For Deema, singing and hearing these songs is important: 'I get so happy when I sing these old [wedding] songs! I feel I'm part of that turāth' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). She claims that enacting turāth is 'an opportunity for us to look at ourselves, an opportunity to work in the old ways, to go back and remember the pleasant memories from before' (ibid). Deema's words here reveal a great deal about how and why accidental communities of memory impose order on their experiences through turāth. In

the Arabic, Deema says *'mnitfarraj 'ala ḥalna',* literally meaning 'we look at ourselves'. The root verb *tafarraja* can mean to watch, to look on/upon, or to observe. As such, figuratively speaking, 'mnitfarraj 'ala ḥalna' may mean 'we look inward', 'we reflect' 'we contemplate', or even 'we reason with ourselves'. Deema thus implies that weddings enact a mode of reasoning for Syrians to determine how and why certain aspects of turāth may be practised in the displacement environment.

Similarly, Farah claims that 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' enables wedding guests to 'journey back' to the past: she says, '*al-nās reja't la-wurra*', literally meaning 'people went back/returned' (interview with the author, 26 July 2021). In explaining how people journey back to the past through song, Farah shows how Syrians in Za'atari embark on a process of remembering 'our heritage' (*turāthna*). However, the turāth to which Farah alludes is complex. On the one hand, Farah describes the song as a 'Hawrani sha'bī song', a popular song from Hawrani. On the other hand, she claims that the song enacts a specifically Syrian heritage (*turāth sūrrī*).

It is worth considering songs like 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' in more detail to understand Farah's framing of the song as a way to remember both Hawrani and Syrian heritage. 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' is typical of the songs sung in unison by women at weddings, accompanied only by the ṭabl. When Farah mentioned 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' in our interview, I admit that I did not ask her to perform it for me because I did not want to break the flow of her testimony. The opportunity to return to the song did not arise throughout the rest of the interview. Because I do not have a

recording of Farah performing the song, I analyse a recording made by the Zanar Ensemble in 2021 in a small town outside of Nablus, Palestine.[28]

'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' is a monophonic song in simple binary form (A/B). As shown in the table below, there are three subsections within Section A: each subsection has the same melody but different lyrics that describe various plants and fruits on each repetition (see Table 2.1). Within each of the subsections in Section A, each verse is repeated twice. A new melody is introduced in Section B, and each verse in Section B is repeated four times. Although Farah names the song title as 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo', the opening lyrics and displayed title of the Zanar recording are 'Ya zaytūna, ya ḥamil 'ala umo', but the phrase 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' does appear in that recording, too, in Section A(2).[29]

[28] See https://youtu.be/TjqxJHSfcls?si=IhoIzAyzXOr6P8h6 (Accessed 30 March 2024).
[29] I suspect that a fourth verse may be missing from Section B in the Zanar Ensemble recording as all other verses are repeated, apart from V3 in Section B. The recording also cuts off suddenly while the women are still singing.

	English	Arabic	No. of repetitions
Section A(1)	*(V1)* Oh, our olives, carried by our mother, Oh, our olives, oh my dear mother	*yā zaytūna yā ḥamil ʻal umo yā zaytūna ya mīmti yamma*	2
	(V2) The ones who love us come to our homes, They come to our homes, Welcome, welcome	*yīju ʻad-dūrna wili yiḥibūna yīju ʻad-dūrna ya hala wa ḥay Allah*	2
Section A(2)	*(V1)* Oh, our apples, carried by our mother Oh, our apples, oh my dear mother	*yā tuffaḥna ya ḥamil ʻal umo yā tuffaḥna yā mīmti yamma*	2
	(V2) The ones who love us come to our weddings They come to our weddings, Welcome, welcome	*Yīju ʻal farāḥna wili yiḥibūna yīju ʻal farāḥna yā hala wa ḥay Allah*	2
Section A(3)	*(V1)* Oh, our dandelions, carried by our mother Oh, our dandelions, oh my dear mother	*yā sirīsna yā ḥamil ʻala umo yā sirīsna yā mīmti yamma*	2
	(V2) Celebrate our groom with *zaffeh*, those of you who love us, Celebrate with *zaffeh*, Welcome, welcome	*zaffo ʻal ʻarīsna wili yiḥubuna zaffo ʻal ʻarīsna yā hala wa ḥay Allah*	2
Section B	*(V1)* We are, oh we are, the dandelion leaves	*aḥna yā aḥna yā waraq as-sirīs*	4
	(V2) How beautiful is the *ḥinna* on our groom's hands	*yā maḥla ḥinna ʻala īdayn ʻarīs*	4
	(V3) We are, oh we are, the apple leaves	*aḥna yā aḥna yā waraq al-tuffaḥ*	4

Table 2.1. Structure of 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo'.

‘Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil ‘Ala Umo’ literally translates as ‘Oh, apple, you carry on your mother’. This translation is a little odd. But given this is a wedding song, one interpretation is that the apple is a metaphor for the bride. Food references are found throughout Arabic culture, including in proverbs, metaphors, idioms, poetry, literature, and songs, often to describe female beauty and allure or romance and love.[30] Food imagery also appears in wedding songs (food is, of course, an integral aspect of weddings in the Arab world). For example, in one of her accounts of a Druze wedding in Syria, Hood recalls women singing a song describing the men carrying mensaf (the rice and meat dish often served at weddings) including lyrics such as ‘he carried the mensaf, he carried’ (2002: 107). In the case of ‘Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil ‘Ala Umo’, the various fruits named throughout the song could well relate to themes such as love, fondness, youth, ripeness, or fertility (indeed, *ḥamil* can mean carrying or pregnant), used to wish the bride a full and happy marriage.

Another interpretation of ‘Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil ‘Ala Umo’ involves ideas about Arab history and heritage. In her assessment of the song, Ebbini similarly make connections between the lyrics and metaphors about reproduction: she likens the tree carrying the different fruits and plants to a mother, and the fruits to her children that multiply and grow forth from her (communication with the author, 5 April 2024). In this way, the tree demonstrates how the mother is the bearer of life (ibid). However, Ebbini also suggests that comparing a mother to a tree highlights the significance of trees for Arab communities and the connections between trees and notions of Arab history, turāth,

[30]For more on different iterations of food imagery and metaphor, see Chatti (2023), Pamies et al (2015), Dakhlaoui (2012), Aljanada and Alfaisal (2020), Toma (2002), and El-Aswad (2014).

and the land (ibid). These aspects of heritage may be reflected in musical aspects of the song. 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' is in a simple 4/4 time signature and uses the *maqsūm* rhythm found across different genres but predominantly in sha'bī, ṭarab, and nationalistic genres (Ebbini 2022: 111). The maqām (pl. *maqāmāt*) is *Bayāti,* one of the most popular of the maqāmāt in the Arab repertory, particularly in folk traditions (Cohen and Katz 2006: 22).

The recording of 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' by the Zanar Ensemble posted on YouTube may shed further light on Farah's framing of the song as Syrian and HAwrani turāth. The recording of the Zanar Ensemble was made in Asira ash-Shamaliya, a rural area to the north of Nablus in Palestine. In the video, we see the five women of the Zanar Ensemble sat in an olive grove, singing, playing the ṭabl, and clapping. Behind them, men dressed in white thawb and shamāgh are busy harvesting the olives. The song is described as originating 'from Palestinian folk songs and its beautiful ancestral culture at the beginning of the olive harvest season' (Bashar al-Najar, YouTube, 1 October 2021). Contemporary sources likewise count 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' as a popular Palestinian wedding song, with other versions supplanting *tuffaḥ* (apples) with *zaytūn* (olives), and even *laymūn* (lemons).[31]

It is not necessarily surprising that songs are shared among different groups across the region. What is significant, however, is that Farah outlines 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' as a specifically Hawrani song that speaks to Hawrani and Syrian culture more broadly. Whether Farah is aware of the song's presence in other parts of the region is

[31] See, for example, https://k234.yoo7.com/t142-topic#251 (Accessed 30 March 2024), a blog post that lists 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' under the category of 'Popular wedding songs in the City of Hebron and its Villages'.

unclear; I, too, was unaware of the song's existence in other parts of the Arab world until I had already left Jordan. However, Farah's leveraging of the song as Hawrani and Syrian indicates the way that turāth becomes a kind of 'tradition' whereby Syrians create memories in order to imply modes of reasoning and verify their ideals (Shannon 2006; Hood 2002). Farah's framing of 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' as a symbol of both Hawrani and Syrian turāth speaks to the divergent ways Syrians understand al-balad in Za'atari, as both a specific (Hawrani, Dera'a) and general (Syrian or even Arab) marker of identity and experience. Additionally, articulating 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' as Hawrani and Syrian is an example of how Syrians use music to build a certain picture of the past to which they 'journey back' in the present.

This process of journeying back to the past through musical practices may be understood as a kind of 'nostalgic dwelling', defined by Amanda Lagerkvist (2013) as the ways of inhabiting and articulating lived experience in places and communities embedded with a heightened awareness of the past. Nostalgia, as Svetlana Boym suggests, does not necessarily have to focus on rebuilding the past or what was lost, but can also be about 'individual and cultural memory' in the present (2001: 49). This kind of nostalgia is demonstrated by Wedad's explanation of how weddings are a way of cultivating positive individual and communal memories of the past in Syria in the present in Za'atari:

> I remember the first wedding in the camp and how amazed people were. Some people were like 'But people are dying in Syria and here we are having a wedding!' But, like, brother, just leave them be. Let people have fun and let go. Everyone has issues, every household has problems and has lost people or has been impacted [by the war]. So, just let us have some happiness […] Because when you go to a wedding, you make

> yourself happy […] When you sing, you sing for yourself, you let your energy out […] When I dance just a little, I relax just a little bit more, too! You can see people you haven't seen in ages, you can speak to them, and you can catch up with the latest news. It's both an individual thing and a communal thing. (Interview with the author, 5 August 2021)

The selection of positive memories of the past is, as Wedad suggests, both an individual and communal process. But this process can sometimes be overlapping and contradictory. Shannon argues that nostalgia enacted by Syrian musicians in Istanbul constitutes a 'more reflective, clear-eyed view of their homeland, its internal contradictions, and the near impossibility of recovering remnants of that vision' (2019: 2177). Oday reveals similar contradictions in his explanation of the place of weddings in the Za'atari environment in that he recognises the value of general instantiations of balad for the community, but does not make the same individual selections:

> Like on a Friday, everyone is tired. But then they go and attend a wedding. There was a period of time […] when everyone was so anxious…you know, at the beginning [of our displacement], or even during corona…It impacted their mental health. But now see how everyone is laughing and smiling [going to weddings]! There is a wedding everyday outside my house. I still don't go to these weddings to be honest, unless I'm especially invited. But I sit there, smoke my shisha, and listen to the songs. (Interview with the author, 1 August 2021)

Oday's position of selecting positive communal memories but enacting his own individual heritage in a different way is not unusual. In fact, a significant proportion of Syrians emphasise the importance of invoking balad for the community but underscore their choice not to personally participate in certain customs and traditions. Take Wasim:

> I'm not saying people don't celebrate […] but there are people who just don't have the time to celebrate […] Even if there is a party right next to my house […] I still might not go […] Because there's no space in my mind, no space to celebrate. I'm too busy thinking of other things. I'm older now, I've got my kids, and my kids need me to raise them […] Inshallah our kids' futures are better than our own futures. (Interview with the author, 27 July 2021)

It may be possible to see the choice not to engage in wedding and celebrations in Za'atari as an example of the 'relative silence or silencing' that Shannon has identified among Syrian musicians in Istanbul who choose not to perform in Turkey for different reasons, including experiences of pain and sadness following the conflict and being displaced (2019: 2174). But Wasim's lack of participation in weddings could also be an example of how people choose not to remember the past in the present because that past does not resonate with their vision of the future. Wasim, for instance, feels he no longer identifies with a past associated with celebrations and parties because he has other priorities in the present, such as raising his children.

In other cases, individual cultural selection is based on personal musical tastes. Both Anas and Amar state how they disliked mijwiz or attending large Hawrani weddings and parties even when they lived in Syria. Anas claims that the sha'bī music performed at weddings is 'just loud noise' (interview with the author, 4 August 2021). Amar even believes that 'the sound of a donkey is better than one mijwiz. I can't listen to it. It's so loud and sharp' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). Dislike of the mijwiz and sha'bī music is shared by other individuals in Za'atari, including those who are not from Dera'a or the Hawran region. Lama is from Homs. She came to the camp with her sister, Batool, along with their husbands and children. Lama explains how certain wedding

traditions, such as the inclusion of sha'bī music, are not exclusively Hawrani, but rather feature at Arab weddings across the region: '[Weddings] are the place for sha'bī music […] If there is a wedding, a party, or even a trip somewhere, then you can put sha'bī, and the place will set on fire!' (interview with the author, 30 June 2021). Amar similarly argues how dabke is performed throughout Syria, not just in Dera'a: 'In Dera'a we have dabke. But in Homs, Tartous, Latakia, or wherever, there is also dabke – it just differs a bit [between the places]' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). In explaining the presence of sha'bī music at weddings in Homs and in the camp, Lama states how she has always disliked the genre's musical features: 'The majority of songs that people listen to, they are…loud. They have a really loud beat […] The voice and the words are so disturbing and irritating to me. My ears can't take it!' (interview with the author, 30 June 2021).

While those such as Amar, Anas, and Lama state their personal dislike for the timbre and sound of the mijwiz and sha'bī music more broadly, they all recognise the genre as part of the turāth of al-balad (both Syria, generally, and Dera'a, specifically). Others, however, dispute the categorisation of wedding traditions such as the mijwiz and sha'bī music as turāth. Walid, for example, argues that:

> Mijwiz isn't *thaqāfeh* (culture). Mijwiz is just average. Unfortunately, it's everywhere now. Of course, there are people who also love the guitar or people who love the oud, but unfortunately, those people aren't here in the camp. Here, it's just like a muṭrib who just gets up and sings anything at a wedding. That's not turāth. Where's the turāth in that? I'm Syrian and even I can't see the turāth in it. Mijwiz is just an instrument for ordinary people, not for professionals. (Interview with the author, 21 August 2021)

Walid's perspectives resonate with ideas about sha'bī music and turāth in the literature on Arab musical culture. Walid describes sha'bī music at weddings and the mijwiz as belonging to 'ordinary people'. Indeed, sha'bī is widely understood as music 'of the people', particularly the working class (Hammond 2017: 7). According to Ebbini, this is reflected in musical qualities, particularly the singing style of the muṭrib: *muṭribīn* (pl.) perform in a nasal, high-pitched forceful vocal timbre, regularly allowing their voices to 'break' (Ebbini 2022: 105-106). As such, Ebbini argues that sha'bī music constitutes a genre 'in which talent and capability are no longer prerequisites for fame in the Arab music industry' (ibid: 106).

For Walid, this supposed lack of talent and capability is precisely the problem. By associating the mijwiz with 'ordinary people', he insinuates that the instrument is devoid of professionalism and therefore cannot be considered as a marker of turāth. Walid evidently does not count the urban and rural practices of the non-elites at weddings (turāth sha'bī) as 'authentic' turāth. According to Walid, authentic turāth consists of practices more commonly understood as turāth klasīki or Arab high culture. According to Shannon, turāth in Syria has historically been considered a 'preserve' of Arab high culture, thereby constituting a 'privileged discourse' that promotes some cultural practices and excludes others (Shannon 2006: 79). Professional musicians that perform 'classical' repertoire, for example, are similarly privileged, often emerging from elite classes, performing for substantial amounts of money and for local and international dignitaries or officials (ibid: 79-81). In addition, Shannon argues that Syrians articulate culture as 'authentic' according to 'the association of particular emotional states with particular times and places and their evocation in the arts' (ibid: 85). Evidently, for Walid, the association of

the mjiwiz and sha‘bī music with ordinary people and weddings where a muṭrib ‘just gets up and sings anything’ means that the music does not constitute authentic culture.

Arguments about authenticity have frequently been levelled at the commercial genre of sha‘bī music. This is partly as a result of semantics. As Grippo explains, the term ‘sha‘bī’ (meaning popular or folkloristic) when preceded by the term ‘al-musīqa’ becomes *al-musīqa al-sha‘bīyeh* (2010: 145). Al-musīqa al-sha‘bīyeh, however, is the primary term for the category known as Egyptian folk music, not the commercial genre of sha‘bī music. The term ‘al-musīqa al-sha‘bīyeh’ is instead claimed by folk musicians who see their music as ‘art’, and the term ‘sha‘bī’ claimed by those concerned with the contemporary commercial phenomenon of sha‘bī music (ibid). As such, sha‘bī musicians have often been pitted against other folk musicians in an ‘imaginary battle for authenticity’ (ibid).

Grippo’s analysis of divergent interpretations of sha‘bī in Egypt may be pertinent for understanding opinions on sha‘bī music in Za’atari. For instance, Farah describes the wedding song ‘Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil ‘Ala Umo’ as a ‘sha‘bī song’ (interview with the author, 26 July 2021). But Farah is not referring to the contemporary commercial genre of sha‘bī music (which is also performed at weddings in the camp). Performances of wedding songs like ‘Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil ‘Ala Umo’ by women do not usually feature any of the musical characteristics of the contemporary sha‘bī genre like the org or the mijwiz. Rather, they are monophonic songs sung in unison accompanied only by the ṭabl. Accordingly, I suspect Farah uses the term ‘sha‘bī’ in order to mean popular, of the people, folk, or folklore. In Walid’s discussion of the sha‘bī music at weddings, however, he is most certainly referring to the contemporary genre of sha‘bī music, which is mainly

performed by muṭribīn and mijwiz performers. These songs would be the same recordings as played on speakers in women's wedding celebrations, as Wedad explained.

Walid's ambivalence towards sha'bī music and its supposed lack of professionalism or culture is interesting on another level. Walid is predominantly a singer but also plays the oud and keyboard. Additionally, he has been teaching himself the violin via YouTube videos on an instrument I sourced for him while we were both working at QS in 2019. But before 2015, Walid had never played a musical instrument in his life and only began formally studying oud and music theory once he had arrived in Za'atari. Walid does, in fact, occasionally perform the contemporary sha'bī genre at various events in the camp – at the World Refugee Day events in June 2021, he sang typical sha'bī songs while men danced the dabke. I have also seen several videos of Walid performing sha'bī songs at other events and celebrations in the camp. However, Walid told me that he no longer performs at these events or in the sha'bī style owing to his changing musical preferences (interview with the author, 21 August 2021). He also believes the fees are too low and argues he can get more money performing outside the camp (ibid). This suggests Walid's rejection of sha'bī music as turāth may lie in his own personal inward negotiations as a musician working in his everyday environment. I turn to these personal inward negotiations in the next chapter.

The range of understandings of what constitutes turāth among individuals in Za'atari suggests that the way in which customs and traditions are practised varies in the ghurba context too. While testimonies imply that customs and traditions are practised 'in the same way' in Za'atari as in al-balad, Syrians highlight how wedding turāth has changed in the camp. Wedad states that fewer people participate in weddings in the camp than in Dera'a: 'There used to be such respect for all those customs and traditions, but not in the

camp […] There is still some degree of it, like, if it's someone very close to me or someone I had a really strong relationship with, then maybe I'll go [to their wedding] […] But, if it's just someone from our neighbourhood here? Then no' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021). Deema even claims that weddings in Za'atari are 'shortcut' (*ikhtiṣār*) versions of weddings in Dera'a: 'Here, it's just one day for the bride, and the guy doesn't have anything. Or the bride just has the ḥinnā', and then the second day they don't even do anything. They just bring the bride to the wedding and that's it' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021).

Other features of the wedding are also reduced. In Syria, there would be huge lunches available at weddings but in the camp, families may only offer sweet plates: 'When you used to get married for 100 mensaf, now you get married for 100 sweet plates!' (Deema, interview with the author, 16 August 2021). The implication here is that sweets are less expensive or extravagant than mensaf. The mahr (wedding dowry) is also different. Where the mahr traditions of different villages in Dera'a ranged from anywhere up to 200,000 SYP (around 4000 USD or 3000 JD), in the camp it is drastically less – Oday estimates about 200 USD or 100-150 JD (interview with the author, 1 August 2021).

Anthropological literature has paid much attention to developments in wedding traditions in recent decades but has often attributed such changes to Westernisation or the channelling of female desire into consumption (Erdreich 2006). Studying Palestinian weddings, Lauren Erdreich (2006) claims to trace liberal 'bourgeoise' changes among Palestinian university women in occupied Palestine.[32] Some Syrians in Za'atari do note

[32] Erdreich describes her research as taking place with 'Palestinian Israeli university women' in the 'nation state of Israel'.

and discuss the impact of liberal values on customs in the camp, if not specifically regarding weddings. For instance, Oday discusses the influence of different kinds of clothing for women in the camp compared to in Dera'a: 'Like the girls have started wearing whatever. Trousers were not our clothes before' (interview with the author, 1 August 2021). While there may be some influence of liberal or Western values on women in Za'atari (I explore this in more detail in Chapter 3), I am not convinced that liberal 'Western' tendencies are the reason for changes in wedding customs and traditions.

According to Syrians in Za'atari, changes to traditional marriage customs are due to changes of circumstances in the ghurba environment. Oday claims that the lack of distinction between people and groups in Za'atari means that individual balad customs (like the mahr) cease to exist: 'All the villages [from Dera'a] are just put together [in the camp]. So, we end up taking bits from here and bits from there, and all these different customs and different people are mixed up' (interview with the author, 1 August 2021). Others challenge this view, demonstrating how individual balad customs are still practised in Za'atari. Anas, for example, explains how his offer to marry his now wife was initially refused because they were not from the same balad in Dera'a – 'people [in the camp] still usually only marry people who they know' (interview with the author, 4 August 2021). Distinctions between groups are also made between those from Dera'a and those from elsewhere, such as Rif as-Sham: 'Ah, yes in Za'atari there is the Hawrani side of things, the customs and traditions of which are completely different to the Rif as-Sham side […] Each of these regions has their own customs and traditions, celebrations, manners, clothing, accents, languages…' (Wasim, interview with the author, 27 July 2021).

Another crucial reason for differences in wedding celebrations may be a change in financial circumstances. Deema states that the *ikhtiṣārāt* (shortcuts) taken in weddings are due to the 'lack of resources and materials' available (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). As a result, Deema admits that Syrians can 'barely afford to bring the most essential things for the wedding and the celebrations' (ibid). As noted in the introduced to this thesis, Syrians do face significant financial obstacles. One reason for this is the laws in Jordan that complicate and restrict their engagement in formal employment. Other income-generating opportunities in the camp are few and far between. Accordingly, Syrians in Za'atari simply may not have the means to maintain the same level of customs and traditions as they did before ghurba. They therefore select certain customs to continue (which may be based on positive communal or individual memories, as above) those to forgo or adapt (like reducing the mahr or providing sweets instead of mensaf).

Furthermore, there may be emotional factors. Although Deema is adamant that most changes in marriage customs result from material lack, she does admit that:

> In terms of celebrations, the rituals have changed. The *jaww* [atmosphere] and the war have affected us […] People have lost people and have lost things, so, psychologically, it can't be the same level of joy or the same way as before. (Interview with the author, 16 August 2021)

Deema proposes that the jaww of ghurba affects Syrians' ability to celebrate and express joy at weddings. The notion of jaww is a complex one, and I turn to it in detail in the following chapter. Essentially, jaww has many translations, including atmosphere, weather, climate, air, scenery, ambience, mood, or feeling. This suggests that the feeling or emotional atmosphere and climate of ghurba – itself understood as a psychological state (Abusharaf 2002: 128) – may impact how some individuals choose to engage with

turāth. Wasim, for example, claims that a Syrian in Za'atari may be '*mish fāḍī yifraḥ*' (interview with the author, 27 July 2021). The phrase 'mish fāḍī yifraḥ*'* literally means 'not free to be cheerful'. Figuratively speaking, fāḍī implies that someone may be empty, unavailable, unable, or perhaps even unwilling or reluctant. Additionally, yifraḥ can mean to be happy, to be joyful, to delight, to rejoice, to have fun, or to be lively. On one level, Wasim could simply be suggesting that some people literally do not have the time to have fun or take part in celebrations. Wasim suggests this is the case for him, as he is too busy with his children. On another level, however, the implication is that a dissonance exists between celebrating and the emotional state of ghurba.

Dissonance between music and ghurba crops up in many testimonies. While not in directly reference to weddings or wedding music, some Syrians mention a discord or discomfort in listening to artists or genres that they used to enjoy before ghurba. Amar, for instance, dislikes listening to the Syrian singer George Wassouf in Za'atari (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). Wassouf (1961-) is a prolific Syrian singer and actor enjoyed by listeners across the Arab world. Wassouf began performing as a wedding singer at 12 years old and has become one of the most celebrated singers of *ṭarab* music – a sub-genre of Arab contemporary music originating from traditional classical Arab culture that is said to evoke the state of *ṭarab* (akin to ecstasy or enchantment) reached during a musical performance (Ebbini 2022: 112). Amar says, 'If I heard George Wassouf here, it would remind me of how I used to live in Syria. I don't like to listen to it here […] To listen to him here hurts my brain from the inside' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021).

This dissonance is not only emotional. Amar claims that he cannot listen to Fairuz in Za'atari because there are no 'suitable' listening environments for her music in the camp.

Fairuz is perhaps one of the most widely listened to and enjoyed Arab artists. As previously noted, Fairuz's music is particularly associated with the morning time and travel, but also the outdoors, nature, or the family home. For Amar, Za'atari lacks the associations necessary for enjoying Fairuz's music:

> I think it's more a case of, where would I even listen to [Fairuz] here? Like, what kind of places do we have here in which I can listen to Fairuz? What, like, a rotting caravan? […] Fairuz needs a car journey, or a cup of coffee and a garden […] As if I'm going to get on my bicycle and put headphones on [and listen to her] while I ride through the market here! It isn't suitable at all [for Fairuz] – actually, not just for songs, but for anything! [He laughs loudly] (Interview with the author, 16 August 2021)

Interestingly, in my conversations with Syrians, Fairuz did not appear in relation to notions of turāth. As Maher, a man in his thirties from Damascus living in Za'atari, confirms: 'Fairuz [isn't Syrian], she's something of all her own […] Fairuz is something else entirely. I'm addicted to her' (interview with the author, 11 July 2021). It is therefore possible to use Amar and Maher's experiences of Fairuz to further frame Deema and Wedad's testimonies about weddings in Za'atari: there appears to be a degree of hesitance among some members of the Za'atari community to engage in certain musical practices in the camp environment (including weddings) because that environment is dissonant with either the musical practice or genre (be it as a result of loss and trauma or emotional reluctance) or the physical attributes of the camp.

Conclusions

What is clear from the above analysis is that memory is key to the practice (and understanding of) heritage in Za'atari. However, the ways in which memory is enacted is manifold. Syrians remember customs and traditions in the camp environment in myriad ways, and the ways they choose to take part in celebrations and why aspects of those celebrations have changed in the camp environment differ between individuals and groups. What does this mean, therefore, for understandings of al-balad? And how does this shed light on ideologies about migration in the wider body of literature?

In recent years, scholars have demonstrated the heterogeneous nature of 'diaspora' as a framework for understanding experiences of displacement. Brubaker has moved away from models that think of diaspora as a bounded entity, often understood in unilateral, teleological relationships to a nation-state, instead reframing diaspora as 'an idiom, stance, or claim' (2005: 11-12). He asserts that diaspora is a 'category of practice' used to 'articulate projects, to formulate expectations, to mobilise energies, to appeal to loyalties', and a way for a population to formulate identity and loyalties that may or may not be distinct from a given ethnicity, homeland, or state (ibid). In Za'atari, Syrians formulate different identities and articulate different projects and loyalties that relate to the concept of balad in divergent ways, on both general (communal, national, emotional) and specific (individual, regional) levels. Za'atari thus emerges as a 'symbolic site' (Malkki 1995: 16) in which Syrians extract different meanings of Syrian, Dera'a, and Hawrani identities: Syrians get to pick and choose what they remember, both as groups and as individuals. This makes the process of 'remembering to be Syrian' a diverse and overlapping one. These memories are also characterised according to gender, individual musical experiences, socio-cultural and economic circumstances, all of which impact

how Syrians decide what ‘pasts’ to remember and how they remember them in the present.

There are, however, some limitations here. Predominantly, these lie in the lack of ethnographic detail regarding wedding celebrations in Za’atari. This is, ultimately, as a result of the restrictions I faced as a researcher in Za’atari that prevented me from observing weddings at night-time. What about other songs performed at weddings in Za’atari? Do they raise similar questions about how turāth and belonging are constructed? What more can be said about other important aspects of weddings such as food, clothing and dress, and transport? What about male music traditions in weddings? What else would they reveal about gendered experiences of ghurba?

Instead, my ‘observations’ of wedding celebrations in Za’atari were experienced through the testimonies and oral histories of Syrians in Za’atari. Testimony and remembering come with their own caveats, too. However, in this regard, I do believe that any divergences of memory that occur in the process of giving testimony reflect the divergent nature of turāth and al-balad in Za’atari, demonstrating the complex ways that individuals remember and articulate understandings of the past, present, and future. Examples of this include Farah’s framing of ‘Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil ‘Ala Umo’, Walid’s ideas about what constitutes ‘sha‘bī’, and the different reasons Syrians give for participating in wedding customs.

The second limitation, or rather question, that emerges is the place of other musical practices in the camp that do not invoke the al-balad framework. While al-balad provides grounds for approaching the ways Syrians invoke ‘Syrian’ identity in ghurba, it is clear that there are other aspects of music-making in Za’atari that may speak to other personal inward negotiations and experiences, such as musical preferences and musical

professions. What about the ways musicians work outside of the framework of turāth and al-balad? What about the other genres and musics that Syrians enjoy and listen to? What about the ways Syrians act as individual musicians working in their everyday environments (Ramnarine 2007)? And what do they tell us about the affective nature of music in contexts of ghurba beyond al-balad? I address these questions in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Taghyīr al-Jaww: Performing, Listening, and Storytelling

Introduction

It is late July 2021, and I am sitting with a young woman named Batool in a caravan normally used for English language lessons. Originally from Homs, Batool lives in the camp with her eight-year-old daughter. She works as a mental health counsellor across several programmes run by Questscope (QS). Batool married at 15 years old and thus did not have the opportunity to continue her education in Syria. Now in her late twenties and living in a refugee camp, alongside her job with QS she is studying part-time for a bachelor's degree in counselling. She is also currently going through a painful and complicated divorce.

I have known Batool for some time by this point, but the two of us have never sat alone to talk in detail about her experiences and thoughts, not only on music but on life in general. While I have heard bits of information about Batool from others in the camp and my colleagues in QS, our meeting in the caravan that hot July day marks the first time she talks in detail about her past in Syria, her marriage and divorce, and her hopes and dreams for the future. Batool is a very intelligent and erudite young woman; during our interview, I frequently have to ask her to explain complex topics in more detail or translate terminologies from Arabic to English where she can.[33] After an hour or so, we

[33] All my interviews with Syrians in Za'atari were conducted entirely Arabic. Interviewees that spoke some English would offer translations if I did not know the original Arabic. It is the case that English terminologies and words are regularly used in spoken Arabic (often referred to as Arabish or Arablish – a mix of English and Arabic)

get to talking about the limits of academic research in Za'atari (notably, the restrictions that prevent me from going to private residences to speak with community members) and Batool's concerns about how these limits affect the way I might capture the myriad experiences of the camp's residents. She explains:

> If you went to peoples' houses [in the camp], you would find completely different opinions [to those who work at QS]. For example, what I've told you might be similar to only, like, half those people. Half! Then the other half would tell you something else. Probably some of the men would be like, 'Music? OK, so what?' If you went to five houses, you would find five different perspectives […] Some people would tell you, 'Music! What do you mean, music! Ḥarām!' and others just 'Music? I guess it is what it is?' They wouldn't be able to explain more than that. Then other people might sit and tell you millions of stories. But I know there's no kind of permit for you like that… (Interview with the author 27 July 2021)

Batool's words got me thinking. First, about how restrictions in the camp environment impact the researcher's view of the local community. This, of course, was a fundamental aspect of my ethnography, as I set out in the introduction to this thesis and in Chapter 1. I further explore the implications of my positionality as a researcher in Za'atari in detail in Chapter 5.

Second, I was intrigued by the notion of the 'millions of stories' about music. Although not heard specifically in private residences as framed by Batool, my experiences in Za'atari had been inextricably steeped in stories. Stories told to me in one-to-one interviews and conversations. Stories heard in the work kitchen early in the morning while drinking cup after cup of strong Arabic coffee. Stories told to me by friends while sat in the blazing afternoon sun smoking endless cigarettes. Stories shared

among my girlfriends while we gathered in caravans during work breaks to sing our favourite songs or while we played about with filters on Snapchat. Stories of my male colleagues, showing me videos of Syria on YouTube as I listen on to their accompanying commentary. Stories received in long voice notes and text messages hours after leaving the camp for the day. Stories of famous male camp musicians I had never met, their selfies with adoring fans and the recordings of their performances uploaded to social media. Stories of women composing songs and sharing them in audio messages on WhatsApp. Stories of people I did not know, the families, friends, colleagues, and community members. Stories heard outside the camp, in cafes and offices back in Amman, or in car journeys home. Stories missing details, without beginnings or ends. The same stories told in multiple ways by multiple people. Stories that made sense and stories that made absolutely no sense.

Even in my one-to-one interviews with Syrians, the notion of stories came up time and time again. Syrians would frequently use the word *quṣti*, meaning 'my story'. They would often begin our recorded interviews by saying '*Hala baḥlīlik quṣti'* (Now, I will tell you my story). This storytelling process was an intensely intimate experience in which Syrians shared their stories of their personal experiences of ghurba, their life in Syria before and during the war, their marriages and relationships, and so on. Interviewees would often interrupt a thought or discussion with phrases such as, '*Khalīnī aḥlīlik quṣa'* (Let me tell you a story) or '*Khalīnī aḥlīlik ishi'* (Let me tell you something).

Beyond personal interactions with Syrians, stories featured heavily in the broader world of the camp, not only in domestic and social settings but also in the projects and programmes implemented by NGOs. I was regularly told about late night saharāt in domestic residences (which I could not attend due to not being allowed in camp in the

evenings) where friends and family members would gather and recite poetry or tales and play music. During my time working with QS and LWF, I learnt about projects such as MeWe, The Field Guide, creative writing lessons, and puppet theatre that used local Arab narrative traditions as tools for healing, education, and development.

It seemed that wherever I turned in the camp, there were stories. I thus came to understand that stories formed a fundamental aspect of my ethnography in Za'atari. But what is this relationship between stories and ethnography? How do stories figure in the everyday lives of Syrians in Za'atari? And what do stories reveal about music-making in the camp? In this chapter, I address these questions by exploring the significance of stories and narrative as a tool to unveil how Syrians use music to negotiate their experiences of ghurba. I ask: what do routine every-day and every-night musical practices in Za'atari look and sound like? What do every-day musical practices reveal about the different experiences and subjectivities of Syrians in ghurba? And how can stories and storytelling help to do so? In the following sections, I describe the different narrative traditions in Za'atari, their historical significance in the wider Arab culture, the context of narrative ethnography in anthropology, and the methods I use to tell the stories of Syrian music-making in the camp.

We Express in Order to Change: Arab Narrative Traditions in Za'atari

The Arab and Muslim world has a rich history of narrative and literary traditions (see Allen 2000 and Kilito 2014). Prior to the writing down of the Qur'anic revelations in the third Islamic century, Arabic literary and narrative traditions were predominantly oral (Allen 2000: 33; Zwettler 1978). But the art of orality and the spoken word continue to hold a significant place in Arab culture (Herzog 2012: 627). According to scholars like

Tarik Sabry and Roger Allen, orality can be traced throughout different forms of Arab culture, such as poetry and storytelling (Allen 2000: 34; Sabry 2010: 57).

Poetry is one of the most highly valued cultural forms in Arab societies. Arabic poetry dates back to the pre-Islamic period (500-622) and there are numerous poetic forms, broadly categorised into two types: classical and modern (Athamneh 2017; Allen 2000; Badawi 1975, 1992; Jayusi 1977; Zwettler 1978). Classical forms of poetry are written in a variety of complex metres, with each form following one metre throughout a poem. As a result, poetic forms often constitute the basis for musical forms. For example, the *muwashshaḥāt* (sing., *muwashshaḥ*) is an Andalusian form based on complex, irregular time signatures. Muwashshaḥāt are traditionally performed in the *waṣla* (pl. *waṣlāt*) or suite of songs, and have remained as 'important symbols of authenticity and wealth of the Arab musical and literary heritage' not only by musicians but also by those who do not perform or listen to them (Shannon 2003: 82-83).

Modern poetry is typically composed in free form and free meter, with many poets writing in colloquial Arabic dialects. Syrian poets like Nizar Qabbani (1923-1998) and Maram Al-Masri (1962-), for instance, make use of simple, sparse, and direct writing styles predominantly writing in Syrian Arabic. Despite changing written traditions and various historical influences on the development of poetry, poems have maintained their social and cultural importance: oral transmission and the recitation of poetry are still foundational to communication modes and feature heavily at social gatherings throughout the Arab world (Allen 2000: 132; Abu-Lughod 1986). At informal late-night saharāt in Za'atari, Syrians will gather to share food and drinks, smoke shisha and cigarettes, and listen to local poets, musicians, and community members, recite poems (either their own

compositions or well-known works), tell tales, or perform songs and instrumental pieces on the oud or rubābā.

Arabic poetry is also a vehicle for the transmission of social and political commentary. As the Palestinian poet Mohammed El-Kurd notes, 'A pen is like a weapon' (Middle East Eye 2016). Poetic commentary often relates to contexts of conflict and displacement across the region. The Palestinian poets Mahmoud Darwish (1941-2008) and Fadwa Tuqan (1917-2003) use poetry to denounce the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine and to explore experiences of dispossession and exile. Likewise, Qabbani's work criticises Arab authoritarianism and political affairs, and Al-Masri explores female perspectives on love, sex, war, and exile, and uses women's voices to speak out against the Assad regime.

Poetry is likewise a means for Syrians in Za'atari to express ideas and commentary about the experiences of ghurba. Maher is one of Za'atari's acclaimed poets. Like many young men living in Za'atari, he was working for the state security forces before fleeing Syria in 2014. But he had always seen himself as a poet: he remembers being a young boy reading the works of Syrian poets collected by his father in the small library in their home in Damascus (interview with the author, 11 July 2021). So, when Maher fled Syria, he chose to bring his notebooks containing his poems with him: 'When people leave their homes, they need their things, the essential things. I brought my old notebooks. That was what I felt I needed' (ibid). Maher continues to write poetry in the camp as a way to express his emotions: 'Sometimes, [poetry] helps me to know myself more. Sometimes when people are anxious, they eat, pray, or do sports. I write' (ibid). This poetry, he argues, relates to his experiences of ghurba:

> I started to compose different stuff [once I came to Za'atari]. My writing style had changed. I was writing darker stuff. About home, the homeland. About Syria, the war. And it made me sad, this writing. It was genuinely sad stuff. All my sadness was in the writing […] When I was in Syria, I would write about love; the most important things to any young person are always sex and love! […] But when I came here, that all changed. My dictionary of words only understood those like ghurba, the homeland, nostalgia, longing, the camp […] Now I write about this place, and about desperation […] When I write, I imbue the paper with my sadness. (Interview with the author, 11 July 2021)

Also central to Arab narrative traditions is stories and the art of storytelling. Folktales and stories abound in Arab culture. They include different narrators and storytellers, settings, and themes, which range from social and political commentary to family relationships, authority, marriage, food, the supernatural, and even religion (Muhawi and Kanaana 1989; El-Shamy 2004). Take the famous *Alf Layla Wa Layla* (A Thousand and One Nights). The collection is said to have Syrian, Iraqi, Persian, and Indian roots, and has origins in the Arab world's vast oral tradition of folktales (Makdisi and Nussbaum 2008: 1-2). Described by Robert Irwin (1994) as a 'labyrinth of stories', *Alf Layla Wa Layla* covers themes such as injustice, betrayal, misogyny, revenge, politics, hostility, love, and affection to illuminate the worlds of snake charmers, sorcerers, adulterers, and other characters (Hovannisian et al. 1997; Marzolph 2007).

Of interest here is the theme of women and feminism in Arab narrative traditions and literature. Women writers are nothing new to the Arab literary world: Arab women have

long excelled in prose and poetry.[34] Arab women's literature has explored a number of themes and narrative perspectives connected to women's lives such as motherhood, the body, sexuality, religion, love, discrimination, relationships, rights and culture. In particular, many women writers have addressed themes of conflict, war, loss, and dispossession. Authors like Susan Abulhawa (2006, 2015, 2020), Hala Alyan (2017), Rana Haddad (2018), Ana Halabi (2018), Zaina Arafat (2020), Yasmin Zaher (2023), Ibtisam Tracy (2010, 2021), Sahar Mandour (2016), Rasha Abbas (2016, 2017), to name but a few, have amplified the experiences and voices of Arab women affected by war, displacement, oppression, and injustice in Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, Greece, and other diaspora communities.

The ability of stories to speak to a range of social and political themes appears to be quintessential to everyday life in Arab societies. In his study exploring the history and practice of storytelling in Damascus, Fadi Fayad Skeiker argues that: 'Storytelling in Syria is more than a form of a popular art, it is a continued living tradition that is integrated in family gatherings and social gatherings' (2010: 223). Skeiker outlines how telling stories in everyday life provides 'a safe environment for people to voice their concerns, articulate their social problems, and share their hope for a better future' (ibid: 224). This is also the case in Za'atari. Many NGOs use narrative traditions and storytelling within humanitarian programming in the camp as tools for expression, healing, and change. Beyond Conflict's *The Field Guide for Barefoot Psychology* (TFG)

[34] It is the case that there is significant debate surrounding the definition and parameters of terms like 'feminist', 'feminism' and 'feminist literature' with regards to Arab women writers, a discussion of which is beyond the scope of this thesis. For more on this issue and for overviews of the history of Arab women writers, see Valassopoulous (2008), Moore (2008), Gauche (2007), Al-Zamili (2022), Zeidan (1995), Cooke (1996), Malti-Douglas (1995), Badran and Cooke (2004).

combines ‘narrative story, scientific information, and practical skills’ to provide psychosocial support for communities affected by conflict and trauma (Niconchuk et al. 2020). TFG tells the stories of two fictional made-up Syrian siblings, Isra’ and Ahmad, but who are based on young Syrians living in the camp. TFG argues that the characters of Isra’ and Ahmad ‘help us think together about conflict, about migration, about our minds, bodies, and hearts’ (ibid: 1). The stories of Isra’ and Ahmad, along with accompanying illustrations, reveal the hidden experiences of conflict: ‘Stories reflect the truths we are sometimes scared to confront in ourselves and our societies. Stories help us to access parts of ourselves and convey feelings, sentiments, and thoughts that would otherwise remain hidden’ (ibid).

Similarly, MeWe International uses narrative therapy, mediation activities and communication skills in order to help Syrians to ‘create and share messages and idea promoting positive change […] interpersonal discoveries, messages, and ideas to the broader group and their communities’ (MeWe 2024). Creative writing exercises help participants to ‘reframe how the mind and body communicate with one another, thereby restoring confidence and agency with one’s mind and body’ (ibid). As Deema, a facilitator on the program, states: ‘We express in order to change’ (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). Additionally, the methodology of narrative therapy involves participants sharing stories with their communities and broader groups through gatherings, installations, publications, video blogging, and public speaking in order ‘to create and share messages and ideas promoting positive change’ (ibid). These messages often include those relating to stereotypes and images of Syrian refugees. Amina, a young woman we met in Chapter 1 who works on both TFG and MeWe, argues that it is imperative for Syrians themselves to learn how to share their own stories in order to avoid

misrepresentation: ‘How will you share your story correctly if you yourself don’t even know how to tell it?’ (interview with the author, 11 July 2021).

The ability to tell and write stories is also integral to some education programmes for youth in the camp. QS delivers a specialised creative writing and poetry course in which young people learn Arabic prose and poetry. Maher runs the course. He believes that educating children and developing their own writing capabilities is crucial to make up for time lost to their education as a result of the conflict, to preserve heritage, and to pass on writing traditions to a new generation (interview with the author, 11 July 2021). Creative writing classes also act as psychological support: ‘It is important to give them artistic tools, paper, pens, whatever, that they can use instead of [poor] coping mechanisms. When you are dealing with trauma or a crisis, you need the arts, your words, your heritage’ (ibid).[35]

Another narrative tradition found in Za’atari is that of the ḥakawātī (pl. *ḥakawātīyeh*). Ḥakawātī, meaning a storyteller, is a figure (traditionally male) known for retelling folktales and legends in public spaces such as cafes and coffeehouses, squares, or outside public buildings and mosques.[36] Ḥakawātīyeh often accompany their stories with music, gestures, improvisation, and the use of different voices. The tales of ḥakawātīyeh are a means of entertainment but are also essential in preserving heritage, encouraging listeners to participate in and react to the performance and retelling of stories, and as a political tool (Chaudhary 2014; Malabonga 2019; Hamod 1963; Kilito

[35] I say more about the role of Arab arts and heritage in education for youth in Za’atari in Chapter 3.
[36] There are historical accounts of older women in Palestine and Lebanon telling stories to women and children in villages and towns in the evening, predominantly in private, indoor, domestic spaces and only at night, as the practice seems to have been forbidden for women historically during the daytime (Nassar 2006: 21).

2014; Snir 1999; Nassar 2006). Although the tradition of the ḥakawātī had almost disappeared by the mid-twentieth century, there have been attempts to revive the tradition: new storytelling events held in cafes in Beirut; ḥakawātī events for children in restaurants during the holy month of Ramadan; storytelling marathons at the Seraj Library and Storytelling Center in Palestine; and the emergence of female ḥakawātīyeh (Cuthbert 2019; Sewell 2017; Seraj Libraries 2024; Shaffi 2022; Nassar 2006; All Good Tales 2018). Revival of the ḥakawātī has drawn on the political dimensions of the tradition. Bisan Owda, for example, is a ḥakawātī who tells stories about Gaza and Palestine on Instagram and YouTube, notably so since the escalation of violence and genocide by the illegal Israeli occupation in Gaza since October 2023.[37]

Related are the traditions of *Al-Arājūz* (also rendered Al-Aragoz) a traditional form of hand puppetry using a portable theatre and glove dolls, and *khayāl al-ẓill,* broadly understood as shadow play.[38] These traditions have long played a pivotal role in entertaining audiences, offering social critique, delivering messages about daily life, and addressing politically sensitive topics (Guo 2020: iv; Shaltout 2024: 143; Mahmoud 2021: 292). In recent decades, various social and political changes in Egypt meant Al-Arājūz was at risk of dying out, and thus the tradition was inscribed to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding in 2018 (UNESCO 2018).

In Za'atari, several NGOs make use of the traditions of the ḥakawātī and puppetry in their work. Figure 3.1 below shows a puppet theatre constructed by a Syrian volunteer

[37] See Owda's Instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/wizard_bisan1?igsh=MXdjMGllZjc5dDhjcg== (Accessed 26 March 2024).
[38] The name al-Aragoz derives from the main and most popular doll.

from LWF, which was displayed as an example of the types of work LWF does to address mental health for a special event held in the camp on World Mental Health Day in 2021. Dressed in the traditional *ṭarbūsh* hat (also known as a *fez*) and *kuffīyeh* (patterned scarf), he uses storytelling and puppetry to relay messages about mental health to children in the camp. Libraries in the camp also make feature storytelling and storytime programmes that draw on the ḥakawātī tradition as part of their endeavours to provide literacy support to Syrian children (Fisher 2020a).



Figure 3.1. Ḥakawātī performing for LWF, World Mental Health Day, Za'atari.[39] (Photograph by the author, 21 October 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

[39] World Mental Health Day is an initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health that aims to educate and raise awareness for global mental health. In 2021, various NGOs in Za'atari celebrated the day by holding festivities that highlighted different mental health-focused activities in the camp in order to demonstrate how their programming supports mental health in innovative and original ways.

Narrative Ethnography, Storytelling, and *Antropoesía*

Anthropologists have long considered ethnography a kind of fiction and have debated the value of different types of knowledge production (see Clifford and Marcus 1986). One debate is concerned with the notion of narrative. Narrative has been defined as 'any form of language that creates a sense of coherence and meaning' (Pengelley and Irwin 2017: 47). Narrative ethnography thus expands on traditional forms of narrative analysis by incorporating practices such as storytelling and poetry (ibid). Historically, narrative has been framed as 'suspect' in anthropology due to fears it obscures or debases the 'truths' that ethnography supposedly intends to seek out (Watson 1995; Rosaldo 1989; Stoller 2016). However, the postcolonial turn in anthropology witnessed a revision of these views. For instance, in his work *Culture & Truth*, Renato Rosaldo dismantles classic norms in anthropology and argues for narrative ethnography as a valuable and credible form of social analysis beyond simply offering a 'dab of local colour': narrative ethnographies, he claims, rather demonstrate how 'ordinary people tell themselves stories about who they are, what they care about, and how they hope to realise their aspirations' (1989).

One form of narrative ethnography is storytelling. Storytelling is a 'specific form of narrative that expresses the human tendency to recount tales of knowledge, experience, thoughts, emotions, beliefs and perspectives' (Pengelley and Irwin 2017: 45). According to Jessica Symons and Rodolfo Maggio, stories can be 'real or imagined […] accounts, experiences, or journeys' in which people construct or share their worldviews (2014: 5). By using storytelling forms in ethnography, Paul Stoller argues that ethnographers (akin to fiction writers) can 'combine representations of place, dialogue, and character to create works that give the readers a real sense of locally lived life […] and to speak directly to

the human condition (2016: 126; 2017: 4). The culturally situated nature of stories has led many to draw parallels between storytelling techniques and the endeavour of ethnographic fieldwork itself: as Symons and Maggio suggest, stories help to 'capture the reader, promoting a form of engagement that mirrors the ethnographer's engagement with the people he/she writes about' (2014: 5).

Scholars also claim that narrative ethnography and storytelling are pertinent ways to explore aspects of everyday life. Narmala Halstead claims that her 'life writing' constitutes a 'different mode of representation' that focuses on the 'imponderabilia of everyday life' (2016: 137). The 1993 collection of interviews *My Music* shows how music 'gets instantiated in everyday life' by summoning a 'special kind of expertise', understood as the 'knowledge that people have about how they use and enjoy music in their own lives' (Lipsitz 1993: xii and xiii).

There are countless examples of narrative ethnographies that successfully evoke place, space, experiences, and perspectives. Ruth Behar's 1993 work *Translated Woman* has long been considered a pinnacle of character construction. Halstead wrote her first novel in 1994 during her fieldwork in urban and rural areas in Guyana (Shewcharan 1994), which is based on a character called 'Bhola Ram'. Halstead had never actually met anyone like Bhola Ram: 'he could have been a composite, or existed in his own right. He was "pure invention"' (2016: 136). Edna O'Brien takes a similar approach in her historically informed novel, *Girl* (2019). She creates an imagined female protagonist in whom she brings together the multiple voices of child brides of Boko Haram with whom she worked during fieldwork in Nigeria (ibid: 230). Mihirini Sirisena (2014) also blends the stories of the students she studied in Sri Lanka into one story with two main characters

to illustrate the different tensions and negotiations of romantic relationships among university students.

Another way scholars have approached narrative ethnography is through poetry. Rosaldo theorises poetry as follows:

> The work of poetry […] is to bring its subject – whether pain, sorrow, shock, or joy – home to the reader. It is not an ornament; it does not make things pretty. Nor does it shy away from agony and distress. Instead it brings things closer, or into focus, or makes them palpable. It slows the action, the course of events, to reveal depth of feeling and to explore its character. (2013: 105)

Described as 'verse with an ethnographic sensibility', Rosaldo's concept of *antropoesía* (anthropoetry) is an opportunity for anthropologists to express feeling to a reader (2013: 106). Antropoesía – also referred to as ethnographic poetry – resembles field research in that it 'involves observation, asking questions, attending with patience and care, knowing that meaning may be there, waiting to be found, even if the observer-poet does not yet know what it is' (ibid: 107). Accordingly, Rosaldo likens the anthropoet to the ethnographer: they both 'dwell in powerful experiences and perceptions' and 'render intelligible what is complex and to bring home to the reader the uneven and contradictory shape of that moment' (ibid). This approach is illustrated in Rosaldo's collection of poems *The Day of Shelley's Death* (2013), which brings into view the subjectivities of himself and the different people he encountered on the traumatic day of his wife's death in the Philippines: 'In writing about the people I encountered – people who for the most part I barely knew or had never met – I learned how deeply my feelings resonated within and were shaped by a field of accidental social relations' (2013: 108).

Adrie Kusserow posits that antropoesía may have particular resonances with research in contexts of conflict and displacement: 'Far from documenting a neat life, a poem, in its very nomadic vagrancy and line length, rhythm and unsettling metaphor, can depict the borderlands, the liminal places of confusion of a refugee, the internal tug of war' (2017: 74). Accordingly, Kusserow composes ethnographic poems about her experiences with refugees from South Sudan in Uganda, South Sudan, and Vermont. The flexibility of ethnographic poetry, she claims, allows ethnographers to 'move the character situationally […] where the refugee is expected to play various roles', and can 'convey the strangeness of adapting to a new culture' (ibid: 75). Miryam Espinosa-Dulanto's work similarly uses poetic narrative to express the daily 'reality, tragedies, dreams, and hopes' of undocumented women in the United States in such a way that moves the reader into the 'uncomfortable world of undocumented people' (2018: 177).

In addition, ethnography like storytelling and antropoesía may attend to the ethical aspects of ethnography (see Rosaldo et al. 1993). This is crucial for ethnographers who study war, displacement, and injustice. First, in terms of anonymity. In her work on state engendered violence in the northeastern regions of India, Soibam Haripriya notes how much of the information shared with her 'could not be revealed for the safety of the respondents' and that many 'wished to remain anonymous' (2018: 132). Engagement with poetry therefore offers Haripriya a 'way of stating the unsayable/unspeakable' and narrating 'beyond what will be ethically possible within ethnography' (ibid: 129-130 and 132). Second, regarding the politically committed responsibilities of the ethnographer. Kusserow believes that 'anthropologists who study war and refugees have an ethical responsibility not to numb, but to move the reader'; poetry enables anthropologists to engender 'action or feeling on the part of the reader' (2017: 76). Espinosa-Dulanto

extends this argument, claiming that ethical responsibility goes beyond feelings to the act of giving witness to undocumented people's worlds, illustrating how immigration status restricts human rights, and highlighting the links between gender and continuous abuse and discrimination (2018: 177).

Creating the Hakawātīyeh of Za'atari

Drawing on Arab literary traditions and anthropological methodologies of storytelling and antropoesía, in this chapter I tell the stories of the different everyday performance and listening practices of three characters from Za'atari: Ayman, Iman, and Maryam.

Ayman is a well-known oud player and singer in Za'atari. He performs at locations and events both inside and outside the camp. Working as a professional musician is a way of life for Ayman, providing a fundamental source of financial support for him and his family.[40] Performing is also key to negotiating his social position within camp society (helping him to garner a celebrity-like status in Zaatari) but also within the broader Jordanian artistic community; travelling to Amman to record in studios or perform in cafes offers a 'change of scenery' for Ayman and helps him to envisage a life beyond the confines of the camp. Ayman's story is called 'Singing to Live, Living to Sing' and documents the musical acts of negotiation and mediation employed by professional musicians in different locations and times: purchasing an oud from a shop in Amman, a

[40] As previously explained, it was difficult to ascertain the number of male musicians working in a professional capacity in Za'atari at the time I was conducting fieldwork because I did not have access to male music-making spaces or wider social events where professional musicians perform. However, it is fair to assume that there is a relatively significant community of men who perform music in a professional capacity across the camp: I was told several stories about men performing at weddings, parties, and gatherings (for which many earn a fee), and Syrians would regularly post videos and photos of male musicians at these events on social media, predominantly featuring the org, tabla, and rubābā.

performance for a birthday party in Za'atari, and a paid gig at a cafe in East Amman. These three vignettes are written in descriptive prose and from Ayman's perspective. Other characters in the story include his friends, family, fellow artists, and colleagues with whom he works at NGOs in the camp.

Iman is a woman in her thirties. She is well-known among her friends and family for her singing voice and for writing songs. Iman does not work as a professional musician, nor does she make money through performing. However, she does use composition and songs to process and understand her emotions and events that occur in her life. Iman's story, 'The Writing on the Caravan Walls', is a chronological account of her life through music. The first event is the death of her son in 2014 and the second is a family gathering at a private residence in the present day. Each section is punctuated by a particular song performed or composed in that period. Thick descriptive prose and extensive use of simile and metaphor work to reflect Iman's pursuits as a composer and singer, as well as creating an expressive space to explore the inner worlds of women in the camp. Through Iman's eyes, other figures from her life emerge, including family members, friends, and colleagues, unveiling Iman's social world to the reader.

Maryam is the third character of this chapter. Maryam listens to a variety of genres at home and at work, including different categories of Arabic classical and popular music, and instrumental Western classical music. She also spends time listening to renditions of the call to prayer, the adhān. Maryam's story is built on the extended metaphor of 'mind rooms': the idea that different musics and sounds open different rooms in the listener's mind, each of which allows the listener to travel, escape, meditate, or to change the mood. For Maryam, some of these rooms are associated with certain places, people, or times, whereas others evoke different feelings or states of mind. In contrast to Ayman and

Iman's stories, Maryam's story is composed of three long-form poems under the title 'Mind Rooms'. Each poem describes a different room (and associated musical genre) of Maryam's mind. They are written in the first person, in free form, and use extended poetic devices.

It is important to note that Ayman, Iman, and Maryam are not 'real' individuals. They are imagined. The three characters are ethnographic hakawātīyeh, storytellers, through whom we learn about the different performing and listening practices in Za'atari. Ayman, Iman, and Maryam are created in the sense that these three people do not actually exist in real life. However, as in the work of the writers described above, the characters are composites of the people with whom I conducted my fieldwork: they are based entirely on Syrians who live in the camp and on data I collected about their lives in interviews, conversations, interactions, observations, experiences, photographs, and videos. Many of these Syrians have already been featured in this thesis, and others emerge in the chapters to follow. Much of Ayman, for instance, is an amalgamation of the lives of musician Walid, poet Maher, musician Tariq (who I introduce in Chapter 3), and other men such as Anas, Amir, Hussein, Mustafa, Oday, to name but a few. Iman and Maryam are a blend of several Syrian women including Nermeen, Farah, Basma, Lama, Batool, Rawan, and Amina. These women shared deeply intimate and personal stories with me (some stated they had never shared these stories with anyone before) and, consequently, I was concerned about writing their stories and protecting identities.[41] Through the

[41] As mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, all participants in my research are given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

creation of hakawātīyeh it is thus possible to narrate their stories and state the previously 'unsayable/unspeakable' while respecting their confidentiality (Haripriya 2018: 132).

The information, events, and words in the stories below are also taken from fieldwork data. Everything in Ayman, Iman, and Maryam's stories did actually happen, they just happened to several individuals at various times. Some of these events were relayed to me in testimony, and some events I participated in or observed myself. Furthermore, the words, images, metaphors, expressions, terminologies, vocabularies, and even some song lyrics that appear below are taken from Syrians themselves, as told to me and heard in interviews, conversations, and encounters.

It is worth demonstrating how the creation of hakawātīyeh manifests in practice through a few examples in order to clarify where the information shared in stories comes from, to emphasise other people's actual creative work, and to demonstrate that, in fact, 'I was there'. The first vignette in Ayman's story, for instance, explains how he travels to Jordan's capital, Amman. Walid (like several men from Za'atari) regularly goes to Amman to visit friends, and he explained the process of purchasing his first oud there on one visit: 'I was staying in Jabal Hussein [with my friend] and I saw an advert on Facebook for ouds for sale […] So I rang them, asked them where they were […] It was a complete coincidence […] It was like 200m from the house!' (interview with the author, 21 August 2021). The recollections of Ayman's musical past and childhood in that vignette are based on various testimonies: Maher, for instance, described the process of copying out poems by Qabbani as gifts for his high school crushes (interview with the author, 11 July 2021), and Walid recounted learning to sing with his school teacher and the importance of finally buying his first oud as an adult: 'My oud is my friend. He doesn't betray me. Maybe another oud would betray me in the way I hold it – I'm used

to my oud. That's what makes me happy. He's my friend' (interview with the author, 21 August). Likewise, the story relating the death of Iman's son in her story is based on the testimony of Basma, whose child was tragically electrocuted in their home in Za'atari. She painfully shared the story of his death, and then explained how singing helped her to process the trauma:

> Even the day my son died […] I loved singing because I could empty out my energy somewhere. Even though they were sad songs or whatever, I felt, you know, at least there is something […] I would cry [when I'm singing about my son]. (Interview with the author, 6 July 2021)

Moreover, the song Iman sings in her story below ('Sīd al-ḥabayib' by Egyptian singer Shadia) is one of the 'sad songs' Basma sang following the death of her son: the lyrics describe the relationship between a mother and her most beloved child (interview with the author, 7 July 2021). Indeed, the artists, musicians, songs, and genres mentioned throughout the below stories are those I frequently heard being played and listened to in Za'atari and those noted by Syrians as their favourite artists and singers (Fairuz, Elissa, Nancy Ajram, Sherine Abd al-Wahab, Amr Diab, Wael Kfoury, Kadim Al-Sahir, George Wassuf, and more).

In other cases, I observed and attended the events in the stories. The party described in the second vignette in Ayman's story took place in Za'atari on 26 February 2020, and the photos that appear in that vignette are those I took during the gathering. The poetry and music described were performed at the gathering (a poem by the Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani and a song by the Syrian singer Nour Mhanna), and the descriptions of people's reactions and thoughts about the gathering are based on my own observations during the party and interactions with attendees.

Ayman, Iman, and Maryam's stories also employ the creative work of Syrians. This includes words, terminologies, metaphors, images, expressions, and ideas. There are countless examples of this throughout the stories. The lyrics that feature in the second half of Iman's story are taken from the song 'Uktubna yā zamān' composed by Basma in 2022, a recording of which was sent to me via WhatsApp on 6 October 2021. The song lyrics (along with the texts for every song that appears in this thesis) can be found in full in Appendix I. The extended metaphor of mind rooms, for instance, which forms the basis of Maryam's poems, was explained by Batool as follows:

> There are places in your mind, like rooms. Each room has a feeling. And every type of music opens a door to a different room. There are types of music if I listen to them, I go to, like, the room of sadness. And there are types of music that leave me in a state of hope. (Interview with the author, 27 July 2021)

In addition to overarching metaphors, other images utilised throughout the three stories come from interviews with Syrians. Some examples include: food-based images like 'ghurba has a bitter taste' and drinking juice as in Ayman's story (Walid, interview with the author, 21 August 2021); musical notation as characters that speak and walk together as in Maryam's (Lama, interview with the author, 30 June 2021); and singing to become an '*ajnabīyeh'* (foreigner) as in Iman's (Farah, interview with the author, 26 July 2021).

Some Ethical Concerns of Narrative Ethnography

There are, of course, several ethical concerns involved in the approaches I outline above. First, there is the problem of my authority and presence as the writer of these stories and the fact that I essentially speak for these characters. Rosaldo (2013) unearths the same issue, admitting that he often 'speaks for other people in their first-person voices', thereby

risking projection and imposing 'one's perceptions on others' (2013: 108). For Kusserow, this is particularly pertinent with refugees: 'To fly home via the US Embassy and write about these lives while they continue to suffer seems completely unfair. It is their voices that should be writing about their own experience of war in South Sudan' (2017: 89-90).

The second predominant issue pertains to the blending of information collected during fieldwork and the invention of characters. By consolidating the experiences and stories of my interlocuters into just three characters there is a risk of implying that Ayman, Iman, and Maryam speak for *all* residents in Za'atari, or are entirely 'made up' and not based on evidence, actual collected data, or my own deep fieldwork. These concerns are relevant in contexts of conflict, displacement, and violence. In her work on state-engendered violence in the northeastern regions of India, Haripriya warns that in field sites of conflict 'doing away with evidence and facticity of events is dangerously close to modes of erasures and oppressive forgetting' (2018: 133).

Thirdly, while I welcome the act of narrative ethnography to bring about a politically committed anthropology, I resonate with Espinosa-Dulanto's humble recognition of the limitations of retellings and poetry, which cannot, she argues, be considered as 'attempts to resolve the immigrants' predicaments nor as an 'oversimplification of their lives/stories' (2018: 177).

Some scholars have attempted to reframe these risks as opportunities to highlight many of the issues at the core of doing fieldwork with refugees. Kusserow sees the ethnographic poem as a way to 'point toward the ethical questions that inevitably arise within the anthropologist about issues of power, whiteness, and social inequality in the field' (2017: 90). Rosaldo states that while some of the social relations he describes may appear 'accidental and fleeting', their inclusion demonstrates how such incidents can in

fact be 'vivid and significant' – 'I learned from them', he says (2013: 108). Accordingly, Rosaldo approaches poetry not as 'purely subjective' but rather 'intersubjective'; 'more the result of an inquiry from a man embedded in a field of accidental social relations than a report from the lone participant observer' (ibid). For instance, when Rosaldo describes the character of 'The Soldier', Rosaldo assumes the perspective of the Soldier seeing and looking back at him at a time when Rosaldo himself could not do so: 'The Soldier' becomes Rosaldo's 'mirror' (ibid). Kusserow similarly understands the voices of Sudanese refugees as mirrors: her poems record 'her version of South Sudan', thereby making 'her often muddled, vulnerable, and confused presence known' (2017: 90). The emotions of her poems are not acts of indulgence, but rather acts of honesty, testifying the ways in which her voice 'necessarily differs' from those of Sudanese refugees (ibid).[42]

I take a similar approach in Maryam's story. In the poems 'Mind Rooms', I imagine that Maryam is directly addressing me, the ethnographer, as I listen to her and attempt to understand her experiences of listening to music. In these poems, Maryam elucidates her perspectives on complex topics such as Islam, gender, and music through metaphors and examples that relate to my experiences and identity. For example, when explaining the sense of spirituality that she feels when listening to renditions of the adhān, Maryam calls on my position as a non-Muslim brought up in a Christian country: 'No hallelujah chorus of angels/Like in your churches'. This was the case in my interviews and interactions

[42] This has resonances with the field of performative ethnography and the work of scholars such as Michelle Kisliuk (1998, 2008) and Deborah Wong (2008), who demonstrate the capacity of approaches such as poetry and 'embodied poetic description' (Kisliuk 2008: 197) to evoke the experience of the researcher and her medium (Wong 2008: 79). Kisliuk argues that poetics invite a 'meta-conversation' between the ethnographer, the people with whom she works, her readers, and the material and ideas (including social life and aesthetics) she addresses (ibid: 202).

with Syrians in Za'atari, who would use imagery based on their view of me and my experiences. For instance, in my conversation with Anas about the nature of community in Syria and the camp, he made comparisons with my home country, the Isle of Man: 'Like in your country that you told me about, you know everyone, and […] you have time to sit with people, and spend time with people […] But then suddenly you're put in this place with 2 million people – like if you went to Britain. The surroundings are different, the customs are different, relationships are different. That's Za'atari' (interview with the author, 4 July 2021). My intersubjectivities with participants is emphasised by phrases in Maryam's poems such as 'Do you understand me?', 'Do you get it?', 'Let me tell you', 'I will tell you what I think', which featured regularly in my encounters in Za'atari, reflecting Syrians' checking I had understood their perspectives and thoughts. Batool, for instance, said to me: 'I'll tell you an example just so you understand correctly' (interview with the author, 27 July).

The notion of intersubjectivities in anthropoetry may also help to shed light on the problem of blending multiple stories into three characters. While Halstead's character of Bhola Rum in Guyana was invented, she argues that his story 'resonated with the life experiences of others' (2016: 136). Furthermore, Haripriya suggests that poetry creates an opportunity for 'stating the unsayable/unspeakable' in contexts where much of the information shared could not be revealed for the safety of the respondents' (2018: 132). Poetry, Haripriya claims, may in fact constitute a new form of knowledge production that embraces a model where the 'subject-object or the knower-known boundary gets merged' (ibid: 144). In the stories below, the invented characters of Ayman, Iman, and Maryam enable me to merge the life stories of many Syrians without revealing individual identities. I do not wish to imply that the experiences, feelings, and life stories of Ayman,

Iman, and Maryam actually reside in three individuals: rather, these characters are gateways, storytellers, hakawātīyeh of the various, divergent, and diverse intersubjectivities of those I encountered in the Za'atari environment.

Ayman: 'Singing to Live, Living to Sing'

1

The Shop

Ghurba has a bitter taste. Like coffee when it's been left to boil for too long. Or when too many grounds are added to the *rakweh,* the coffee pot. It lingers on his tongue, coating his teeth and gums with a gritty residue. It overpowers all other tastes and makes everything dark, unpleasant, sour.

Ayman sits on a stool outside the main door of his caravan and surveys the street. The scene is beige, in every sense of the word: beige sand, beige caravans, beige atmosphere. The street is run down and dishevelled. Caravans are lined up either side in various states of disrepair. Old mattresses lean against caravan walls. Plastic bags and rubbish are strewn across the dusty ground. People make their way to the main road below where the market begins. They pay no attention to him, nor he to them. They trudge past in abayas or old jeans and brown cotton work vests; at least the latter are adorned in some way with a little embroidery, even if just with the names of the NGOs for whom their wearers work. Seventies Raleigh style bicycles weave among the walkers haphazardly trying to avoid the rocks and potholes of the rugged ground below or the large water tanks that protrude from houses and line the centre of the road. Riders balance bags of bread for breakfast or boxes of groceries for wives at home on the handlebars. From his stool, he can see the main road below: a steady flow of old carts pulled by donkeys and rundown

fruit trucks, interrupted periodically by big and shiny cars with logos and stickers on their sides.

He looks at his watch. 8am already! He should set off for work. Inside, he can hear his wife shouting at the kids. Put your shoes on! You're already late for school! *Yā Allah!* Because I said so, that's why! Aya, *khalaṣ!* Stop it! Mohamed, be quiet! You're hurting my head! You lot drive me crazy; may God forgive you all!

His job as a security guard at the Save the Children compound hardly offers much peace. Standing in the stagnant heat under the sun all day monitoring the gate, organising gaggles of children, directing them to their classes, telling off the teenage boys for kicking balls over fences, and so on.

Children, stress, work, routine. He needs a change of scenery.

That night he tells his wife he'll spend the weekend in Amman with his old friend, Samer. She doesn't argue. It's not as if he helps with the children anyway; always in the garden, messing about with his basil and mint. He leaves work early on Thursday so he can get to Amman before nightfall and spend the weekend in the city. He doesn't have a permit, so he'll have to use al-sātir and hope he doesn't get caught. He usually doesn't.[43]

He walks the long distance from his house towards the main road outside the camp to take the bus. The bus only seats about twelve, and passengers get on and off at various stops along the route. One rarely stays in the same seat for the entire journey on these buses; if a woman gets on, all the men will shuffle around to allow her to sit alone on one of the single seats along the right-hand side. The journey takes twice as long as it should

[43] Weekends in Jordan are Friday and Saturday.

because the driver regularly stops to get coffee from young boys waving silver trays at the side of the road, to pray, or to wait for the bus to fill up again at stops along the way. Usually there is more seat shuffling at this point, too: people getting off to stretch their legs or use a gas station toilet. Brown curtains are drawn closed across the windows to shield passengers from the summer sun. Thank God, a hint of cold air through the vents on the ceiling. Tajwīd plays vaguely and quietly in the background. People talk on phones, drift in and out of sleep, or whisper prayers to themselves.

He alights the bus at Tabarbour Station in North Amman, and tracks down a *servīs*, the white taxis of Amman, heading towards the Jabal Al-Hussein district where his friend lives. He wishes he didn't have to take these shared taxis; he'd much rather take one of the yellow private cabs on his own instead of having to share his journey cooped up with three other passengers he doesn't even know in a cramped and worn-out Hyundai.

Jabal al-Hussein is one of the oldest districts in Amman. The buildings are closely cramped together, and many are beginning to show signs of their age. Samer's place is not far from the district's main market, close to Hussein Camp, one of the camps for Palestinians in Jordan. The Apartment is on the top floor of a rundown building. Of course, as with all these old apartment blocks, there's no elevator. Beads of sweat drip down Ayman's forehead onto the broken tiles of the stairs as he climbs to the top. It's only three flights but he's out of breath all the same. Thank God for the strict laws here that cap building heights: he doesn't think he'd make it in this heat if there were more than three storeys.

Samer greets him at the top. They embrace, planting light kisses on each other's cheeks. In front of the door, shoes, sandals, and slippers are neatly lined up; he leaves his own amongst them and crosses the threshold. The Apartment is small: a corridor with

three rooms along the left-hand side. The first is a square-shaped room for lounging and sleeping, followed by the kitchen, then a small bathroom. In the main living room, the floor is covered with long cushions, upholstered with grey and silver shiny floral fabric. The shutters are closed halfway to shade the room from the afternoon sun. Some rays slip through the spaces where the slats don't quite meet, painting the floor in rows of yellow stripes. There are several cracks on the white concrete walls and the ceiling, meeting in the centre where a bare light bulb hangs from exposed blue and red wires.

They eat a breakfast prepared by Samer's wife, Fatima. Spread out on a plastic sheet on the floor of the living room, they eat bread, oil, and *zaatar,* the oregano and thyme herb mix found in every Arab kitchen. There's also *makdūs*, the small aubergines stuffed with walnuts and chillies, preserved in rich and gloopy olive oil. Seeing the makdūs next to black olives piled up in white and brown porcelain bowls reminds Ayman of his mother and those sleepy breakfasts they'd enjoy together after Friday prayers. Fatima doesn't eat with them. After she brings the food, she slips back to the kitchen, leaving him and Samer alone to eat and catch up.

Samer used to live in Za'atari and wants to hear all the news. How are your renovations coming on? Did you plant the basil? Did you get the second caravan? How is Abu Mahmoud? And Abu Leyan? Are they still working at the Centre? Did Mohamed finally travel? No, not that Mohamed. The one who left for Germany. Did he make it? I heard he got stuck at the border. Have you ever thought about travelling? No, I can't afford it either.

They talk for hours, and soon Samer has to leave for work. But before he does, he invites Ayman up to the roof terrace. Many of the houses in Amman have them. Usually, they are filled with huge white plastic water tanks, satellite dishes, or washing lines. But

The Rooftop in Samer's building has enough space that he's also able to lay out some old cushions and matting for him, Fatima, and their daughter to lounge on in the summer and escape the sweltering heat of The Apartment. Once they reach the top, Ayman is glad for the breeze. And for the view. The Apartment might be small and basic, but the view is the opposite. The Rooftop looks out over the whole of Jabal al-Hussein and even all the way to Downtown. Yes, Ayman will be more than happy to spend some hours up here while Samer is at work.

Ayman relaxes on the cushions and spreads his legs out on the matting Samer has laid out on the concrete floor. It's secured down with some old bricks. Fatima brings him sweetened tea in a glass cup. He does nothing much, apart from scroll through Facebook. He had a long journey, and he is hopeful he might be able to nap in the cool of The Rooftop, gazing up at the moon. It always rises so early here.

Just as he feels himself about to nod off, between a photo of a wedding from the camp and a status bearing an extract from the Qūr'ān, he sees an advert that perks him up: a picture of a shop somewhere in Amman. At first, it seems like a standard shop selling tourist stuff. But hanging next to the abayas, dresses with coin belts for raqṣ sharqī, lanterns, tea trays, statues of Um Kulthum, and other trinkets, are dozens of ouds. Ayman sits upright, stirred from his drowsiness. Clicking the link through to the main page, he discovers The Shop is in *wasaṭ al-balad.* The famous downtown area of the city.

That's only a five-minute walk from Samer's place.

Allah always shows us the way.

The Shop is on the corner right in the heart of wasaṭ al-balad. Outside, Abu Ghassan sits on a white plastic chair on the pavement smoking a cigarette looking out at the busy road and lines of traffic. As Ayman approaches The Shop, Abu Ghassan jumps up and

throws the cigarette onto the yellow and pink bricks below. They greet each other in the customary fashion: May God give you health and all good things. And all good things to you. Abu Ghassan ushers him inside: Welcome, welcome! *Ahlan wa Sahlan!* Please enter, good sir!

The Shop is packed full of objects. Ouds hang from ceiling and are propped up on chairs in every corner of the store. Abu Ghassan continues to bestow greetings and good wishes on Ayman as he looks around. On further inspection, there are also ṭabl and daf, and the canes used by some dabke dancers instead of misbaḥa. He replies to Abu Ghassan politely, but his mind is elsewhere. He strokes the wooden belly of an oud, the stretched skin of a ṭabla.



Figure 3.2. Shop in downtown Amman. (Photograph by the author, 15 September 2021, Amman, Jordan).

As he does so, the bitter taste upon his tongue that has taken residence there begins to dissipate. The unpleasant sharpness gives way to sweetness. It tastes like the sugar syrup poured over *qaṭāyif* during Ramadan or drizzled over hot *knāfeh*.[44] It swirls around his mouth, all fragrant and floral. Suddenly, the world around him grows light. It was as if all these years there had been a grey vignette creeping in around the edges of his vision, so slowly that he hadn't even noticed it until this moment. Now, he sees the light. A night sky lit up with a thousand blood moons.

The ouds gleam and glimmer in the light from the spotlights above. They shine in shades of brown, orange, mahogany. Their sound holes are covered with intricate rosette designs. As Abu Ghassan explains: the more beautiful the instrument, the more you'll pay. And no doubt about it, some of these ouds cost a lot. He remembers how expensive ouds were in Syria even before the events: 200 or 300 līra! That price soared in the first years of the chaos to almost double. But he knows that even in Jordan where things are cheaper, a good instrument was still going to cost you.

He walks over to one oud, sitting on top of a pile of dafs in one corner of The Shop. Abu Ghassan gives him a price. It's a lot. But Thank God, he's able to bargain to meet his budget.[45] Abu Ghassan hands the oud over to Ayman. At first, he isn't sure where to put his hands, where to place his fingers, where to balance the body, how tightly he should

---

[44] Qaṭāyif are small deep-fried pancakes filled with cream or walnuts, commonly eaten during the holy month of Ramadan. Knāfeh is made with unripe cheese baked with shredded phyllo dough. Both are dipped in or drizzled with sweet sugar syrup, often fragranced with rose or other floral scents.
[45] Bargaining or bartering over prices is a usual custom in markets and some establishments across the Middle East. See Khuri 1968 for more on the etiquette of bargaining in Arab society.

grip. It's the first time in his life he's ever held a musical instrument. He doesn't even know how to play.

But he does know how to sing.

The first time was when he was just a young boy. Eight or nine years old. A simple farmer's son. They were auditioning students to sing for a special school assembly. He can't remember what for now after all these years. Probably a national holiday. Everyone was made to audition. Boy after boy stepped forward from the line, singing a couple of notes before being dismissed with an unimpressed wave of The Teacher's hand. When his turn came, he started the requested song: 'Mawṭinī'. But The Teacher did not wave him off like the he did the others. He sang the first verse, then the second and third, until he stopped. He didn't know any more verses. The Teacher slowly approached him: What's your name, dear boy? The Teacher stared him in the eyes, a youthful smirk appearing across an old and wrinkled face: What a voice you've got there, my son! You'd be quite good if you practised.

He studied with The Teacher until he graduated. Once a week, The Teacher taught him popular songs, or played him muwashshaḥāt on a tape recorder in The Teacher's office or told him about all the notes and the rhythms. Sometimes, The Teacher even wrote out the black notes onto lines and spaces on special paper, and he would sing them back as The Teacher listened. On special days, The Teacher brought an oud. But Ayman never played it. He just sang along as The Teacher strummed beneath him to the words of the most popular artists: George Wassuf, Sabah Fakhri, even Fairuz. Everyone likes Fairuz.

He started writing his own songs, too. Little songs based on the maqāmāt he'd learnt. He'd gift the songs to the girls he fancied at school, writing the lyrics down on pieces of

paper torn from exercise books, or serenading them in the playground as their friends giggled in a group behind. When he was in 2nd Grade, he fell in love with a girl called Muna. Well, he thought he did. Though he supposes it wasn't real love. There were lots of girls he 'loved' in those days; they would come and go from his heart like the desert winds. Just silly little schoolboy crushes. But his regard for Muna never faltered. Right up to 12th Grade when he took his Baccalauréat, his final exams, he loved her. Ten years of writing and singing songs just for her. But as soon as Muna graduated, she got married to someone else. He was heartbroken, if only for a brief moment. He moved onto someone else a few days after. *Heyk ad-dinyā.* That's life.

Then came The Police. It was, without doubt, the biggest mistake of his life signing up. But there was little choice other than to work for The State in those days. God knows how they took him, all lankiness and sentimentality. It was a dark time: just training, training, and more training. And training left no time for anything else, let alone time to sing or write. Ayman The Singer slipped away. Ayman The Singer was dead. He sang a bit when he was in The Prison, you know, to comfort other prisoners. But that's a story for another time.

He had hoped leaving Syria might resurrect him. It had not done. Singing was the last thing on his mind when he fled. All he had wanted was a safe place to sleep, a safe place where he wasn't scared shelling would kill his family or where The Regime couldn't find him and force him back to his post. Like he always says: when you're thirsty, you don't drink juice. No! You drink water first, gallons of it. Only when your thirst is quenched, only when you've drank enough water, do you reach for the juice.

It was finally time to drink the juice.

He counts out his cash as Abu Ghassan zipped up a black polyester case around the oud he had chosen. It was without doubt the cheapest in the shop: the strings are bad, and the wood is thin and lousy. But it is all he can afford.

Back in Za'atari the next morning he wakes early – a habit accrued from his training days. Eyes drooping with sleep, he reaches across and grabs the new oud. Not wishing to wake his wife or children sleeping on the mats next to him, he very quietly plucks his way through the strings; thirty seconds or so. It doesn't form a melody, just random notes. He leans the oud back against the wall and gets up from the floor. He makes coffee and goes outside to sit on the stool outside his home.

He opens his phone and plays a Fairuz compilation on YouTube: the background image on the video is a white beach and blue azure sea. He looks out at the street and watches the passers-by. As they walk in their abayas and cotton vests, or ride their bicycles or push prams, he waves and smiles at them. He shouts out and greets them with a loud voice: Morning of goodness! They turn their heads in his direction, and shout out: Morning of light, sir!

Each day he wakes early and immediately plays his oud. Notes become maqāmāt. Maqāmāt become melodies. Every morning, he plays then heads out to drink his coffee on the front step.

Morning of goodness! Morning of roses!

Although these morning moments with his oud are brief – never more than five minutes or so – they are enough to feel as if he has practised, like he's trained his fingers and his hands just a little, just enough, before he greets the day.

Morning of goodness! Morning of jasmine!

And each time he plays, the oud becomes more beautiful: the wood shines brighter, the strings become more supple beneath his fingers. His hands start to mould to the fret board, and the more they create a slight indentation in the wood, the more the oud becomes his. It is his: it belongs to him, and him alone. His oud is his friend. His oud never betrays him, it never leaves. It is the only oud that truly…gets him.

He carries his oud everywhere he goes: to work, to the supermarket, to his friend's house. He is obsessed. During the day he watches endless YouTube videos: how to tune your oud, proper finger placement, plucking techniques, playing different maqāmāt on your oud. There are nine other ouds at the centre where he works, each one more expensive than the next. He often finds himself gazing at them in an idle moment. But he never plays them. They are not his, and they feel foreign in his hand. Even to touch them feels reckless, wrong. What if he can't get the notes out? What if it slips from his grip? What if it bears allegiance to someone else?

Ayman has a new job teaching music at another NGO in the camp. All he had to do was sing in the audition, and he got the job. The manager said his voice reminded him of Lebanon. One day, Doctor Mahmoud comes up to the camp for a visit. Doctor Mahmoud is not a doctor. At least not in the conventional sense. Mahmoud is a Jordanian musician who works for Ayman's new NGO. The Doctor brought an oud with him, purchased in Greece on a recent holiday. God only knows how much he paid.

Mashallah.

What God has willed has happened.

It is one of the most beautiful things Ayman has ever seen. The perfectly polished wood, the delicate neck, the white floral inlay design. The Doctor shows Ayman the instrument and urges him to have a go. But he can't possibly. Only The Doctor can play

an oud of that standard. It probably cost $4000 or something like it, surely. Though he had no idea of the actual price, he is sure it was too expensive for him to play. It deserves more learned hands.

But Doctor Mahmoud insists. As Ayman holds the oud with his rough hands and rests it upon his bony knee, the weight of its prestige descends upon him. Plucking the strings with a clear long plectrum, he feels something akin to that time in The Shop. Playing The Doctor's oud, the same sweetness collects in his mouth. And with it, that bright light in his eyes. Now he knows what is to come: he hasn't yet reached the level worthy of this calibre of instrument, but he would do all he could to deserve one like it one day.

Doctor Mahmoud leaves him alone to play on the oud while he goes to supervise the other music teachers' sessions. Oud in hand, Ayman mumbles out some lyrics, like he had once mumbled out for his girlfriends on the schoolyard. He mumbles and plucks, taking breaks to type out his words into his phone. But now the words are different from before. He does not speak of young love or innocence or happily ever after. For he has changed, he has been in the darkness, in the shadows. But the oud – both his and The Doctor's – have lit him up. Music has changed him: it has given him hope. Hope for a better oud, and a better future.

2

The Party

Rain falls heavily onto the concrete floor of the youth centre courtyard. Little pools form all over, dirtied by mud and sand. The sky above him is grey and cloudless, and predictably gloomy and cold for February. It's the type of cold you only find in the desert; it bores right through to your bones, to your core. It's almost one o'clock. He sets off to find Hamza. No doubt huddling with everybody else in the kitchen; it's the only caravan

in the centre with any reliable heating source. He and Hamza have their next set of music lessons in a few minutes. That is, if the students come. Rain always puts people off.

As predicted, he finds Hamza atop the kitchen counter with two friends. They're directly in the path of the warm air leaving the heating unit above them. Their legs swing back and forth like small children. All of them wear the same ripped jeans and leather slippers. The room is packed. Everyone drinks tea sweetened with sugar and mint. It's often the same group in here every day. They even sit in the same places. As he enters, they turn towards him with not so friendly faces: he's let in a gust of the bitter Jordanian desert air. But they greet him respectfully, asking after his family and children. Formalities over with, he motions to Hamza to get going.

The students arrive, and more turn up than he expects. He begins by serenading them with a song or two, accompanying himself on the org. Even if his audience is a group of nine-year-old boys, he never misses a chance to perform. Some think him a proud, arrogant kind of man. Yes, he's talented – but he knows it. Even so, he's a liked character. People turn a blind eye to his ego, to his self-importance. They beg him to sing at parties, stop him in the street for selfies, gaze in admiration as he plays for them over morning coffees at work.

Soon enough he returns to the usual order of the class. They sing through the major and minor scales using solfège. They recite small phrases he's devised: Every Stave has Five Lines and Four Spaces. Some of the boys even take it in turns to play the opening phrase of some sha'bī song on the org; these kind of songs are always popular with the children, and they always sing along enthusiastically.

A sudden blast of cold floods into the caravan. Rami, one of the other volunteers, pops his head out from behind the door: Ayman, they want you. Despite the lack of

details, he can take a few guesses. ‘They’ are the Amman staff. Maybe they need some detail for a report or paperwork? But before Rami exits back out the door, he shouts out: Bring your oud, OK?

They want him to perform! He casts his mind back. Had he heard correctly that it’s someone’s birthday today? One of the Jordanian employees? He’s sure that was the topic being thrown about when he stepped into the warmth of the kitchen earlier. Something about getting bottles of juice and packets of mini cakes out of the storage cupboard? He hadn’t wasted time trying to understand; he has little time for pointless chatter. But as quickly as the proud smirk on his face had appeared, it vanishes. A slight sense of dread sets in. It isn’t that he dislikes performing; he relishes the opportunity to play for an adoring crowd. But spontaneous, spur-of-the-moment occasions are his least favourite. He has no time to prepare, no time to rehearse, no time to even properly tune his oud.

As Rami disappears back behind the door, he almost feels the urge to shout out: Well? For a dinar or for five? But it’s not worth it. For all his grumblings, he is really quite flattered at the invitation – fee or no fee. They want *him* to come and perform. Not Hamza, not one of those people that perform at weddings in the camp, but *him*.

He dismisses the boys early. There’s only ten minutes left of the class as it is, and it’s raining: best they get home as quick as they can before the roads turn to slush. He unzips the thin black polyester case covering his oud, a useless layer of protection in this harsh environment. The oud’s wood is icy to the touch, the tuning is completely off. He fiddles about adjusting the tuning pegs for a few minutes, conscious of keeping the party waiting too long. He roots around in his bag for a pair of fingerless gloves and then sets off to The Party.

He trudges through the rain in his trusty walking boots.

Across the courtyard is a large caravan. It's usually home to the organisation's counselling and mental health activities. Today, it plays host to The Party. He proudly flings open its rusty door. Faces turn coldly in his direction. A wave of disappointment washes over him: he had hoped for applause or cheers. His colleague, Yasser, a well-known poet in the camp, is reciting a poem. It's a Qabbani work, and the crowd are engrossed. He closes the door as quietly as he can behind him, but the metal, beaten and broken out of shape, rattles in the frame.

These caravans were never meant to last long.

The room is long and rectangular, broadly divided in two sections: one packed full of The Party guests, and the other empty except for a large table. Seating is limited. Several tall and bulky young men squish together on a few small sofas. Others sit on plastic chairs and armchairs dotted around the room. Some of the ladies huddle together on large colourful bean bags, draping limbs over one another. Most of The Party are other Syrians who work at the centre, but the Amman staff are also there, including The Birthday Girl. Yara sits serenely on one of the armchairs; it was once probably much plusher when it was first bought from IKEA all those years ago. Now, the garishness of the green patterns has faded. Birthday banners and balloons adorn the room. At the other end, cakes and sweet treats are neatly arranged on the table. The faint smell of blown-out candles wafts through the air.

A lengthy applause and copious exclamations of praise follow Yasser's performance. Yasser humbly thanks the group: a hand to the chest and a dip of the head in thanks. Yasser rarely revels in praise, a modest guy, embarrassed by any overt admiration. As always, Yasser is all grace and humility, acknowledging the applause quietly, before disappearing back behind the other men squeezed onto the sofa.

Someone pulls out a chair for Ayman and places it at the top end of the circle formed by the seating. Settling into the fluorescent orange plastic, he picks up his oud and slowly plucks at the strings.

Yā rab.

Oh God. The tuning! It's already off after just a few minutes standing in the cold. The group shout out to him: Come on, *mua'llim*, play something! Yes, sir, play! *Yalla*!

He revels in their words. They make him feel wanted, special.

He plays slowly through a maqām, tuning his oud as he does so. It's taking more time than usual, and before long, the usual jokers of the group begin their teasing. Zohdi and Taysir: these two are always causing mischief. They mock the out of the tune notes. He could just ignore them and roll his eyes, like most people do. But there's no chance his pride will allow that. While he plays through the rest of the maqām, he looks over to the duo, squints his eyes a little, tuts loudly, and chastises them: It's not even in tune yet! Just wait a moment!

The rest of the group chuckle and cheer at his admonishment. A few even join in, jumping to his defence. The main voices are Tamara and Suhaila, strong and feisty young women who never fail to speak their minds. But Zohdi and Taysir aren't listening. Instead, they continue their mocking, shouting across to the Jordanian staff sat opposite: You guys should fire Ayman right here and now! He can't even play in tune! The remarks don't worry him. He is confident enough in his abilities that any idea about being fired has never once crossed his mind. Who could possibly replace him? And deep down he knows their remarks mean nothing.

Or so he hopes.

He begins his chosen song: Nour Mhanna's 'Tahet Hadujha'. Mhanna is one of the *ṭarab* greats. And the ṭarab genre is, without question, Ayman's favourite genre. Something about it makes him feel different. A bit more refined. Not like the other stuff here in the camp. And he has always felt a particular affinity with Mhanna: he is a real singer, a real musician, a real artist. And, of course: he's Syrian.



Figure 3.3. A gathering in QS, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 26 February 2020, Za'atari, Jordan).

As he expected, with each powerful and full-bodied note, with each incantation of '*yā layli',* with each 'Oh night', Zohdi and Taysir cease their joking. In fact, they listen closely along with the rest of the group, sitting in amazement with the same incredulous look on their faces as conjured by Yasser only moments before. He elongates certain words in the lyrics for emphasis: with only the simple drone of the oud beneath him, he draws out the vowels of the word *ẓulūm,* as if to emphasise its meaning: injustice, wrongdoing, oppression. He feels the tension building: eyes twinkle, hands stretch out ready to clap, bodies on all sides lean towards him inch by inch as the vibrato of his voice

rings through the vowels. The note hangs heavily in the air, a ripe fig ready to drop at any moment into open, expectant hands. As he finally reaches the limit of his lung capacity, he tucks the final consonant quickly into the melody, shaking his head as he does.

The fig drops.

The crowd erupts, chanting all the usual words of exclamation and praise. *Allah*! *Yamma*! *Aywa*! *Mashallah*! Bodies relax back to their original positions, hands come together in applause, eyes close in ecstasy, arms raise heavenward. They clap enthusiastically to the beat and sing along. They shout out praise to him through the melodies. Zohdi even rises to his feet and begins to dance, cocking his hips from side to side. He grabs two tissues from the IKEA coffee table, pinches them between his rough and calloused fingers, and waves them about like the rich satins or colourful silks usually held by more delicate, feminine hands.

The Party guests are having so much fun they hardly notice how bad the oud's tuning really is. It's moments like these that Ayman finds himself particularly resentful. If only he had more money, if only he weren't in this place, he could buy a better oud, one with better and stronger wood, quality strings, secure pegs. Her loves his oud, yes, but he can't deny its weaknesses.



Figure 3.4. Dancing during a gathering, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 26 February 2020, Za'atari, Jordan).

But they don't notice. The group's joviality brings a smile to his face even as he sings. Who knows if this is the kind of ṭarab they speak of when Mhanna or Um Kulthum or Abdel Halim perform. But as he sings, they dance. As he sings, they clap. As he sings, they laugh. As he sings, they cry. They beg for more songs, more singing. With each note: they are changed. In a cramped caravan on a cold and uneventful February afternoon, The Party is all light and pleasure, the outside world of grey and gloom forgotten.

3

The Café

He can't quite remember how it all happened exactly, but Samer told him about a friend who had a friend who worked in a cafe near to the restaurant where Samer was a waiter. At The Café, they pay for singers to perform, and they were looking for someone to fill the coveted weekend slot.

The Café is tucked away, almost hidden on a quiet side street in wasaṭ al-balad. Despite the large space, The Café has a cosy vibe. Up on the top floor of an old downtown building, the ceilings are low, and the windows are round arches. It's low lit, except for some bright yellow and pink neon lights at the far end. Dozens of dark wooden tables, some square, some round, are spread throughout the room. The chairs make an eclectic collection: some old sofas, cushioned armchairs, plastic dining chairs. All the tables face the far side of the room, where there is a small, raised platform. It's a stage area, upon which there is a single microphone on a stand, a speaker, and a stool. Other speakers are placed elsewhere throughout The Café.

Because he'd been recommended by a friend, The Owner gives him today's Thursday evening slot as a trial shift. Customers arrive in a steady flow, nestling into their cushioned chairs, drinking mocktails, and smoking lemon and mint shisha or Marlboro cigarettes while Ayman sings with his oud. The songs of George Wasoof, Nour Mhanna, Sabah Fakhri and Nazem al-Ghazali rise into the plumes of sweetly scented smoke lingering across The Café.



Figure 3.5. A café in downtown Amman. (Photograph by the author, 9 April 2021, Amman, Jordan).

He had no expectation whatsoever that anyone would actually listen; surely, they just wanted to have a coffee or a juice and relax after a long week at work. But as they sip and smoke, and as he sings, heads turn in his direction, ears prick, conversations wane, and they sit listening in reverence until the early morning. After every song, they clap and cheer; they even join in with him for some of the more popular tracks.

As The Café prepares to close, The Owner shakes Ayman's hand and pushes a wad of cash into his fingers: Come back again tomorrow. Same time. At first, he thinks The Owner must have counted wrong; it's more than double what he'd get for an entire wedding in the camp! But he nods: By God's will, I'll be here.

He walks back to Samer's apartment in a haze, the cash warming his jeans pocket. He reflects on the evening and realises: there's a market for him here. This one café with

its few tables is just one small part of a huge country that could listen to him. If they'll listen, others might, too. The Café is more than just a café. It is a door. A door to another livelihood, another life. He could perform in The Café and save up his white money for a black day.

Khabi qarshak al-abyaḍ lil-youmak al-aswad. That's what his father used to say.

In fact, it could be good for more than just a black day. He could use it to pay for music classes, to study and become a real artist, a real musician. He could buy a better oud or a keyboard, get a better phone or even a laptop so he can make recordings of his songs. Even become a recording engineer. He wouldn't have to perform in Za'atari for mere spare change, wasting his time and his talent. He could write and compose until everyone knew his name.

And that is what he did. Every weekend from Thursday at 5pm, he takes up his place on the platform at The Café. With the money he gets, he pays for music lessons at a small music school near to Samer's place where he can study during the day before his evening slot. He learns about the major and minor scales, the Arabic maqāmāt. He learns the different note values, the whole notes, half notes, rests, and how to notate them. He notates scales and sings them back. He learns more about ṭarab, *taqsīm* (instrumental improvisations) the firqeh (Arab musical ensemble), the waṣla and muwashshaḥāt, and all about *al-musīqa al-klasīkīyeh*, the classical music of the late nineteenth century.

Ayman barely ever performs in Za'atari anymore. Their music sounds homemade to him now, no hint of the professionalism or study of his Amman world. In the camp, they call it heritage, tradition, turāth. To him, it's ordinary. And Ayman doesn't want to be ordinary. Ayman spent too many years being ordinary. Ayman wants to be special. If he has a special energy, a special talent, why wouldn't he let it out for all the world to see?

Iman: 'The Writing on the Caravan Walls'

Sīd al-ḥabayib…
My greatest love…

As they make their way home through the market, Iman presses her son tightly into her chest. Colourful toys and stuffed animals sit displayed in shop windows and sway lightly in the breeze as they hang from the shop canopies. If he saw them, Omar would definitely want something, but Iman can't afford to buy him a single thing. So, she decides to shield his eyes. It would break her heart to see his disappointment. Over the last two years, all the family's money has gone into making their caravan safe. The caravans might be a step up from the flimsy blue and white tents of the early days, but the steel structures aren't exactly what you'd call cosy. So, the toys would have to wait while Iman does her best to turn their caravan into home.

Yā ḍanāyā yā inta …
Oh, my baby son…

When they left Damascus last year, Iman never dreamt that a year later they'd still be living here in this jungle of a place. She always tries to see the good in people, she really does. But Za'atari really tests her patience. Most of all, her ignorant neighbours. As if life wasn't hard enough, every day they would dump their sewage right in front of her caravan, leaving her patch of land a stinking and swampy mess. What bastards. So, she'd set her mind to constructing a simple fence around her plot. The children would have their own space to play, safe from the streets and safe from sewage. She'd also have a space to get back to her gardening, maybe plant a few flowers here and there. Maybe

they'll even bloom. But for that to happen in this place, she might need a miracle. Or at the very least, a real house – and a caravan is not a house.

Wa kull amilī wa manāyā yā inta …
You are all I hope and wish for…

They get back from the market tired and grubby. Iman goes inside to wash herself. She's caked in that fine brown Za'atari dust that, no matter the weather, always manages to cling to your clothes, hair, and skin. Iman cleans up as much as possible, and changes into an old *galabiyeh,* the long dress she wears around the house. Today marks one of her final tasks in the garden: installing the gate. It's a giant of a thing. Heavy, black, wrought iron – and she needs help to put it in. She calls up her brother because he only lives round the corner. Mohammed arrives about half an hour later, drinks a coffee, smokes a bit, then gets to work on the gate. He drills into the fencing, fixing the hinges one screw at a time. Iman tidies up around him, watering her seedlings and singing random melodies quietly to herself as she goes. She's been planting flowers the last few months and praying that they will add some colour to the drab landscape. Omar plays behind her, humming along with her wandering tunes, and chuckling to himself while he plays in the dirt. As she works, mud creeps up her dress – so much for having washed up. But with each of Omar's laughs, Iman reminds herself that every inch of dirt is worth it.

Yā aḥla ghanweh fi dunyā ḥilweh…
The most beautiful song in a beautiful world…

A few minutes into drilling, the electricity cuts out. '*Ya Allah!* Khalāṣ!', Iman exclaims in exasperation. Nothing in this camp ever works properly for any useful amount of time. Mohammed sighs too and goes to re-set the generator. A good

opportunity for a cigarette and a sit down, if nothing else. The drill cable lies on the ground. Behind her, Omar cries out. '*Ma'lish,* Mama. It's nothing', Iman says, calling her own baby boy 'Mama' in the typical way. Iman thinks he must have slipped in the mud and turns to help him up from the ground. As she reaches out to grab his hand, she notices how small it looks in comparison to her own. How funny, she thinks. But then: a jolt. A shock of electricity sharply zaps through her fingers. Instinctively, she quickly shakes it off, slamming her hand on the ground in an attempt to discharge the electricity. She looks back to her son to help him off the ground. But all she sees are his eyes violently rolling over in his head.

Ghanayt wa qālat ma'yeh…
She sang to me and told me you are with me…

She screams. Mohammed rushes over. He screams. He grabs the baby. He runs. Iman runs. She charges out into the street after him. She cries. She yells. She begs for help. Neighbours, stirred from their houses by the chaos, bleed into the street. One of them takes Omar from Mohammed's arms as he tires. They all run together, carrying Omar in turns. Each man grabbing and running, grabbing and running. Iman doesn't even know who they are. A haze of red, blue, white, and black football shirts, the colours of another time and another land. They reach the nearest hospital, but they can't help. What a surprise, Iman thinks. They need another hospital – a bigger one in yet another area of the camp. Nurses quickly give the baby some oxygen and bundle him into an ambulance. In the commotion, Iman somehow doesn't make it into the ambulance so ends up running after the vehicle. She passes through the dirt of Districts 8 and 9, past the shops and their hanging toys. As is usual for this time of year, dust storms start to pick up momentum through the tight alleyways as she runs, but Iman pushes through, sprinting to her son.

Inta sīd al-ḥabāyib…
My greatest love…

She arrives at the second hospital out of breath. She can't find Omar. Iman approaches the first doctor she sees, demanding answers. 'They took him to check his blood pressure and breathing', the doctor reassures her. 'But *Alhamdulillah,* all is good'. Those words. Alhamdulillah. Thank God. They settle her somewhat and Iman slumps into one of the white plastic bucket chairs lined up in the make-shift reception area. It creaks and wobbles as she sits down. Women start to gather around her. They splash her face with water and attempt to calm her. As her breathing slows, Iman notices a slight tingling sensation in her feet. She looks down and sees a tangled barefoot mess of dust, mud, and blood. She must have run so quickly out of the house that she hadn't even put on any shoes. The women console her with stories and tales. I know a man who got electrocuted and he's totally fine! Nothing happened. Ma'lish, *ḥabībtī*. It's nothing, my dear. This kind of stuff happens all the time with kids! Inshallah, it's nothing. Alhamdulillah, dear, he's in the right place now. God will protect him. Inshallah it will be OK. May God protect him. I heard about a story just like this, and in the end, Al-hamdullilah everything was OK! Make sure you say *Bismillah.* In God's name. It will be fine, dear. But Iman can barely hear them. All she can see is the doctor running frantically in the distance. Thoughts fire ferociously through her mind. What's wrong? Has something happened? Is Omar alright? Does he need help? Why are they running? Why aren't they telling me what's going on? They said Alhamdulillah! If they said Thank God, then he has to be OK! At some point, Mohammed appears in front of her. 'Your son is dead', he says.

Yā ḍanāyā yā inta

Oh, my baby son…

The days after Omar's death drag on in a blur as white and haunting as the burial robes they wrapped around his little lifeless body. Constant streams of people come to the house offering their condolences, wearing copy-paste faces of pity. One day, their two eldest daughters back at school, Iman and her husband, Youssef, sit on the cushions positioned on the floor around the edges of their living room, staring bleary eyed into the distance. Iman sits as rigid and motionless as the new steel fencing now surrounding their little plot; some helpful friends had finished it up for them while they dealt with the funeral. She's trying to keep it together, but she knows that she is just as lost as her husband. Is this it? Is this life now? She had never once imagined she would be in this position: *al-thikleh.* A parent without their child. The word doesn't even exist in other languages. As she looks over at Youssef, Iman knows that something has to change. She can't go on like this. She has to face this. She has to *feel* something. Anything! While Youssef stares off into the distance, Iman does the only thing she can. The only thing she knows how. She sings.

Iman has always been known for her soft and melodious singing voice. At gatherings, friends and family frequently chant '*Yalla*, Iman! Sing for us!' Not that she needs convincing. She sings any time, any place, and for anyone – even if they don't want to hear it. She remembers her thirteen-year-old self. A young girl sitting on the patio with her uncles surrounded by the smell of jasmine trees and the sound of squawking chickens. They spent most summer evenings like that, once it was cool enough to sit outside, drinking tea, smoking shisha (them, not her), and listening to the old songs of greats such as Abel Halim Hafez or Um Kulthum. Iman would always sing along loudly to every

song. Her uncles would frequently tell her to shut up – 'We want to hear them, not you!' – but she would carry on regardless. She didn't care. She wasn't singing to show off or to please them. It was more than that.

When Iman sings, she empties out her energy into her voice, letting go of whatever feelings she has inside. With each note, each breath, each melody, she releases something, pouring out all the emotions and energy built up within her. Whatever life throws at Iman, she sings. If she's happy, she sings. If she's sad, she sings. If she's angry, she sings. If she's stressed, she sings. Even if she's bored, she sings. So, now, in the hardest of times, sat here with her husband, the anger, confusion, and blazing grief of the last few days locked up unintelligibly inside of her, Iman knows what she must do. It might seem odd to some, singing when you've lost a child. How can she even think to sing in a moment like this? But it's precisely because of this moment that means she must; it's an urge, a visceral need, to sing.

Iman slowly parts her lips, closes her eyes, and rests her hands on her knees. She barely trusts her vocal cords. They, too, seemed to have turned to stone. But somehow, as she takes a deep breath, they play along. Iman feels their familiar and gentle buzz as she sings the sad and plaintive melody of the only song that can speak to her in this moment.

My greatest love, oh my baby son	*Sīd al-ḥabayib yā ḍanāyā yā inta*
You are all I hope and wish for	*Wa kull amilī wa manāyā yā inta*
The most beautiful song in a beautiful world	*Yā aḥla ghanweh fi dunyā ḥilweh*
Sang to me and told me you are with me	*Ghaneyt wa qālat ma'yeh*
My greatest love, oh my baby son	*Inta sīd al-ḥabāyib yā ḍanāyā yā inta*[46]

Iman would hardly describe 'Sīd al-ḥabayib' as one of her favourite songs, nor its singer one of her favourite singers. Shadia was one of the great Egyptian singers and actresses of her time, that 'Golden Age' of Egyptian cinema in the 1950s and 1960s. Iman had always, in a way, admired her. Who didn't? She admired her not just for her voice and her impeccable classical singing style, but also for the life she led: the glamor, the beauty, the freedom. But like the rest of her family and girlfriends, Iman usually preferred more modern styles, like the Egyptian Shireen, or Lebanese Elissa and Nancy Ajram, some of the best-known female pop singers in the Arab world.

Singing their romantic songs always brought her back to those honeymoon years with her husband. He'd go all out and prepare the room they shared in his uncle's house with flowers and candles, and she'd sing him songs like Nancy Ajram's 'Aam Betaala' Feek' (I'm hooked on you) as if the words were her own. Oh, how young they were.

Iman has never considered herself a 'musician' in the traditional sense. She has vague memories of learning Do-Re-Mi at school before she left early to get married, but that's about it. She's hardly like Ayman, Hamza, or the other men in the camp for whom

[46] The full lyrics are included in Appendix I.

knowing the different maqāmāt is as easy as breathing. However, what Iman does know is that the upbeat love songs of her beloved Elissa, Shireen, and Nancy aren't right for this moment. Not for her. Not for Omar. Because Iman has always said that a song has to speak to your feelings in the moment. It has to make sense to the situation or the atmosphere that you're in. To your emotions. To the moment. To the mood. To your circumstance. To *al-jaww*. If it doesn't fit al-jaww, how can she sing it?

So, the only song that makes sense to her right now, that makes sense to al-jaww is 'Sīd al-ḥabayib'. As she sings, weaving the song's words with her tongue and embellishing notes as they pass, Iman feels the immense sadness and grief trapped in her soul gushing out of her. Tears stream down her face and sobs get caught in her throat: it's a wonder she can sing. But at least she feels it. And she feels him, too. Her greatest love, her baby son, in her arms once more as she rocks him gently to sleep to the lilting melody.

Over the following weeks, Iman sings the song over and over. She sings it to her husband, to her daughters, to herself. She sings it as she cooks and cleans, or as she puts the girls to bed. Sometimes she just hums it. Every time, she gives every ounce of emotion she has to the song, each rendition bring backing back her dearest son to her arms. With time, she starts to feel a semblance of her former strength returning. She knows it will never fully come back: a part of her died along with her son. But slowly, she comes back to life. If nothing else, she has to carry on living in his memory. Do the things he can't do. Learn, travel, and live. And she'll do it for him.

One day, Iman stands in the kitchen coring courgettes, preparing them to fill with rice and minced meat. A memory pops into her head of Omar chewing on the courgettes with his gums. She hums Shadia's song quietly. Suddenly, through the kitchen window in front of her, she notices something tall swaying in the breeze. Its shape is blurry and

undefined; her husband had installed a frosted window so that she can move about the house without having to worry about her hijab, but it means she can't quite make out what it is. She quickly finishes up the dishes then puts on a prayer garment to protect her modesty and goes out into the garden to investigate. On the spot next to where her baby boy slumped lifelessly into her arms, was a green bush festooned in a mass of leaves. And growing from the bush, dozens of small but bright orange flowers were pointing up towards the dusty sun, their petals unfurling to the heavens.



Figure 3.6. Garden in private residence, Za'atari. (Photograph sent to the author via WhatsApp, 28 August 2021).

***

Uktubna yā zamān…bi ḥarūf a'la al-ḥayṭan
Oh time, write to us…with letters on the wall…

Iman is back at work. She moves from NGO to NGO, seeing out the stipulated 3-month cycle at each. Oh, such is life in Za'atari. Her most recent position is as an administrator in the office at a community centre where she helps with all kinds of things from registration of new participants to collecting reports and attendance sheets, dealing with visitors, and maintaining the timetables. For Iman, there's little difference between organising these things and organising her own children and household. Sometimes, on their breaks, Iman and her female colleagues sneak in the music room, only if it's empty, to sing their favourite songs together (they're still too shy to go in if Ayman or Hamza are there). The girls ask Iman for hints and tips to improve their singing or request her to perform a song (or two). It only takes a few weeks for her to become known as 'the voice of the community'. Iman also starts to record herself more. She doesn't have any fancy equipment or anything; she just uses her phone. But she regularly sends her recordings to girlfriends via WhatsApp, sometimes even writing songs specifically for them, weaving their names into sweet epithets.

Mahuma murat ayām…ma bitimḥi hal kalām…
No matter how many days pass…the words will never be erased…

One Thursday, Iman's colleagues, Layla and Rahma, have managed to secure a spare microphone from somewhere or other, and have hooked it up to the speaker in the Zumba room. Whenever they have a chance between sessions or during coffee and lunch breaks,

the women sprint off to the caravan, sheltered by the screen protector at the room's entrance, to play with their new find. It's a Thursday, after all – the end of the working week – so they can afford to have some fun. Sometimes they fight over whose turn it is with the microphone, other times all three of them huddle around it, each one clasping the handle in a tight grip. They laugh and joke with one another as they video themselves with Layla's phone belting out the dramatic love songs of Nancy Ajram.

Asasnā hal makān…bi mukhayyim ili kān…
We built this place…our camp…

Iman leaves work later that afternoon content and calm. After picking up the children from their various clubs and activities, she passes with them through the streets on the way to their caravan. Looking around her she sees the endless rows of supermarkets, spice sellers, wedding dress boutiques, chicken shops, sandwich bars, beauty salons, fruit and vegetable markets, sweet shops. The colourful murals painted on nearly every caravan wall in every colour possible. Some have fake brick patterns as well as doors or windows 'adorned' with flower boxes. Others are painted with words, either letting passers-by know their occupation (Men's salon! Dresses for rent!). Just around the corner from Iman's house there is a caravan painted bright blue with a young girl wearing a cap and gown: 'Teach a woman', it says, 'and she teaches society'. The change from the never-ending beige of those early days couldn't be starker. Seeing it as it is now, Iman can hardly believe how the camp used to look. Because in the beginning, this place? Monstrous. Totally monstrous. Yet, somehow, over the years, it's become something. It's become a place.

Al-lawḥ min al-karavān…bitjma‘ aḥla shubān

Made of caravans…bringing together the sweetest youth…

As Iman strolls along with her shopping bags and children in tow, she thinks back about her day at work, about Layla and Rahma, about the caravans, about the murals and the shops, and slowly little phrases and sentences start to form in her mind. Before she knows it, she's started to hum.

'Mama, what are you singing?', asks Noor.

'Oh, nothing much. Just something that came to me.'



Figure 3.7. Mural in Za'atari. The text reads 'Teach a woman, and she teaches society'. (Photograph by the author, 1 February 2019, Za'atari, Jordan).

Once they get home, Iman deals with the children, changing them out of their school clothes, making them snacks, and tidying up the shoes they've flung unceremoniously into a pile at the entrance to the caravan. As she potters round the house, Iman carries on humming her new tune, perfecting the phrases, working over sentences, finding the right words that fit. Once the children are sorted out and she's put the chicken for tonight's

meal on the stovetop to boil, Iman sits down with her phone and starts to type the lyrics to her new song. As she writes, she sings quietly to herself, memorising the melody and how it fits with the words. She even tries it out at different pitches. The higher register is definitely better, she thinks. It's got more feeling, more energy. More jaw.

Ṣamumna hal makān…bi ḥub wa kul itqān…
We designed this place…with love and dedication…

That evening, Iman, her husband, and children head over to Mohammed's place for their usual Thursday night gathering, celebrating the start of the weekend in style. Her sister, Salwa, her husband and their children are there, as well as her uncle, Hassan, his wife, and their kids. Coffee, *metteh,*[47] and shisha are overflowing. The men sit about on the floor chatting and smoking. The women busy themselves in the kitchen, preparing plates of sweets, biscuits, and salted nuts, using the time to catch up with one another and share any local gossip. Salwa helps Mohammed's wife with the hosting, shuttling back and forth between the kitchen and the lounge, refilling coffee cups. The children run around consumed in some secret game to which only they know the rules. In the background, the television plays an old episode of a popular singing competition. Occasionally, a song will grab the attention of some the guests, and they will sing along, sharing memories of hearing it at so-and-so's wedding, or commenting on the performer's rendition.

[47] *Metteh* is a herbal drink from Argentina popular throughout Syria and Lebanon. It is commonly drunk in Za'atari in the colder weather, prepared with hot water and drunk in a special glass cup with a long silver straw.

L-insā'd bāqet ḥub…fiha bināt wa ṣubiān
To build a bouquet of love…holding together our boys and girls…

After a few hours, Mohammed opens up the cupboard beneath the television and brings out a small speaker and a hand-held microphone. He plugs the speaker into the nearest power socket and announces, 'Yalla, guys, time for some music!' This is a weekly ritual. One by one, each member of the family takes the microphone and sings the usual favourites. The lyrics of Amr Diab, Wael Kfoury, Fadhl Shaker, Fairuz, Elissa, and Um Kulthum blare out of the speaker. The volume is set so high you can mostly only hear static, the tinny sound vibrating against the steel walls and window frames. Even shy Salwa has a go; when she forgets the words or misses a note, the group sing along with her in camaraderie. The children, too, take turns, singing little ditties they've learnt at school or nursery.

When Iman's go comes around, all the attention is on her, as she sits with her legs demurely folded on the floor at the far end of the caravan beneath the gold net curtains. Usually Iman sings Fairuz – her songs are always a hit with anyone of any age, at any time of day, in any place. But tonight, she's not feeling it. She needs something different: her song. Because there was something about this day, something about singing with the girls that morning, something about the white painted dove flying out of an open book placed in a young girl's hands, making its way across her black academic robes and over a cartoonesque city skyline. A Fairuz song may well be for everyone, but Iman's song is for them. Her song *is* them. So, Iman gets out her phone and opens up the lyrics she jotted down earlier. Taking a deep breath in, she begins to sing:

Oh time, write to us	*Uktubna yā zamān*
With letters on the wall	*Bi ḥarūf a'la al-ḥayṭan*

No matter how many days pass	*Mahuma murat ayām*
The words will never be erased	*Ma bitimḥi hal kalām*
We built this place	*Asasna hal makān*
Our camp	*Bi mukhayim ili kān*
Made of caravans	*Al-lawḥ min al-karavān*
Bringing together the sweetest youth	*Bitjma' aḥla shubān*
We designed this place	*Ṣamumna hal makān*
With love and dedication	*Bi ḥub wa kul itqān*
To build a bouquet of love	*L-insā'd bāqet ḥub*[48]

As she sings, the room quietens. The din of children and fighting newlyweds dissipates. All eyes are on her. She notices how their smiles grow, the creases round their eyes become deeper, their cheekers higher and redder. She loves these moments when she can finally let out her voice for others.

[48] The full lyrics are included in Appendix I.

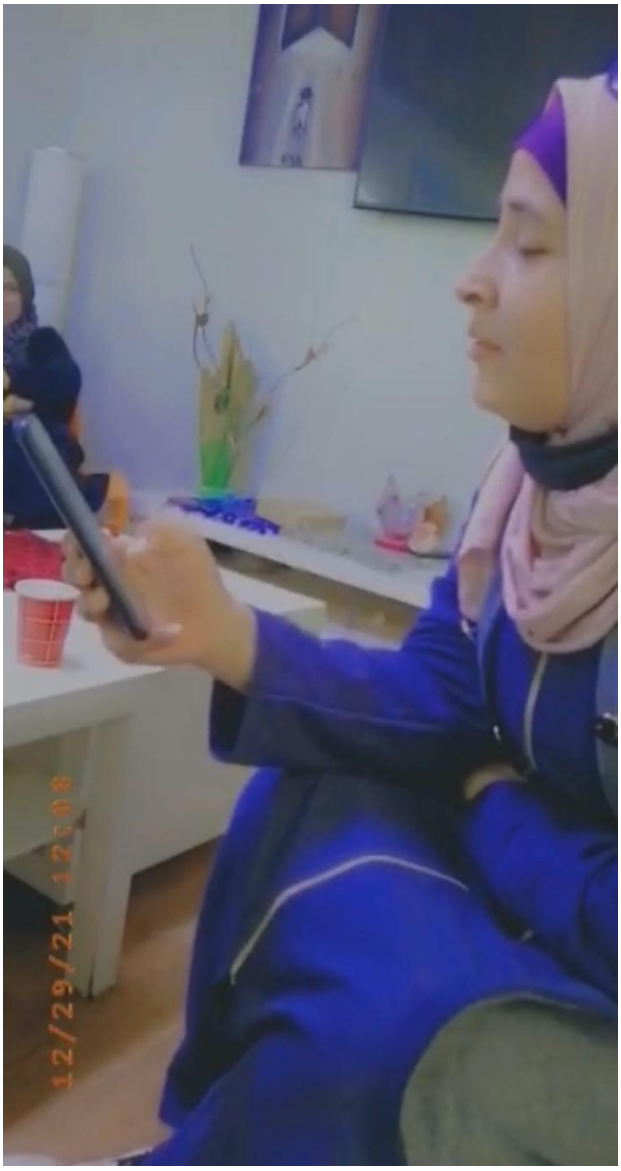


Figure 3.8. Screenshot of video of woman singing in Za'atari. (Video sent to the author via WhatsApp, 31 January 2022).

After a while, they take a brief respite from singing, make some more coffee, and enjoy some knāfeh*;* Hassan had brought it back with him from his trip to the nearby town of Mafraq earlier that day.

'Did you go with Abu Youssef?', Salwa asks.

'No, I went by myself. *Yā ḥarām,* poor guy is having problems with the water supply to his house – they haven't had any water for the last week. His wife is pregnant, too.'

‘*Masākīn.* Poor guys. May God protect them.’ Salwa has always been sweet, Iman thinks.

‘It’s stuff like that that makes me even more ready to travel’, says Iman.

Hassan unleashes a peal of laughter. He laughs so hard Iman thinks he might actually pass out. What’s the expression, Iman asks herself, to die from laughter?

‘Travel!’, Hassan exclaims. ‘What do you mean, travel? *Yā salām!*’ He can barely get the words out coherently as he gasps for breath between laughs. ‘Where on earth do you think you’re going to travel to? Have you even registered anywhere for a visa? Can you even afford it? And who would even take you? Listen, ḥabībti. We aren’t travelling anywhere. Do you really think we’ll ever get out of this place?’

By now, everyone in the caravan has tuned into their conversation and is laughing along with Hassan. The room quickly becomes a noisy cacophony of mockery and jeers.

But Iman remains steadfast.

‘*Tsk’*, Iman clicks her tongue against the back of her teeth and raises her eyebrows in indignation. ‘Laugh all you like. But you just wait and see if I don’t travel somewhere’, gesticulating wildly with her arms as she speaks. She pauses for a moment, thinking about her next move. She thinks back to her walk home: row after row of shops and restaurants. She thinks back to the mural near her house: the woman dressed in cap and gown, the open book in her hands transforming into doves. She thinks back to the girls at work and Layla’s smile as she clings to the microphone.

Then, pointing to her chest, Iman says, ‘I’m *ajnabīyeh,* you know. A foreigner. And I will get out of here. You’ll see.’

‘What did you say? You’re a foreigner?’, extols Hassan incredulously. ‘Mashallah! A foreigner sits among us, my friends! And in what way are you ajnabīyeh, my dearest?’

‘Because I sing’, says Iman defiantly. ‘Because I play sports. Because I live how I want. Our family, OK, we’re open minded. We don’t mind. We were raised differently. But everyone else in this camp, all these people, always barking at me, “Oh, you’re pregnant, you shouldn’t be jumping about doing sports!” or “Oh, you’re a woman, you shouldn’t be singing!”’

Iman hardly knows what has come over her. She never speaks like this. And she’s never voiced these thoughts before. Before, they were just thoughts.

‘But you know what?’, she continues, ‘I don’t care what they think! I don’t care how they do things here in this camp. Ana ajnabīyeh. I’m a foreigner! I want to practise sports like foreigners do. I want to sing like foreigners do. What’s so wrong with foreigners, anyway? Their life is good. It’s better than ours! Once a foreign girl gets pregnant, for instance, she doesn’t have to stop everything and give up her life. No. She still does sport and listens to music and sings. Their daughters wear what they want and do what they want; they don’t get harassed in the street just for wearing a skirt and then told they should be married off when they’re still only children. I don’t want that kind of life for me or for my daughters! I want a life without all that shit. So, yeah. I am ajnabīyeh. I won’t stay in this camp. I want to give my life everything it deserves. I refuse to miss out on anything. And why should I? Why should any of us miss out on anything? Me, the children, you,’ she points to Hassan. ‘Look at how much talent is in this room. Look at how many of us sang tonight. Look at what we did in this camp. Look at what we made here – from nothing! We all deserve to get out of here. We deserve to get away from this monstrous place. We deserve to build something somewhere else. We deserve a life.’

Quietness has descended over the room. Even the children have settled to listen to Iman's speech. After a long pause, Hassan solemnly nods. His reply is simple, saying quietly and slowly, 'Inshallah, yā ajnabīyeh. God willing.'

Hassan turns to Mohammed, who is smoking, and motions towards the shisha with his eyes and the ever so slightest rise of his eyebrows. It's a move so small it's almost imperceptible, but any regular smoker can see it a mile off and knows exactly what it means. Mohammed takes one last puff, taps the pipe to his forearm, then passes it to Hassan. The group begins to chatter again, and the earlier hubbub of voices returns. Iman's daughter rushes to take her turn at the microphone. Hassan, however, is subdued, quietly smoking. Iman gets up from her place and sits down on the cushions next to him. She never meant for him to be upset or embarrassed.

'Remember those days before the events when we used to sit in your garden listening to the radio? I must have only been about thirteen – not long before I got married.'

Hassan turns towards Iman and stares deeply into her eyes. Iman wonders what he sees swimming in them. Maybe it's what she saw in his only moments earlier.

Suddenly, a toothy grin breaks out across his face.

'Of course, I do', he says. 'They played some great stuff back then. But, my god, you used to drive me crazy singing along so loudly. I could barely hear the singers!' Hassan winks as he speaks and Iman laughs. His cheekiness is back.

'You should sing one of those songs now', she suggests.

'Me? Sing? Have you lost your mind?'

'Why not? Everyone else is.'

'No, no, no. I don't want to. It's not my thing. I don't mind you guys singing, but me? No.'

‘Yalla, uncle. Please!’ Before he has chance to refuse again, Iman shouts across the room, ‘Who wants Amo Hassan to sing us a song?’

The group shout out in agreement, convincing Hassan to take his turn at the microphone. The shouts get louder, people start to clap, and the women ululate in jest.

There’s no getting out of this, Hassan thinks, so he quickly admits defeat.

‘*Tayib,* I’ll do it. OK, OK!’

He gestures to his son to pass him the microphone as he winds the smoking pipe around the shisha. It needs new coals anyway, he tells himself.

Hassan clears his throat and reaches into his pocket to find his misbaḥa. With the prayer beads in hands, he takes a deep breath, and launches into Abdel Halim’s ‘Gānā Al-Hawā’. As he sings, Hassan rubs the beads between his fingers, closing his eyes as he recites the words.

For the rest of the evening, it becomes practically impossible for anyone to make Hassan let go of the microphone. It’s the first time he’s sung at a gathering with everyone there. They can all tell how much he’s enjoying himself – it shows on his face. And it brings everyone around him joy, too, to see him so happy. Iman looks around: her brother, her sister, her daughter, her uncles and aunts, her cousins. Each one of them with something inside of them they need to get out. Each one writing their stories onto the walls of their camp, never to be forgotten.

Maryam: ‘Mind Rooms’

I

A bad day
God
Help me

Music plays
Eyes closed
I walk a long corridor
On both sides
Doors
Behind the doors
Rooms
I open a door to my right
It closes behind me
Latch into lock

Inside is big
Spacious and bright
A raised platform
And rows of chairs below
I take my seat among them

On both side of the platforms
Black figures gather
Lean but with round bellies
With a raised arm
A collective breath
The little figures flood the stage
Hand in hand
They enter together
Walking and laughing
Feet marching in unison
Forming a neat arc across the stage

Two of them step forward
Into the centre of the stage
One is tall
A high pitched but tuneful voice
Sweet and dulcet tones

They flow like small streams
Trickling down a mountain side
His arms sway from side to side
Crafting delicate circles

The other one is much smaller
A bit plump, Mashallah
His voice is heavy
Deep and low
His words like heart beats
Forming familiar patterns
His feet plod below

The rest of the figures murmur behind
Whispering and speaking together
In one quiet voice

I smile
A rare sight of late
I haven't been in the mood to smile

I always get like this when I've been away
When I come back to the camp
This time was only two days
Two days!
Just a bit of training for my studies

But it was enough
Enough for me to see

Houses
Their yellow brick walls
Steadfast, concrete
You can even lean against them!
You feel the solid smooth support
You can lift your head
And smell the majnūneh above you
The pink bougainvillea petals
Sprawling over the top of garden walls

Roads
Tarmacked and marked
Little white dashes
And giant green billboards
Leading you on
Leading you home again

Trees
They are everywhere!
Lining streets
Rooted in gardens
Some of them even bear fruit
Lemons, oranges
Sweet citrus smells
Some are manicured into elegant shapes
Cut out with words that praise our God

Parks
Green and inviting
Children swinging and climbing
Soaking up their final moments in the sun
Before mother calls them home
And when the sun goes down
People gather on the ground
Eating sweetened pastries
And salty nuts
Lighting little fires
To ward off the night chill
Shisha smoke rising from the grass

Such atmosphere
Such life
Such jaww

Everything my caravan is not
Everything Za'atari is not
Everything ghurba is not

And this is why I do not smile on my return
Why I simply sit
Stewing in my anger
Like a pot of strong *mulūkhīya*

A dark and murky mélange
Of tangled up and slimy jute leaves

But even I know when the stew is done
I know when it's time to turn off the gas

You can smell the garlic
My mother used to say

I know what it takes
Just a few swishes of the finger
A few taps of the screen
You don't even have to fiddle with cassettes
Or wind tapes back
Gone are the days of your stereo
The batteries melting in the heat of your mother's kitchen
No more rummaging through big crates
To find the CD you want
All I have to do is
Scroll, tap, and play
And I will hear what I need
Scroll, tap, and play
And I will stop stewing

You can find anything you want
Whole collections
Symphonies
Piano pieces
Duos, trios, quartets
Of my beloved Beethoven

I scroll, tap, and play
And with a few notes
I hear it
Beethoven's 7th Symphony

And just like that
I escape
I travel
I hop on a bus
Waving through the window at my mother
As I set off on my journey

Sat among the crowd
A smile grows across my face
Stretching out my wrinkles
My back straightens
Puffing out my chest
No more loneliness
No more anger
No more stewing

Just me, the figures, and the music
Together

The music stops
The figures silently retreat to the wings
The lights around us grow bright
And the audience filters out

I stand up
Making my way back
Through the spacious room
I open the door
And leave
Closing the door behind me
Latch into lock

I turn left
And step into the corridor
I walk along
On both sides
Doors
Behind the doors
Rooms
Eyes open

A good day
Thank
God

II

Music is like a knife
It can peel fruit
But it can also kill a man

Today's fruit is report writing
I actually despise these reports
Who cares who attended and who didn't?
Or what we did and didn't do?

I'm a hard worker
Always have been
Everyone has always said it

Clever Maryam
Hardworking Maryam
Strong Maryam

But I truly hate reports
So, even I need something
A bit of music
To help me work
To get me in the mood

Today
Music will peel the fruit
And get these reports done

I have made myself a special playlist
Just for occasions just like this
I have collected all the songs
Put them in a perfect order
To help me focus

Clever Maryam
Hardworking Maryam
Strong Maryam

I made sure to add the good stuff
You know the types
Kadim Al-Sahir

Majida Al-Roumi
George Wassuf
Mohammad Abdo
Ṭarab is always easy on the ears
And on the mind

Not like that sha‘bī or shabābī shit
Like the people here listen to
Yā rab
It’s so ‘over’
As they say here
Too much
An irritant
A pollutant my ears
Another allergy I can add to my list:
Milk, nuts, musīqa sha‘bīyeh

I plug my headphones in
And play the first song
Violins
Piano
Voice

Once again
I walk along the corridor
I open up a door to my left
And enter the room

This room is long
Narrow
Dimly lit
Spotlights illuminate a path
Right down the middle of the room
I follow it
One foot after the other
Walking in time with the beat
Venturing further into the room

In here
It’s just me and the music
On one path
I have no idea how many songs I get through

How many steps I take
How far into the room I go
But I know I get through my reports
Like I always do

Clever Maryam
Hardworking Maryam
Strong Maryam

But then–
Suddenly–
A change

My perfectly curated playlist has ended
And another song is playing

Without time to think
I'm no longer in the narrow and dim room
I'm standing outside a different room
One I have avoided for a very long time

The door flings open
And I am thrown onto a hard tiled floor
I hit the ground
Bruised, broken

It's 2011
A *diwān*
One of the reception halls of
Downtown Homs

It's hot and noisy
Crowded
Sweaty

Two large loudspeakers
Giant black holes
Earsplitting mijwiz
Forced hitaf
Heavy rhythms
Piercing zaghārīt

It puts my nerves on edge
Like when a kid plays the violin
But badly

Men dance the dabke
Their bodies weaving round and round
Drawing endless circles
Endless lines
Round and round

The women encircle them, too
Clapping and laughing
Their ululating
Ringing out like bells
Round and round

Yā Allah
I'm going to be sick

I clamber up from the floor
To the corner
Crouching down
Hands over ears
Exactly like I used to
Exactly the same as before
The 13-year-old girl
Hiding in the corner
Shielding from the noise

Through the shuffling movements
I see people I know in the dabke lines
My father and grandfather
My uncle and cousins
Clammy hands clasped together
Mouths wide open
Grinning like hyenas

Then I see him
I see his face

The face that met me every day from the school bus
The face that brought little white paper bags of green fuzzy almonds in the spring
The face that read to me while I sat, legs swinging, on the counter in our baba's shop
The face dressed up in soldier's uniform
The face I watched from the window marching and chanting through the streets and squares
The face they plastered across billboards and banners
The face of a martyr

His face
My brother's face
My dead brother's face

Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh'
There is no power and strength except with God

A thick rope in my stomach
Begins to twist and turn
It ties up my insides
My heart pounds at the walls of my chest
Violently beating against my pink skin
My breath is stuck in my throat
Like a nut going down the wrong way
Beads of sweat drip down my forehead
The edges of my crimson hijab soaked

I want to run
I want to disappear
Yet I am frozen
While the knife plunges
Deeper and deeper

I know what is happening to me

Clever Maryam
Hardworking Maryam
Strong Maryam

It's a trauma response
It's chronic stress
You know: flight, fight, freeze

I've learnt that
I know that
The Field Guide told me that
War is embodied
This is how the body responds to trauma

Then comes silence
Alhamdulillah

Silence
Thank God
The song is over

I waste no time
For I have learnt that
Silence is fleeting

I crawl on hands and knees
A scrambling baby
Tears and snot
Back to the exit
Out of the room

I slam the door
Firmly shut behind me
I sprint down the corridor
Open my eyes wide
And slam the laptop shut

Everything is upside down
Colours blur
Shapes shift and move
Sounds merge
Everything undefined
A dense, toneless buzz

I know what I must do
What I have learnt
What I teach others

Close your eyes, Maryam
Breathe deeply in and out

In, Out
In, Out

Focus on your breathing, Maryam

In, Out
In, Out

Focus on your body, Maryam
Focus on your hands, legs, feet

My rubber soles on uneven and cracked linoleum floor
The cushion of the moth-bitten office chair beneath my thighs
The soft denim of my jeans
My manicured nails tracing its blue grain

Focus on your surroundings
The sounds inside the room, outside the room

Buzzing air conditioning
Whirring laptop fan
Creaking caravan
Murmuring voices
Shouting children

Think of a person you love, Maryam
A place of safety
A moment of calm

Your hands
Sliding across a table
Grasping my fingers in your own
As I cried
Your limbs alone saying–
I am here with you
It's OK
We can stop if you want

Your smile
Creating lines around your mouth
Your eyes meeting mine in a private moment
As I spoke
Your pupils alone saying–
I am here with you
I can never understand
But I will always listen

Slowly, Maryam
When you're ready, open your eyes

The world is in order again
But now come the questions

How the hell did that song get in there?
I swear I deleted it years ago
Did I delete it?
How had I not deleted it?
I should have deleted it
I never listen to that song
I never listen to dabke
I never journey back

Clever Maryam
Hardworking Maryam
Strong Maryam

I know people that do
They listen to songs from the past
They look back on before
They say it brings them comfort
To recall the old memories

But not for me
No, I don't look back
Not now, not ever
The connections are still too strong
I hear that music
And I'm in the room
With my gangly awkward teenage limbs
And my brother's bloodied beaten face

What’s the point in a memory like that
Of a place that isn’t there anymore
What’s the point of remembering
Those people who aren’t even here anymore

I refuse to live in the past
The past is without
The future is with

I re-open my laptop
Open SoundCloud
And I delete every single song
That takes me back to that room
One by one
I throw the songs and their memories
Into a bag
A big leather one
Like the one my baba used to have
The leather all soft and wrinkled

I stuff
I shove
I cram

And when the bag is near to bursting
I zip it up
Then throw it angrily to one side
It lands in the corner
With a heavy thud
Loaded and dangerous
Relegated to the darkness

One day
God willing
I hope to return to that bag
Unpack the songs
One by one
And listen to them once more

Inshallah

But for now
I will leave them there
On the side
In the bag

I will leave them there
And I will leave

III

I hear many sounds in this camp
I hear too many sounds in this camp

Bicycles
Their irritating bells
Ringing all day long
Their brakes squeak, too
In desperate need of oiling

Carts led by donkeys
Braying as they pull
Be it people or products
They circle the neighbourhoods
Their drivers shout out
Banadūra, Baṭāṭa, Khiyār…
Banadūra, Baṭāṭa, Khiyār…
Tomatoes, Potatoes, Cucumbers…
Tomatoes, Potatoes, Cucumbers…

Sometimes I hear a car
But only during the daytime
Those cars are shiny and new
Carrying people like you
You come from the outside
And go back to the outside

The generators whirring
Though their sounds are never constant
They have no clear rhythm
Always cutting out randomly
But when they do endure
Don't be thinking you're getting more than
Just a few hours
Eight, I think
That's the max

At their mercy:
The air-con
The machines splutter into life
Sounding out with a ding
Signalling their arrival
They wheeze and strain
Pushing out as much cool air as they can
Until they are gone
Their power lost once more

Through the caravan walls
Voices and shouts
Reverberating through broken steel
Neighbours arguing
Colleagues debating
Children playing
Falling out
Crying
Making up again

You even hear televisions
Radios or songs
The sounds are muffled a bit
Though steel is not as strong as you think

But then there are the mosques

Yā salām
The mosques

Into the air they call
Allahu Akbar
Allahu Akbar
Allahu Akbar
Allahu Akbar
Allahu Akbar

Yes
God is great

The adhān
The one sound I never tire of
The one sound I long to hear
The one sound there is never enough of
The one sound so beautiful, so special
It cannot be eclipsed

Well
That is how I used to feel

I don't like to say it
It feels wrong to
Like speaking badly of a parent
Or grandparent
But the truth is
The adhān in Za'atari?
Not so beautiful

No one here is a real muazzin
The person who calls the prayer
They don't have the background
The experience
The knowledge
The devotion

Here they splutter out the words
As fast as they can
Allahu Akbar!
On any old tone, any old maqām
And then they go home
Job done
Tayib, what's for dinner?

This isn't how it should be
At least–
It isn't how I remember it
Back home
Back in Homs

I wish you could hear it
How I long to hear it
I search for old recordings
Trawling through YouTube
For any small remnant of that sound
It's amazing what people upload
All kinds of stuff
From before the ghurba
Things we never thought important

That's where I find them
That's where I hear them again
Hundreds of muazzinīn calling at once
Clear and pure
Their voices echoing off walls
Their maqāmāt overlap
Their tones dance through the air
Mingling with car horns and engines
With people and markets
Weaving a rich *tatrīz*[49]
Of melodies, meditations, and men

The adhān is a special sound to me
Because it opens a special room
A room all of its own

This room has no memories
This room has no place

---

[49] Traditional cross-stitch style of embroidery originating from Palestine. Tatrīz has been practiced for centuries by Palestinian women who use different embroidered patterns and symbols to document life in different regions of Palestine as well as significant events, conversations, relationships, or families. Tatrīz is often embroidered onto thawbs or abayas and is worn by women all over the Middle East.

This room has no people

This room is a feeling

The feeling has no name
I have tried to name it many times before
Calm, relaxation, reverence?
But these words do not suffice
These words fail
Don’t you think?

The feeling is in the chest
Buried deep beneath layers
Skin and sinew
A warm and comforting sensation
Without shape or colour
Seeping softly and gently
Slowly taking over my limbs
Quietly commanding control
Like kneeling down on cold tiles
Spreading my arms wide
Pointing my face up to the sky
And opening my mouth to say something
I expect a chorus of angels
Or a peal of bells
Like in the movies!
But no sound comes out
No words emerge
No hallelujah chorus of angels
Like in your churches

It’s just me
On the floor
Consumed by a feeling
I have always known
And yet do not know at all

Nothing else can take me to this room
No song
No music
No composer or singer

Only the adhān can open this room

Although I go to this room often
I do not tell others about it
I do not tell people how it makes me feel
I do not try to explain

It would be the same for you
If you tried to talk about it
With people here

I fear they would not understand
That they would misinterpret our words
That they would chastise and condemn

I fear the words they would hurl
The insults, the looks
The slurs behind one's back

Ḥaram! Kāfreh! 'Ayib!
Sinful! Infidel! Disgrace!

The adhān is not music!
It can't do the things you say it does!
Ḥaram!

So, here I will be clear
Here, I will tell you what I think

I know the adhān is not music
Of course, it isn't

When I talk about the adhān
I am not talking about music
Because the adhān is not music

Remember that:
The adhān is not music

In the camp
People have lots of ideas about music
I don't know if you've heard them or not

Music? Ḥaram!
It's sinful! Forbidden!
Leads to all kinds of bad behaviour!

A woman singing?
Absolutely not

Music, what of it?
Do something useful with your time!

I have often thought about these words
What they mean
Where they are written
Who decided they are true

I have searched
And I have read
And I have found that
They are words
Customs, traditions
Passed down through generations
Unquestioned
Behaviours from another era
The time of my grandparents
And my great grandparents
And my great-great grandparents
The way they assumed things should be
Left unchallenged
Taken as writ
Misunderstood

Do you understand me?
Do you get it?
How else can I explain this to you?
Let me think

It's like the first time I got my period
I was 14
A child
Terrified
Convinced I was dying
Unprepared for the onslaught of womanhood

(They married me off six months later)

They told me I was not allowed to pray
As long as I was bleeding
I could not pray

Why you ask?

It's not like people think
It's not because I was impure
Not because I was dirty, soiled

I have read about it
I'll tell you about it

When you have your period
Your blood pressure is high
Your immune system is compromised
You're tired
You're weak
Your body needs rest
Performing *sujūd*[50] would make you dizzy
It would make you sick, weak

And Allah would not want you to be weak

It's like fasting
The same thing
If you have your period
And you try to fast –
Well, you get it –
Fasting would make you sick, weak

And Allah would not want you to be weak

Maybe that's what people worry about with music
That it will make them weak

---

[50] The act of prostration to *Allah* in the direction of Mecca during prayer.

Because sometimes music makes you weak
It can open rooms of grief and sadness
Or rooms of torment, distress

And Allah would not want you to be weak

When I hear the adhān
It does not open the doors music opens
It does not open doors of sadness or grief
Or weakness

Allah would not want you to be weak

The adhān is not music
The adhān is a sound
And it opens a room
That no music will ever open

So, I guess
I hear many sounds in this camp
But one sound
The only sound
The true sound
Rises far above them all

Discussion: The Framework of Taghyīr al-Jaww

What do we learn about the everyday musical lives of Syrians in Za'atari through the narrative ethnographies of Ayman, Iman, and Maryam?

The stories of Ayman, Iman, and Maryam demonstrate the genres and kinds of music and sounds enjoyed by different individuals in the camp, and how these genres articulate different identities and experiences. Both Ayman and Maryam for instance, favour the ṭarab style. We also see how older members of Iman's family enjoy the same genre. Ṭarab originates from traditional Arab culture and refers to music which evokes the state of ṭarab, that of rapture or ecstasy reached during a musical performance (Racy 2003). Ṭarab

has a number of key musical features that often involve highly technical and refined musical skills (Ebbini 2022: 114). But many commentators understand ṭarab as the emotional state aroused in listeners owing to the interplay between performer, music, lyrics, and audience (Shannon 2006: 161). Others speak of a broader ṭarab culture that relates to a set of practices and sentiments connected to performing and listening to music (Shannon 2006; Danielson 1997; Racy 2003). As such, in ṭarab culture, the singer and the audience are vital in creating the energy of a performance; performances are accompanied by shouts and gestures, creating the atmosphere and experience of ṭarab wherein the singer and listeners are actively interacting (Shannon 2006: 162). Scholarship also suggests that ṭarab may be particularly powerful for diasporic communities, bridging divides, transmitting turāth in new hybrid forms, and challenging social norms (Figueroa 2022; Marcus 2004; Rasmussen 2002, 2004, 2005, 2016).

Many of the singers and artists named by Ayman, Iman, and Maryam belong to the culture of ṭarab, including Nour Mhanna (b.1966), Abdel Halim Hafez (1929-1977), and Sabah Fakhri (1933-2021). Abdel Halim Hafez (often referred to simply as Abdel Halim) is an Egyptian singer, actor, and composer. He is widely regarded as one of the greats of the classical period of Arab 'popular' music and was a leading figure in ṭarab music in the mid-twentieth century. Sabah Fakhri, a legendary Syrian vocalist from Aleppo, was another major figure in the twentieth century ṭarab culture (Shannon 2003b: 83). Many ṭarab musicians are said to have had strong religious training in rituals such as the tajwīd and the adhān (Danielson 1997; Shannon 2003b: 94). These rituals have informed the nature of ṭarab culture, giving ṭarab musicians expert skills in pronunciation, text articulation, phrasing, and musical inflections (Danielson 1997: 10; Ebbini and Al-Bakri 2021: 9).

In contrast to the ṭarab enjoyed by Ayman and other older characters in the above stories, Iman mostly enjoys music from the *shabābī* genre. Shabābī music, literally meaning youth music, is considered the 'main face' of popular music among Arab listeners, bearing significant resemblance to Western popular music styles, but also incorporating idiosyncratic musical features of different countries across the Arab region (Ebbini 2022: 106-107). These songs are usually short in length, have 'catchy' tunes, standard time signatures, Arab singing style, Arab ornamented rhythms, and Western instruments (ibid: 107). Some of the most famous singers in the Arab world today are known for their shabābī style, including those enjoyed by Iman, such as Elissa, Nancy Ajram, Sherine Abd al-Wahab, and others such as Amr Diab and Wael Kfoury (ibid).

All these types of music correspond with Ebbini's (2022) categorisation of contemporary Arab musical culture, thereby suggesting that listening and performing preferences in Za'atari mirror the wider Arab listening culture. Maryam's practice of listening to Western classical music and to the sounds of the adhān further expands this framework. As explored in the introduction to this thesis, the relationship between music and Islam is complex. Scholars have long debated the ethical and moral parameters of music in Islam as well as terminological considerations; the adhān and Qur'anic recitation have been framed as 'religious music', 'music in Islam', 'music as a form of recitation', or 'music with Islamic nuances' (Ebbini and Al-Bakri 2021: 2; Shokouhi and Yusof 2013: 373; Rasmussen 2010: 79). Interestingly, although Maryam does state that the adhān is not music, she describes the adhān as *ṣawt*, which means sound or voice. The word ṣawt does appear in discussions of music and Islam, as in the term '*hanadasa al ṣawt',* translated as 'sound art' or the art of sound' as a way to establish equivalency with

Western uses of the term 'music' (Al-Faruqi 1982, 1986: 172; Salhi 2014: 2).[51] Maryam's use of the term 'ṣawt' in fact works to delineates the adhān from definitions, interpretations, and connotations of musīqa.

Although Maryam acknowledges the ideological differences between the adhān and the other musics she enjoys by framing the adhān as ṣawt, she is clear about the affective power of listening to categories of ṣawt. Listening to the adhān engenders a feeling akin to spirituality, a feeling that Maryam claims cannot be engendered through music or musīqa. Furthermore, she explains how listening to the adhān is inextricably tied up with memory and sense of place: the Za'atari style of adhān, for Maryam, is in direct contrast to the Homs style of adhān that she recalls hearing in her daily life in Syria. Listening to the Homs style of the adhān thus conjures special feelings for Maryam that the Za'atari adhān cannot. This sheds considerable light on the place of religious music in everyday life. While scholars have understood religious recitation as part of the theological heritage of Islam intended to highlight Qur'anic text and the word of God it is also the case that the adhān may be seen as a part of the 'Arabic musical heritage' (Al-Bakri et al. 2019: 167). In their work drawing the 'sonic map' of the adhān, Al-Bakri et al. highlight the links between place and the call to prayer, charting the 'influence of particular aesthetic taste and local musical impact onto the Islamic ritual' (ibid: 182). These variances thus constitute the call to prayer as an 'inseparable part of everyday life' (ibid: 182). Clearly, the adhān is an inseparable part of Maryam's own day-to-day listening practice but also the way in which she sonically maps out her life, remembering and experiencing different

[51] The term 'ṣawt' (sometimes rendered 'ṣaut') is also used to describe a form of popular music in Kuwait and Bahrain. See Ahmad Al Salhi (2016).

places through different local styles of the adhān. The adhān thus emerges as a signifier of heritage and the way in which Maryam's understands her local surroundings (or, indeed, changes in those surroundings).

Ayman, Iman, and Maryam's stories also reveal something significant about the transformative acts of performing and listening. With these hakawātīyeh, I argue that performing and listening engenders a process of *taghyīr al-jaww.* Translating literally as 'changing the atmosphere', taghyīr al-jaww derives from *yighayīr al-jaww* (to change the atmosphere), a phrase used extensively by Syrians in Za'atari when explaining the affective and transformative action of performing or listening, and of music itself. Both change and atmosphere have various meanings for Syrians depending on the context. *Taghyīr* (change or changing) can be economic (e.g., bringing income), psychological (e.g., processing trauma, relaxing, regulating moods), or even emotional and metaphorical (e.g., travelling or escaping to imagined places or countries). *Jaww*, on the other hand, can mean atmosphere, weather, air, scenery, ambience, mood, feeling, style, vibe, or status quo.

For Ayman, performing in a professional capacity brings about economic and social change (taghyīr) to his personal, physical, social circumstances (jaww). Performing brings Ayman vital income that, in turn, enables him to negotiate his social position both within the camp and within the wider musical scene of Jordan: he can buy more equipment and take more lessons to improve his musical craft and his ability to expand his career. Indeed, promoting and furthering his social position is fundamental to Ayman's performance practice, allowing him to garner notoriety and popularity among other members of the Za'atari community and beyond; performing in Amman enables Ayman to expand his horizons beyond the camp. The transformative nature of music for

Ayman is intrinsically linked, I believe, to the genre of ṭarab he performs. The refined, skilled, and respected nature of ṭarab musicians and ṭarab culture is a way for Ayman to aspire to the same level, to refine his own talents, and to advance the trajectory of his professional musical career. Furthermore, the culture of ṭarab and its associations with the creation of an atmosphere akin to ecstasy between the performer and the audience is also important in engendering significant emotions and reactions (taghyīr) among Syrians in Za'atari and customers in Amman who listen to Ayman perform: they sing along, clap, shout out, and even dance.

For Iman, performing and composing songs engenders psychological change (taghyīr) that enables her to regulate and process the emotions and moods (jaww) of her life. Singing is evidently cathartic for Iman: by singing songs that speak directly to her feelings in a particular 'moment' (the 'jaww' she finds herself in), Iman can process trauma such as the death of her son. Composing is equally important, allowing Iman to document the world around her, and also address her own positionality in the camp. One way that Iman articulates the act of singing in Za'atari is by reframing her identity to that of ajnabīyeh or foreigner. I do not suggest that Iman uses the phrase ajnabīyeh to change her ethnic or racial identity or that she equates the term with 'Western'. While ajnabīyeh is often synonymous with 'Western' in the local Arabic in Za'atari, Iman's use of the term here is not necessarily an act of privileging Western frameworks of gender. Indeed, research by those such as Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2014), Abu-Lughod (1998), and Rasmussen (2010) has demonstrated the importance of looking beyond mainstream essentialist definitions of patriarchy and gender roles in Arab and Muslim contexts, instead understanding the plurality of gender roles and systems in different contexts. Rather, imagining herself as 'ajnabīyeh' signals a metaphorical 'othering' from the

ambivalent views about women and acts of singing or musical performance she encounters in the camp. In this way, she is able to envision a different or 'foreign' set of life prospects (jaww) for her and her family – which includes her daughter but also her male relatives.

For Maryam, taghyīr al-jaww is illustrated through the extended metaphor of rooms in her mind. By listening to different types of musīqa and ṣawt, Maryam travels to a series of metaphorical rooms in her mind, each of which in turn invokes a different type of jaww – be it the concentration needed for work, to change her mood after having left the camp, or feelings associated with religious reverence or calm. Other 'rooms' transport Maryam to specific places or memories that have negative connotations, such as her hometown of Homs during her childhood, and the memory of her brother. These rooms help Maryam to bring about certain psychological and emotional states, to strengthen her own convictions, and to address ideas about music, gender, and religion. By seeking out recordings of the Homs adhān on YouTube, Maryam engenders a feeling or experience akin to spirituality. This transformative act may have significant implications for the way in which the adhān and other arrangements of sound in the Islam are framed in music studies.

Conclusions

Everyday acts of music-making in Za'atari are transformative: music and sound have an indelible and intrinsic place in the lives of different Syrians in the camp, who perform and listen in various ways in order to mediate and negotiate their day-to-day experiences in al-ghurba. Given that the notion of taghyīr al-jaww is open to multiple interpretations and definitions and highlights the varying ways different individuals and groups understand the transformative capacity of music-making, I suggest that taghyīr al-jaww

emerges as an effective framework for understanding the transformative nature of everyday cultural acts in contexts of ghurba.

Central to this framework are the ethnographic traditions of storytelling and antropoesía. Narrative ethnography effectively demonstrates processes of taghyīr al-jaww by revealing the knowledge, experience, thoughts, emotions, beliefs and perspectives of ordinary people, evoking a sense of place and space, and giving a sense of locally lived life in a culturally situated manner. Furthermore, narrative ethnography exposes the crucial role of the ethnographer in understanding and expressing processes of taghyīr al-jaww. The ethnographer learns from a wider range of intersubjective experiences and relations and thereby presents their version of the pain, sorrow, shock, joy, pride, determination, happiness, and spirituality of those whose lives have been affected by displacement. As such, taghyīr al-jaww also emerges as a political endeavour, exposing the transformative acts of performing and listening through narrative ethnography, moving the reader, and acting as a mirror for us all in thinking about the lives of those who have been affected by displacement.

Chapter 3

The Role of Music in Humanitarian Programming

Introduction

Anecdotes about music healing or changing lives are particularly pervasive in the world of international aid and development. The all-star boy band born out of a Sierra Leonean refugee camp in Guinea (Valdivia Ramirez 2013). The talented Syrian boy gifted a violin by Oxford University (University of Oxford 2017). The disadvantaged Venezuelan youth saved from poverty through music education programmes (Sistema Europe 2017). The local musicians teaching Palestinian songs in UNRWA schools in Gaza to help children process the trauma of war (Al Jazeera English 2024). The Dutch organisation of socially engaged musicians providing performances, workshops, and instruments to connect communities and heal wounds for 25 years in conflict zones across Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Kosovo, and Palestine (Musicians Without Borders 2024).

The same may be said of humanitarian work in Za'atari too. In QS and LWF, music and arts-based projects account for a significant proportion of their programming in the camp. Both organisations provide a range of music activities in their respective centres, including music education for youth, music therapy courses, Zumba, and in the past, Brazilian capoeira. Other creative activities provided by the organisations also include drawing, painting, mosaic, calligraphy, fashion design, sewing, handicrafts, creative writing, and poetry. The proliferation of arts-based programming by these organisations suggests that music has a significant role in the wider system of humanitarian aid provided to refugees in Za'atari. In this chapter, I therefore ask how music is used as a

form of aid and relief for Syrians and the extent to which music's power is harnessed as an agent of change in ghurba settings.

In recent decades the fields of applied ethnomusicology, music therapy, community music, and conflict transformation studies have paid substantial attention to the use of music in contexts of conflict and displacement. In highlighting the capacity of music 'to transform conflict(s) with empathy, creativity, and non-violence' (Urbain 2008: 4), scholars have underscored music's ability to build bridges, nurture social cohesion, ameliorate relationships, improve mental wellbeing, and preserve cultural heritage for communities affected by war, trauma, and displacement (Beckles-Willson 2013, 2014, 2021; Bergh 2007; Bergh and Sloboda 2010; Cohen 2003; Grant et al. 2010; Haskell 2015; Hemetek et al. 2004; Howell 2015; O'Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010; Storsve et al. 2010; Sweers 2010; Robertson 2010; Tan 2010, 2015; Urbain et al. 2008).

There are countless examples of programmes around the world who have harnessed music as a peacebuilding and development tool in contexts of conflict and displacement. Musicians Without Borders, as mentioned above, has established various community-based music projects in Northern Ireland, Palestine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Rwanda, the Balkans, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Musicians without Borders 2024). In the MENA region, there have been numerous music initiatives in support of conflict-affected communities. In Palestine, 'Sounds of Palestine' aims to empower disadvantaged children in Bethlehem through music education, and the Barenboim-Said Music Center, which includes the famous West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, claims to promote peace and dialogue among Arab and Israeli groups through different performing and learning activities (Sounds of Palestine 2024; Fundación Barenboim-Said 2021; West-Eastern Divan Orchestra 2023). Action for Hope, founded

in 2013 in Lebanon, now has projects across Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Sudan that aim to support the 'social, cultural, and psychological needs of distressed and displaced communities' through 'cultural relief' and 'cultural development' programmes such as music schools and theatre trainings (Action for Hope 2023).

In assessing the efficacy and sustainability of some of these programmes, scholars and practitioners have been concerned with the relevance of the types and genres of music employed within each context. Many have criticised the prevalence of Western classical music in conflict zones in non-Western contexts. For example, Rachel Beckles-Willson (2013, 2014) highlights resonances of Orientalism in Western classical music projects in Palestine, including in the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. Jim Sykes (2018) similarly condemns the use of Western classical music in projects in post-war, post-tsunami Sri Lanka for alienating local participants. Some scholars have outlined the benefits of different genres in music interventions. Arild Bergh and John Sloboda note how a common approach to music in conflict transformation settings has included 'multicultural' projects that leverage 'world music' to challenge attitudes and build bridges (2010: 6). But Bergh and Sloboda also emphasise the pitfalls of multicultural projects in that they assume homogeneity of ethnic groups, reinforce ideas of 'the Other', increase differences between groups, and work on the problematic belief that music is a 'universal language' (ibid: 9). Others have highlighted the use of local musics from a given context. For example, Maya Youssef claims that therapy projects with Syrian youth in London using the qānūn help participants to 'connect' to their identities and also preserves cultural heritage (Youssef 2021).

In addition to concerns about the politics of genres employed in music interventions, there is debate surrounding the extent to which programmes are implicated in the wider

politics of humanitarian funding. As explained in the introduction to this thesis, the depiction of refugees as victims of circumstance can be traced throughout academic, development, and public spaces. Scholars posit that the system of humanitarian aid fundamentally relies on an image of victimhood and deprivation in order to sustain public interest and funding in refugee contexts (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014; Harrell-Bond 1986; Cabot 2016). While I explore how this ideology plays out in Za'atari in greater detail in my discussion of the relationships between humanitarian actors, refugees, and academics in Chapter 5, it is important to note that musical programming can be particularly implicated in this debate. Awet Andemicael, for instance, postulates that the arts pose a threat to public expectations that refugees live in situations of 'shock and horror':

> It is certainly what most of the world seems to expect; in fact, depictions of refugees as actively involved in artistic pursuits might violate such expectations, possibly dampening the philanthropic zeal of those wishing to help (2011: 8).

Taking into account these key frameworks and ideas, in this chapter I explore the functions of music programming in Za'atari Refugee Camp by assessing music projects implemented with QS and LWF in the camp between 2019 and 2021. I categorise music programmes into four functions: music for cultural education; music for social cohesion; music for mental health and psychosocial support; and music for empowerment and equality. Within each of these functions, I examine the role and politics of the types of activity and genres of music employed, including Arabic music, Western classical music, Zumba, Capoeira, and Music Therapy. In doing so, I ask to what extent different genres are effective in supporting sustainable, and ethical approaches to the use of music as tool for humanitarianism in conflict-affected contexts.

Music for Cultural Education

A major concern for humanitarian organisations in Za'atari (and in Jordan more broadly) is the education of Syrian youth. Syrian children in Jordan are legally entitled to a full cycle of education, including pre-primary and secondary schooling, and education is compulsory through to 10th Grade (Human Rights Watch 2020: 14). The GoJ has taken steps to enrol Syrian children in education, opening schools in camps, establishing a two-shift system to deal with overcrowding, and allowing NGOs to provide non-formal education programmes. In Za'atari, UNICEF works with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to manage the operation of the camp's 32 public schools (UNHCR 2024f). While exact data on enrolment figures is difficult to obtain, evidence suggests that nearly 84,000 school-age Syrians in Jordan are not enrolled in any education program (Human Rights Watch 2020a: 14). In 2023, UNHCR stated that 22,000 students are enrolled in formal education in Za'atari (UNHCR 2023a). However, given that 54% of the camp population is children, a significant number of school-age Syrians in the camp are evidently not enrolled in formal public education. Recent research has also found that the number of boys enrolled in schools in camps outweighs the number of girls (Delprato et al. 2020).

The reasons for Syrian children not attending school in Za'atari are manifold. Human Rights Watch suggests that lack of attendance is due to the low quality of education in camps, including reduced school hours, a shortage of teachers, incorrect class placement, administrative barriers, and reports of sexual harassment (2020a: 33-46). Furthermore, extreme poverty and lack of employment opportunities for refugees forces many school-age youth into child labour to provide for their families, and forced marriage means many (particularly girls) do not attend school (ibid: 25-29).

In addition to public MoE schooling, NGOs in Za'atari provide non-formal education and extra-curricular programmes for the camp population. Since the establishment of their Youth Centre in Za'atari in 2012, QS have offered learning activities for youth aged 10-30, including art (fashion design, handicrafts, mosaics, calligraphy, painting), English language training, ICT, creative writing and poetry, Arabic-language support, sports (Zumba, football, table tennis), peer-to-peer mentoring, and counselling. LWF also began their work in Za'atari in 2012 in their dedicated 'Peace Oasis' centre and have since provided youth (aged 14-30) with art, drama, sport (football, Zumba) sewing, food preparation/catering, and capoeira activities.

In both organisations, music education is central. In QS, music classes have been funded by UNFPA and the Catalyst Foundation, and in LWF, activities are funded by several donors, primarily international churches and faith-based groups.[52] Music lessons are provided by both NGOs in gender-segregated groups of around 10-20 young people. Lessons are carried out in dedicated music caravans. A variety of instruments and equipment is available, including ouds, orgs, ṭabl, and guitars, microphones and speakers (see Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3).

[52] Donors include Czech Diaconia (Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren), Dutch Lutherans, the Evangelical Churches of America and Bavaria, the Protest Church of Germany, and other faith-based groups.



Figure 4.1. A music caravan in QS, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 14 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).



Figure 4.2. Inside second music caravan in QS, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 27 February 2020, Za'atari, Jordan).



Figure 4.3. Inside music caravan in LWF 'Peace Oasis', Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 26 January 2020, Za'atari, Jordan).

I attended music classes in QS several times a week throughout my fieldwork.[53] Most of the lessons I observed were held by QS with female students, but I did observe lessons

[53] Conducting fieldwork with youth in Za'atari presented numerous challenges. QS had a complex set of procedures for researchers wishing to carry out fieldwork with people under the age of 18, which were never fully disclosed to me. Procedures seemed to include (but were not limited to) ratifying the specific research activity with al-mufawwaḍīyeh (UNHCR and camp authorities), even if researchers already had blanket clearance from al-mufawwaḍīyeh to be in the camp and carry out research. (Also see my comments in the introduction, Chapter 1, and in Chapter 5 about the lack of clarity regarding the position of researchers in the camp). On one occasion, I did carry out a focus group discussion (FGD) with some teenage female music students from QS after receiving permission from one of the project managers in the Amman office to do so. Two adults – both Syrian women from Za'atari – were present throughout. However, when another member of the Amman management team from QS learnt about the session, I was told it was 'against the rules'. I was asked to delete the audio recording and show him evidence I had done so. As such, it was generally the case that carrying out focus group discussions with youth in the camp was difficult, and I was conscious of creating more friction between myself and my partner NGOs by pressing the issue (again, see my comments in Chapter 5 regarding my relationship with my partner NGOs). I am aware that my discussion here, therefore, is limited in some capacity as I was not able to explore student experiences of cultural education in the camp in detail. I did, of course, often speak to students when observing or teaching classes and those conversations have informed my understanding and exploration of music education in the following sections.

with males, too.[54] Below is an extract from my fieldnotes describing a music class I attended with male participants in QS in November 2019:

> We must arrive relatively early at the centre as I'm able to observe the morning music class with the young boys. I always feel a little awkward in these settings, not only because of my gender […] but also because the young boys are so continually fascinated and embarrassed in equal measure by my presence that I feel I am disrupting the natural way of things, and I am always intensely aware of the researcher's presence, reactivity and so on in these settings. I feel it too in the girls' sessions, but not as keenly.
>
> Tariq begins with a show-and-tell-type session with a guitar [rather than the org], telling the boys all about the instrument. He attempts to play a little without a great degree of success because the guitar is so out of tune (no doubt due to the environment in which it is kept) […] The boys are pretty low in energy and in concentration today, pretty unresponsive to Tariq (who has really great energy all the time, and is a wholly committed teacher) […] Tariq is clearly aware of the kids' despondency, so conducts a little stand-up/sit-down game to rally them; laughter ensues, and he gets them back on track […] Tariq begins teaching *solfège* to the boys. He splits the room; there are about 10 boys either side of the room. I note that this is considerably more than I've ever seen in the girls' lessons […] As usual, Tariq uses the solfège as a starting point to teach the melody of a song. Then he plays several patterns that the boys

[54] I did observe music classes in LWF's Peace Oasis center, but not to the same extent as in QS. LWF classes followed a similar format. This is unsurprising given that music teachers in Za'atari are friends and share resources. That I predominantly observed classes with female youth was mainly a case of logistics: because of the two-shift school system (which means girls and boys, and children of different ages, attend school at different times of day) and the timings of my trips to the camp, I often missed the early morning classes that took place for young boys, and was already leaving the camp by the time afternoon classes for older boys took place.

> repeat once they come to the org. Whilst one boy plays, Tariq adds in the beat […] As new students have a go at playing the org, Tariq writes the solfège notes directly onto to the org keys with a marker pen. He tests the boys then by saying things like 'play *mi* 3 times', 'play *do re mi*' etc. He then appears to apply these exercises to the song they are learning. I think it might be 'Ṣudfa' by Yara again […] Tariq moves onto the guitar and demonstrates the musical scale on that instrument. Interchanging between the guitar, the org, and singing, Tariq regularly conducts call and response exercises both to the class and to the boy currently playing the org. It is another boy's first time playing the org, too, and Tariq immediately also tells him not to be scared. Such a lovely moment.

As explained in my fieldnotes, music lessons were conducted by Syrian musicians from the camp and primarily featured org or oud instruction, depending on the teacher's own principal study. In org classes, for instance, where sufficient orgs are available (as in LWF) students play on individual instruments in unison. If there is a limited number of keyboards, as in QS, students take it turns to play on one org with the group observing each other in turn. Class content also includes music theory, predominantly Arabic music theory such as the maqāmāt, fundamentals of rhythm, solfège, and Arab musical repertoire; students will learn songs together, playing melodies on instruments, and sing along with their peers in unison (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5).



Figure 4.4. Music class in QS, Za'atari with male youth. (Photograph by the author, 11 November 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

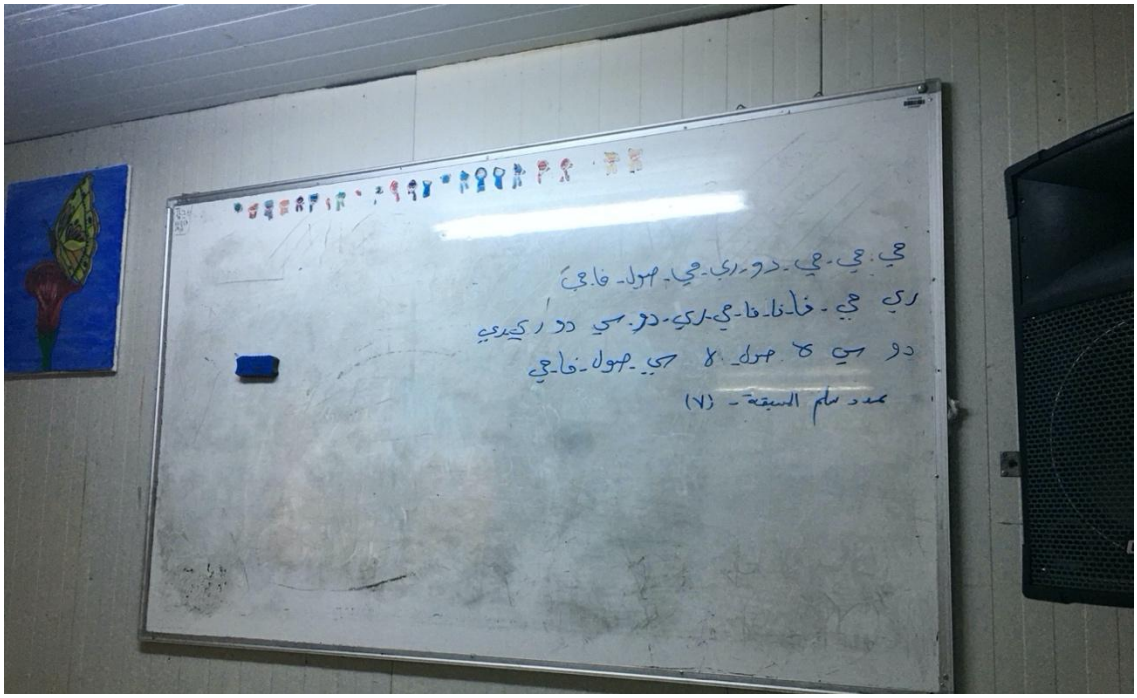


Figure 4.5. Whiteboard in QS music caravan showing the opening melody to 'Mawṭinī' written out in solfège using Arabic script. (Photograph by the author, 22 January 2020, Za'atari, Jordan).

Most music classes in Za'atari focus on Arabic music genres, instrumental teaching on the org and org, and Arabic music pedagogy. There is a long history of utilising local

musics in projects in contexts of conflict and displacement. Dwight Conquergood's health theatre in Bin Vinai, Vietnam capitalised on Vietnamese musical 'traditions' as an 'empowering way of securing continuity and some semblance of stability' (1988: 180). And in her work with Syrian refugee children throughout Europe, Maya Youssef uses 'traditional' Syrian music in order to allow participants to 'reconnect with their identities' (2021). In Za'atari, using local musics also attempts to connect with Syrians' cultural backgrounds. As Elisabeth, a program manager at LWF, reveals:

> I think, you know, [the music used in lessons] has to connect to their reality and their day-to-day life. So, generally, I think that some of the reason behind [using Arabic music] is just to connect to their background and their traditions that they have. (Interview with the author, 8 October 2020)

For others, connecting to traditions is crucial because of the context of ghurba. Many of the children in Za'atari were either very young when they fled Syria or were born in the camp. While Wedad (who I introduced in Chapter 1) now works as a mental health counsellor on the MeWe program in QS, prior to 2011, she was training as a pianist and cultural librarian in Damascus. Wedad argues that music lessons in the camp should educate youth on Syrian culture:

> Lots of children in the camp, they don't even know anything about Syria – the only thing they know about it is war. So, they should learn about their own culture and music. All children here know is the camp. They should always remember: You are Syrian. You are not just a refugee in a camp. (Interview with the author, 5 August 2021)

In the class I describe in my fieldnotes above, the song the students are learning is ‘Ṣudfa’ by Yara. Born Carla Nazih al-Berkashi, Yara is a well-known Lebanese pop singer. Her 2009 release, ‘Ṣudfa’, features on the album ‘Laala Khalijiyyeh’, and is written in the khalījī style. ‘Ṣudfa’ opens with a short taqsīm (instrumental improvisations) on the oud, followed by a heavy Gulf beat on the ṭabl, unison violins, and riqq. The song follows a repetitive chorus-verse structure. Yara performs the verses solo and is joined by male unison voices during the chorus. The opening melody of the chorus is simple, comprising of 4 repeating notes in stepwise motion. The lyrics describe the female vocalist and a male suddenly meeting one another’s eyes in a crowded room, and the impact on the vocalist’s life from that moment on: ‘All my songs are written about him/The most beautiful love songs and poems composed by him for me’. Other songs I frequently heard taught in music lessons included: ‘Mawṭinī’, based on a poem by the Palestinian poet Ibrahim Tuqan, the unofficial national anthem of Palestine until 1996, and the anthem of Iraq since 2004; and Elly Shomali’s 1937 composition ‘Biktub Ismik Yā Bilādī’ (I write your name, my country). Walid’s own composition, as mentioned in Chapter 1, ‘Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani’ was also featured in music lessons.

How do these songs fit into the goals of NGOs and Syrians to provide a cultural education for youth in the camp? Let’s turn once more to Ebbini’s model of Arab contemporary music. Ebbini identifies the seven most recognised, commercialised, and enjoyed ‘meta-genre’ of ‘Arab popular music’ within the wider contemporary Arab musical culture: sha‘bī, khalījī, shabābī, ṭarab, Islamic-pop, raï and nationalistic (2022: 104). Yara’s ‘Ṣudfa’ is written in the khalījī style. Originating in the Persian Gulf states of Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, traditional khalījī music reflects the Bedouin and maritime lifestyles of the region with various

intricate rhythmic patterns, distinctive vocal delivery, and a 'complex formalised song cycle', accompanied by the oud, percussion, rhythmic clapping, and the violin (ibid: 108-109). Popularised across the entire Arab region in the 1960s and 70s, modern khalījī blends Gulf rhythms with modern song structures like the taqāsīm and mawwāl improvisatory forms, and the Arab-style orchestra (*firqeh*) (ibid: 109). Twenty-first century khalījī music has increasingly incorporated electronic instruments and synthesizers, leading many to associate contemporary khalījī forms with the popular shabābī genre (ibid).

Songs such as 'Mawṭinī' and 'Biktub Ismik Yā Bilādī', however, fall under the meta-genre of nationalistic music (al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh). Broader conceptualisations in the scholarship have understood nationalistic musical forms across contexts as involving some kind of folk element in order to reflect national affiliation or patriotism (Turino 2000). In the category of al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh in Arab musical culture, nationalist sentiment is often expressed through lyrics and folkloristic musical traditions shared across regions and states in the Arab world (Ebbini 2022: 109). Some songs in the repertoire are dedicated to specific rulers, countries, or cities, and feature musical idioms specific to a country or region. Take the use of dabke style in Omar Abdallat's 'Yā Birjnā Al-'Alī' (Our shining light), dedicated to King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein of Jordan, or the traditional rhythmic patterns and mijwiz in Mohammad Asaf's 'Dammī Falastīnī' (My blood is Palestinian) (ibid: 108). Al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh also speaks to pan-Arabism and the notion of a wider Arab nation. This collection of songs, including 'Mawṭinī', takes a more generalised approach to the use of folkloristic elements and instead emphasises lyrics and forceful military-style vocals to reflect and encourage feelings of solidarity and unity (ibid: 108 and 109).

When I spoke to Amar, one of the men we first encountered in Chapter 1, he explained that the genres of Arab contemporary musical culture are the most popular among youth in the camp (interview with the author, 4 August 2021). It therefore makes sense that teachers would utilise them in music lessons. Amar argues that teachers use sha'bī music, for instance, because it represents the broader listening preferences of the Za'atari community:

> The thing in Za'atari is that 99% of the camp listens to sha'bī music. So, even if someone came and said, 'This different genre of music will benefit you', if you give [the camp] a choice between Arabic music and Western music, they'll pick Arabic music […] They want the same kind of stuff they hear at weddings and stuff like that. Even if you wanted to use 'art' music (even, you know, Arabic classical music), in Za'atari that wouldn't work. If you started one project for learning the oud and one for learning the org, which one would be more popular? Of course: the org. (Interview with the author, 4 August 2021)

The case of al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh in music classes, however, suggests there is more to selecting music simply because youth are familiar with them. Nermeen is a Zumba instructor and music therapy facilitator with QS. She claims that there is value in al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh for Syrians in Za'atari:

> For example, if I heard a song that talked about one's country, like 'Mawṭinī', of course it will affect me completely and speak to me: we had to flee our country and we ended up in a place that was not our own. And only God knows when we can go back. So, a song like 'Mawṭinī', straight away will make me cry […] Egyptian, Lebanese, whatever […] With a *muḥadath* song, it allows us to remember the situation that we are in; it's relevant to our context. For example, the song 'Mawṭinī' […] has

> a direct impact on us; we left our homeland, we were going from place to place, and only God knows when we will be able to go back […] So, when we hear something about 'the homeland', we remember *our* homeland. (Interview with the author, 5 July 2021)

Here, Nermeen describes songs such as *'*Mawṭinī' as muḥadath. While muḥadath can be translated as modernised, modern, or contemporary, it can strangely also be understood as traditionalist or, in this context, cultural; it is cultural in the sense that it relates to a wider culture, society, or lifestyle. By denoting songs from the meta-genre of al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh as muḥadath, Nermeen intimates how compositions like 'Mawṭinī', despite speaking to broader pan-Arab nationalistic sentiment, can also relate to the context of Za'atari by eliciting feelings and thoughts related to concepts of home or homeland.

Another composition that may be thought of as muḥadath in that it relates to the context of Za'atari by eliciting thoughts of home or homeland is Walid's own composition, 'Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani'. 'Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani' has many of the hallmark features of al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh. The song is written in a 2/4 time signature and uses the *Ayūb* rhythm. Ayūb, said to be of Egyptian origin, has a short, cyclical feel, and is often used in folk music and raqṣ sharqī (belly dancing) (Rechberger 2018: 92; Groskopf 2021: 152). The maqām in 'Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani' is *'Ajam* (beginning on E flat), which is more or less similar to the Western major scale. The song's melody is simple, moves in a stepwise motion, and the text setting is syllabic. The melody in the verse has the same rhythm as the chorus but is sung a third above. According to Walid, aspects such as syllabic text setting and the use of maqām 'Ajam help to make the song simple and accessible for young Syrian learners (interview with the author, 21 August 2021).

Whether or not songs like 'Mawṭinī' or 'Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani' speak specifically to a Syrian homeland is evidently not the point. Rather, the songs speak to sentiments that

some might relate to Syria and to its broader culture. In this way, music education programmes similarly map onto ideas about al-balad as explored in Chapter 1, whereby even general evocations relating to concepts of balad, home, or ghurba, are invoked by Syrians in differing ways; here, al-balad is invoked for the purposes of cultural education of youth. As such, when Syrians and other humanitarian actors in Za'atari speak of music classes connecting to participants' identities and day-to-day lives or addressing gaps in the cultural knowledge of youth in the camp, we can understand this as a broader 'Arab' cultural education that may or may not relate to certain experiences or sentiments of those in ghurba.

Focusing on broader Arab culture in music programming in Za'atari appears to be preferable to the use of genres from other cultures. Syrians in Za'atari generally refer to *al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh* (foreign music) to describe any music that is not 'Arab'. Occasionally, Syrians will refer to musics from other locales specifically, like, for example, *al-musīqa al-ṣīnīyeh* (Chinese music) or *al-musīqa al-gharbīyeh* (Western music), the latter of which refers to music produced in Europe and America. Many Syrians argue that al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh as a broader category is not effective for cultural education in the camp. Deema believes this is because al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh is not part of the contemporary Arab musical culture enjoyed or listened to by camp youth:

> When you're talking about teaching music, why would I want to do al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh? On a basic level, what if one day I wanted to put on an event in the camp for our community. I want the community to understand the music. If so, why would I play al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh, for example? They wouldn't connect with it. Of course, each individual person obviously has their own tastes, but you have to think about what

> is best for people on the whole. (Interview with the author, 16 August 2021)

For Nermeen, al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh also presents an issue with comprehension given the fact that the genre may include lyrics or words in other languages: 'Not everyone knows the words to foreign songs, you know? So, no one would be able to understand them or memorise them' (interview with the author, 5 July 2021).

There are countless education programmes across other contexts that utilise Western art music with vulnerable groups on the basis that the genre is somehow universal. Kiki Fukushima, for example, argues that, 'Classical music has no borders, for which reason musicians from different backgrounds can play together […] By sharing music stands and playing together, they come to respect each other for their respective music skills' (2011: 11). El-Sistema, established in Venezuela in 1975, is grounded in a similar philosophy, employing Western art music education with children from economically disadvantaged communities based on the alleged principles of change, ensemble, accessibility, frequency, and connectivity of the genre (Govias 2011). Accordingly, others have employed El-Sistema in contexts of forced displacement, as in the El-Sistema programmes in refugee camps in Greece (Bohorquez et al. 2021).

In Za'atari, too, Western art music has been used in music programming. In 2014, a social initiative called 'Music for Life' carried out a series of activities in Za'atari camp. Founded by George Mathew, Music for Life was based on the belief of 'music and music making creating transformative social impact through strong partnerships' (Music for Life International 2019). The organisation partnered with QS, and four musicians from orchestras across the United States, including the MET Orchestra and the New World Symphony Orchestra, visited the camp for one week. Forming a string quartet, they

performed short concerts of works by Haydn, Shostakovich, and Borodin, and carried out mini workshops for children to 'try out' instruments and learn about chamber music (see Figure 4.6) (Questscope 2014).



Figure 4.6. Music for Life concert in QS, Za'atari. (Questscope 2014).

The use of Western art music in contexts of displacement and conflict has been criticised by scholars. In her studies of music projects in Palestine, Beckles-Willson (2014) likens current-day foreign music teachers of Western art music to eighteenth-century Protestant missionaries to the Holy Land; like missionaries, music teachers in Palestine see Western art music as the 'most effective' genre and format for Palestinian refugees due to its supposedly universal comprehension and affect (2014: 23 and 26).

Beckles-Willson therefore frames music activities in Palestine through the prism of Orientalism where musicians perpetuate inequalities between 'East' and 'West' (2013: 7). Similar Orientalist critiques have been directed at El-Sistema, with scholars claiming that the use of Western art music perpetuates an unequal balance in authority, control and exclusion, ignores each learner's own interests, cultures or socially situated experiences, and privileges Eurocentric music traditions that inherently 'devalue' other musics, backgrounds and cultural expressions (Baker 2016; Bolden et al. 2020; Hallam and Creech 2020). In his work on El-Sistema projects in post-war, post-tsunami Sri Lanka, Sykes demonstrates how music 'as a gift, can be offered in ways that are alienating' and that the 'false treatment' of music as a 'leveling phenomenon' works to 'construct and reinforce borders even when [music] is mobilised to erase them' (2018: 179).

The place of Western art music in Za'atari is complex. While Deema acknowledges that participants did enjoy the Music for Life initiative, she questions its wider impact: 'I mean, it was nice. But it was just one day. Even though it was nice, if there had been an option to pick the [type of] music, Arabic music would have been better' (interview with the author, 16 August 2021). Her husband, Oday, evokes a similar sentiment, and even calls into question the putative universality of music: 'I mean, they came, they played, and it was alright. But then they just left, and we forgot all about it. You know, we're not used to that culture […] For me, music isn't a universal language' (interview with the author, 1 August 2021).

Perspectives of the place of Western art music in music programming in Za'atari differ among figures within the wider humanitarian system. Robert is the founder and now 'Chief Vision Officer' of QS. An eccentric character, he has lived in the Middle East for over 40 years and has established several education initiatives for youth across Jordan.

He reasons the value of Western art music in music programming in Za'atari by focusing on the violin as a cross-cultural 'tool' through which children can express themselves:

> [Instruments like the violin] are tools. There is no limit to what any human being can do with any tool if they know how to play it. Then the creative stuff that's [inside] them can express itself through the tool in the way that they want it to be expressed. So, if you want to come to the East with a violin, come. Actually, some of the most famous singers in Egypt and the Lebanon are accompanied by orchestras with violins. (Interview with the author, 3 February 2021)

Putting aside Robert's use of the typifying terminology 'the East', his statement about the use of the violin in Arabic music is, to an extent, true. The violin and other stringed instruments like the cello and double bass have long been incorporated into the classical Arab chamber ensemble (*takht*) alongside the oud, qānūn, *ney* (flute), and riqq; the violin in particular has been praised for its ability to execute quartertones, balance out the ensemble, and develop a richer timbre, and dynamic and ornamental variety (Ebbini 2022: 114; Abu Shumays and Farraj 2019). As Ebbini illustrates, contemporary Arab composers within the Instrumental Music category of contemporary Arab music have even increasingly used the Western-style orchestra to express Arab musical identity (Ebbini 2022: 115).

Other figures within NGOs, however, tell a different story about the place of Western music in music programming. Lucy was involved with The Catalyst Foundation during the organisation's time funding arts and music projects in QS between 2014 and 2019. She has an extensive knowledge of the arts and ethnomusicological research. In highlighting the broad potential of music as an educational tool for youth in Za'atari,

Lucy stresses the risk that genres like Western art music present in contexts of displacement:

> I'm very conscious of and allergic to the danger of, sort of…I'm even nervous to use the word because I'm not an academic…but I am nervous about the concept of cultural imperialism. Even among my leadership and my board, they were like, 'Oh yes, we should buy a bunch of violins and you should figure out a way so that it would be great to have a bunch of…like a little classical orchestra'. And maybe that would be great! […] I mean, even on that front, it's more a complicated question […] Like this clarinetist, Kinan Azmeh,[55] who I was talking to was telling me that he finds it very insulting to even talk about Western Classical music as something that is 'Western' because it belongs to everyone. He feels like it belongs to him just as much as it belongs to someone in Germany. (Interview with the author, 22 January 2021)

Despite Lucy's (misplaced) humility, cultural imperialism, as she terms it, is a major concern when selecting the type of musics to support in a humanitarian setting. Although she shares the fears intimated by scholars such as Beckles-Willson and Sykes, Lucy also reveals the risk of condescending Syrians by assuming that they cannot engage with Western art musics simply because the music is 'Western', and Syrians are 'not'.

Musicians in Za'atari raise similar concerns about placing barriers between 'Arab' and 'Western' music. Walid argues that he always attempts to elucidate the similarities between 'Eastern music' (*al-musīqa al-sharqīyeh*) and 'Western' music (al-musīqa al-gharbīyeh) in his classes with students. This was also the case in his composition

[55] Kinan Azmeh is a Syrian professional clarinet player and composer of contemporary classical music.

‘Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani’. Walid claims that musical features of the song, such as maqām ‘Ajam and syllabic text setting, demonstrate the similarities between some of the maqāmāt and Western scales, and also help students to learn English:

> So, the lyrics ‘Ḥabaytak, ḥabaytak/yā waṭani, ḥabaytak’, can also be sung as ‘I love you, I love you/My country, I love you’ [to the same melody] […] And this sends a message. You can bring together kids, like 11- or 12-year-olds, and they can learn English language at the same time [as they are singing]. (Interview with the author, 21 August 2021)

In composing songs with musical features that he claims are shared between music cultures, Walid proposes an interesting approach to perspectives on appropriate music genres for music education in contexts of displacement. This reinforces Lucy’s argument about the role of different actors such as donors or board members in determining what musics are employed (and how) in music programming. This suggests that the relationships, infrastructures, and politics at play between Syrians and NGO figures (including donors) in the camp may be central to understanding the role of music in humanitarian programming in more detail. I turn to those politics in depth in Chapter 5.

Music for Social Cohesion and Consolidation

Many scholars emphasise music’s ability to enable, trigger, and strengthen empathy and relationships, thereby fostering a special kind of reciprocity that is cultivated through relationships of sensitivity towards others (Cohen 2003; Urbain 2008). M.J. Grant et al. argue that nurturing sensitivity towards others through music in turn nurtures group self-awareness and understanding: ‘[Music] allows society to understand itself in terms of its own interpretation of reality, and also to conceptualise the experiences of adverse groups by emphasising common ground and by communicating in both directions’ (2010: 191).

Frameworks based on the ability of music to build community have formed the foundation for many music projects in contexts of conflict and displacement. Pettan's Azra Project, for instance, aimed to ameliorate social relations between Bosnian refugees and the Norwegian host community by teaching Norwegians Bosnian genres, and Bosnian musicians Norwegian repertoires (2010: 181-184).

Although all residents of Za'atari originate from Syria, Syrians in the camp have unique, individual experiences, and express a wide range of diverse ideas. This is demonstrated throughout Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. There are also complex socio-cultural challenges for the camp population, such as PTSD, trauma-related disorders and other challenges such as child labour, forced and early marriage, and gender-based violence. Humanitarian programming in the camp has therefore turned to music as a way to face some of these challenges. One example is capoeira.

Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian mix of dance, martial arts, and music. While capoeira is defined in different ways across disciplines, it can be understood as the combination of physical interaction, instrumental music, singing and oral poetry (Bouchard 2021: 97). According to John Lewis, capoeira is a 'delicate balance between domination and liberation, between fight and dance, and those creative tensions generate an endless fascinating interplay' (1992: 5). Capoeira has a complicated place in the Jordanian cultural landscape. Between 2014 and 2019, the practice enjoyed widespread popularity throughout the country, particularly in humanitarian contexts and with displaced groups. This included Za'atari. The force behind the growing popularity of capoeira in Za'atari

was, to a large extent, a group of three capoeiristas: Leandro, Orlando, and Fia.[56] These three capoeiristas worked individually over many years with several NGOs in the camp including LWF, Capoeira4Refugees, Islamic Relief, Norwegian Refugee Council, Relief International, and Finn Church Aid to provide capoeira for Syrian youth. Eventually, the trio formed their own organisation, known as Capoeira al-Shababi (literally meaning youth capoeira). Once Capoeira al-Shababi was formed as its own entity in 2017, the organisation itself collaborated with NGOs to bring capoeira to Za'atari and host communities. In this section, I focus on Leandro, Orlando, and Fia's work as Capoeria al-Shababi with LWF from 2017 to 2019.[57] In 2019, Capoeira al-Shababi's work in Jordan came to an end following a series of incidents that resulted in the GoJ closing down the organisation's work in the country.

Capoeira al-Shababi's sessions in LWF were provided for youth aged 9 through to 19 years. Sessions took place two days per week, with six classes each day: two classes each for males and females, and two 'ToTs' (training of trainers). In ToTs, Syrians from the camp were trained to lead capoeira sessions themselves. Classes for boys and girls had up to 25 participants each. Classes covered many of the fundamental components of capoeira practice: physical moves (such as kick and response, handstands) musical instruction on instruments including the *berimbau* (single-stringed bow attached to a resonator), *pandeiro* (hand frame drum), and *atabaque* (tall wooden hand drum), and songs (usually in Portuguese) from the capoeira tradition (see Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.8).

---

[56] A capoeirista is someone who practices capoeira. Most capoeiristas are assigned names in Portuguese.
[57] Susanna Hast (2019, 2021) has also carried out research on Capoeira al-Shababi and their work in Za'atari. She predominantly explores how capoeira serves to cultivate a sense of 'collective body and family' among youth in Za'atari (2019: 18). Hast explores her own role as a participant in capoeira sessions 'sharing movement' with young Syrian women and girls (2021: 44).



Figure 4.7. Female youth playing capoeira instruments in LWF's Peace Oasis, Za'atari. (LWF 2018).



Figure 4.8. Female youth practicing capoeira in LWF's Peace Oasis in Za'atari. (LWF 2018).

A central tenet of capoeira is the *roda.*[58] According to Urška Habjan, the roda is a circle formed by the bodies of capoeira practitioners where the game of capoeira happens (2015: 118). In the middle of the roda, two capoeiristas interact with and confront each other; others play instruments, clap, or sing (usually in a call and response format between a solo voice and chorus) (ibid: 118-119). But the roda is more than just the space where the interaction takes place; it is the essence of the performance itself and a ritual of moral and ethical rules and regulations (ibid). Regardless of the specific rules in a given roda, Habjan claims that the roda determines the 'proper way of thinking and behaving' for capoeiristas, thereby demonstrating a capoeirista's way of 'being in the world' (ibid: 128). The roda therefore refers not only to the practice of capoeira itself (*roda de capoeira*) but also to outside life, the roda of life (*roda da vida*) (ibid).

Leandro, Orlando, and Fia all conceptualise the notion of roda da vida as a community building tool. On the one hand, Orlando highlights the specific values of respect and humility within the Za'atari roda:

> And [the participants] saw how humble it was, how humble the whole capoeira and the roda are […] When you play […] you show respect for the music. When they give you the signal to go [into the roda], you can just go in. It's easy. Then you shake [hands] and you hug each other in the end. You see how humble it is. And they like that. They really like that. (Interview with the author, 19 August 2020)

[58] In my conversations with Capoeira al-Shababi's capoeiristas, they also referred to the roda as the '*hodor*'. I have been unable to find a reference to the hodor in the existing scholarship on capoeira. So, while I acknowledge how capoeiristas in Capoeira al-Shababi may use this term, I use the established terminology of the roda.

Leandro, on the other hand, describes a broader, metaphorical approach to the roda and, by extension, the practice of capoeira:

> The whole concept of capoeira is mimicking life itself inside a controlled environment and with music to orchestrate it better. So, music, in our theory, becomes life itself, and your [capoeira] partner becomes the difficulties in life and the way you work around them. When you're playing capoeira, you have two people in the middle, eight music instruments, and then the circle. And they all play a part in creating this small life within life itself: the people around the circle are your support […] your partner is the difficult situation you need to work around, and the music is life and its different situations; if [the music] is fast, you need to go fast, if it's slow, you need to go slow. (13 November 2020)

To help capoeira participants overcome difficulties together in the roda, Fia explains how she and her colleagues employed a number of 'connecting games' (interview with the author, 20 August 2020). These games often involved the pandeiro. A member of the group would be nominated as a leader who would beat rhythms that other members of the group have to follow (Fia, interview with the author, 20 August 2020). Sometimes the games used clapping or singing instead of the pandeiro. Fia explains how leaders would often be encouraged to 'throw a variation' of a beat to another member of the group to play: that way, the participants 'have to look with their eyes to know who they are going to throw it to' (ibid). In her research on Capoeira al-Shababi's work in Za'atari in 2019, Susanna Hast argues that these kinds of games established 'synchrony' among capoeira participants: clapping and singing helped Syrian youth to feel like 'one body', 'one hand', or 'one tone', thus building bonds and a sense of collective embodiment through sound (2019: 25).

Another component in building bonds between capoeira students was through education about the history and origins of capoeira. Leandro argues that it would be impossible to practise capoeira without knowing its history because its origins are inseparable from capoeira as a practice: 'the history *is* capoeira, and capoeira *is* history' (interview with the author, 13 November 2020). While scholars debate the exact origins of capoeira, most agree that the practice is based on 'prior African forms' brought to Brazil in the slave trade sometime between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Assunção 2022: 146; Bouchard 2021: 97). Despite the many permutations of capoeira since its inception (both within Brazil and globally), Matthias Assunção reveals the importance of the memorialisation of slavery to the modern practice of capoeira; many 'modern' capoeira groups 'full-heartedly' embrace the place of slavery as 'crucial to the formative period of their art' (2022: 160).

The memorialisation of slavery was key in capoeira in Za'atari. As Fia explains:

> So, we'd tell them the story of capoeira, of the slave trade, of Brazil, of resisting oppression, and the fact that there is a lot of interlinkages between Muslims and capoeira. There was a lot of migration of Muslim African slaves to Brazil, and a lot of songs talk about Muslims or have Arabic words in them. They were called the *mulkas* in Brazil and they had this big capoeira uprising, which was essentially a capoeira uprising of the Muslim slaves. I think it was in Bahia.[59] (Interview with the author, 20 August 2020)

[59] I cannot find reference for the term 'mulka' with regards to capoeira. It could be that Fia is referring to the uprising called the Malê Revolt, malê being a Yoruba word for 'Muslim' in Bahia in the early to mid-nineteenth century.

According to Fia, highlighting the 'interlinkages' of capoeira's history with Za'atari supposedly strengthened intra-community bonds among Syrians. She likens Syrians in Za'atari to the black slave community in that they are 'in this community together and are physically stuck together' and face similar political challenges (interview with the author, 20 August 2020). By elucidating the ways slave communities used capoeira as a tool against oppression, Fia claims that Syrians in Za'atari come to understand the value of collective power, learning that 'you are always more powerful as a group than just as individuals together' (interview with the author, 20 August 2020).

The history of capoeira also enables participants to make sense of their own experiences. Many capoeira songs include ideas of travelling, revolutionists, warriors, running away, going back to where you came from, going home, or the notion of *saudade* (meaning longing, nostalgia, homesickness, or missing). For Leandro, these themes resonate with the experiences of many in Za'atari. He recalls the experiences of a Syrian teenager upon learning a song that described slaves running to *quilombos* (settlements) they had created to escape their masters. When slaves would escape to the quilombos, they would step on dry leaves, the sound of which resembled the Arabic words '*shway, shway*' (slowly, slowly), typically rendered in Portuguese as *'xuê, xuâ'* (pronounced shoo-ay, shoo-ah). Using these two words, the slaves composed a song documenting their escape in the night, their liberation, and the sounds that almost caused them to be discovered and recaptured. The Syrian teen learning the song in the capoeira session said it reminded him and his family running from their village in Syria in the night being 'hunted' by the government (Leandro, interview with the author, 13 November 2020).

According to Fia, highlighting the links between capoeira and Za'atari in this way has the additional advantage of helping to 'balance' worries about capoeira being too

'new' or 'foreign' to participants, instead showing them how capoeira 'is also something familiar […] that relates to your situation in some way' (interview with the author, 20 August 2020). This is important given that a major concern for scholars and practitioners in the fields of music and conflict resolution, community music, and applied ethnomusicology, has been the potential pitfalls of using music cultures other than the culture at hand in music projects. Bergh, for instance, argues that 'multicultural' projects that typically draw on world music genres fail to 'connect' with participants (2007: 148).

Fia concedes that there were problems of this kind in Capoeira al-Shababi's work in Za'atari. She says: 'We struggled a lot because there are so many different elements […] You've got instruments which are really difficult to play. You've got a beat which is not familiar to them. You've got lyrics in a foreign language of which the pronunciation is completely foreign – even for me, let alone for them!' (interview with the author, 20 August 2020). The issue of a foreign language appeared to be particularly problematic in Za'atari. In her studies on the global spread of capoeira, Maria-Eva Bouchard underlines the importance of Popular Brazilian Portuguese (PBP) for participation in capoeira and to show belonging to the community of practice (2021: 96). Bouchard notes how speaking PBP is essential for capoeiristas to grow in their practice, access knowledge, and understand the meaning of songs (ibid: 98). The leaders of Capoeira al-Shababi similarly underscored the paramount important of PBP in capoeira practice but conceded that it simply was not possible to teach children in Za'atari an entirely new language. This was due to lack of resources and funding, but also the structure of the program. Like much of the humanitarian programming in Za'atari, Capoeira al-Shababi's projects were implemented in cycles, each of which lasts between three to six months. With each new cycle, new students are enrolled. Moreover, most students only take part in a few lessons

per week. While structuring programming in this way may enable more children to take part in activities, it meant that capoeira project leaders were unable to provide full PBP instruction to students. Additionally, not all of the capoeiristas in Capoeira al-Shababi are fluent in PBP, as Orlando admits: 'For me, unfortunately, I'm not really, *really* good in Portuguese. I don't wanna say I'm 'good'…Yes, [I can hold a conversation] but the songs that I've learnt […] I had to know the translation and the meaning of the songs' (interview with the author, 19 August 2020).

Nevertheless, Capoeira al-Shababi did implement a number of approaches to overcome such challenges. Both Orlando and Fia explain how they would encourage students to translate song lyrics. Orlando's work translating capoeira songs for himself meant that he could provide translations of songs from Portuguese into Arabic for students. Some participants would instead transliterate the Portuguese phonetically in Arabic script. Participants even gave capoeira instruments Arabic names: one group of female participants renamed the atabaque, calling it *atabūki*, a play on atabaque and the Arabic term for 'your father' (*abūki*). While Capoeira al-Shababi's leaders all note how they would have liked to be able to provide language lessons, Orlando maintains that groups of students learnt to communicate with each other in other ways, instead reaching for the 'language of capoeira':

> That's the language that we speak between us: capoeira. We don't need a 'real' language or [to know] what your background is or anything. We leave that outside. We're capoeiristas. We're family. We're community […] Because in capoeira it's beautiful to have a community. It's not just, say, a sport that you're doing. It's a cultural thing you're building, and you pass it on to students and they pass it on to other people, and they

> pass it on, and they pass it on. (Interview with the author, 19 August 2020)

It is perhaps features such as the broader language of capoeira beyond Arabic or Portuguese, resonances between the Syrian case and the history of capoeira, and technical aspects of the roda and capoeira's 'connecting games' that go some way to explaining why the martial art was chosen as a viable cultural form instead of other local forms of dance or movement such as dabke. This is not to say that dabke does not necessarily promote similar socio-cultural benefits. Indeed, both Syrians and NGO figures express the importance of using local musics in music education. However, the same concern does not appear to be relevant in relation to capoeira because the form itself has such strong links to the Za'atari case and because of the way that Leandro, Orlando, and Fia endeavoured to nurture and develop a capoeira practice that reflected the context and values of the Za'atari environment. Just as global capoeira has developed in different ways in different contexts (see Rosenthal 2018), so, too, did capoeira in the Za'atari context: by 'adapting' or 'translating' different aspects, Capoeira al-Shababi demonstrate how multicultural projects can be effective tools for community building in such a way that does not have to be alienating for participants. It might even be said that Capeoira al-Shababi were able to create their own special kind of roda in Za'atari, one we might term 'roda de Za'atari', which drew on the historical and contextual parallels of oppression, uprising, and community bonds between capoeira and the case of Syrian ghurba to bring Syrian youth together through movement and music.

This does not mean, however, that there were not challenges in creating the roda de Za'atari that materialised in other ways, namely regarding gender and the negotiation of

relationships between Capoeira al-Shababi and other political institutions in Jordan. I explore these issues further on in this chapter and in Chapter 5.

Music for MHPSS

Throughout my DPhil, discussions or mentions of my research almost always led to the follow-up question: 'Oh, you mean like music therapy?' The response was the same with different interlocuters, be it academics, humanitarian actors (including NGO project managers, funders, and donors), and the Syrian community in Za'atari. Within all these relationships, there was a direct conflation of 'music' and 'refugees' with 'therapy'.

The concept of music as a form of therapy has gained significant traction in recent years. Jane Edwards demarcates music therapy as a distinct area of study, defining it as a 'relational therapy involving the use of music in therapeutic processes with individuals and groups by a qualified practitioner who has undertaken appropriate training and undertakes ongoing professional development' (2017: 2). But definitions of music therapy are diverse, and the field shares definitions, methods, and purposes with a number of related disciplines (Wheeler 2017: 720). Take the fields of community music, music and conflict transformation studies, and applied ethnomusicology, all of which explore the use of music in therapeutic processes by practitioners qualified in their respective fields. As a result, the lines between disciplines become blurred. But as Angela Impey and Stephen Cottrell maintain in their study of the relationship between applied ethnomusicology and community music, any differences between disciplines may actually be a case of 'institutional affiliations, disciplinary networks, or ideological preferences rather than any significant qualitative differences between the studies themselves' (2018: 528).

Across fields concerned with the therapeutic use of music, there has been a growing interest in contexts of conflict and displacement. Recent studies show that music can have a clear impact on health outcomes with refugee participants, including: alleviating symptoms of anxiety, stress, and PTSD; strengthening self-esteem, sense of agency, and self-confidence; cultivating modes of expression; providing a sense of escape in a safe space; and helping refugees to make sense of new unfamiliar surroundings (see Abdulbaki 2020; Beck et al. 2018, 2021; Bergh 2010; Bernard et al. 2023; Gulbay 2021; Heynan et al. 2023; Lenette et al. 2016; Lenette and Sunderland 2016; Mallon and Antik 2021; Parker et al. 2021; Parker and Mufti 2016; Urbain 2008; Vougioukalou et al. 2019).

In this section, I ask how music programming in Za'atari may have potential health outcomes for Syrians. To do so, I assess how music is leveraged as MHPSS (mental health and psychosocial support) in a specialised Music Therapy project run by QS. I draw on the experiences of the seven Syrian facilitators who implemented Music Therapy sessions in QS during my time with the organisation, some of whom we have met already: Nermeen, Walid, Shams, Hussein, Lama, Sajida, and Tariq.[60] To distinguish the specific QS program from the general term of 'music therapy', when referring to the QS program, I capitalise the two words ('Music Therapy').

I borrow the term 'mental health and psychosocial support' (MHPSS) from the humanitarian lexicon of the camp. MHPSS is used by international organisations, the United Nations, hospitals, researchers, social workers, and medical personnel, particularly with those communities affected by conflict, crises, and disasters (Niconchuk

[60] As with music lessons provided by QS, I did not formally interview or speak to youth participants in the Music Therapy program for ethical reasons. As such, I explore facilitator experiences but also include my observations of Music Therapy sessions without referring specifically to any individual children.

et al. 2020: v). Definitions of both 'mental health' and 'psychosocial well-being' vary across MHPSS frameworks, and there are numerous interventions and approaches to MHPSS by different healthcare professionals (ibid). I follow the definition of MHPSS put forward by TFG, the educational and psychosocial support tool for communities affected by stress and trauma created in collaboration with Syrians in Za'atari and QS. TFG defines mental health as 'not just the absence of mental illness but the presence of positive abilities to cope, to healthily interact with others, and to successfully manage negative thought and behavior patterns that are common risks after traumatic or overwhelming negative experiences' (ibid: viii). Psychosocial wellbeing in TFG is understood as 'a positive state in which an individual operates with healthy and positive social interactions with others, benefits from a strong support network, has a positive view of the self, efficiently copes with mental health challenges, and maintains a positive and hopeful outlook, often in spite of major challenges' (ibid).

The Music Therapy program in QS came to fruition following a Jordanian musician's initial involvement with the 2014 Music for Life project.[61] Ibrahim, a musician turned nurse turned music therapist, has worked extensively throughout Jordan providing music-based projects for Jordanian and Syrian youth (see Figure 4.9, which shows a music therapy session with Syrian and Jordanian youth in a community centre in Irbid run by Ibrahim).[62] Together with Ibrahim, QS secured funding for the Music Therapy program

[61] For personal reasons, I did not conduct a private one-to-one interview with Ibrahim. Any comments that refer directly to him or his work stem are therefore as a result of group conversations of which we were both involved with others or from meetings in QS that we were both acquired to attend.
[62] The format of music therapy sessions conducted by Ibrahim elsewhere across Jordan was more or less the same as those within the QS Music Therapy project in Za'atari. The main difference is that in QS, sessions are conducted by Syrian facilitators, not by Ibrahim. The project in Dayr Yusuf was funded by DARNA, the Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation.

through The Catalyst Foundation, who also funded QS's creative writing programmes. Ibrahim was the main designer and creator of the Music Therapy program and was responsible for training Syrian facilitators from Za'atari from 2020 onwards.



Figure 4.9. Music therapy session with female youth led by Ibrahim (seated in front of banner) in Dayr Yusuf Community Centre, Irbid. (Photograph by the author, 5 November 2020, Irbid, Jordan).

I observed a number of Music Therapy sessions carried out in QS throughout 2021. I also assisted the management team at QS in compiling monthly reports and evaluations of the program for The Catalyst Foundation. In one of these reports, it was stipulated that the main aim of the Music Therapy program is to 'encourage a sense of personal agency, self-understanding, self-expression and socially integrative engagements and opportunities, and enable refugees to express their feelings through creative means and develop platforms to share their experiences with the larger community' (Questscope 2021a). The project also claims to prioritise therapeutic benefits: 'Artistic activities also

have significant therapeutic benefits for youth who have suffered trauma, facilitating and accelerating the healing and development of vulnerable youth into healers within their communities and societies' (Questscope 2021a).

To meet these goals, the Music Therapy program offers the following activities: singing, drumming, instrumental improvisation, composition/song writing, and guided meditation. Sessions begin with an introductory and welcome song, composed by Ibrahim, 'Abu Hayba*'* (Hayba's father). 'Abu Hayba' is repeated several times at the beginning of each session, and the words 'Abu Hayba' are replaced with each participant's name as each child introduces themselves to the group. The group then sings the song back with each participant's name inserted into the lyrics. The lyrics are:

Oh dear, oh Abu Hayba	*Yā ghazāl, yā Abu Hayba*
Welcome!	*Marḥabtayn wa marḥaba*
You've visited us and have honoured us!	*Zurtūnā wa sharaftūnā*
Welcome!	*Ahlān wa sahlān!*[64]
Your presence lights us up!	*Nawartūnā!*
Oh, Yaba![63]	*Uff yābā!*

As seen in the notation below (see Figure 4.10), the song's melody is simple and repetitive with stepwise motion and a small melodic range, making it accessible for young voices. The song is set in a 2/4 time signature, which provides a clear and steady pulse

[63] A colloquial term for father.
[64] Whilst the correct translation for 'welcome' in Arabic is *Ahlān wa sahlān,* in 'Abu Habya', as it often is in spoken Arabic too, the words are elided and pronounced more like *ahlaw sahlā* to fit with the melody and to reflect colloquial pronunciation.

for participants to beat along while they sing; children use ṭabl, shakers, bells, or simply clap.

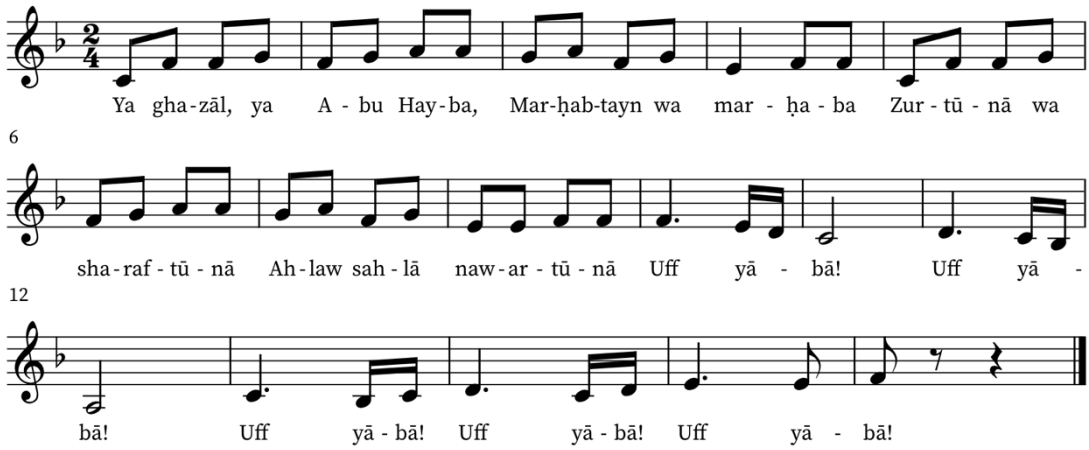


Figure 4.10. Transcription by the author of the song 'Abu Hayba' used in QS Music Therapy sessions in Za'atari Refugee Camp.

According to facilitator Hussein, the song helps children to greet the other members of a group in a manner reminiscent of Arab customs and traditions of hospitality:

> For example, 'Abu Hayba', was used to welcome and greet. But sometimes I had kids come to me and say, 'Teacher, we got so bored of this song! We don't want it anymore!' So, I would explain to them, 'OK, imagine if I came to your house. You would want to greet me and give me coffee and host me, right?' And they tell me: 'Ah! Of course!' It's the same thing. (Interview with the author, 19 August 2021)

After they have introduced themselves, children engage in a variety of therapeutic exercises. Drumming, for example, involves, each child playing a drum or percussion instrument like a shaker, while being led by one of their peers. Described by Hussein as a 'Tom and Jerry' exercise (interview with the author, 19 August 2021), the children take

turns being the ‘leader’: the leader conducts the group to play quietly or loudly, moving their arm from a low to high position accordingly (see Figure 4.11).



Figure 4.11. Drumming/leadership exercises in Dayr Yusuf, Irbid. (Photograph by the author, 5 November 2020, Irbid, Jordan).[65]

Drumming-leadership exercises may be crucial for building children’s self-confidence. Lama (who we met earlier in Chapter 1) was one of the music therapy facilitators in QS during my fieldwork. Lama had considerable experience in mental

[65] The leader uses hand movements to direct the volume of the group’s drumming – high for loud (right-hand photo) and low for quiet (left-hand photo).

health support before training for the Music Therapy program: she worked in QS's mentoring schemes, is one of the main facilitators and counsellors in MeWe, and has previously worked in the emergency department of a hospital. Lama states the value of drumming-leadership for employing a child's body language and communicating with their peers:

> Even if [the students] are still somewhat reserved or shy or get embarrassed, they are changing: This is helping me. Now it's my turn to be the leader. You start to learn that this group here is your support. They are giving me the support I need. They believe in me and trust me. And we're here for you without even saying a single word! You could theoretically do this with children [who speak] any language, without any words. Maybe we only use words in the first sessions to explain everything to them, but after that there is no need for explanation. The music speaks.
>
> So, in sessions, a child taps into their body language in that I'm doing movements and you're doing movements: I'm with you! We are together! Together we're doing it! Especially with the girls, this is important. The girls were very quiet […] [The exercise is] very simple. Each child becomes the leader – and they feel that they really are the leader – and the children have to follow each leader, all without us [the facilitators] telling them or telling them what this [exercise] is actually about. (Interview with the author, 30 June 2021)

While Lama draws parallels between the physiology of body language in drumming-leadership activities and a positive MHPSS impact, another facilitator, Shams underscores the importance of the feelings involved in becoming the leader. Shams (who was only 18 years old herself at the time of our interview) argues that in taking part in drumming exercises, children develop feelings of self-confidence and trust in others

because they believe that they 'really are the leader': 'Children feel listened to because each child plays in turn and everyone has to listen – even the teacher! […] The leader activity is very important because it gives them confidence and releases their negative energy' (interview with the author, 9 August 2021).

In their studies of music therapy in a refugee support centre in Wales in the United Kingdom, Sofia Vougioukalou et al. expose the role of leadership exercises for giving 'individuals who had experienced displacement and marginalisation a chance to lead in a safe, performative space' and for 'instilling confidence in solo performance' (2019: 533). In the support centre in Wales, drumming was also used as part of improvisation activities (ibid: 539). For Vougioukalou et al., improvisation and 'allowing things to happen spontaneously' not only builds up confidence and empowerment, but also enables the expression of emotions, increased energy, increased sense of freedom and increased participant enjoyment (ibid: 539, 543-544).

Similar types of improvisation activities were employed with QS's Music Therapy. Syrian music therapy facilitators in Za'atari predominantly make use of melodicas in improvisation activities: each child has the chance to play a melodica, improvising whatever they want, while the rest of the group listens. Children are accompanied on the org by a facilitator who plays broken chords and arpeggios (usually centred around C major and relative chords with lots of added 7ths). Less-experienced facilitators make use of the 'chord function' on the org to fill out chords as they play individual notes. For facilitators, the key to improvisation activities is emphasising the complete freedom children have in being able to play what they want. In sessions, I regularly heard facilitators tell children that there is 'no right or wrong' in what they play, that they can play 'whatever they want', or that the facilitator will always follow them 'no matter

what'. Sajida told me that she even explains to children in sessions that improvisation is 'a chance to breathe'; 'you can play whatever you want, you can play whatever instrument you like' (interview with the author, 30 June 2021).

Improvisation may have significant emotional benefits. For facilitator Nermeen, the freedom to improvise allows children to release emotions or energy: 'It releases their energy […] It also helps to calm and relax them […] You feel like music helps them to be happy. They find joy in it. And it's completely different than say when they are studying Arabic or Maths' (interview with the author, 5 July 2021). Sajida similarly tracks the emotional changes among participants. She recalls the story of a young girl who took part in the program:

> Like, I knew this one girl, and when she started with us a while back, she wouldn't greet us, ever. She was struggling with her mental health [nafsītha ta'bāneh].[66] […] But by the second session, she started laughing and smiling! After that, she would come [to the centre] every day – even on the other days [when we didn't have sessions]! She told us, 'I am so happy now'. (Interview with the author, 30 June 2021)

At the end of every session, children are led through a guided meditation by facilitators (see Figure 4.12). Facilitators use an ocean drum, which mimics the sound of waves, to stimulate a relaxing and meditative state among the children. Over the top of

[66] 'Nafsītha ta'bāneh' literally translates as 'her mind is tired'. The phrase *nafsīyeh ta'bāneh* is generally used to describe when someone is struggling with their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing or is 'not well'. Thus, nafsītha ta'bāneh implies that the girl was experiencing mental health challenges that were affecting her wellbeing.

the ocean drum, facilitators speak through a guided imagery exercise, which includes prompting children to imagine places of calm and relaxation – like the sea.



Figure 4.12. Meditation exercise using ocean drum in Music Therapy session in QS with male youth. (Photograph by the author, 29 August 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

For facilitator Hussein, guiding participants through a meditation at the end of a session counteracts the liveliness of preceding activities and fosters a 'chill vibe' suitable for relaxation (interview with the author, 19 August 2021). This is, he maintains, key to finding the ultimate 'harmony' at the core of Music Therapy:

> They love [the meditation exercise]! After four activities of singing and playing and drumming and all of this stuff, they have the opportunity to just relax completely. They release negative energy in those first four activities, but then in that last activity, we have the ocean drum, and they can sleep to its sound. They would say to me: 'Sir, there is water below

> our feet!'. When they imagine [the sea], and the vibe is super chill, and the caravan and the place is right, and there is harmony between the sound and the words, they benefit more. (Interview with the author, 19 August 2021)

According to the seven Music Therapy facilitators in QS, the program has a wide-reaching impact on children's MHPSS beyond the sessions. Facilitators regularly conduct evaluation sessions with participants' families, and families have noted positive changes at home between children and parents following their participation in the programme. As Hussein explains: 'Families see how their children have changed [through music]: they listen when they are at home, they are more loving, there are less issues with them at home or in the neighbourhood, and they are happier, with them and their friends' (interview with the author, 19 August 2021). Lama argues that these changes occur implicitly through the musical action: 'Like, if their mother asks them to do something at home, he will do exactly what she says. And that's without us having to tell him in the sessions, "We're teaching you how to respond in order to translate it into your everyday life with your family"' (interview with the author, 30 June 2021).

Improving the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of youth in Za'atari may be crucial given that many children in the camp suffer from trauma, PTSD, poverty, and other stress factors. As Lama states:

> Refugees have come from war. They've come from crisis. A humanitarian crisis will have a huge impact on everyone, especially on children…And children in a society even without war, be it Jordanian or English, whatever, are vulnerable. So, imagine the impacts on children in a society who are coming from a warzone. Maybe they don't have a family, maybe someone in their family died, or they're orphans. The Music Therapy program is concerned with their early psychology: it

> leaves them stronger in themselves, changes their behaviours. Like, for example, so many children bite their nails […] from anxiety, or from referred and generational stress or anxiety in their families and this society. The Music Therapy program therefore impacts their psychology in a positive way, changes their habits and behaviours, calms them down. From the meditation activities, they can breathe and think in a positive way. (Interview with the author, 30 June 2021)

It is fair to say that facilitators in QS's Music Therapy project generally speak in an overwhelming positively manner about the program. However, there were a few instances that raised concerns about the place of the project within the wide scope of music programming in QS. The Music Therapy project was, supposedly, designed as a specific music therapy program, whereby music is leveraged as a tool for mental health support, a feature emphasised by all the Music Therapy facilitators with whom I spoke. But during my time in QS, I found it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the pre-existing music education program funded by UNFPA (as described at the beginning of this chapter) and the Music Therapy program. There appeared to be, at least to me, significant overlap between the two: facilitators were often the same across the two programmes; Ibrahim became increasingly involved in both programmes; and Music Therapy began including aspects of music theory and (more formalised) instrumental instruction into sessions (children would learn about instruments as well as aspects of the maqamāt and the musical scale (see Figure 4.13)).

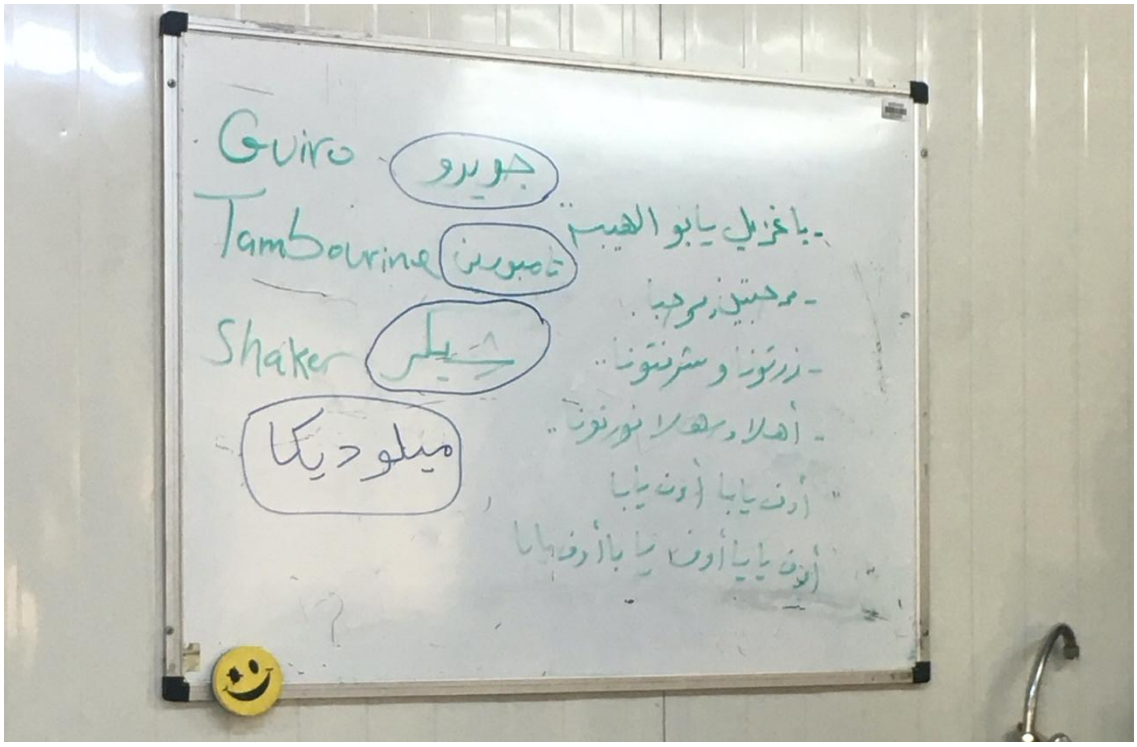


Figure 4.13. Whiteboard in QS Music Therapy caravan spelling out names of instruments in Arabic and English, and the lyrics to 'Abu Hayba'. (Photograph by the author, 14 June 2021, Za'atari, Jordan).

I admit that I found it very difficult to get to the bottom of all this and to determine the structuring of the two concurrent programmes. I never really got a definitive or clear answer. Nonetheless, some kind of overlap was taking place – and the overlap even included me. In early 2021, I was asked by Ibrahim to provide piano training for Tariq and Walid, both of whom worked on both programmes, in order to 'improve' their keyboard skills. While I discuss my role as a music trainer in Za'atari in more detail in Chapter 5, the emphasis in this instance was clearly on facilitators honing supposedly more 'refined' keyboard skills that were rooted in the Western classical tradition in which I was trained. I felt uneasy about this. I was unsure about the leveraging of Western classical music as a standard to be met by facilitators. Tariq, for example, is an accomplished professional org player in Za'atari who performs in the sha'bī style. And Walid also has a successful career performing at events both inside and outside the camp.

Music Therapy fcilitators also began undertaking music theory training. I do not intend to revisit the arguments set out in the early sections of this chapter regarding the suitability of Western art music as a genre for use in humanitarian programming. However, I recall one moment between myself and Tariq in the summer of 2021. Tariq performs as an org player widely across the camp, and to much acclaim; he always told me stories and showed me evidence of how he is regularly stopped in the street for photographs and selfies by adoring fans. (He was also keen to take selfies with me during my visits to the camp – see Figure 4.14).



Figure 4.14. Tariq and the author in QS music caravan, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 28 October 2019, Za'atari, Jordan).

One day, while I was smoking with a colleague in the courtyard of the QS centre in Za'atari, an anxious Tariq approached me with a bunch of white papers in his hand. Without providing any context, he launched into the following conversation:

Tariq: It's called a walnut, right?	Tariq: *Ismo 'wālnut' ṣaḥ?*
Graihagh: What do you mean, a 'walnut'? I don't understand.	Graihagh: *Shu ya'ni 'wālnut'? Mish fāḥmeh.*
Tariq: You know, in music, the name of the note in English is a 'walnut'?	Tariq: *Ya'ni bil musīqa, ism al-nawta bil ingalīzi hūweh 'wālnut'?*
Graihagh: Oh, you mean a whole note?	Graihagh: *Ah, quṣdak,* 'whole note'*?*
Tariq: Correct. That's what I said, right? What's the difference?	Tariq: *Saḥ. Ana ḥakayt hayk. La? Shu al-fariq?*

I suspect that Tariq had interpreted the words 'whole note' as the same as 'walnut'. However, it may also be that I was failing to accurately discern the word due to Tariq's Dera'a accent, which I sometimes struggled with. Regardless, it was clear from both the conversation and Tariq's demeanour that he was anxious and stressed about trying to pronounce the English terminologies in the music theory correctly. Other facilitators, like Lama, who have no 'formal' musical experience also mentioned to me how she struggled with the musical aspects of the program, her experience being primarily in general MHPSS.

On another occasion, three of the facilitators raised concerns to me about their salaries working on the Music Therapy program. While one will undoubtedly find gripes about salaries in any workplace the world round, there was a serious concern about the ratio of salary to the required output and number of hours worked per week. One

facilitator, for example, was receiving only 50JD per month but was carrying out four music therapy sessions per day, 5 days per week.[67] Others stated they felt overwhelmed by the number of sessions and children, worried about being able to provide the due care for each individual participant, and or were angry at being 'told what to do' by external figures – they felt that they knew what would be better for the children and participants on the ground rather than anyone else.

This analysis demonstrates that there is clearly something significant to be said about the relationships between Syrian facilitators and external project managers in music programming, how programmes are structured, and who, ultimately, is in control the programmes. I deal with these issues comprehensively in Chapter 5. But QS's Music Therapy project also prompts us to ask what is meant and understood by 'music therapy' and how it is to be employed in humanitarian contexts. What are the boundaries of music therapy as a 'distinct' area of study? What are its resonances with other fields such as applied ethnomusicology, community music, or music and conflict resolution studies? What kinds of backgrounds are helpful for facilitators? And to what extent to do any (or all) these areas leverage music as an effective MHPSS tool in contexts of displacement? Addressing these questions in future studies and projects in other contexts of displacement may be key to unearthing the most effective and sensitive ways in which music can be used as a therapeutic tool for participants who have suffered trauma and loss.

[67] JD refers to Jordanian Dinar. The Jordanian Dinar is pegged to the dollar at a set rate of 1JD = 1.41 USD. As of February 2024, 1 JD was equal to 1.11 GBP.

Music for Representation and Empowerment

Bergh argues that one of the ways music is used as a tool for conflict transformation is 'representation' (2007: 148). He defines representation as 'an attempt to let a (usually dominant) group A see something else than their current (stereotypical) view of group B, "the other", through musicking' (ibid). Group B, he claims, is 'represented by music which somehow links it to group B, which may be defined in terms of geography, age, ethnicity, religion, etc.' (ibid). Typically, music interventions focused on representation have been understood as collaborations between two distinct groups: 'Group A' playing music associated with 'Group B'. Pettan's Azra Project (2010) was based on this strategy: Norwegians played Bosnian music alongside Bosnian refugees to 'ameliorate' relationships between the two, supposedly, adverse groups and challenge stereotypes about refugees held by the host community. In this section, I explore how music programming in Za'atari uses music for representation through the example of Zumba.

As explored elsewhere in this thesis, the situation of women in Za'atari is complex. Several organisations that operate within the camp report high levels of gender inequality, gender-based and sexual violence, and early marriage (Oxfam 2022; UNFPA 2021). But scholars have increasingly come to challenge the narratives set forward by NGOs regarding women in camps (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014a, 2014b; Al-Akash and Chalmiers 2021; Turner 2012). I too have attempted to challenge some stereotypes about women in camps. In Chapter 2, for instance, the stories of Iman and Maryam demonstrate how women use different individual performing and listening practices as a form of emotional release and catharsis, as a form of metaphorical travel, as a way of documenting their life experiences, and to challenge social ideas held about women in Za'atari society about the relationships between women, music, and Islam. It is therefore interesting to understand

in more detail how humanitarian organisations approach the place of women in the camp through music programming such as Zumba.

Designed by Alberto Beto Perez in the 1990s, Zumba has emerged as one of the world's largest and most successful dance-fitness programmes and is allegedly available in 180 countries and serves 15 million people (Zumba Fitness LLC 2024). Much of Zumba's success has been accredited to its departure from traditional group fitness' focus on 'work' and its invitation to participants to 'Ditch the workout, Join the party' to a soundtrack of Latin, hip-hop, world, and popular music genres (Nieri and Hughes 2016: 3 and 4). Incorporating Latin dance with aerobic exercise and social dancing, classes feature pre-choreographed content that repeats across classes and instructors (Nieri and Hughes 2023: 687; Suri et al. 2017: 24). While Zumba is widely marketed as 'for everybody and every body', Zumba serves a predominantly female clientele (Nieri and Hughes 2016: 3).

QS provides daily Zumba classes for women and girls aged 10 and above.[68] Classes are exclusively female and take place in a specially designated sports caravan in the QS youth centre. The caravan is furnished with a variety of workout equipment including cross trainers, treadmills, yoga mats, aerobic steps, and weights. Affixed to the wall on one of the long sides of the caravan is a flatscreen television, along with loudspeakers. There is also a microphone available. A room divider is placed directly behind the entrance door to the caravan when Zumba is taking place to provide modesty and safety for women to work out without head coverings and in sports clothing.

[68] LWF also provides Zumba activities, but I did not observe any Zumba classes with LWF.

A number of women from the camp are employed by QS as Zumba instructors. Two instructors who provided Zumba classes during my time with QS are Nermeen and Farah. Nermeen and Farah lead Zumba participants by standing at the front of the class, usually facing the group. At various points in the class, they join the participants, standing among the group. During classes, Nermeen and Farah play pre-choreographed Zumba videos on the TV screen. The videos are pre-downloaded and stored on a USB device. Nermeen and Farah follow these videos 'in real time' with class participants, demonstrating moves and shouting out help or advice over the music.[69] It is unclear whether Zumba classes in Za'atari are officially credited by Zumba Fitness LLC; Nermeen, for instance, tends to refer to the classes as 'fitness' or 'sport' rather than specifically as 'Zumba'.

I regularly observed and participated in Zumba classes in QS during my time conducting fieldwork with the organisation between 2019 and 2021: sometimes I would join in the class and dance with the women; sometimes I would sit with friends on chairs places around the edge of the room and watch; sometimes I observed or participated in classes in full; and other times I would periodically pop in and out of classes whenever I had time between other research activities. Both through Zumba and everyday interactions, I became very close with many of the women who take part in classes and the instructors (especially Farah). My assessment of Zumba here is therefore based on my own experiences participating in and observing classes, my interactions with females from QS who attended or taught classes, and formal interviews with Zumba instructors from Za'atari.

---

[69] In order to protect the modesty of Zumba participants in Za'atari, I will not be providing photographs or videos of classes here.

One of the reasons for Zumba's popularity with women in Za'atari appears to be the physiological benefits. Physiological benefits of Zumba are well-documented across the literature on group fitness programmes, particularly the positive effect on weight, BMI, and body fat mass, and as an adjunct to conventional medicine for the prevention of lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and obesity (Suri et al. 2017; Vendramin et al. 2016). According to Robert, the founder of QS, these benefits were the main motivation for women suggesting Zumba as an activity to the organisation:

> Zumba exercise was completely from women outside [of the QS centre]; we didn't even know them! But they knew that we had a good reputation, so they came to us and said, "We only [have time to] cook and therefore we only eat, so we're getting fat. And we don't want to be fat!" (Interview with the author, 3 February 2021)

I suspect Robert's recollections may be embellished somewhat: Robert has worked extensively within QS for nearly 40 years and thus has cultivated effective techniques in networking and selling 'success stories' for donors and funders to programmes.[70] Nevertheless, a few relevant points emerge from Robert's testimony. The impetus for Zumba came from a group of women in the camp who requested that the organisation sponsor and support sessions. This evidently says something significant about the agency that Syrians have in determining the focus and content of aid. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 5. While none of the women with whom I spoke neither explicitly mentioned this process nor explained their initial motivations for specifically requesting Zumba (as

[70] 'Success stories' are a crucial part of the humanitarian landscape where NGOs, in competition for funding, show they are producing successes to donors to prove value for money and to justify their aid budgets (Kloster 2020: 438). See also: Kamat 2004; Kloster 2020; Mosse 2005; Srivastava 2017.

opposed to any other sport or dance form such as dabke), they did repeatedly emphasise the physical aspects of the activity and the importance of Zumba in helping them (and others) to achieve certain physical goals, and I suspect this may have had something to do with their desires to establish Zumba in the camp:

> Physically, my whole body changed: I got muscles, a waist, my body got more beautiful. I looked younger – I feel like a kid again! […] Age has no limits […] Like at the moment I'm pregnant, but I forget I'm pregnant when I see the girls [in Zumba] and we put the music on […] If you are young, I'm young with you. (Farah, interview with the author, 26 July 2021)

> I have had so many success stories [for the fitness classes]. So many women come to [my classes] and, Mashallah, their fitness [improved], they sort themselves out, they lose weight. I started measuring their waist each month and the numbers reduced so much! They really benefitted […] One woman told me, 'You know what, these pants didn't even fit me before, and now can you see how I got thinner?' […] You know, I don't work just to get a salary. I work to share a part in your success and be happy for you! […] I come to work because I want to do something I love. (Nermeen, interview with the author, 5 July 2021)

I learnt about the importance of the physical aspects of Zumba for Syrian women through my own experiences participating in classes in the camp. In one of my early observations of Zumba sessions in QS, I was dancing alongside other women, following the routine playing on the screen being demonstrated by Farah, who was leading the class. Admittedly, I did not know I would be taking part in Zumba that particular day (my scheduling in QS was often determined by others), so I was without appropriate

sportswear and was instead wearing my usual fieldwork garb of jeans and a long-sleeved top. Nevertheless, I worked out to the best of my ability. A few minutes into the class, Farah approached me, encouraging me to 'try harder' and to attend class as regularly possible: *'lāzim tanḥafī wa takhafafī buṭnik'* (you must slim down and lose weight on your stomach), she told me. While I admit to being a little taken aback at the time, the incident is noteworthy for reflecting on the links between physiological changes and Zumba in the Za'atari context. Although aspects of my identity in Za'atari were complex (I explore this in greater detail in Chapter 5), it is the case that I am a tall, slim, and fit young woman. And yet, Farah was concerned about my weight and body shape. What 'ideal' body did Farah envisage for me? In what belief system or ideology was her concept of the ideal body rooted? What is the impact of focusing predominantly on body image, weight, or size in group fitness for women?

Much has been said in the scholarship about the damaging centrality of the body in women's group fitness activities. Scholars argue that highlighting the body in group fitness reinforces body dissatisfaction and promotes unrealistic body standards that privilege 'slim, hard, and white bodies' (Nieri and Hughes 2016: 1). Many claim that Zumba is undertaken by women as an involuntary imperative in order to meet gendered Western body ideals that end up making women feel worse about themselves and thus reinforce body dissatisfaction (Brabazon 2006; Dworkin and Wachs 2009; Nieri and Hughes 2023). Others go as far to claim that group fitness makes women into automatons or sexual objects, and fosters competition between participating women (Greenleaf et al. 2016; Kagan and Morse 1988; Lloyd 1995; Maguire and Mansfield 1998). Accordingly, Tanya Nieri and Elizabeth Hughes (2023) frame these criticisms as 'constraining' aspects of female group fitness.

Nermeen and Farah clearly place importance on the ability of Zumba to help women lose weight or attain a physical goal of thinness. But to what extent is this rooted in Western body ideals? Research on body ideologies and body image in the Arab (female) world is sparse. Existing data does suggest that a high proportion of women across the Arab world in countries (including Jordan and Syria) report serious body size concerns and a desire to be thin (Musiager and Mannai 2013; Madanat et al. 2011; Musaiger 2014; Melisse et al. 2020). The general increase in body dissatisfaction appears to have led to an increased risk for the development of eating disorders primarily among women in these populations (Melisse et al. 2020: 1). Scholars posit that such developments result from the influence of 'Westernisation' and exposure to 'Western' mass media, which promote 'Western' norms for body shape (Musaiger and Mannai 2013: 245). Others note rapid socio-cultural changes following the oil boom of the 1970s, which led to increased affluence, changes in available (fattier) foods, and the increased prevalence of diseases such as obesity, in turn leading to fears about fatness (Melisse et al. 2020: 15; Musaiger and Mannai 2013: 241). Research emphasises how the 'traditional' preference for 'plumpness' as a 'sign of beauty' in Arab culture has changed; populations now consider thinner women more appealing (Rasheed 1998; Eapen et al. 2006).

In her research on Arab women in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Badreya Al-Jenaibi (2017) is clear about the impact of Western media on ideas about female body image. She maintains that the 'profound narcissism and individualism of Western advertising' subjects Arab and Islamic women to a 'process of commodification', thus giving women 'highly different and conflicting messages of what constitutes ideals of femininity' in the UAE (2017: 67). This, she argues, creates conflict between traditional views and more liberal ideologies of Arab women seeking to 'establish an ideal image of

herself, created by herself, inspired by Western ideals of the perfectibility of the self, and of the self's image' (ibid).

It may seem plausible to suggest that Zumba in Za'atari plays into ideologies of thinness, beauty, and the perfectibility of physical appearance. But whether these ideologies result from some kind of Western influence and are thus inherently constraining for women in Za'atari is debatable. Undoubtedly, women in Za'atari positively value the physiological benefits of weight loss in Zumba. This suggests that such ideologies may not be constraining for Syrian women. Further research into the link between preferences for thinness (achieved through Zumba) and the prevalence of body dissatisfaction or eating disorders in the camp may help to elucidate the extent to which body ideas in Zumba play into a 'constraining' ideology of women's sport (Nieri and Hughes 2023).

In assessing whether Zumba is a constraining or liberating force for women, Nieri and Hughes (2016, 2023) advocate for looking beyond physiological aspects and uncovering the psychological experiences of women in Zumba and focusing on how women feel: 'women's narratives can tell us about fitness as experienced by humans with agency and voice, not merely by bodies' (2016: 4). So, how do Farah and Nermeen feel about Zumba in Za'atari? When Farah and Nermeen speak about the physiological benefits of Zumba, they also note how it makes them feel about their bodies. For instance, Farah describes how she feels 'young again', despite being in an older, bigger, pregnant body. Nermeen explains the feelings of joy she has in doing what she loves for a living and helping others to succeed in meeting their goals.

In Zuma sessions in Za'atari, music is implicated in these feelings. Farah highlights how the music in Zumba enables her to release negative feelings and cultivate a positive,

motivational energy: 'It releases my negative energy and all the music and the beautiful songs [make me] excited; I can feel my whole body moving [with energy]' (interview with the author, 26 July 2021). Nermeen similarly describes the 'exciting' energy of the music:

> Like sometimes when the electricity would go out [in the camp], everyone would stop dancing. And I'd tell them, 'Yalla, carry on!' But they couldn't because you feel as if the music is the thing keeping you going; the music encourages you […] Al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh really motivates you. It has so much excitement. (Interview with the author, 5 July 2021)

The music to which Farah and Nermeen refer is a combination of Latin music, world music genres, hip-hop, and popular music – all understood by Farah and Nermeen as al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh. According to the two women, the use of al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh (as opposed to Arabic music) in Zumba is not an issue. In fact, both suggest that it is precisely the 'foreign music' that gives them the energy. For example, Farah claims that it is not crucial to use Arabic music in Zumba, nor does it matter if she can understand the lyrics of a song used in Zumba. Rather, she highlights the importance of the *nighmeh* of each song. Nighmeh (pl. *nighmāt*) can be interpreted as tone, sound, song, melody, or note. For Farah, the nighmeh of a song in Zumba is a quality that engenders certain emotions in her and motivates her to dance:

> Even if I don't know the words, I'm happy. I know that this music is letting out my energy, so I'm happy! […] The meaning of the words isn't important to me […] It's the sound and the nighmeh that's important. For example, if the nighmeh is calm, I won't feel any frustration. Sometimes the melody will leave you feeling sensitive, and maybe you'll

> even cry when you do Zumba! […] When there's a 'high' melody, you feel so close to your heart, and you're able to give even more energy, and to work more […] Everything goes to the exercise [….] The music and the movement fuse together. They fuse! A song is the source of the energy and the strength. It's the source! (Interview with the author, 26 July 2021)

Another central benefit of Zumba beyond physiological changes is the cultivation of female support networks and feelings of safety. Founder of QS, Robert, argues that the 'critical context' – and, ultimately, success – of Zumba in Za'atari is the networks established among women in the camp:

> The critical thing is actually not the boombox. The critical thing is the women and their networks. And the more fun it gets to be, the bigger the network gets. I would imagine that we could probably have five Zumba rooms all over the camp. If you're going to multiply Zumba rooms, we're not sure you can multiply the environment of trust that makes the Zumba room successful. That's the critical context […] To have a healthy community of people, however big or small, you have to have a place for freedom to be felt. (Interview with the author, 3 February 2021)

For Robert, networks between women in the camp are cultivated through the creation of a safe space of freedom and trust in which women can safely get together to work out. Having a dedicated caravan with modesty screen at the doorway helps to at least cultivate a physical environment of safety for women to work out without head coverings and in sports clothing. Although the notion of networks is crucial to Robert's discussion of Zumba in the camp, in my discussions and interactions with women in Zumba, there were very few specific mentions of networks of this kind in Zumba. One of the only examples is Nermeen's discussion of increased interaction between women in Zumba in online

sessions during corona. I explain more about this in the next chapter, but essentially Nermeen claims that online feedback via WhatsApp allowed for increased participation in Zumba and a maintenance of interactions and relationships between herself as the instructor and her female participants (interview with the author, 5 July 2021).

Despite the lack of direct reference to networks or similar terminologies, it is fair to say that in my observations of Zumba classes in QS there was an indisputable camaraderie among women. We always greeted each other warmly upon arrival in the centre before classes. Many women arrived for sessions together in groups. A select number of women consistently and routinely attended class every day. Within the classes themselves, women and girls of all ages danced together, giggling and whispering during routines, requesting certain videos, and loudly singing to their favourite songs. Women regularly cheered each other on and helped each other out with the dance moves. Participants and instructors would regularly assist me with dance routines and advise me on how best to achieve certain moves and movements.

It is, of course, difficult to say whether these positive social interactions existed prior to women taking part in Zumba or if they would come to exist without the exercise. But the notion of Zumba creating a safe space and freedom for women is clear. Existing literature on Zumba and women's group fitness has underscored the notion of bodily rights, autonomy, and freedom. Audrey MacNevin (2003) highlights the ability for women in Zumba to take personal responsibility for their health, and Leslea Haravon Collins (2002) demonstrates the rewarding nature for women of taking control over their physical body and aerobic progress. Nermeen and Farah's experiences tell a similar story. For example, Nermeen's description of the 'joy' she feels when women in Zumba lose

weight, mirrors the 'rewarding' feelings tied up in aerobic progress. Farah expresses the importance of bodily autonomy:

> Zumba releases my character. OK, sometimes, when I'm at home, I get angry or whatever. But when I come to Zumba, I just forget everything. I change the scenery [bighyīr al-jaww] and I give my body its worth [*ba'ṭi jismi ḥaqqo*]. (Interview with the author, 26 July 2021)

Here, I have translated Farah's words 'ba'ṭi jismi ḥaqqo' as 'I give my body its worth'. But there are many ways one might interpret the original Arabic. Ḥaqqo comes from *ḥaqq*, which can mean fact, truth, or trueness (i.e., a state of being true), reality, rightness, genuineness, or a title claim or property, or a duty, due, obligation, worth, privilege or right. In some parts of the region, ḥaqq is even used when asking how much a product or service costs – i.e., what is the thing's (monetary) worth or value. Considering these myriad translations, Farah's words can be interpreted on several levels: Farah believes that she has a right to move her body, and by doing Zumba, she is honouring that right; Farah feels an obligation to her body to keep it fit and healthy; Farah's body is worthy of exercise; Farah values herself and her body; Farah is worthy and deserving of the enjoyment associated with movement. In all these interpretations, there is a clear and profound relationship between body and rights: in an environment like Za'atari, where women face several barriers that impact their bodies (early marriage, child pregnancy, contraceptive choices, control over movements and behaviours, to mention but a few), I think it fair to underscore the importance of Farah honouring her body and exercising bodily autonomy.

The notion of autonomy in Zumba extends beyond the physical. Research suggests that group fitness can create conditions to empower women (Haravon Collins 2002;

Liimakka 2011; Markula 2004). Nieri and Hughes associate the predominance of women in Zumba classes with experiences of 'greater freedom' (2016: 23). For women in Za'atari, the freedom involved in Zumba may lie in the ability to take part in the exercise in the first place. Farah explains how her husband had historically prevented her from leaving the house to participate in activities offered by humanitarian organisations in the camp. She therefore describes her joy when her husband permitted her to join Zumba:

> I was really happy [the first time I went to a sports session in the camp], because my husband had finally allowed me to go out. And so, I started training other girls in the camp. Before [joining QS], I just used to train at home alone without other people, without anything. My husband wouldn't allow me to go to sessions before. (Interview with the author, 26 July 2021)

Farah's position is not an uncommon one for women in Za'atari. I regularly heard from my partner NGOs that they struggled to recruit women to activities because male relatives have reservations about women taking part in them.[71] The root cause of these reservations is unclear. While patriarchal systems may have something to do with it, I was also told by project managers at QS that hesitancy among male household heads is rooted in fears about the safety of women when travelling to and from NGO centres following reports of rape and sexual harassment.

[71] As noted earlier in this thesis, NGOs report challenges in recruiting women and girls to take part in initiatives put forward by organisations (UNFPA 2021). I discuss some of the caveats and nuances wrapped up in this ideology in more detail in further on in this chapter with regards to my discussion of capoeira and gender ideologies.

Nevertheless, Farah equates the ability of taking part in Zumba with a greater sense of freedom, self-confidence, and autonomy to the extent that when she was offered a job at QS as an instructor, Farah did not feel the need to take her husband's opinion or permission:

> When they later offered me a job as an instructor in Questscope, I was so happy. I walked home, and I didn't even ask my husband about taking the job – I just took it! […] Now, all my friends and neighbours know that I am strong. *Ana qadd ḥali*. (Interview with the author, 26 July 2021)

The autonomy that Zumba affords Farah is demonstrated through her use of phrase, 'ana qadd ḥali'. Translating the phrase requires a bit of effort. 'Ana' is the first-person pronoun 'I'. 'Qadd' can be interpreted as a measurement or amount of something, including the measurement of 'up to' (something, a point, an amount). The word ḥali means myself. Put together, these words literally mean, 'I am up to myself'. But figuratively speaking, the phrase 'ana qadd ḥali' expresses sentiments such as 'I can do it', 'I am capable', 'I stand up for myself' or 'I'm up to it' ('it' being a task, activity, capability or even feeling, etc.). By describing herself in this manner, Farah suggests that Zumba enables her to renegotiate her identity and position both among her own household and her circle of friends and neighbours. Farah is now strong, capable, and in charge of herself.

Experiences of bodily autonomy, confidence, and freedom may be what makes Zumba a liberating force for women in the sport. Equally, it may be the case that Zumba is constraining for women in Za'atari. Let's take, for example, the notion of sexualisation bound up in female fitness programmes. Nieri and Hughes claim that the performance of 'sexual moves' in Zumba is directly correlated to the freedom felt by women taking part; by having the opportunity to move their bodies in a sexual way in a safe space, women

supposedly experience 'greater freedom' (2016: 3). In Za'atari, however, the notion of supposedly sexualised moves may be contentious. While there was no mention of sexuality or sexual moves in my discussion of Zumba specifically, there was in those about capoeira. In the following paragraphs, I discuss the links between capoeira, gender, and freedom.

In her review of Capoeira al-Shababi's work in Za'atari, Hast states that capoeira in the camp 'subverts the patriarchal governance of bodies by being inclusive of all bodies and abilities' (2019: 27). She argues that 'the inclusion of girls and young women in the program […] counts as an act of resistance of patriarchal norms in itself' (ibid). Supposedly, this is especially the case in Za'atari: Hast posits that capoeira presents a 'space of safety and creativity' for girls who are 'at higher risk of being married at a young age' (2021: 45). My interviews with Capoeira al-Shababi capoeiristas, however, revealed a more complex story about female liberation.

When Leandro, Orlando and Fia first started running capoeira in Jordan, they told me that they encountered difficulties recruiting females. According to Leandro, this was due to concerns within some more conservative communities about the notions of 'self-defence, freedom of expression, and dance' (interview with the author, 13 November 2020). In one capoeira project carried out with Jordanian and Syrian youth in Irbid, a city in the north of Jordan, local Islamic clerics and community leaders took issue with the idea of women and girls having to open their legs in order to perform certain moves in capoeira – the capoeiristas even recall announcements made during Friday prayers in Irbid over the mosque loudspeakers that discouraged community members from attending capoeira sessions (Leandro, interview with the author, 13 November 2020; Fia, interview with the author, 20 August 2020).

The culmination of tensions in Irbid had a knock-on effect for capoeira projects in Za'atari, as Fia explains: 'We got signalled to The Intelligence, and they closed down all of our projects' (interview with the author, 20 August 2020). Capoeira al-Shababi's leaders were hesitant to formally discuss the matter in full because of the sensitive and upsetting nature of the events. It is also important to state that there were other factors that contributed to the closure of Capoeira al-Shababi, but I will not discuss them here in order to protect the trust and safety of my interlocuters. However, for Leandro and Fia, conservative and patriarchal ideologies about women, dance, freedom, and sexuality (at least in Irbid) played a large part in the eventual end of Capoeira al-Shababi. Whether the same concerns would have arisen independently in Za'atari is hard to say. But the existence of these ideologies, and the impact of implementation of capoeira in Za'atari, calls into question the extent to which some female fitness and dance programmes may be a 'liberating' force for women within other patriarchal or conservative environments.

It appears that the liberating/constraining dichotomy is just as prominent in the Za'atari context as it is in the various studies concerned either with female group fitness or femininity across the Arab world. On the one hand, Zumba may be considered liberating for Syrian women by enabling them to exercise their autonomy and agency, make their own decisions, and discover their inner strength and capabilities. On the other hand, Zumba may be considered constraining in that it privileges certain gendered body ideals and thinness for participants. What is interesting about the way this dichotomy emerges in Za'atari is that it may not be as clear cut as it first seems: what is considered 'liberating' or 'constraining' for Western commentators, may not be considered the same in Za'atari. For example, where the ability to perform 'sexual moves' in Zumba in a Western context is seen as liberating, in capoeira in Jordan, it was constraining because

it complicates the participation of women in such activities taking place within traditional patriarchal social structures.

The same may be said for the notion of body image. While studies claim that the Western body ideals promoted through Zumba are constraining for women, in Za'atari women appear to welcome physiological changes in weight and appearance. For Syrian women, thinness was frequently associated with better overall health and body *image*, how women *feel* in their bodies, and, ultimately, the ability to be in charge of their own physicality. In an environment like Za'atari where Syrians are continually denied the ability to move freely, the opportunity to exercise physical autonomy through Zumba may be a crucial motivation behind fitness activities for Syrian women.

While initial studies on body weight concerns in the Arab world suggest that there may be a link between body dissatisfaction and Western ideologies, the work of those like Lila Abu-Lughod may shed light on the value of these links. In untangling the stereotypes of Arab women, Abu-Lughod levels criticism at Western scholars for seeking to impose frameworks that conflate notions of 'freedom' with the so-called 'emergence' of Muslim women from 'private' or 'domestic' spaces into 'public' ones: in her 1998 collection of essays remarking feminism and modernity in the Middle East, Abu-Lughod explains how the volume's contributors are together 'suspicious about the way modernity is so easily equated with the progress, emancipation, and empowerment of women' , and thus 'ask not just what new possibilities but what hidden costs, unanticipated constraints, novel forms of discipline and regulation, and unintended consequences accompany such programmes' (1998: 2).

Abu-Lughod's sentiment is shared by women in the camp. Wedad argues:

> Before we even came to the camp […] we'd hear about girls who were paid, you know… those types of actions […] Or the idea there was no privacy […] But when I came here, I didn't find this at all […] No one harasses you in the street […] Even if there is harassment, it's 1 in 1 million girls […] But any society has this! […] Yes, OK: there is some violence and harassment. But the whole world is like this! Every single society – not just Syrians! But the image is that we are doing it a million times more. And the organisations are promoting this, too, in order to bring money. (Interview with the author, 5 August 2021)

Wedad's words raise a number of crucial questions. Why do certain narratives get told about certain groups? Do NGOs and even refugees themselves perpetuate narratives simply to maintain funding? And what is the veracity of such claims? In her statement, Wedad makes references to harassment and sex work. While she claims such activities do not take place in Za'atari, I did hear several anecdotes from women in the camp and from my colleagues at QS and LWF about sexual harassment and forced sex work in Za'atari. Existing scholarship suggests that women in Za'atari are indeed subjected to sexual harassment and sexual and gender-based violence, and that there is a high incidence of forced sex work in the camp (Al-Hourani et al. 2019b; Krause et al. 2015; Hattar-Pollara 2019). And Al-Hourani et al. argue that women in Za'atari often respond to sexual harassment by 'keeping silent for fear of making their situation worse by provoking conflict within their families' (2019: 37).

However, as I set out in the introduction to this thesis, these narratives are not straightforward. In her research on Saharawi refugee camps in Algeria, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2014b) argues that refugees themselves adopt the rhetoric of international donors regarding gender equality and female empowerment to ensure a continuation of political and humanitarian support. In other cases, scholars have revealed the

'paradoxical' nature of programmes of gender equality and empowerment for reinforcing male authority over refugees or privileging older women over younger generations (and vice versa) (Turner 2012; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014b). In their research on early marriage in Za'atari, Al-Akash and Chalmiers (2021) suggest that there may also be disparities between NGOs' and refugees' narratives of gender. They find that Syrians in Za'atari view early marriage as beneficial for girls (offering opportunities for upward social mobility, increased financial stability, and protection from the risks facing unmarried young women) whereas NGOs in the camp present early marriage as a violation to women's rights (2021: 296). Al-Akash and Chalmiers therefore believe that is crucial to understand the temporally and contextually specific nature of practices such as early marriage in order to reveal the 'diverse ways in which women may exercise agency' (ibid: 298).

My analysis of Zumba suggests that the experiences of women in Za'atari are complex and diverse, relating to unique sets of social, geographic, religious, and individual conditions. This supports Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's view on the 'value of intersectionalist analyses' in research on gender and displacement to demonstrate the different ways displaced populations understand gender relations and respond to international policies and discourses (2014a: 404). Thus, rather than make sweeping statements about whether or not Zumba or capoeira challenge gender norms, we can say that women approach programmes in different ways and for their own unique reasons. Perhaps, therefore, ana qadd ḥali can mean just that: I am up to myself – whatever I decide that is.

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated the wide-ranging functions of music in humanitarian programming in a refugee camp. Music evidently has a capacity to educate, bring together, heal, and empower in the Za'atari context. By exploring the narratives and experiences of different actors implicated in the implementation of music programming in Za'atari, I have shown how music plays an integral role in humanitarianism despite the suggestion by some critics and scholars that music and the arts pose a threat to monetary and emotional support for refugees. In contrast, I argue that music can be positively and effectively leveraged in various ways to demonstrate the capacities and abilities of Syrians who have faced – and continue to face – complex challenges.

I have also unearthed key points that critique NGOs and their delivery of humanitarian aid, and that raise questions about the role of different actors and institutions in shaping music programming. For example: who is responsible for the design of music programmes? How do different actors approach music programming? How are music programmes structured? What politics, ideologies, or positionalities inform music programming? And to what extent do these factors impact music's ability to be an empowering force for Syrians in camps?

Evidently, these questions require further attention, and I do so in the remaining two chapters of this thesis. In Chapter 4, I turn to the place of music during the COVID-19 pandemic (or 'corona' as it is known in Jordan). Corona is remarkable case study for investigating how politics and policies can affect music-making as well as the ways in which Syrians overcome challenges in their everyday environments through music. In Chapter 5, I examine the role of different actors in shaping the camp's musical

environment by investigating the different relationships, infrastructures, and positionalities in the camp and their impact on Za'atari's musical culture.

Chapter 4

Corona, Technology, and Music-Making in Za'atari

Introduction

Shahed sits cross-legged on the floor of her family home late one Wednesday afternoon. It is March 2020. Her whole family are with her: her mother, father, two brothers, and younger sister, all gathered together in their small caravan. The loud voices of arguing neighbours and the sounds of disgruntled, neighing donkeys echo through the iron walls that make up Shahed's home. She and her family are confined to these four walls 24 hours a day, unable to leave the house. She is prohibited from making the long walk she has made daily for the last year through the dust and dirt of the camp's roads to her beloved music class.

Every day Shahed is meant to watch a few hours of school, which are broadcast on the television. But it is so boring, her little sister is constantly annoying her, and she is not really concentrating. Her mother tells her about how some NGOs in the camp are starting to run their activities 'online' via WhatsApp. But Shahed cannot even begin to fathom how anything could be done online in this camp, never mind her music classes. It is not as if she has an org at home she can practise on, or a phone of her own. Only her eldest brother owns a phone. There is barely any signal in their district of the camp, the family does not have WiFi, and they only get a few hours of electricity a day anyway. Shahed is stressed and anxious, and desperately misses her friends. She would do anything to be back singing and playing with the girls in the music caravan once more, carefree. It's her 16th birthday next week. What kind of celebration will that be? It does

not exactly help that her family are feeling the same way, too; all cooped up together with nowhere to go and nothing to do.

But through it all, she has hope. If Shahed has learnt anything living in this camp, she knows that Syrians always find some kind of innovative solution to make things work. She is from A'almah after all, *al-mdārasīn* of Dera'a. The studious ones.[72] So, how could she not?

Experiencing Corona in Jordan

On 18 March 2020, in response to corona (the colloquial term for COVID-19 in Jordan), the government of Jordan (GoJ) imposed martial law. The army spread out across the Kingdom and soldiers were stationed at checkpoints throughout cities and towns. All land, sea, and air borders were closed, and any movement outside private residences was fully prohibited. All workplaces (including NGO headquarters), businesses, schools, places of worship, and governmental ministries were closed. Local television channels broadcast daily briefings from the government and King Abdullah II bin al-Hussein, as well as motivational messages including songs such as 'Khalīk Bil Bayt' (Stay at Home) by Fairuz (see Figure 5.1).

[72] A'almah is located in the governorate of Dera'a. Its inhabitants are locally referred to as al-mdarasīn (meaning studious or educated) owing to perceptions of high rates in the area of those who complete higher education.

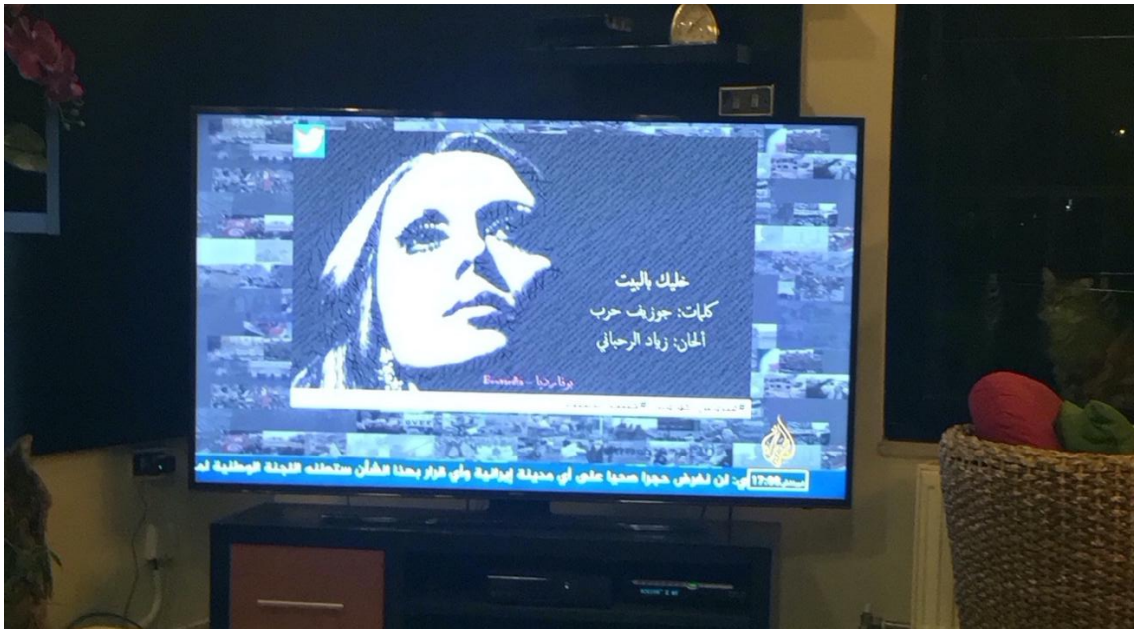


Figure 5.1. Al Jazeera broadcasting 'Khalīk Bel Bayt by Fairuz. The text reads: 'Stay At Home/Words: Joseph Harb/Melody: Ziad Rahbani'. (Photograph by the author, 15 March 2020, Amman, Jordan)

When the GoJ implemented martial law, I was living with family friends in a villa in an affluent area of West Amman. In those initial days of lockdown, I spent my days sitting in the villa's large garden. Among the greenery, I listened to nothing but the rustling leaves, the tweeting birds, and the echoing call to prayer, which now called worshippers to pray in their homes, not in the mosques. Although I had my worries about when I would next see my family on the Isle of Man, or what would happen with my research, life took on a slow but sweet pace.

But corona presented major issues for huge swathes of the population in Jordan, particularly Syrians living in Za'atari, as illustrated in this chapter's opening vignette. In 2019, it was estimated that nearly 16% of the population in Jordan were living below the national poverty line (World Bank Group 2020). With the onset of corona in 2020, more than 85% of the most vulnerable households faced difficulties meeting food and rent needs (UNDP and Tkiyet Um Ali 2020: 3). In response, the GoJ implemented a number

of emergency measures, including additional financing from the World Bank, and the distribution of 'essentials' (including bread, powdered milk for infants, and cigarettes) using public buses in Amman (see Figure 5.2). While resource distribution via buses was effective to a certain extent in some areas, the experiment was largely unsuccessful, particularly in densely populated districts. Buses did not reach all communities, and even when they did, resources were insufficient and many communities stormed buses to secure food.

To tackle some of these problems, the GoJ eased restrictions gradually over time according to the health situation in the country. Small supermarkets opened and movement outside the home was permitted but with strict curfew hours. Some workplaces re-opened, and distance learning was implemented for government schools with national curricula broadcast on two televisions stations so that students could study at home.



Figure 5.2. Public bus delivering bread during the lockdown in Mecca Street, Amman. (Photograph by the author, 24 March 2020, Amman, Jordan).

For UNHCR and the GoJ, managing the virus in Za'atari was a major concern, not least because the camp is densely populated and has poor sanitation. To curb viral spread, all access to and from the camp was restricted. Syrians were prohibited from leaving or returning to the camp and permits for outside employment or travel were suspended. External access for NGOs was restricted except for the provision of essential services such as medical, basic livelihood needs, and WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene). Lockdown was also implemented inside the camp: residents were prohibited from leaving residences; schools and community centres were closed; and in-person gatherings were prohibited. School children (who follow the Jordanian national curriculum) were also switched to remote learning via television broadcast. Nominated household members were permitted to travel to established food distribution points in the camp. Health and hygiene measures were also introduced. PPE items such as face masks, hand sanitiser and gloves were distributed, COVID-19 hotlines and information resources were made available, and corona testing, quarantine and vaccination facilities were established at various locations inside the camp (see Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3. COVID-19 testing and quarantine facility in Za'atari. (MSF 2020)

Over time, corona-related procedures in Za'atari were eased. Internal movement within the camp was permitted, small businesses re-opened, and external access for NGOs was incrementally increased to facilitate the continued provision of services to Syrians. But despite the apparent easing of restrictions, the GoJ's response to the pandemic throughout 2020 and 2021 was unpredictable and erratic. Restrictions were implemented or changed with little or no notice, varying between more relaxed and stricter measures, particularly with regards to in-person gatherings and curfews. As a result, it was difficult for NGOs in Za'atari to plan for a potential return to in-person programming. Accordingly, organisations in Za'atari turned to conducting their programmes of services and activities online.

Many in Za'atari had concerns about implementing activities online. Zumba instructor Nermeen's first official day working with QS was the first day of lockdown in the camp. She recalls the day: 'They told me we'll carry on working online. I was so upset […] I mean, how would *we* work online?!' (interview with the author, 5 July 2021).

The concerns Nermeen had about working online stemmed from the many challenges facing the Za'atari community during corona. As one of the primary program managers at LWF, Elisabeth played a central role in co-ordinating the organisation's pandemic response, and she sets forth some of the core problems in working online in Za'atari:

> The challenges, of course, are that not all people have mobile phones, or they have to share it with sisters, brothers, fathers. So, they don't have a lot of time on the phone. They also don't have very stable internet connection. (Interview with the author, 8 October 2020)

Nermeen and Elisabeth's comments suggest that there is something significant to be said about the place of technology and music in contexts of displacement like Za'atari. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, technology and the internet had not been a prominent theme in my fieldwork investigating music-making in the camp. It was not until corona-related restrictions were implemented in Jordan that my research took on a different shape. As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, lockdown restrictions meant that I was unable to conduct any interviews with Syrians because I could not make trips to the camp. Furthermore, the policies of communication surveillance and limited internet connectivity in the camp made remote research logistically and ethically problematic. I was, however, able to spend time in the QS and LWF headquarters when restrictions eased somewhat in Amman over certain periods, and I worked together with NGOs to overcome some of the challenges to remote music programming in Za'atari. Once I resumed fieldwork in Za'atari in the summer of 2021, I carried out interviews with Syrians, and it was in these interviews that my interlocuters frequently discussed their experiences during corona and the problems they encountered carrying out music-making online.

These conversations therefore led me to consider the relationship between music, technology, and displacement in more detail. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of research into the internet. In both music studies and migration studies, scholars have explored the intersections between technologies, performance and listening practices, politics, migration and notions of place, space, and boundaries (Awad and Tossell 2021; Beckles-Willson 2021; Born 2013; Christidis 2020, 2022; Gillespie, Osseiran and Cheesman 2018; Habash 2021; Krüger and Trandafoiu 2014; Nooshin 2018; Ögut 2021a, 2021b; Stokes 2020; Toynbee and Dueck 2011; Trandafoiu 2014; Western 2020). But what about contexts like Za'atari where this might not be the case? What happens when technologies or digital resources are simply not available? How do politics or socio-cultural factors complicate engagement with technologies in music-making? How do communities overcome these challenges? And what might those approaches reveal about the place of the internet in music-making and ghurba? In this chapter, I address these questions by exploring the relationship between agency, technology, and music, and by interrogating my own role working in an applied capacity to implement new approaches to online music programming in the camp.

Some Perspectives on Technology and Music-Making

Sonia Livingstone suggests that research on the role of the internet and new media technologies has fallen into two strands: one critical of the internet as an antidemocratic space, and the other focused on the internet as a space to challenge existing social orders and for marginalised voices (2005a). As such, research on the role of the internet across the social sciences has tended to focus on a series of oppositions: empowerment/control, public/private, virtual/real, continuity/rupture, democratisation/reinforcement of existing hegemonies (or the creation of new ones). Additionally, in recent years, research on the

internet and technology has explored its relationship with music and notions of globalisation, mobility, transnationalism, identity, and citizenship (Born 2013; Krüger and Trandafoiu 2014; Nooshin 2018; Western in Scheding et al. 2018; Stanyek and Gopinath 2012; Stokes 2020; Toynbee and Dueck 2011; Western 2020).

In her research on music and the internet in Iran, Laudan Nooshin states that Iranian cyberspace has often been depicted as an 'alternative public sphere' (2018: 345). However, she contends that while 'the tendency to present the internet as a utopian space of (potential) liberation is not unique to Iran, the specific political circumstances and restrictions in the public domain have arguably led to a certain fetishisation and a propensity to overstate its liberatory potential' (ibid). Nooshin critiques the extent to which utopian discourses of the internet and new media technologies 'fail to acknowledge the extent to which existing hegemonies may be perpetuated or reinforced online or indeed replaced by new ones' (ibid: 368). Citing factors such as censorship, marginalisation, and historical, cultural and gender norms, she exposes Iranian cyberspace as a 'complex place' that 'cannot be understood in purely utopian (space of empowerment) or dystopian (space of centralised control) terms' (ibid: 345).

In her study of music-making with African male migrants in Sicily, Rachel Beckles-Willson (2021) identifies similar factors that undermine utopian perspectives of the use of technologies (specifically, mobile phones), particularly among migrant communities. Beckles-Willson claims that a 'utilitarian position' on the use of phones in migrant existence 'neglects…the constant anguish of interruptive and interrupted communication over distance, and the fear of corporations, governments and traffickers exploiting with surveillance' (2021: 232). For those such as Marie Gillespie et al., these factors represent 'infrastructural vulnerabilities', understood as the sociotechnical arrangements on which

refugees rely that impact engagement with technologies and experiences of displacement (2018: 5).

Infrastructural Vulnerabilities in Za'atari

How do ideas about the internet and infrastructural vulnerabilities play out in the use of technologies and media in Za'atari? Za'atari's remote location in the north Jordanian desert means that signal and internet access are scarce and unreliable (Maitland et al. 2015). While Za'atari has grown significantly in size and infrastructure since its establishment in 2012, facilities enabling online connectivity are underdeveloped. Generators provide electricity, which is restricted to nine hours per day (Carlisle 2022). Although electricity hours were extended during the lockdown, supply was still limited thereby complicating long-term use of portable rechargeable devices such as mobiles, laptops, or tablets. Access to such devices is also complicated by socio-economic disadvantages: not every individual in Za'atari owns a mobile (mobiles are often shared among family members), and residents cannot afford to purchase larger devices (such as laptops) or data packages with enough bandwidth for online activities. According to reports, these barriers put lower-income families particularly at risk: children who did not have access to certain technologies, for instance, were not able to partake in online learning (Human Rights Watch 2020a: 23 and 24).

Access to musical instruments is problematic. Many working musicians in the camp have their own oud, org, rubābā or ṭabl, and sometimes even microphones, speakers, recording equipment, and cameras. This is not the case for most participants in NGO music programming. Instruments for music programmes are kept in NGO centres, to which Syrians did not have access during lockdown. Walid, who was working as a music instructor at QS during corona, argues that the lack of access to instruments was a

fundamental barrier to music-making at the time: 'When you don't have instruments, it's very hard to practise *any* musical activity!' (Walid, communication with the author, 14 May 2020).

These infrastructural vulnerabilities are compounded by various political, social, and cultural factors. As explored in the introduction to this thesis, online and telephone communications are monitored by camp authorities, and policies are even in place that mandate local mobile network providers to limit mobile signal and connectivity across the camp. Control over communications was further exerted during corona. Under the implementation of martial law, the GoJ issued a set of 'Defence Orders' that had significant implications for the use of technologies and freedom of speech (Human Rights Watch 2020b). For example, paragraph 2.2 of Defence Order No. 8 (issued 15 April 2020) prohibits 'publishing, re-publishing, or circulating any news about the epidemic in order to terrify people or cause panic among them via media, telephone, or social media' (ibid). While the Prime Minister at the time, Omar Razzaz, pledged that decrees would not impinge on political rights or freedom of speech, several arrests were made for 'violations' of Defence Orders; the general manager and the news director of national news channel, Roya TV, were both arrested following 'a news report that was aired on Roya News social media pages', regarding corona measures in the country (Roya News 2020).

Certain social and cultural aspects of life in the camp also complicate the use of online technologies for music-making. As explored in Chapter 3, the ability for women to gather for Zumba, for example, in-person may be fundamental to Syrian women's sense of autonomy and freedom. Not only does Zumba empower women who take part but it also provides a physical environment of safety for women to work out without head

coverings and in sports clothing. According to Zumba instructor Nermeen, protecting the environment of safety and freedom in an online space poses serious problems:

> So, I sat and thought about how I was going to provide sport activities online. I knew that no way was it going to work for me to film myself doing sports, wearing a scarf, and full clothes. But it also wasn't going to work if I'm wearing workout clothes [without hijab] and then those videos get shared around the community. (Interview with the author, 5 July 2021)

In music education programmes, too, the inability for participants to gather in-person in groups due to lockdown restrictions was problematic. Music lessons in Za'atari are provided in large groups in dedicated caravans within QS and LWF centres. In QS, lessons are participatory and interactive, focusing on group singing activities or org instruction where students take turns to play the org. According to LWF program manager, Elisabeth, this style of interactive teaching is difficult to carry out online:

> Music is difficult to do over the internet because it's interactive! So, [online] it becomes more of a study – following how to read music or the theory – and it's a bit bland and boring, maybe, and harder to concentrate on. Especially as you are alone in your room or whatever. Especially for music, the preference is to do it in-person. (Interview with the author, 8 October 2020)

The inability to gather in person may also have implications for the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of participants in NGO programmes. Wedad was working on QS's MeWe programmes during the main period of lockdown in 2020. She was also heavily pregnant with her second child at the time. Wedad claims that the ability for Syrians to gather together in-person is the most crucial condition of any NGO

programming because such activities involve the act of 'listening together': 'Any activity, be it MeWe, The Field Guide, or music, all of them involve the same community listening together to the same thing. They're taking on board the same thing' (interview with the author, 5 August 2021).

Analysing the barriers facing actors in Za'atari during corona appears to draw out several assumptions about the internet and online culture that require further interrogation. First, in terms of gender. In their studies of the place of the internet in Iran, Annabelle Sreberny and Gholam Khiabany argue that 'the absence of the body in virtual space can have a liberating and democratic impact' for Iranian women (2010: 116). Nooshin, however, claims that women in Iran often have to exercise caution about how and where they promote themselves online, not least in terms of controlling 'the afterlife of clips online' (2018: 361 and 367). For women in Zumba, the 'online space' may also present itself as more constricting than liberating because it fails to provide the safety and protection of modesty that dedicated women-only 'public' spaces in the camp afford. This further sheds light on Abu-Lughod's theory about the risk of Western frameworks that conflate 'freedom' with the 'emergence' of women from 'private' spaces into 'public' ones (1998: 2).

Second, in terms of narratives of migration. Exposing the technological vulnerabilities faced by Syrians during corona appears to play into, as opposed to dismantle, victim-based narratives of refugees, and the role of technologies in those narratives. Depictions of technologies – particularly mobile phones – in displacement are often contentious (see Alencar 2020; Beckles-Willson 2021; Felton 2015; Gillespie et al. 2018; Palmberger 2022; Ponzanesi 2019; Twigt 2018). One instance at LWF problematises the relationship between technologies and narratives of migration.

Program manager Elisabeth is from Western Europe and worked in development aid and activism in India, Burundi, and Angola before moving to Jordan. She recalls an interaction with one of the donors to LWF:

> So, we made a small video about [our online programmes in COVID-19] for one of our donors to share with their support space […] [Our donors] were having a discussion internally about the type of questions that they could expect [from their support space] […] So, one of the questions was just that: why do refugees have mobile phones? […] I must say I was very surprised because I thought we had passed that [way of thinking] […] I think in [faith-based support] there might be some misconceptions about the day-to-day lives of most refugees. (Interview with the author, 8 October 2020)

'Misconceptions' about the day-to-day lives of refugees are messily entangled in the core of humanitarianism and international aid. As traced elsewhere in this thesis, many argue that the system of humanitarianism aid ensures that forcibly displaced persons remain vulnerable and cast as victims in order to sustain public interest and funding (Andemicael 2004; Cabot 2016; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014; Harrell-Bond 1986; Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007).[73] Koen Leurs and Kevin Smets extend this position to technology: 'the appearance of digitally connected refugees was perceived as incongruent with Eurocentric ideas of sad and poor refugees fleeing from war and atrocities' (2018: 6). The technological vulnerabilities facing Syrians (particularly restrictions on in-person gender-specific gatherings and the cultural issues involved in online implementation)

[73] I say more about this in detail in Chapter 5.

may thus appear to intimate a kind of 'Turklian criticism' (Gopinath and Stanyek 2019: 106) of the place of technologies in displacement in that one substantiates Sherry Turkle's lamentation of the loss of face-to-face interaction and thereby accentuates the detrimental aspects of online culture for putting 'the real on the run' (2011: 1).

These various assumptions reveal the risks in exploring the place of technologies in ghurba. While it is important to acknowledge the barriers and vulnerabilities facing Syrians, depicting them as entirely 'disconnected' from technologies and media is damaging and fails to acknowledge the ways they overcome such challenges and find alternative ways to fostering participation and interaction online. In the following section, I illuminate how Syrians are, in fact, 'connected', and how they overcome the various obstacles facing them in their use of technologies and media.

Precarity and Flexibility

In his work on electronic music in the township of Soweto in South Africa, Gavin Steingo (2017) explores how 'accident' and 'failure' manifest in music-making. Steingo identifies infrastructural vulnerabilities faced by non-professional musicians in Soweto that render musical performance 'impossible': lack of sufficient hard drives, faulty or old devices, and power outages and unreliable internet due to poor electrical infrastructure (2017: 4-5). However, due to their frequency and ubiquity, he argues that technological failures are 'a material and even quotidian aspect of musical activity' (ibid: 6). As such, Steingo asserts that because music-making in Soweto is 'more precarious' it is also 'more flexible' (ibid: 6, 7). Isabel Awad and Jonathan Tossell outline a similar theory in their work on refugees, arguing that 'precarity' is central to understanding how Syrians in Jordan interact with technologies (2018: 613). Based on Susan Banki's (2014) work on precarity, which she defines as a lack of security and instability in various categories

(such as housing, employment, and mobility), Awad and Tossell argue that mobile phones are 'fundamental tools, which refugees use strategically to alleviate precarity' (2018: 613).

Concepts of precarity and flexibility may be useful in discussing music-making in Za'atari. But there is a caveat involved in doing so. It may not necessarily be the case, as Steingo implies, that precarity itself leads to greater flexibility; flexibility varies across contexts depending on a number of factors such as the availability and stability of resources and the ability of actors to access those resources. Different context-specific factors therefore engender differing levels and types of flexibility. It is from this perspective that I ask how there might be flexibility in online music-making in the precarious environment of Za'atari and how Syrians in Za'atari overcame the technological vulnerabilities facing them during corona. I address these questions through analysis of performance practices by professional musicians and in humanitarian programming.

Online Performance Practices by Musicians

The prohibition of social gatherings and the inability to travel outside the camp for paid gigs during corona presented significant issues for musicians like Walid and Tariq. Nevertheless, these musicians overcame such challenges in various diverse and flexible ways. In the summer of 2020, I was told about a musician in Za'atari (let's call him Ali) who held a gathering in his home during the lockdown. As a prominent musician in the camp, Ali already had his own org as well as a microphone and loudspeakers. The gathering was attended by many of Ali's friends. The details of what happened next are unclear, but Ali was apprehended by the camp security forces and placed under house arrest for several days. I am not sure how the security forces came to know about the

gathering: some people told me the police had heard music blaring from the musician's home, while others suggested it was because a short video of the gathering had been posted on social media by one of Ali's friends who was in attendance. Nevertheless, the illegal gathering may tell us something interesting about precarity and technology in Za'atari.

Music research has paid significant attention to underground or clandestine music-making in political regimes and in contexts of conflict (see Baily 2001; Korpe 2004; Hall 2019; Nooshin 2005, 2009, 2017). Across contexts, the internet thus emerges as a safe 'private' (domestic, flexible) space distinct from unsafe 'public' (censored, precarious) spaces. Georgina Born argues that the dualistic conception of public (i.e., 'outside' – spaces accessible to public view and participation) and private (i.e., 'inside' – domestic spaces) is analytically helpful in understanding the relationship between music and space (2013: 25). It may well be, however, that there are, as Nooshin claims, 'degrees of publicness and privateness that challenge the stability of such a binary construction' (2018: 350). For example, clandestine events initially appear to offer musicians like Ali flexible, alternative, and private musical spaces in Za'atari in the face of public political restrictions. On the one hand, if the authorities were alerted to the gathering after hearing the amplified music, music itself 'gives up' the privacy of the inside private space, permeating sound into the public, policed space. On the other hand, if the authorities were made aware of the gathering through social media monitoring, the 'private' space of the internet is also undermined due to policies of surveillance in the camp.[74]

[74] As far as I am aware, Syrians in Za'atari do not use VPNs (virtual private networks). In 2023, the GoJ criminalized the use of VPNs throughout the country.

This is not to say, however, that online spaces cannot be used for other music-making activities. I was in contact with Walid over WhatsApp regularly during the summer of 2020. He would keep me up to date with his life, telling me about the things he had been up to, from digging up his garden to keeping on top of his oud practice. He also explained how he was using social media as a way to continue performing during lockdown. Throughout 2020, Walid regularly posted recordings of his songs on his Facebook page. Because the songs were pre-recorded, rather than live streamed performances' Walid was able to circumnavigate the connectivity issues that may arise when trying to stream live from the camp. According to Walid, performing in this way was vital for his state of mind. As he told me at the time on WhatsApp: 'I'm posting a lot on social media […] The only thing that I can really express myself through is art' (communication with the author via WhatsApp, 14 May 2020).

One recording Walid posted on his Facebook is a song about Eid. Eid Al-Fitr, one of the major celebrations within the Islamic faith, fell in May 2020 during a major period of lockdown throughout Jordan and Za'atari, and Muslims were unable to celebrate in the usual way of gathering in large groups, taking part in communal daily prayer, or visiting friends and family. Walid is a devout Muslim, and the restrictions on Eid celebrations were tough for him. As such, he composed a song about the sadness of being unable to celebrate with the usual customs and traditions. In the song, he directly addresses 'Eid':

Please excuse me	*Lakin 'afwān minak lakin*
But can't you see the sadness of all places?	*Mu shāyif ḥuzun al-amākin?*
The wound living inside us	*Al-juruḥ jūwāna sākin*

When everyone is far from their families	*Wa kul waḥad a'm ahilo ba'īd*
How will you come to us	*Kīf bidak tījī tāwfīna*
And light up our nights	*Wa tuḍwī biqarbak līālīna*
The joy inside of us is dead	*Wa al-farḥa maqtūleh fīna*
Tell me, do you like it, Eid?	*Quli bitruḍāha yā Eid?*

In this way, Walid uses social media to continue his performance practices in the face of restrictions on in-person gatherings and to express some of his feelings about the impact of those restrictions. But one question remains: how was Walid able to make quality sound recordings given the (lack of) resources available to him in the camp, and his inability to travel to recording studios outside, as he regularly did pre-corona?

For Walid, the answer was apparently simple: build his own recording studio. Although an ostensibly difficult task in the face of physical, economic, and political restraints of the camp environment during a pandemic, Walid constructed a small recording studio on his small plot in Za'atari (see Figure 5.4).[75]

[75] As stated in the introduction to this thesis, each household in Za'atari is allotted a 10x10m plot, on which they can fit caravans, tents, and other installations.



Figure 5.4. Recording studio built in private residence in Za'atari. (Photograph sent to the author via WhatsApp, 14 May 2020).

Because of the lack of appropriate resources and materials in the camp during lockdown to construct a 'proper studio', Walid claims had to be flexible with his approach and build a studio from whatever materials he had available at the time:

> Initially, the idea to make a studio came to me in corona because of the separation (*farāq*) [from studios, from one another]. I basically had no choice but to make the studio as an expansion to my house […] I insulated the studio with very basic material that I had around. I used empty egg cartons, cardboard, old carpets, and bits of old wood. The conditions for building a studio in, like, Amman, for example, rather than Za'atari, is that there must be concrete and bricks […] I didn't have concrete […] So, I had to find other ways to insulate and dampen the sound because I can't be singing and then sound comes in from outside or vice versa. It ate up a lot of my time, to be honest, and it cost me a lot! Every week I tried to bring something to use […] I used loads of eggs! […] And it took about one month of work in total. (Interview with the author, 21 August 2021)

The resulting studio provided Walid with the vital space in which to record his own songs, which he could then post to social media during corona: the materials of egg cartons, cardboard, and carpet insulated Walid's 'private' space of the recording studio from the 'public' space outside, and vice versa. However, the studio also had long-term benefits, helping Walid to overcome some of the economic and financial challenges he faces as a Syrian refugee trying to make it as a musician in the (public) music scene of Jordan:

> If I have all the instruments, the right set-up, the microphone, then there's no need for me to go and record a song [in a studio outside the camp]. That will cost me a big amount – even if it's just 50JD. If I had to pay 50JD each time I wanted to record a song, my salary would have to be 2000JD [a month]! And I need to live off my salary, not sing off it! I sing to live, not live to sing! (Interview with the author, 21 August 2021)

Walid's performance practices during corona reveal something significant about precarity and flexibility. By posting pre-recorded songs on his social media, Walid demonstrated flexibility in his approach to performance, circumventing infrastructural precarities (such as poor connectivity that might prevent live streamed performances), political restrictions on in-person performances, and policies of surveillance. He was, however, still able to produce commentary on the policies that affected his life as a Muslim under lockdown, by composing songs about Eid and his sadness at being unable to celebrate due to restrictions on celebrations. By building his own studio made up of materials from the camp itself, Walid created an alternative private space for music-making insulated (literally and figuratively) from the highly controlled public spaces of the camp. In this way, Walid shows how 'people create devices more adaptable and amendable' to precarious environments (Steingo 2017: 12). But his music-making under lockdown also suggests that flexibility is often forced upon those in precarious environments: Walid 'had no choice' but to create a studio of alternative materials in his home because of physical and economic restraints; Walid could not afford to spend his salary on expensive studios outside the camp; and Walid would rather not use his salary on aspects of his performance practice, but instead use singing as a way to make money – 'I sing to live, not live to sing!' (interview with the author, 21 August 2021).

From the above discussion, it is clear how professional musicians enacted different types and levels of flexibility in the face of precarity during corona. Some of these practices were more successful than others. But what about other aspects of Za'atari's musical culture during corona? In the next section, I turn the case of online music programming in NGOs during corona.

Online Music Programming in NGOs

From early in the lockdown, both QS and LWF expressed interest implementing their usual music programming online. In the summer of 2020, LWF asked me to put together a proposal for their online music education programmes in Za'atari and in Zarqa.[76] Working together with Syrian music teachers in both Za'atari and LWF's community centre in Zarqa, the proposal outlined methods for implementing online music activities, including logistics and content (LWF 2020a). I also produced a proposal for QS with similar content.

The main method of implementation in Za'atari for humanitarian programming during corona was WhatsApp. The platform emerged as an instrumental tool for online activity given the precarity of internet connectivity and device access issues in the camp. WhatsApp is the most widely used communication service across residents in the camp. Most Syrians in Za'atari have some kind of access to WhatsApp, either through their own device, or that of a family member or friend. Additionally, WhatsApp does not require consistent connectivity like Zoom or Skype, and participants can take part in activities at any time whenever they have access to a device. WhatsApp therefore offered a particular kind of flexibility, one not built from (or with) precarity for actors in music programmes. According to Elisabeth, the flexibility of WhatsApp was a key feature of online programming during corona:

> The main thing is that when things were posted 'online', they would be accessible at a later time. [Everything was] pre-recorded. So, there

[76] Different LWF centers in Jordan share the same resources as part of LWF's plan to implement a unified program of activities across the country. Music content produced by LWF facilitators in Zarqa was therefore also used in LWF music lessons in Za'atari.

> weren't any kind of fixed times when you had to be online to follow a course or something (Interview with the author, 8 October 2020).

For online music education programmes, Syrian facilitators created group chats on WhatsApp, with separate groups for males and females. In this way, online programming attempted to respect the segregated nature of music education programmes before the pandemic. Additionally, facilitators added participants using whatever phone number was available to them, like for instance, that of a family member.

It became clear that it would be necessary to revise the design and content of music education for online implantation, particularly given the fact that music programming prior to corona was highly interactive and carried out in large groups. Online music lessons would be implemented by teachers recording short videos of about five to ten minutes in length on four core topics and sending these to participants via WhatsApp (LWF 2020a). By keeping videos short, facilitators could circumnavigate internet bandwidth and connectivity issues as well as avoid online fatigue and maintain participants' concentration. The core topics of online instruction covered: music theory, singing, listening, and instrumental instruction (LWF, 2020a).

In the first instance, music theory was deemed suitable for online implementation because it does not require participants to have access to instruments or additional resources. In LWF online music theory lessons, for example, Syrian facilitators focused on aspects such as the musical scales, clefs, notation, maqāmāt, and rhythm. They also

recorded educational videos explaining the features of different instruments such as the oud (see Figures 5.5 and 5.6).[77]

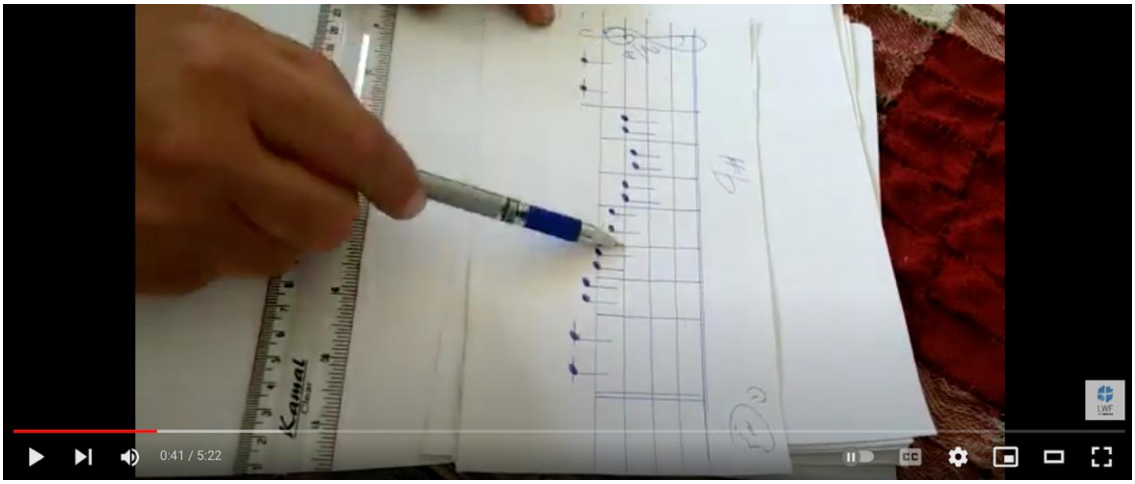


Figure 5.5 Pre-recorded online music theory class for LWF explaining tuning for the oud. (LWF 2020).[78]

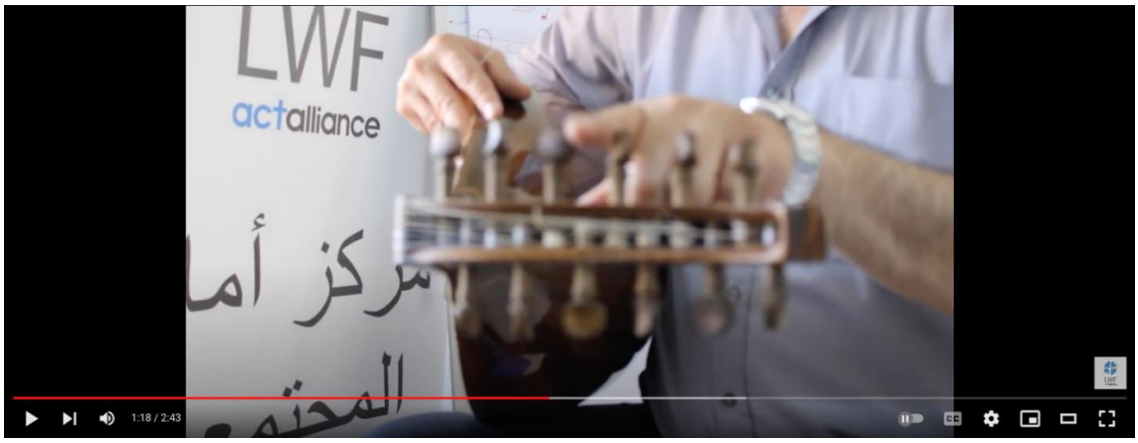


Figure 5.6. Pre-recorded online music theory class for LWF explaining tuning on the oud (LWF 2020). The text on the banner reads 'Markaz Amān al-Mujtamaʿī' (Safe Community Center). (LWF 2020).[79]

[77] Figures 5.5 and 5.6 show online music theory classes recorded by the Syrian music teacher in LWF's community center in Zarqa, which were also used by facilitators and students in Za'atari.
[78] See https://youtu.be/pfImcItHBVU (Accessed 18 December 2022).
[79] See https://youtu.be/ly7aqHqVrRU (Accessed 18 December 2022).

The second core area of online music curricula was singing. Singing was chosen because it is an accessible and simple form of music-making that does not require any resources or instruments. Additionally, singing can help to foster a sense of interaction and 'togetherness': songs can be taught by teachers 'in real time', directly talking to participants in an engaging manner, leaving 'space' within the video for participants to 'respond' and 'sing along' at home (LWF 2020a). I prepared a series of training videos for Syrian teachers to demonstrate these 'real time' singing activities. In the two training videos, I spoke to the camera in an engaging and uplifting tone, directly addressing students. I also included basic body and vocal warm-ups for all ability levels (stretching the arms and legs, relaxing the neck, singing up and down the scale using solfège and/or numbers at different pitches and ascending one tone with each repetition, humming from bottom range of the voice to the top, and other simple breathing exercises). I then selected two simple strophic songs in Arabic suitable for youth in the camp. The first was 'Bukra' (Tomorrow), a single produced by Quincy Jones, Moroccan producer RedOne, and the popular Iraqi poet and musician Kadim Al Sahir. Bukra was released in an effort to raise funds for youth arts programmes across the Arab world and describes working together to build a 'better tomorrow'. The second was the popular song 'Ba'dak 'ala Bāli' (You're Still on My Mind) by Fairuz. I taught the songs line by line in a call and response style, and superimposed lyrics on the screen (see Figure 5.7). At the end of each video, I repeated the song in full using a simple piano backing track, which could be easily replicated by instructors in Za'atari by accompanying themselves on the oud or org, if they had the resources.



Figure 5.7. Training video produced by the author for LWF. On screen text reads '*jāi bukra nahār jadīd* (Tomorrow a new day is coming) (Video by the author, 2 June 2020).[80]

For some instructors, these kinds of singing activities emerged as effective methods of online music education, particularly in terms of fostering interaction with participants. In QS, for instance, Walid replicated a similar approach. In his videos for students in QS's music programmes, Walid enthusiastically greeted participants with phrases such as *'yā shāṭrīn'* (Oh, clever ones), and would invite students to 'listen and sing together'. The repertoire of such videos followed that of music classes pre-corona, particularly those from the genre of al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh, such as 'Biktub Ismik Yā Bilādī' and Walid's own composition, 'Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani'.

The third area of music instruction was listening. Listening aimed to benefit participants' psychosocial mental health and wellbeing, enable relaxation, and relieve tension or stress (LWF 2020a). This approach proved particularly popular with Syrian facilitators. In listening activities, teachers sent MP3s or videos of short songs, pieces, or

[80] Video also available on LWF's YouTube channel. See https://youtu.be/wMPakqNF2M4 (Accessed 18 December 2022).

improvisations (either their own or by other performers) via the WhatsApp groups (see Figure 5.8).



Figure 5.8. Pre-recorded listening activity for LWF with two instructors playing the oud and ṭabla. The text on the banner behind reads '*Markaz Amān al-Mujtama'ī*' (Safe Community Centre). (LWF, 2020).[81]

Songs for listening activities predominantly drew on those meta-genres popular in the contemporary Arab musical culture, including shabābī, sha'bī and nationalistic categories. In addition, instructors recorded themselves performing instrumental works and improvisations that used certain maqamāt based on beliefs among Arab musicians that different maqamāt have different psychological effects on listeners (see Mahdi 1993; Ebbini and Al-Bakri 2021).

Many of the approaches in online music programmes were also utilised across other music programming. In Zumba, Nermeen told me how she created and sent short videos to participants via WhatsApp but used YouTube as a source for materials:

[81] See https://youtu.be/EESbNEX43iM (Accessed 18 December 2022). Here, we see two musicians performing together. In Zarqa, corona-related policies differed from those in the camp, and small numbers of people were permitted to gather for work purposes.

> So, I went on YouTube and searched […] for 'abs workout', and just downloaded the workouts that I wanted which were already on YouTube that other coaches were giving. I would download them, and then sit and edit the videos so that I was just getting the specific exercises I wanted and not too much [i.e., the whole video] […] I edited and shortened the videos a bit so that it wouldn't use up too much of participants' data, and because we have an issue with the net here and it can't take much […] I also made each video about 30 seconds long, so that it wouldn't be too long or too boring. (Interview with the author, 5 July 2021)

According to Nermeen, downloading and editing videos from YouTube overcame technological issues regarding bandwidths and data. I was not, however, able to get to the bottom of how Nermeen was able to download and edit videos in the first place given that she, theoretically, faces many of the same infrastructural vulnerabilities as program participants; it could be that her personal data plan was bigger, or that she had access to personal WiFi.[82] Nevertheless, using material from YouTube helped Nermeen to overcome cultural issues surrounding recording Zumba activities herself, instead distributing videos of 'other coaches' on YouTube, and enabling her to preserve her modesty.

Nermeen's use of technology in this way might, at first, appear to 'remove' or 'hide' her as an individual within the Zumba activity (Nooshin 2018: 346). This might question the extent to which both technology and Zumba can be a liberating force (particularly in light of my discussion in the previous chapter about Zumba, which highlighted the importance of the activity in empowering women). However, I am not convinced this is

[82] I heard stories that some Syrians in Za'atari had WiFi routers in their caravans.

the case. The process executed by Nermeen during corona is not so far removed from the structure of Zumba classes pre-pandemic. In leading Zumba sessions in the camp, Nermeen and her colleague Farah follow pre-downloaded videos and Zumba exercises from other coaches that are played on the TV screen in the QS sports caravan. Moreover, Nermeen insists that she does remain 'present' in online Zumba by providing 'real time' feedback with women through voice notes and audio messages on WhatsApp:

> When I was sending the videos [via WhatsApp] to the groups, I would record a voice note and I would say 'Hi ladies. Please watch this video, this is an exercise for whatever, so do this and this and this' […] So, in this group on WhatsApp, I would record voice notes for them, talking them through the exercises as if I was with them. And they would send me feedback through voice notes telling me, 'My leg muscles hurt' or 'My stomach hurts'. (Interview with the author, 5 July 2021)

Nermeen's use of voice notes to maintain interaction with participants in online activities appears to corroborate claims in the literature about the tangibility that online interactions can afford users. Nooshin, for example, states that the internet can offer a 'more immediate and tangible sense of engagement with others as well as the possibility of interaction' (2018: 356). Nooshin claims that the internet therefore potentially makes possible 'new kinds of affinity communities' and engenders a unique sense of 'social intimacy' (ibid: 358). Educational specialists, too, have explored the possibility that technologies such as mobile phones can facilitate 'more authentic, participative ways of learning in the twenty-first century' (Schuck et al. 2016: 4). Beckles-Willson goes as far as to suggest that musical interaction facilitated by WhatsApp in her education program with young male African migrants in a Sicilian hostel 'reconfigured' communal hostel life into a 'digital one' and was 'central to fulfilling the affective and social needs of

migrants' (2021: 232 and 239). For African males, WhatsApp offered an accessible space for music-making: voice notes in particular 'eradicated' the need to travel to create music and the need to be literate to participate in WhatsApp groups (ibid: 232-233).

Other actors in Za'atari, however, contend that WhatsApp did not eradicate distance with participants in online activities during corona. In her role as a counsellor in MeWe and TFG, Wedad claims that WhatsApp was unhelpful in consolidating meaningful relationships of trust between facilitators and participants because it lacks a face-to-face aspect:

> In the beginning of corona, I was so stressed. I was working with both MeWe and The Field Guide, and we were establishing new sessions and groups.[83] Just imagine: you're trying to communicate and reach people only through your phone – you don't even know them. It's not at all easy to build trust with people you've never even seen before and that you don't even know! It's so hard and requires so much work. It needs so much work via a mobile. (Interview with the author, 5 August 2021)

For Wedad, the work involved in trying to establish meaningful relationships online, being constantly 'available' online to participants even outside of session times, and fitting in activities around her busy life as a working mother, contributed to a severe period of depression during corona. QS's creative writing teacher, Maher, also struggled when conducting lessons online. He argues that remote teaching afforded him a false

[83] Many programmes in Za'atari run in cycles of three months, with new participants recruited to programmes with each cycle.

sense of ‘free time’ in which he felt reluctant to do anything: ‘[Sitting at home all day] is totally toxic. It kills you!’ (interview with the author, 11 July 2021).

It is clear that both the pandemic and pandemic-related measures had a significant and far-reaching impact on different music-making activities, including music and arts-based programming within NGOs. Over time, some corona measures were eased in the camp, and this helped to better facilitate online activities and adaptations to technologies. Over the course of 2020, external access to Za’atari for NGOs was increased meaning that organisations could distribute materials purchased outside the camp within the community to improve implementation of online activities. To overcome the lack of access to mobile devices, QS bought a bulk number of tablets and distributed them to both facilitators and participants for use across various programmes, including music. They also included SIM and Micro SIM cards with large data packages. Tablets were rotated among participants in different programmes on a schedule to ensure that at some point all participants in any given program would have access to a tablet.

For music, QS also planned to distribute and rotate musical instruments such as mini electric keyboards to homes to facilitate the fourth core aspect of online music curricula: instrumental instruction. As with other activities, instrumental instruction would involve pre-recorded short lessons, again incorporating interactive techniques. In initial discussions with QS, we proposed to purchase small electronic keyboards such as the CASIO ‘SA-46’ 32-key mini keyboard. But these keyboards either require electricity (restricted in Za’atari) or batteries (a potential additional economic burden on participants and NGOs). Ibrahim, the leader of QS’s Music Therapy program, suggested that a solution may lie in melodicas: they do not require electricity, are portable, easy to use, and low cost. To address hygiene concerns, facilitators sanitised melodicas at the QS

centre between rotations among participants, once the authorities permitted small in-person gatherings within NGO workplaces in the camp. This new policy also enabled facilitators to use centres to meet to plan and record lessons, and to access instruments and resources. This was immensely helpful for music teachers preparing online lessons. Teachers could now meet in centres and work together to prepare and record content for music education classes. For instance, one teacher would perform on the org, while the other recorded from above so that all the keys would be visible in the video. This is demonstrated in the below photograph (Figure 5.9) which shows two Syrian music teachers recording content for music classes in one of QS's music caravans.



Figure 5.9. QS music therapy facilitators preparing for online implementation in QS music caravan, Za'atari. (Photograph by the author, 14 June 2021).

Corona: An Opportunity?

The above analysis clearly demonstrates that while corona exacerbated and exposed many of the vulnerabilities faced by Syrians, they also employed innovative, adaptive, and flexible approaches that facilitated online music-making. In fact, both Syrians and NGOs argue that the adaptations to programmes brought about by corona ended up presenting an opportunity to shed light on and address important social and cultural issues in the camp. Here, I turn to two important issues illuminated through online music-making practices during the pandemic: gender dynamics and public health.

One significant challenge in considering the place of technologies in ghurba contexts is 'the gendered aspects of migration and technology' (Witteborn 2018: 29). Across much of the humanitarian programming in Za'atari, organisations can struggle to recruit females to programmes. I explored some of these issues in Chapter 3. During corona, the safety of the in-person environment was put at risk until those such as Nermeen devised innovative ways of downloading YouTube videos to retain modesty and working on WhatsApp through voice notes to maintain the social aspect of the sport for Syrian women. According to Nermeen, online fitness classes actually expanded the scope of potential participants in Zumba:

> So, when the girls started interacting more with me on the WhatsApp groups, some of them would say: 'My husband didn't used to let me go out when I really wanted to come to the centre [to take part in Zumba]'. So, online activities opened up space for a lot of women to learn and train [when they couldn't before]. Corona gave us the opportunity to know which women would want online sessions and which women would want face-to-face activities. (Interview with the author, 5 July 2021)

This offers an alternative perspective on the role of the internet for women. Nermeen's adaptability and flexibility in her approach meant that the internet emerged as a safe space for women where it might not have been so before, both in terms of anxieties about appearing without head covering and for those women who previously had no access to 'offline' Zumba spaces for other social reasons. The success of online Zumba classes was such that QS decided to continue providing Zumba online even after corona measures were lifted and in-person Zumba sessions were reinstated. In this way, Zumba represents an 'alternative public sphere' (Nooshin 2018: 345) that 'does not displace but rather supplements or even stimulates face-to-face communication, strengthening social networks' (Livingstone 2005b: 176).

Facilitators in LWF used music during corona to address public health and educational approaches in the camp. As part of their online activities for youth, LWF designed an online series named *Ḥadīqa al-ma'lūmāt* (The Information Garden). According to project manager Elisabeth, Ḥadīqa al-ma'lūmāt aimed to provide 'education messages for children using puppets and play' (interview with the author, 8 October 2020). Episodes of Ḥadīqa al-ma'lūmāt were recorded by Syrians and uploaded to LWF's YouTube and Facebook pages. One episode focuses specifically on the importance of hygiene during the pandemic. In the 'Washing Hands' episode, we meet three characters: SpongeBob, Papa Smurf, and Micky Mouse. They are joined by Haroon, LWF's music teacher in Za'atari. The four of them gather in LWF's kindergarten – known as The Smurf Centre – and greet viewers in loud, excited voices. In this first portion of the episode, SpongeBob, Papa Smurf, and Micky Mouse explain how the spread of germs works through ball games (the ball is the germ, and the germs get passed around if you touch and throw it). They also demonstrate how to properly wash your

hands. Like many other episodes of Ḥadīqa al-ma‘lūmāt, the episode ends with a song, performed by Haroon. In this episode, Haroon sings the ‘Washing Hands Song’ (see Figure 5.10).



Figure 5.10. ‘Washing Hands’ episode of LWF’s ‘Al-ḥadīqa al-ma‘lūmāt’ series (LWF YouTube 2020).[84]

The ‘Washing Hands’ song is simple and repetitive with lines such as ‘wash your hands, dear one’ and ‘it will protect you from the germs’ occurring several times throughout the song, as if to reinforce the importance of continuous hand washing to protect one’s community. The lyrics are:

Wash, wash your hands, dear one	*Ghasil, ghasil, yā ḥilū īdayk*
It will give you hygiene and health	*Al-naẓafeh wa ṣaḥa bia‘tīk*
Wash, wash your hands, dear one	*Ghasil, ghasil, yā ḥilū īdayk*
We must wash our hands with soap and water (x2)	*Lāzim minghasil īd bel ṣabūn wa may (x2)*
It will protect you from the germs (x2)	*Min al-jarathīm taḥmīk (x2)*

[84] See https://youtu.be/rco8rp7lcNA (Accessed 1 October 2022).

After this step, keep repeating	*Ba‘d al-khutweh wallah na‘īd*
So that you and I will be happy	*A‘shān ana wa inta sa‘īd*
We’ll greet each other with signals	*Mansalim bi ishārāt*
And say the nicest phrases	*Neḥki ajmāl a‘bāreh*
Protect me, oh neighbour (x2)	*Taḥmīni yā jār! (x2)*

At the time Haroon and his colleagues in Za’atari were working on Ḥadīqa al-ma‘lūmāt, Elisabeth and I were also collaborating with Haroon and his colleague in Zarqa, Abu Moath, regarding the online music curriculum we had proposed for LWF’s music programming. In my interview with Elisabeth in the summer of 2020, we got to discussing the approaches of both these programmes and some of the challenges we encountered implementing them. Part of Elisabeth’s wider approach to humanitarian programming is striking a balance between listening to voices on the ground and encouraging communities to ‘try something new’ (interview with the author, 8 October 2020). While I explore the politics and infrastructures of participatory programming in Za’atari in more detail in the following chapter, Elisabeth’s personal belief is that facilitators should be encouraged to ‘have more experiences’ and to ‘give it go’, but without having to ‘stop whatever you’re doing right now’ (interview with the author, 8 October 2021). This was, she claims, the case with Ḥadīqa al-ma‘lūmāt, which did not represent a ‘traditional approach’ to teaching that many Syrian facilitators are used to: ‘They’re doing it in Za’atari, for instance, with the Information Garden, where they link it with education messages for children, using puppets and play. And it’s really, I mean it’s not a traditional Syrian perspective or approach, it’s new and its creative’ (Elisabeth, 8 October 2021). While it is difficult to surmise what a ‘traditional Syrian perspective or approach’ to education supposedly is, it is fair to say that the traditional teaching style

throughout much of the Arab world tends to follow a standard teacher-centred didactic approach (Massialas and Jarrar 1987, 1991; Kim et al. 2019).

The divergence from this traditional didactic approach was challenging for Syrian teachers in Za'atari and Zarqa. Extensive discussions between myself, Elisabeth, and our Jordanian colleague, Bushra (who was responsible for the day-to-day management of LWF's operations in Za'atari and Zarqa) revealed that Abu Moath did not want to implement the suggestions regarding singing activities in his online music lessons. While Elisabeth agrees that some of this may have been down to a reluctance to 'try new things' (such as approaches that depart from traditional Syrian teaching styles), she also claims that gender and age played a significant role:

> Part of it is gender related because the teachers are male, and they are not very used to being told what to do by women […] Older people are more set in their ways and are less likely to adapt and change […] and the people we work with on music […] are older men, men of middle age. (Interview with the author, 8 October 2020)

Elisabeth's remarks clearly warrant further discussion regarding the positionality of different actors in the field and how factors such as gender and age impact the way in which researchers and NGO staff alike work in contexts of displacement. I say more about this in Chapter 5. However, Elisabeth's remarks emphasise the role of gender in offline and online spaces, how it determines flexibility, the importance of flexibility in online music-making, and the extent to which online adaptations can realistically facilitate change or new opportunities for different actors. In the case of technology in Za'atari, it appears that the internet may be more 'accessible' to female participants in online Zumba, but less so to male music facilitators. Differing accessibility in this way

represents an important shift in perspectives on the internet in the literature as not *wholly* democratising, but rather as varied and unequal; as Livingstone argues, space (including online space) is 'unequally accessible', '"preferring" some actors or some activities over others' (2005c: 20).

Conclusions

What does it mean to study corona as a case study on the place of music and technology in Za'atari? It is clear that corona exposed and exacerbated many of the vulnerabilities faced by Syrians in Za'atari, illuminating the precarity of life for people in camps. While exposing these vulnerabilities may appear to play into damaging narratives of life in displacement, illustrating how Syrians overcame such vulnerabilities highlights the agency and creativity of displaced communities: Syrians exercise various forms and levels of flexibility, adaptability, and opportunity in their approaches to music-making in the face of precarity. This flexibility, however, is not inherent because of the precarity of ghurba; rather, flexibility emerges in different, sometimes unwanted and sometimes welcomed ways, and according to different factors *within* the precarious environment of ghurba.

It is also possible to conclude that approaches to technology in Za'atari question framings of the internet more broadly, particularly the dualistic binaries applied in discussions of technologies and music. Online music-making in the camp during corona was not *entirely* democratising and liberating or *entirely* reinforcing of hegemonies. Nor was it *entirely* private or *entirely* public. Nor was it *entirely* real or *entirely* virtual. Rather, like Nooshin's assessment of Iranian cyberspace, Za'atari's cyberspace is a 'complex place' (Nooshin 2018: 345), shifting between binaries and according to different actors and activities.

Corona is an apt case study for understanding the complex and often contradictory nature of life in a camp. While technology and politics delineate one aspect of that complexity, the relationships sustained between actors is clearly equally as substantial. Take my interactions with Abu Moath, or the case of Ḥadīqa al-maʻlūmāt. How do gender, age, or insider-outsider relations affect the socio-cultural capacity of music in contexts of ghurba? I explore some of these tensions, and more, in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Who Speaks? Relationships, Infrastructures, and Positionalities in Ghurba

> Government bureaucrats distrust researchers and journalists because their reports can be critical of their administration and damaging to their careers. Workers with NGOs often mistrust researchers because they only care about their research projects, government agents because they haven't done enough for the communities, and tourists because they aren't serious. (Seeger 2008: 280)

> [Both] ethnographers and advocates working on migration and asylum variously disrupt and reinforce dominant technical and aesthetic norms in their representational work […] Ethnographers and advocates alike can never convey voices without simultaneously producing attendant phantoms. (Cabot 2016: 654)

> The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish. (Spivak 1983: 104)

> We don't speak for ourselves. The world speaks for us. (Maher, interview with the author, 11 July 2021)

The above words of Anthony Seeger, Helen Cabot, Gayatri Spivak, and Za'atari camp poet Maher remind us that the various interactions and relationships between actors may have a significant impact on the ways in which music can be an empowering force for those whose lives have been affected by conflict and loss. For Seeger, Cabot, Spivak, and Maher, the messy entanglements of the public world, including academics and advocates, and so-called marginalised or 'subaltern' groups complicate notions of voice and agency. They essentially prompt us to ask: can Syrians speak?

Of course, these concerns have been present throughout this thesis. In Chapter 2, I have explored the capacity of narrative ethnography to illuminate the hidden experiences, feelings, emotions, and musical worlds of Syrians in the camp. Chapter 3 similarly

interrogates how actors within NGOs – including project managers and Syrian facilitators – use music to educate, heal, and empower different groups in the camp environment.

But these discussions also unearthed problems, uncertainties, and 'phantoms', as Cabot terms them, of their own. Narrative ethnography, for instance, calls into question the place of the researcher speaking for others. Music programming in NGOs also raises concerns about who is leveraging a given project, how they are leveraging it, the way in which a project is structured, and the different identities and positionalities behind different types of programming.

In this chapter, I formalise the relationships between different groups in ghurba contexts to ask in more detail the impact of these interactions on music's ability to empower Syrians, to enable them to 'speak'. As Seeger suggests, I assess the relationships and infrastructures at play between Syrians and NGOs, NGOs and donors, NGOs and researchers, and Syrians and researchers. By interrogating the power dynamics, hierarchies, agendas, politics, and challenges within each of these relationships, I examine the role of different actors (including myself as an ethnomusicologist) in either deconstructing or reinforcing narratives about ghurba. In doing so, I hope to bring the seemingly disparate worlds of humanitarianism, the arts, and academic research into focus.

Asymmetry or Empowerment? Relationships Between Syrians and NGOs

Syrians interact with NGOs in several aspects of their lives. One of those interactions is their involvement in the delivery of aid and services in the camp in a system called incentive-based volunteering (IBV). According to UNHCR, IBV was established as a result of the 'lack of livelihood opportunities' for Syrians (2022: 2). As explored in the introduction to this thesis, Jordan places restrictions on Syrians engaging in formal

employment. While the 2016 Jordan Compact granted a proportion of work permits to Syrians, scholars like Ala Al-Mahaidi contends that the Compact does not attend to Syrians' wider socio-economic rights, and leaves many in the camp 'conflicted between pursuing formal employment with a work permit versus depending on humanitarian assistance from international institutions (2021: 16).

At the end of 2023, almost 3,000 refugees (about 10 per cent of the camp population above 18 years) were engaged in IBV positions (UNHCR 2024f: 2). The IBV system functions around a complex set of operating procedures. For example, different positions are classified according to 'skill level' in order to 'avoid competition between agencies and ensure fair incentives' (UNHCR 2022: 3). Skill levels range from 'semi-skilled' positions such as cleaners or security guards to 'technical' positions including teachers, supervisors, or engineers, and differ in rate of pay and maximum rotation period (the amount of time a volunteer can remain in a position) (ibid). In 2022, semi-skilled volunteers received 1JD per hour with quarterly rotation, and technical volunteers received 2.50JD per hour and a maximum of 2 years (ibid). Organisations are required to employ 'mandatory time gaps' or 'breaks' between two IBV opportunities.[85] IBV essentially means that activities in the camp are run and implemented by Syrians themselves, for which they receive (ostensibly low) cash benefits. Examples include those such as Farah, Walid, or Nermeen, who work as music teachers, music therapy facilitators, or Zumba instructors.

[85] There are some avenues that agencies can take to get around stipulations regarding time gaps or rotation periods in exceptional or extreme circumstances. In QS, I found that many Syrians remained in posts for longer than three months.

Syrian volunteers are supported by other NGO employees who work as co-ordinators or managers for certain projects run in the camp. Within both QS and LWF, a large proportion of these employees are Jordanian citizens (though many have Palestinian heritage). LWF also employs project managers from the US or Europe, like Elisabeth, my project manager at the time in LWF, who comes from The Netherlands. In addition to these employees, there are individuals contracted (usually on a freelance or part-time basis) as consultants, experts, or trainers, like Ibrahim on QS's Music Therapy, or the three capoeiristas who formed Capoeira al-Shababi, who hail from Italy, Palestine, and Jordan. Other figures such as donors, funding partners, or trustees tend to be located elsewhere and only travel to Jordan for short periods. For example, Lucy from The Catalyst Foundation is primarily based in New York, and Robert in QS splits his time between Minneapolis and Jordan.

The corpus of research on migration and asylum has extensively attended to the relationships between refugee communities and aid organisations. Harrell-Bond argues that as a consequence of aid to refugees being traditionally conceived of in terms of 'charity', 'both humanitarian workers and refugees are "trapped" in asymmetrical relationships in a structure in which accountability is skewed in the direction of the donors who pay for the assistance, rather than the refugees' (2002: 53). For many scholars, the standard operational procedures within aid agencies maintains and perpetuates inherent inequalities and power imbalances with refugees (Akhtar and Rata 2022, Daniel and Knusden 1995, Gandolfo 2022, Ishkanian and Shutes 2021).

In Za'atari, IBV theoretically attempts to address these power asymmetries. Consider the following statement by QS regarding their approach to operations in the camp as described in a concept note for their donors, UNFPA:

> A distinctive feature of Questscope's approach is commitment to Syrian refugee leaders – where young men and women design, implement and evaluate activities in the Centre […] The Centre was designed to create a new community-led space for youth to build their skills through meaningful volunteering opportunities and activities promoting their positive development, wellbeing, leadership, and participation as agents of change in their community. (Questscope 2022)

QS states that through volunteering schemes, Syrians are responsible for the design, implementation, and evaluation of activities in Za'atari. In this way, Syrians hypothetically take control of the programmes that serve the camp population and are thus empowered as leaders within their own communities. The IBV model has obvious resonances with some approaches within international development practice such as The Participatory Research and Action model (PRA) established by Robert Chambers in 1997 in order to 'involve people in generating knowledge about their own condition and how it can be changed, to stimulate social and economic change based on the awakening of the common people, and to empower the oppressed' (1997: 108). PRA thus places the needs, priorities, and capacities of the people first, and seeks sustainability by encouraging people to lead and construct their own community action plans (ibid).

But how do the notions of empowerment and sustainability play out in reality in humanitarian programming in Za'atari? A notable example is that of the storytelling and communication initiative, MeWe. Founded by Moshin Mohi-Ud-Din, MeWe aims to improve healing and communication tools for Syrians through various methodologies, including narrative therapy, writing, interpersonal communication tools, and mental health support such as meditation. Syrian community facilitators are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of MeWe's methodologies and development of the

programme. Batool was one of the first practitioners with MeWe and helped to develop the programme when it began in 2014. She emphasises the fundamental importance of bottom-up Syrian-led programming in both design and implementation of MeWe:

> Moshin never had a problem if we had any opinions or came up with activities. In fact, every time he'd come [for a visit], he'd say, 'What have you been up to? What things have you been doing?' And he always saw [our initiatives] in a positive way. So, we came up the curriculum ourselves […] It is great [that we had responsibility]. We're not just sitting here just to be 'given' aid. There was always this confidence that we knew what was most suitable. (Interview with the author, 27 July 2021)

For Batool, having the responsibility to shape the program enabled her to explore the possibility of introducing music to MeWe's meditation exercises. She recalls this process:

> We didn't want to put music that would remind someone of a time of trauma in their lives. Some music might have connotations with a bad feeling or with a particular context or instance […] That actually happened once. One girl told us a song had reminded her of when she was in Syria, and she started to cry because we'd reminded her of a bad time […] We used to play Fairuz, for example, as people arrived at a session. But with Fairuz, every single person has memories or connotations with her. It would be impossible to use anything by her because [the participants] wouldn't concentrate on anything, let alone the meditation! Their minds would journey back to their old lives. We don't want to talk about the past in MeWe; we want to talk about the future […] So, why do we use *al-musīqa al-simfonīeh* (symphony music) then? Because most people in Za'atari don't listen to it. They don't have any kind of relationship to it; it won't 'take' them anywhere. (Interview with the author, 27 July 2021)

Batool's explanation of how she selected appropriate music for MeWe meditation exercises sets an interesting precedent for the concerns raised in previous chapters about the suitability of different musical cultures within music programming. When Batool references *al-musīqa al-simfonīeh*, she is referring to the symphonic tradition within Western classical music – what others in Za'atari describe as al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh or al-musīqa al-gharbīyeh. As explored in Chapter 3, some in Za'atari feel that Western classical music or al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh is not suitable for music education programmes because it does not reflect the contemporary music culture of Za'atari's youth. Scholars have similarly criticised Western classical music projects in contexts of conflict for having Eurocentric and Orientalist undertones (see Baker 2016; Beckles-Willson 2013; Hallam and Creech 2010; Sykes 2018). Without debating the putative mediative qualities of Western classical music, Batool's experiences with MeWe show how such music may in fact be suitable in some contexts, like meditation, precisely *because* participants cannot relate to it. This suggests that the suitability of a music genre for music programming in contexts like Za'atari is not contingent on the genre itself or the culture(s) with which it may be associated. Rather, it is *how* the genre is used and *who* is using it: by being empowered to select music themselves, Syrians are able to make choices about their own musical cultures according to the needs of a given project, thereby nurturing those musical cultures from within.

Donors to music programming are also implicated in this process. Where some scholars argue that NGOs are skewed towards the requirements of donors, thus affecting the relations between refugee communities and NGOs, Lucy (a manager at The Catalyst Foundation) who supported music and arts programmes for a time in QS, demonstrates how donors can contribute to addressing power imbalances in the field. Lucy explains

the Foundation takes a 'pretty hands off' approach when allocating funds, allowing organisations to 'implement [a project] as they see best' (interview with the author, 22 January 2021). LWF project manager Elisabeth also explains how donors to music programmes approached their role as funders in a hands-off way. She states that the advantage of having 'a close-knit network' of small groups of faith-based donors in LWF means that funding partners tend to be more 'flexible and willing to listen', rather than adhering strictly to a set funding frameworks, as found in larger 'multi-country, multi-million dollar' organisations (Elisabeth uses Save The Children as an example) (interview with the author, 8 October 2020).[86] Moreover, for Elisabeth, focusing on the capabilities of Syrian communities is key to relationships with donors:

> For me, it's the capacities and skills that we have [that we should show to donors], to focus on the good side, and to highlight and illustrate all the things that these people know and are willing to do but are just lacking the chance and the opportunity. So even though [Za'atari] isn't as 'horrible' as Moira [a camp in Greece] – people don't die, there's no fire, it's not as bad – it's a question of equality and opportunities. (Interview with the author, 8 October 2020)

Lucy similarly argues that when projects focus on highlighting the capabilities of communities, projects tend to be more sustainable and effective in the long run. For example, The Catalyst Foundation rejected a number of proposals modelled on 'one-off' visits from external musicians because such projects did not reflect sustainable bottom-up approaches:

---

[86] As previously stated, donors to LWF include several faith-based entities and churches across Europe.

> We've had all kinds of people who have come in and said, 'I've got these great musical games and fun things, and I want to fly in and do a recorder workshop with children!' Or 'I have this great project, and it involves kazoos!' Like, that's super fun but I was less drawn to those because it does feel like you're saying someone from the outside has a project where they are looking for a group of kids to do their project with, and then they leave again. (Interview with the author, 22 January 2021)

One example from Za'atari that maps onto Lucy and Elisabeth's comments is the Music for Life Initiative in 2014, where musicians from various US-based orchestras provided concerts over the period of a week. As explored in Chapter 3, Syrians in Za'atari raised concerns about the potential relatability of the music itself but also about the length and structure of the project: 'I mean, they came, they played, and it was alright. But then they just left, and we forgot all about it' (Oday, interview with the author, 1 August 2021).

Considering the ways in which the structure of a project either reinforces or subverts asymmetries is important for other actors within the NGO infrastructure, such as external project leaders. Take, for example, Capoeira al-Shababi. Leandro, Orlando, and Fia were externally contracted together as Capoeira al-Shababi by various agencies such as LWF and Relief International in order to carry out capoeira projects in Za'atari. An essential component of Capoeira al-Shababi's approach to training Syrians as capoeiristas in order to 'keep the sessions going' without the presence of external trainers is through what is known as ToTs (training of trainers) (Leandro, 13 November 2021). ToTs are conducted across agencies in Za'atari to build the capacities of community members to carry out activities themselves, and to ensure that activities are not reliant on external project leaders. In Capoeira al-Shababi's work with LWF, the team interviewed and selected six facilitators (three men and three women) from the camp who received six months of

training on physical movement, music and instrumental instruction, and psychosocial support. According to Orlando, ToTs go beyond simply empowering Syrians; rather, they address the challenges faced by external leaders in negotiating relationships with Syrians in the camp. He explains:

> [Syrian teachers] were the bridge between us and the students […] There would be students that would not come to us for aid if they were in a specific situation.[87] They would go to them [Syrian teachers] […] Maybe because they feel like they are from the same family: they're both from Syria, they know what they are going through, so they have more connection with those guys than with the main teachers [from Capoeira al-Shababi]. (Interview with the author, 19 August 2020)

Here, Orlando (himself Jordanian) intimates that a barrier exists between external project leaders and Syrian participants because they lack shared experiences. In his opinion, ToTs can mitigate that barrier by involving Syrian trainers to work with youth participants. But other capoeiristas in Capoeira al-Shababi are less certain about the ability for external project leaders to mitigate relationships with Syrians in the camp. Leandro is Palestinian. He left Palestine and came to Jordan in 2014. He openly acknowledges the difficulties and trauma he has faced – and continues to face – as a stateless person. Despite the apparent resonances that might exist between his experiences as a stateless Palestinian and those of Syrians in Za'atari, Leandro maintains that his Palestinian identity was in fact a barrier in his interactions in the camp. Both

[87] My interview with Orlando was conducted in both Arabic and English. While Orlando's English is pretty flawless, I suspect here that he meant 'help' rather than aid.

Leandro and Fia recall several instances of discrimination towards Leandro, particularly during their time with LWF, and both are adamant that such discrimination was as a result of putative long-standing tensions between Jordanian and Syrian groups and Palestinians (Fia, interview with the author, 20 August 2020; Leandro, interview with the author, 13 November 2020). The source of these tensions is contentious. As set out in the introduction to this thesis, relationships between different groups in Jordan are complicated. Leandro, for instance, believes that 'Jordanian tribes' resent Palestinians for *Aylūl al-Aswad* (Black September), also known as the Jordanian Civil War, the armed conflict between the Jordanian military and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation between 1970 and 1971 (Leandro, interview with the author, 13 November 2020). Syrians, he claims, are blamed for coming to Jordan and 'overwhelming the system' (ibid).

Although Aylūl al-Aswad is key to understanding relations between Jordanians and Palestinians, the history of Palestinians in Jordan is long. While Jordan once considered themselves to be 'one family' with Palestinians (Chen 2009: 50), commentators suggest there has been significant social and political discrimination against Palestinians and, as a result, heightened communal tensions (Pérez 2011: 4; Zahran 2012: 3; Achilli 2014: 240; Bocco 2010: 235; Chen 2009: 54).[88] The situation of Syrians in Jordan is equally complex. Some research claims that there is very little discrimination towards Syrians

[88] Since October 2023, there has been a notable increase in support among Jordanians for Palestinians and the Palestinian cause following the onset of genocide and violence in Gaza. Huge daily public protests are held throughout the country in support of Palestine and demanding an end to the illegal Israeli occupation. While some analysts argue that the genocide has brought about a change to Jordan's policy and rhetoric toward Israel (Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 and has sustained several political and economic ties with the Occupation), others have noted how Jordan has in fact cracked down on pro-Palestinian support, restricting protests, banning the Palestinian flag and other symbols, and arresting protesters (Badarin 2023: Ersan 2023; Shaoul 2024; Klarenberg 2024; Harb 2024).

and that Jordan has traditionally welcomed Syrian refugees with openness and tolerance (at least in comparison to other countries like Turkey and Lebanon) (Betts et al. 207: 8-12; Chatty 2017a: 339; Chatty 2017b: 239-240). However, many scholars have argued that the initial openness of Jordan and Jordanian communities has given way to hostility owing to both the real and perceived impact of Syrian refugees on political, economic, sociocultural, and environmental aspects of life in Jordan (Alshoubaki and Harris 2018; Achilli 2015: 2-3; Chatty 2017b: 239-240; Tobin 2018: 1).

Given this context, it is clear to see how the notion of ethno-nationalist identity for Leandro is complex, and why he refers to himself as an 'outsider' in the camp environment. But this 'outsider' identity, he argues, is not solely based on his background as a Palestinian and all that comes with that. It is also due to broader socio-cultural differences, particularly to do with age:

> What makes me an outsider, first of all, is that I break the social norms. The age gap between me and [participants] is huge, let's say, but I don't let it come in the way like [the way] cultural or societal structures tells people or how they should behave […] When I did ToT projects […] I used to keep telling my trainers this: 'Break this wall of "you are old and you should get respect automatically because they are young" […]' The culture says that […] the teacher is the divine creature in the class […] You see it in every Arab community. (Interview with the author, 13 November 2020)

Leandro and Orlando's experiences in Za'atari shed considerable light on the notion of insider-outsider relations and their significance in the context of NGO-refugee relationships in the development context. Approaches to international development have increasingly included the engagement of staff from the local context owing to their

alleged familiarity with local settings, language, culture, and environment (see Akhtar and Rata 2022; Batti 2014; Libal and Harding 2011; Mukasa 1999; Mommers and Van Wessel 2009; Zetter 1996). Figures like Leandro and Orlando in Capoeira al-Shababi, the Jordanian musician Ibrahim in QS's Music Therapy, and other local employees within QS or LWF from Jordan or Palestine might be considered in this vein. But both Leandro and Orlando's experiences suggest that shared 'Arab' identity, Arabic language, or life background does not afford local staff or project managers an 'insider' positionality. If anything, Leandro and Orlando consider themselves (albeit in different ways) as outsiders: Orlando because he has no experience of displacement, and Leandro because he 'breaks the social norms' of wider Arab society wherein age is seen as a marker of respect. In terms of language, I recall several conversations with my colleague Hala at QS in which I would reveal my frustrations at not being able to understand the Dera'a accent of Za'atari's residents. Hala was born in Jordan and is of Palestinian descent (her father fled Palestine in 1967 and has Jordanian citizenship), but even she revealed that she had problems understanding the Dera'a accent, often saying things along of the lines of 'Don't worry, I struggle, too!'

In ethnomusicological research, scholars argue that equating shared linguistic capacity to an 'insider' position risks ignoring the heterogeneity of communities and 'perpetuating a silence' established by previous 'outsiders' to a given culture (O'Laoire 2003: 118). Likewise equivalence of Jordanian or Palestinian NGO project managers to Syrians in camps not only ignores the heterogeneity of the Arab world but also risks perpetuating a silence whereby humanitarian actors and refugees are 'trapped in asymmetrical relations' that do not seek to privilege refugee voices or empower refugees as leaders in their own communities (Harrell-Bond 2002: 53). Furthermore, the role of

NGO project managers and external project leaders appears to be a prevalent issue for Syrians. When I spoke with musician and music teacher Walid about his thoughts on music programming in the camp, he explained his wish to implement his own project. His description of that project does much to shed light on his thoughts about the role of NGOs in determining the shape of a given music project:

> The kind of project I would do […] would have nothing to do with NGOs. I would open a specific Music Institute […] And I could make stars with just $3,000. Stars! There would have specific salaries, specific support, specific attention [all just for music] […] There would be songs composed, recorded, and distributed locally within Za'atari camp. And I would help to put together a complete album that you could export or sell to institutions [outside] and under our names. Not the musicians who come and take photos with us then leave, taking our rights with them […] Like when [QS] gave me the opportunity to try out a chorale [for the French embassy visit]. I got loads of loads of young girls and boys together […] and we all sang in harmony 'Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani' […] And [it was successful] because they listened to my ideas and my words […] I won't accept some random who tries to come in and tell me what to do, and especially if he's not even a musician. (Interview with the author, 21 August 2021)

The chorale to which Walid refers above was a small performance by a group of young Syrians in QS during a visit from the French Embassy to the camp. I was not present at the event to witness the performance myself. That Walid owes the chorale's success to the fact it was his idea speaks volumes about the importance of Syrians being able to nurture their own musical cultures. Walid also clearly takes issue with those from 'outside' coming in and dictating how projects in the camp should be run. Interestingly, however, Walid states that if the 'outsider' is a musician (he refers to me as an example

at this point) he would be more receptive to their involvement because they share similar musical backgrounds. Non-musicians would therefore be considered 'outsiders'. For Walid, a mediating factor in relations between Syrians and NGOs is not shared background, culture, or language, but rather shared *musical* interests and knowledge.

Researcher/Aid-worker: Relationships Between NGOs and Academics

Most (if not all) researchers come into contact in some way with gatekeepers throughout the course of their research. Be they translators, friends, diplomats, group leaders, organisations, schools, universities, or governments, these figures help to facilitate researcher access to sites and communities. These gatekeepers exist in humanitarian contexts, too.

As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, my access to Za'atari was predominantly facilitated by my partner NGOs, QS and LWF. There are advantages to working with NGOs in refugee camps. Researchers can avail of transportation organised by NGOs to and from camps (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007: 289), and NGOs can negotiate with local authorities and introduce researchers to potential interlocuters in the camp (Ruano-Posada 2014: 12). This was certainly the case for me in Za'atari: the journey from Amman to the camp can take anywhere up to three hours each way depending on traffic; there is limited public transport throughout Jordan; and only vehicles pre-registered with al-mufawwaḍīyeh (like those owned by NGOs) are permitted to enter the camp. In addition, being connected with QS and LWF meant that I was based within their respective centres during my visits and therefore had access to activities and prospective research participants within each centre for my study.

But scholars have pointed out that relationships between NGOs and researchers can be intensely problematic. Harrell-Bond and Eftihia Voutira argue that relationships

between NGOs and researchers may be strained because NGOs fear that researchers will be critical of their administrations and thus seek to undermine the humanitarian aid system that relies on refugees being cast as 'victims' in order to secure funding (2007: 284). In camps, researchers have noted the complex and precarious process of attempting to secure permissions from government and camp authorities. In her research in Algeria's Saharawi camps, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh explains how some researchers gain limited access, some secure permits immediately and with no restrictions on duration, whilst others are refused access altogether (2014: 35). Seeger highlights the 'distrust' between NGOs and ethnomusicologists, but rather attributes such distrust to the assumption of NGOs that researchers 'only care about their research projects' (2008: 280).

Much of this research had me intensely worried about my application to the UNHCR BNLWG in September 2019 to work in Za'atari. To my surprise, my application was approved in just seven days. Furthermore, it was my contact at UNHCR that suggested I partner with NGOs to extend my access to the camp. Similarly, both QS and LWF were wholly enthusiastic about my research and the opportunity to work together. Within a matter of weeks, I had contracts with both organisations that theoretically enabled me to access the camp.

Tensions did, however, exist below the surface. For instance, when in Za'atari, I was not permitted to leave the confines of the NGOs' compounds owing to supposed 'rules' about 'foreigners' or external visitors to the camp being prohibited from walking around the camp without supervision. This control also extended to time allowed in camp. I was told that all non-residents must leave the camp by 4pm. However, the veracity of these rules and the reasoning behind them are extremely murky. It is fair to say that, as with many regulations in Za'atari, very little is written down (or at least publicly available).

Regulations also change regularly and without notice. It is therefore hard to determine whether a policy is official or rather a case of hearsay or assumption. If policies about researchers' movements in the camp are genuine, it is likely such policies relate to security concerns and thus are a Public Security Directorate issue (the Jordanian governmental directorate under which SRAD falls).[89] Research on refugee camp security suggests that 'night dangers' and limited night-time monitoring in camps can obstruct protection activities, and thus explain heightened security policies in some contexts (Crisp 1999: 3; da Costa 2006: 7; Hyndman 2004: 204; Vogler 2006: 8).

I often found myself facing resistance from within the organisations about when I was able to visit Za'atari. I would be told there was 'no room in the car' or that 'no one from the office is going to Za'atari today' only to be told by others that some employees had visited the camp that day or that the car had not been full at all. In QS specifically, I was frequently told that I was 'needed instead in the Amman office' to help someone with something or other. But when I would arrive at the office, that person was not there, or the thing in question was no longer a priority.[90] On other occasions, I would be asked to submit timetables or schedules about what days and times I wanted to be in the camp so that the timetable could be 'assessed'. Those timetables rarely came to anything.

In LWF, I had no problems being taken 'into the field', but 'the field' tended to be their community centre in Zarqa, not Za'atari, despite the fact we agreed that my time would be split equally between the two locales: trips to Za'atari would be cancelled, or

[89] See https://psd.gov.jo/en-us/psd-department-s/syrian-refugees-affairs-directorate/ (Accessed 4 March 2024)

[90] I only conducted music-specific administrative work for LWF, such as proposal writing, or reports directly related to music projects. This work was predominantly carried out remotely.

the trips would be switched last minute between locales with the promise of going to Za'atari next time, instead.[91]

When I was able to get to Za'atari, control was exerted on my research activities and movements. In QS, for instance, I was often requested to stay in one caravan with other staff from Amman to assist with their work; sometimes if I went to attend a music session or talk to someone, a staff member would often come and fetch me back requesting 'help' with something. Interviewing Syrians who worked within QS was also complex. Due to corona, by 2021 I was further behind schedule in my fieldwork than I had hoped to be. As such, I devised a timetable with my supervisors at QS to agree on times I could visit the camp. They wanted precise details about who I was going to interview and when. I admit that was a problematic situation to be in not least in terms of the ability for Syrians to give informed consent. I was frequently interrupted during interviews: employees with whom I had travelled to the camp on that day would enter a caravan in mid-interview to ask things such as, 'How much longer do you need?', 'are you nearly done', or 'Can you finish soon? We want to get back to Amman early'.

The reasons for the control exerted by both QS and LWF could well be down the levels of mistrust identified by scholars between NGOs and researchers (Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007; Seeger 2008). Alternatively, control within NGOs may simply be a reflection of the broader atmosphere of control leveraged by the camp authorities. Indeed, Harrell-Bond and Voutira maintain that camps are 'big brother surveillance situations' in which 'one cannot see without being watched' (2007: 285). While certain aspects of my

[91] Admittedly, corona complicated travelling to Za'atari for large parts of 2020 and 2021 when policy in the camp prohibited non-residents from entering. It was possible, however, to travel to other parts of Jordan, such as Zarqa, during this time.

relationships with NGOs seemed to suggest an openness and enthusiasm towards research, the exertion of control often left me ironically feeling increasingly out of control of my own research; as Georgina Born intimates, what can seem open to observation in fieldwork, often becomes 'closed from view' (2005: 17).

The political barriers that close institutional practices from view inside a refugee camp can impact the ability of the ethnomusicologist to work in an applied capacity. Applied methodologies have become embedded in ethnomusicology following a long history of scholars working 'beyond the academy' for the betterment of the communities that they study (Sheehy 1992). For many, it is not a question of whether ethnomusicologists should intervene, but rather how (Pettan 2010: 178). Pettan identifies four types of applied ethnomusicology regularly employed by scholars: action, adjustment, administrative, and advocate (2008: 90). Pettan's Azra Project, for example, combined his research on the music of Bosnian refugees in Norway with action, including formal education for Bosnians and Norwegians on topics including music, exile, ethnomusicology, and Bosnian music, as well as music-making with the Azra Ensemble. For Pettan, these activities also had a broader advocative aim of maintaining public concern for the plight of refugees and ameliorating their perception within Norway (2010: 181-184). Seeger was both administrator and advocate for the Suyá in Brazil, helping to produce and distribute CDs of Suyá music, as well as using his collected ethnographic data as defense in legal cases brought against the Suyá by the Brazilian government (2008: 274; 2010: 118). In working in these roles, ethnomusicologists have come to see their roles as 'facilitators or catalysts' to a musical intervention rather than all-knowing leaders who 'bestow gifts' on those that know nothing (Impey 2002: 22; Tan 2015: 114, 127-129).

My work with QS and LWF in Za'atari likewise included elements of action, administration, and advocacy. A large proportion of my work in QS was administrative. While this was occasionally related to the organisations' music-based projects, I carried out writing, editing, reporting, and endless translation tasks for many of their other non-music programmes, some related to Za'atari, and some not. As an example, I was assigned a task by a manager in QS to write a final report for the European Union relating to a multi-million Euro project implemented by QS with youth throughout Jordan. (The project had ended before I even began working at QS). Armed with hundreds of quarterly reports from the three-year project, I was asked to complete the final reporting form provided by the funder just a few days before the stipulated deadline.

This tells us something interesting about the roles applied ethnomusicologists take on. Because of the broader reading and writing skills ethnomusicologists may have (perhaps particularly in the English language), they may well be called upon by partner organisations to utilise these skills in tasks that may have no direct relation to music itself. These extra roles may relate to the fact that research participants often choose the roles applied ethnomusicologists occupy in the field. Seeger, for example, outlines how the Suyá in Brazil defined a 'specific role' for him; he argues, 'they want me to work for them once they have decided what to do' (2008: 282). By fulfilling these roles, scholars may prevent what Seeger defines as the potential for researchers to be 'just as blinded by their need to complete their research plans as NGO project managers are by their need to successfully complete their projects' (ibid). If, in the much the same vein as Nancy Scheper-Hughes' call to a 'politically committed and morally engaged' militant anthropology (1995: 410), applied ethnomusicologists are genuinely committed to bettering the communities they work with, scholars should use their requisite skills in

appropriate ways according to the needs of a given community – even if the work connected to those skills seems unrelated to their own research projects. This may be the case especially in smaller NGOs where resources are limited.

In other instances, my work was related to music-projects. This was particularly the case in my action-based roles with my Syrians on the ground. On my visits with QS and LWF to Za'atari (as well as the LWF community centre in Zarqa) a major aspect of my work was supporting music classes. Occasionally, Walid, Tariq, and Abu Moath (the music teacher at LWF's centre in Zarqa) would ask me to 'cover' a class, either in part or in full. On these occasions, I would provide vocal or instrumental instruction on the org, and would usually teach the class a simple song (usually a nursery rhyme or popular sha'bī song, depending on age groups) or revise some of the basic music theory I knew they had already covered in the course (playing scales, identifying aspects of musical notation). Simple call and response clapping or singing exercises and games were also useful.

Perhaps one of my most significant roles was my work on the Dream Day project. In late 2020, a fellow consultant and friend at QS, Mike Nichonchuk, had been approached by an external funder to start up a music school in Za'atari. Nichonchuk is from the US and is the creator of Beyond Conflict's TFG. Although himself a competent musician, Nichonchuk suggested to QS that the project be taken forward with me at its helm, and him in an advisory role. Dream Day's funder (who had named the project himself) was a wealthy individual from the US who worked in celebrity PR. The project had already been through several preliminary versions with other organisations in Za'atari before Nichonchuk and I become involved. Over the course of late 2020 and early 2021, we held various meetings with the funder, his representative on the ground in

Jordan, and those in managerial or board positions to discuss the parameters of the project. The donor revealed he had an initial grant of $100,000-$150,000 and a total fund amount of up to $1million to follow. His vision was a high-tech performing arts space in Za'atari for children that 'focused on the power of Music and Art to transform young lives, heal trauma and help children learn more effectively by engaging their imaginations and senses more completely than through more conventional methods' (Dream Day 2024). The main music genre proposed seemed to relate to what could be broadly understood as Western popular music; there was lots of talk of bringing in drum kits, electric and bass guitars, and the relevant equipment.

In meetings and through the various draft proposals throughout 2020-2021, I attempted to emphasise how a more effective, sustainable, impactful, and sensitive approach to a music project in the camp would begin with assessing the (musical) needs of the Za'atari community and bringing the community itself into the discussion, design, and implementation process. In some ways, this was successful. Following Impey's work with the Dukuduku, I engaged in preliminary conversations with musicians and teachers from QS to determine desired foci for the project (Impey 2002: 18-21). I also drew on my own fieldwork and what I had learnt about the music and music-making activities in the camp. A new vision of Dream Day therefore emerged with a goal to 'foster and support a motivated and excited generation of young creators in Za'atari camp who can benefit from their creativity socially, psychologically and financially' (Questscope 2021b).

Dream Day had two main objectives. First, to support the livelihoods and career development of Syrian youth through the construction and development of the first specialised recording studio in Za'atari camp. Second, to promote and improve the social,

emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of Syrian youth by supporting and developing existing music programming (Questscope 2021b). Although these two objectives have clear music-specific goals, they also centre Syrians as leaders within their own community in such a way that focuses on sustainability and long-term nurturing of a musical community within the camp driven by youth trained in the requisite skills and capabilities. As stated in the project proposal: 'Fundamental to the development of the recording studio will be the training of refugee youth in recording techniques, building capacities of youth to run the studio sustainability from within Za'atari, thereby creating a community of professionally trained musicians and technicians in the camp' (Questscope 2021b). I also planned for all music programming to implemented and designed by Syrian facilitators, who would engage in the relevant musical or therapeutic trainings.

Other aspects of Dream Day were less successful. At the beginning of 2021, Nichonchuk and I were still working to finalise the Dream Day proposal. Mid-way through February of that year, I was given a day's notice to send the proposal to the donor. My managers at QS told me that a logframe was required. The logframe is a commonplace tool throughout humanitarian programming, particularly as part of funding applications (Krause 2014: 75-76). Since the late 1960s, it has become a standardised way for NGOs to record 'feasible goals and measurable outcomes' (Viterna 2016: 394). Scholars argue that the logframe clarifies the goals and responsibilities of an agency in a project, rationalises exchanges between donors and NGOs, establishes budgets, and allows managers to demonstrate the assumptions on which a project's success is built (Krause 2014: 87-91). But there has also been much criticism of the logframe. According to Monika Krause, the logframe is an 'imposition by donor agencies' that is associated

with ‘numbers, paperwork, and managerialism as opposed to values, service to those in need, and practical experience’ (Krause 2014: 88). Krause argues that the logframe focuses on single goals and narrow outcomes, and removes projects from the wider context and effects that other NGO work might be having (ibid: 88-89).

Using a logframe may present specific problems in terms of attempting to measure music and musical experiences in directly quantifiable terms. While this could be in some way rooted in wider debates about the supposed intangibility of music, complications may lie in the incongruities between approaches in international development and the arts world, as Lucy at The Catalyst Foundation:

> Many of the different INGOs (international NGOs) had some version of an arts program for children, which is great! But it’s very much completely separate from the art world […] It’s very much like ‘an international aid version of art’. Like, we’re going to get kits of crayon and paper and scissors, and there’s going to be a team of educational specialists who come up with a series of arts projects […] But I was particularly interested in seeing if there were different ways of kind of having the projects if possible be driven by artists who were envisioning how it would unfold, as opposed to aid workers. My only sense is that they really are very different worlds […] In the general sense, they are quite separate. And not just different sensibilities: it’s a whole different track. There are philanthropic organisations that focus on the arts, and there are ones that are more focused on aid in emergency situations. And they are really quite different. And the intersection, as far as I can see in just my own little piece of it, was very small. (Interview with the author, 22 January 2021)

The ‘different tracks’ of the arts world and the international aid world emerged in aspects of the Dream Day project like the logframe. I do not wish to suggest that organisations

like QS have anything but good intentions. However, it is the case that NGOs need and want facts and figures to demonstrate quantifiable impact for specific target groups to be accountable to their donors. As such, the Dream Day logframe ended up including outputs such as the numbers of music facilitators trained, the number of beneficiaries using the recording studio or attending sessions, the number of sessions carried out per week, or the number of instruments purchased (see Appendix II). Artists, philanthropic organisations, and ethnomusicologists, however, tend to be more concerned with the experiences of participants in a project and the wider holistic impact in qualitative terms. I suspect a logframe from these actors would look very different.

One example of how practitioners might approach measuring outputs and activities of a music programme in a development context is Caroline Lenette et al.'s 2016 study on the impact of participatory music on the mental health and wellbeing of asylum seekers in Australia. Their project presented 'an opportunity to develop alternative ways of exploring people's experiences of participatory arts programmes through "unobstrusive" research methods' and to 'document the ways that music participation may be able to support asylum seekers in Australian detention centres' (2016: 126). Through thematic analysis of coded written narrative reflections regarding the experiences and impacts of music activities with asylum seekers, Lennette et al. set the stage for alternative approaches to assessing the potential of music programming in contexts of humanitarianism, focusing instead on notions of agency, community, humanisation, and resilience among participants (ibid).

I was not able to employ these alternative measuring modes with Dream Day, mainly due to time constraints. But I did take a similar holistic approach in my work with LWF. In 2020, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer at LWF, Lina, approached me

for advice on how to incorporate aspects of mental health and wellbeing into evaluation tools for music projects. Previous tools used by LWF on their music programmes included questions such as: How well do you know the musical scale? How well do you know the maqāmāt? Do you know how to play the musical scale on the piano? Do you know how to change the sound on the org using different functions? Do you know how to sing different notes? And, how well do you know the different notes on the oud? (LWF, 2020b). Responses included 'I know', 'I somewhat know', 'I do not know' (LWF, 2020b).

Lina provided me with a copy of the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) as a guide for the kind of questions that might be asked on a new questionnaire. While still producing quantifiable outcomes in terms of 'scoring', WEMWBS was developed by Sarah Stewart-Brown in the 1990s and focuses on determining participants' reactions to a set of statements about their mental well-being (e.g., 'I've had energy to spare', 'I've been feeling good about myself', 'I've been feeling cheerful') (2008: 15). I thus combined WEMWBS' focus on how participants feel with the kind of narrative-based approach employed by Lenette et al. (2016). The survey did not include any scoring or scale, but rather free space for participants to write their own accounts. Pre-activity questions asked if and why participants listened to or performed music, and how participants feel before starting classes (e.g., tired, sad, anxious, or happy). Post-activity questions focused on how participants responded to classes, what aspects they did or did not like and why, and how they felt during and after the classes. All the tools were made available in both English and Arabic.

Lina and my manager Elisabeth responded positively to the new tools. But I later learnt that the Syrian music teachers had been less enthusiastic. Informal conversations

with Elisabeth revealed that the teachers had found the focus on mental health and wellbeing ‘too emotional’ or simply ‘not useful’. Admittedly, the tools were created without consultation or collaboration with Syrian teachers: corona restrictions were still in place at the time meaning communicating with Syrian volunteers in Za’atari and Zarqa was more difficult, and the nature of my personal relations with male Syrian teachers in LWF were somewhat more difficult due to gender and age differences.

On balance, there is value to narrative-based, qualitative approaches in terms of bridging the gap between the humanitarian world and the arts world. There is evidently a need to find more holistic and sensitive ways of approaching music in aid contexts that reflect the experiential processes and journeys of musical activity in conjunction with quantitative data collection and measuring tools. I do not believe that the success of such models is based on the models themselves, but rather a question of *how* tools are implemented and the extent to which relationships forged between different actors (consultants, academics, artists, NGO project managers, donors, community facilitators) affects the implementation process.

The same concerns can be considered in relation to Dream Day. Within Dream Day, there were key distinctions among parties as to what was expected of a music project in a context of international aid. The donors wanted to give as much as they could to help poor, struggling refugee children in camps with the gift of music. NGO project managers, keen to seize the available funds in an increasingly competitive and desperately underfunded sector, attended to these visions in part but also attempted to work in ways that highlighted how music can speak to the holistic wellbeing and empowerment of communities. In my role as an ethnomusicologist, I wanted to help develop a sensitive,

sustainable, and empowering music project for communities affected by the loss and trauma of conflict and displacement.

I cannot say for certain why, but during my time at QS the Dream Day project seemed to come to a standstill after the proposal submission. Regardless, my involvement with the project ended when my partnership with QS came to an end in the summer of 2021. My contract with LWF had also ended earlier that year, when the organisation told me it would not be renewing my contract (it had been renewed once previously). Both organisations cited lack of funding to their music programmes. I was an unpaid volunteer throughout the entirety of my time with both organisations and never requested or received payment or compensation for any of the work I carried out.

In June 2023, I learnt that the Dream Day project had eventually come to fruition in a collaboration between QS, The Dream Day Foundation, and the Playing for Change Foundation. The project was inaugurated in QS's centre in Za'atari on 25 September 2023 and was covered by several Western news outlets, including Forbes magazine under the headline 'World's Largest Syrian Refugee Camp Gets Music Program, Recording Studio' (Applefeld Olsen 2023). British singer-songwriter Ellie Goulding, dressed head to toe in white, was present to open the centre and was photographed hugging and embracing several children from the camp (Goulding 2023). I had always voiced my concerns about the inclusion of celebrity figures in the project, not least given the political and moral issues of 'celebrity humanitarianism'. Although some commentators argue that celebrities' involvement in humanitarian causes raises visibility and helps the public to see celebrities as 'legitimate educated and aware individuals' (Dwight 2016: 18), others maintain that celebrity humanitarianism reinforces existing hegemonies of 'us' versus 'them', and legitimises (and ultimately promotes) power inequalities, legacies of

colonialism and missionary impulse, and neoliberal capitalism (Müller 2013; Kapoor 2012; Mostafanezhad 2013).

Nevertheless, current coverage of the programme does suggest that aspects of the initial plan for Dream Day are being implemented. The Playing for Change Foundation website, for example, notes how the project offers 'complimentary music lessons across various instruments and disciplines, all facilitated by talented musicians from the Zaatari refugee community' (PfC 2024). They also state the launch of the 'camp's inaugural recording studio', which aims to 'open doors of opportunity for both present and budding musicians […] fostering a vibrant musical community in the heart of adversity' (ibid).

The Dream Day project and my relations with NGOs in Za'atari reveals a great deal about the nature of my place as a researcher and applied ethnomusicologist in a context of humanitarianism. I frequently found myself caught between a rock and a hard place, not only in navigating my own positionality between my different roles as an applied ethnomusicologist and my role as researcher, but also constantly negotiating the differing agendas in the international aid world. In Dream Day, I found I was not a 'facilitator' or 'catalyst' to musical action, but rather a kind of 'intermediary'. Being aware of the vast body of literature regarding cultural intermediaries, I am somewhat hesitant to use the term.[92] However, my inclination to make use of the term stems from Lucy at The Catalyst Foundation, who describes herself as an intermediary in her work with QS on their

[92] Since it was introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1984) the notion of cultural intermediaries has been extensively explored across a wide range of disciplines and socio-cultural and political contexts such as consumerism, cultural production, higher education, technology and the internet, cultural policy, diplomacy, medicine and health, advertising, and public relations. Jennifer Smith Maguire and Julian Matthew's *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader* (2014) provides a decent overview and history of the application of cultural intermediaries across disciplines and sectors.

creative writing projects. Her definition of an intermediary as a 'bridge' between actors in the distinctly different humanitarian and arts world resonates with my own experiences:

> I didn't want to be too 'micro-managey' [in my role funding programmes with QS]. But I also wanted to encourage interaction and communication between managers and the artists, the poets who are coming into work with the students.[93] Because it was two very different cultures [management and the artists], and I had people complaining at me from both sides […] saying, 'They don't understand what they're doing'. I was trying to [work] a little bit like intermediaries. It was less trying to micro-manage or impose my vision of the project onto QS but trying to help these two different groups of people with very different cultures – I mean they are all Syrian or Jordanian, so they are all Arabs, but the actual professional cultures they were from were so different. So, I was trying to be the bridge there. (Interview with the author, 22 January 2021)

My role as a bridge or intermediary happened on a number of levels: between myself as an NGO staff member and donors; between myself as a consultant and NGO project managers; and between myself as a researcher and Syrians. Intermediation also occurred on a personal level between my roles of the administrator, the advocate, the active 'intervener', and the researcher. Sometimes, bridging these different roles was a success. But by being in a position of perpetual negotiation and mediation on all sides, be it as a result of the wider system of control exerted in the camp, the infrastructure of donor-NGO relations, or my own relations within Za'atari, on several occasions I felt that, even

[93] The Catalyst Foundation funded creative writing and poetry activities in QS. Part of the project involved sponsoring well-known Arab poets providing workshops with students in Za'atari.

when I was actively attempting to do so, I was not disrupting or challenging negative representations.

Perhaps this in and of itself says a lot about what it means for ethnomusicologists to engage in critical acts of representation in contexts of forced displacement. While those like Seeger have suggested that ethnomusicologists might 'separate their research from their project-related activities' (2008: 282) in order to avoid similar pitfalls, my role as an intermediary in Za'atari demonstrates the extent to which applied methodologies are not separate to, but rather constitutive of, ethnomusicological practice (Bendrups 2015: 72; Impey 2002: 14; Seeger 2008: 283). This is particularly the case in humanitarian contexts like Za'atari. And it is in these ethnomusicological practices that researchers must assess the extent to which they too produce 'attendant phantoms' (Cabot 2016: 654).

Diktūrā Mahaba: Relationships Between Syrians and Academics

During the first few weeks of my trips to Za'atari with QS throughout the course of late 2019, I would often arrive as music lessons with participants were underway. I would always enter the music caravan as quietly as possible so as not to disturb the classes, but either Tariq or Walid would loudly announce my arrival to the students and urge them to welcome me with applause and the usual greetings. Frequently, the two musicians would strike up a song (or if already playing as part of the class, would change to another) into which they would weave epithets into the lyrics in my honour. Playing the org, the usual heavy sha'bī beats booming out of the large monitor, Walid and Tariq would sing out, '*Yā ḥabībti Mahaba'* (Oh, dearest Mahaba) or *'Yā ḥilweh diktūrā'* (Oh, beautiful doctor) as students and other onlookers clapped along. On the occasions I was spared this particular embarrassment, other young musicians from the camp, in particular a budding singer called Iyad, would grab the microphone upon seeing me and sing some of the

sha‘bī songs I had once told him I enjoyed, such as Hussein Al-Deek’s ‘Ma‘ik ‘Al-Mawt’ (With you until death). During these impromptu performances by Walid, Tariq, and Iyad, I felt intensely uncomfortable and self-conscious; the ultimate ‘outsider’ implicating the way in which the musical culture I was studying functions. However, I was also aware that the act of naming and referring to others in song is common across many Arab musical traditions (like wedding or celebration chants where singers name the bride and groom). What is more, the musicians were regularly using an Arabic equivalent of my name that had been assigned to me by colleagues; the meaning of Mahaba in Arabic is similar to the meaning of Graihagh in Manx Gaelic (loved one or loveable), and the vague translation was a useful tool to explain what my name meant.

Reflecting on this experience prompts a number of questions. To what extent does a researcher’s presence shape the musical culture they are studying? To what degree are researchers ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders’ in the culture they are studying? And how do insider/outsider dynamics impact relations with research participants? In the paragraphs that follow, I unpack these questions by exploring the factors that informed my positionality and identity in Za’atari, particularly in relation to my relations with Syrians, and how this impacts musical cultures in ghurba.

One long-held critique of ethnomusicological fieldwork is that it ‘rest[s] on asymmetries of power and therefore involve[s] the illegitimate use of the fieldworker’s authority’ (Todd-Titon 2008: 48). Asymmetries can often result in ambivalence on the part of participants, with researchers suspected as spies, journalists, or exploiters who may ‘steal’ community secrets or use data for dubious, undisclosed ends (Beaudry 2008: 221; Seeger 2008: 280; Nettl 2005: 198). In contexts of humanitarianism, conflict, and displacement, these asymmetries may be exacerbated, ‘sharpened’ or ‘more difficult to

resolve' (Pottier et al. 2011:8). Many communities who have been affected by conflict and displacement have been, and continue to be, exposed to extreme trauma and loss. According to Ulrike Krause, refugees may exhibit deep feelings of distrust or fear about taking part in research: displaced persons face 'restrictive, insecure, and uncertain circumstances', and 'may not be able to anticipate the consequences of their contribution to research projects which can frighten them and eventually thwart their participation' (2017: 12).

Feelings of distrust, fear or suspicion among refugee participants may be compounded if displaced persons associate the researcher directly with NGOs. This is especially the case if researchers avail of NGO transportation or are accompanied by bodyguards; research participants may view the researcher as an NGO worker, and thus feel they are either obliged to take part in research, that there will be repercussions of participating if authorities object to research, or scared about how their information will be used (Krause 2017: 4 and 10; Bloch 1999: 379; Vogler 2007: 57-58; Harrell-Bond and Voutira 2007: 287; Jacobsen and Landau 2003: 8).

When I first started working in the camp, my research did arouse some suspicions. I recall several instances, particularly with Syrian males, when they would solicit questions such as, 'But why Za'atari?' or 'What on earth could interest you about this place?'. The underlying implication was one of bewilderment that anyone could have interest in a place that held many negative connotations and associations for its residents, especially when that researcher could (theoretically) choose to do research anywhere. While I do not mean to suggest that relations between QS and Syrians inherently engender fear, certain incidents in my fieldwork suggest that Syrians had reservations about me due to my involvement with the NGO. For example, in many of the interviews I conducted, if

Syrians were discussing a particularly personal, intimate detail or relaying sensitive information, they would suddenly point to my mobile phone (which I used as a recording device) and enquire if anyone at QS would ever hear or listen to the recording. Although I assured them (as I had done before the interview began) that no one else other than myself would ever listen to the recording, the fact they stopped in their tracks (sometimes mid-sentence), demonstrates the extent to which my perceived affiliation with an organisation was affecting the way in which Syrians chose to interact with me, and what kinds of information they chose to share.

Equally, I found that Syrians were acutely knowledgeable about research ethics, informed consent, and interview practices: often, when I set forth the parameters of an interview by relaying information about recording, data protection, privacy, informed consent and so on, participants would wave their hands or roll their eyes, laughing as they told me they had heard 'this kind of stuff' multiple times before and that I should just 'get on with it'. Many even showed an active interest in my research, inviting me to certain events within QS or LWF like a visit from an ambassador or a cultural celebration they thought I would be interested in. Sometimes they would even phone me in advance to make sure I had secured transport to the camp with my colleagues from Amman. I was regularly sent videos and audio recordings of saharāt and musical gatherings that took place in private residences at night or the weekend, and was also played or sung different songs they thought I would like or be interested in.

Evidently, Syrians are not passive or helpless victims when it comes to research. But it is still important to consider how researchers prevent doing harm to those who have already been exposed to trauma and loss. As Ulrike Krause argues in relation to her research with refugees in Uganda: 'It is important to note that exposing them to a set of

questions without considering and determining the most sensitive and appropriate way of doing so may cause (further) harm and put participants in difficult situations' (Krause 2017: 4). What are some of the sensitive and appropriate approaches I undertook in Za'atari to ensure I did not frame refugees as victims but did not also cause (further) harm?

Throughout my research, it was essential to build relationships of trust, respect, and familiarity with Syrians, and to get to know the Syrians with whom I worked before inviting anyone to speak with me 'formally' in an interview. When I did invite Syrians to take part in an interview, they mostly took the form of informal open-ended conversations: free-flowing unstructured interviews with open-ended questions, encourage reflexivity, allow participants to express thoughts and feelings and to consider their answers, and enable the ethnographer to learn from the participant (O'Reilly 2012: 120). This flexible interview approach also meant that I could shape conversations in the most sensitive and appropriate way for each individual based on what I had come to learn about them through my extended time in the field interacting with them; I was able to tailor interview content and select the appropriate level of formality/informality according to different relationship dynamics, in terms of language, vocabulary, and tone. Informed consent was obtained from all participants who took part.

Other approaches taken by ethnomusicologists in the field to help sensitively negotiate relations with research participants is through applied methodologies. In taking on action, advocacy, and administrative roles, ethnomusicologists have attempted to redraw the boundaries of researcher positionality in the field. In her roles establishing a community archiving project to document and preserve traditions of the Dukuduku community Kwazulu Natal, Impey established discussion groups to identify community

ideas about cultural heritage and thus determine foci for the project, recruited and trained local students as researchers, and founded a computer laboratory to allow for continued storage of, and public access to, documentation (2002: 18-21). By recognising 'what people have, rather than what they lack', Impey claims that her approach 'seeks to overcome perceptions of deprivation and powerlessness, and encourages self-representation' (ibid: 18). Rebalancing relationships in this way can have a significant impact on the researcher's positionality in the field: their role becomes to 'listen and learn, and to function as a research partner, a facilitator or catalyst to change' (ibid).

My approach with Dream Day attempted to establish a structure that encouraged self-representation and empowerment of Syrians. The project emphasised the fundamental place of recruiting and training Syrians from Za'atari to work as sound and recording engineers, music teachers, and music therapy facilitators. What is more, the idea for a recording studio came from musicians in Za'atari: when I spoke to those like Walid and Tariq, they noted their desire to have their own recording facilities so that they could further their career options as musicians without the various financial or logistic barriers currently facing them as Syrians in a camp with restricted movement and financial stresses.

But working in an applied capacity did not always seek to rebalance relationships in the way I intended. In my work with LWF in their community centre in Zarqa, my role unearthed tensions with the Syrian music teacher, Abu Moath. Despite the fact that I had positioned myself in a facilitator role working collaboratively to develop the music curricula (as requested by LWF project managers), Abu Moath intimated to our colleagues that he felt I was telling him what to do and overstepping my boundaries. In many ways, it is understandable why Abu Moath may have felt this way. One instance

where I, too, was uncomfortable with my position in LWF was during corona when I created training videos for Syrian facilitators regarding online music instruction, as explored in Chapter 4. The videos were intended to be used as internal training materials, and I sent them to my managers under this premise for them to pass onto Syrian facilitators in Za'atari and Zarqa. However, one day, when I was finishing up a day at work in the QS offices, I checked my phone and saw that I had hundreds of notifications from my Syrian friends in Za'atari on Facebook. I was perplexed: I had not posted on Facebook in quite some time. I discovered that LWF had posted my training videos directly to their Facebook and YouTube pages. While the comments from my colleagues on the videos were overwhelmingly positive, I was upset. I had been clear with LWF that the videos were for internal use and for Syrian facilitators to do with as they see fit. I was worried about how the posting of the videos online would impact and reinforce the power dynamics between myself and Abu Moath. I spoke to my manager, Elisabeth, at length on the topic, and she admitted that there had been a breakdown in communication regarding the use of the videos but that it was a net positive because they were being enjoyed by Syrians and may help to do some good.

The incident with the training videos suggests that the relationship sustained between researchers and displaced communities are in some way affected by other NGO actors. While this was certainly the case at times, there may have been other factors at play that impacted my relations those like Abu Moath, namely: gender and age. Elisabeth attributes the problems between myself and Abu Moath not only to hierarchical imbalances in terms of my position as an 'outsider' supposedly 'intervening' in Abu Moath's work, but also to differences in gender and age in the wider LWF organisation:

> The people we work with on music, particularly in Zarqa and also maybe in Za'atari again, they are older men, men of middle age […] Older people are more set in their ways, and they are less likely to adapt and change. (Interview with the author, 8 October 2020)

There is a wider cultural ideology and 'moral code of conduct' in much of the Arab world to honour and respect elders (Elsaman and Arafa 2012: 22; Ibrahim and Bayen 2019: 181). Research by Suad Joseph demonstrates how this ideology is also gendered: she conceptualises patriarchy in the Arab context as the 'prioritising of the rights of males and elders (including elder women)' (1996: 14). With this in mind, it is entirely plausible that my position as a young researcher may have appeared as offensive to older Syrian facilitators who had been doing the job for far longer than I had. This was also compounded by my identity as a woman. At that time in LWF, the Syrian music facilitators in Zarqa and Za'atari were male, whereas most of the project managers and NGO employees were female. Indeed, Elisabeth, my colleague Bushra, and I often contemplated at length the extent to which cultural codes about young women occupying certain roles and the ways in which they interact with older men in the Arab world played into our challenges implementing change in music programmes.

Several scholars have examined the place of gender and patriarchy in researcher positionality in the field. In her fieldwork in village India in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Babiracki illustrates the place of 'gender identity', understood as 'the particular constructions of female, male, and all things in-between that one chooses and/or is assigned in particular situations') (2008: 172). This resulted in a 'gendered experience' of the musical cultures of Mundari and Nagpuri village life and her relationships therein (ibid: 174). For example, many events were gendered meaning she frequently was only able participate in the women's side of events (ibid: 173). These experiences, she argues,

often ‘conflicted’ with her ‘need to be a researcher’ (ibid). Veronica Doubleday’s (1988) experiences in Afghanistan with ethnomusicologist John Baily, however, demonstrate how her gender identity afforded her invaluable insight into the underexplored women’s musical culture of Herat, a culture that would have been impossible for her husband to participate in. In these two contexts, Babiracki and Doubleday show how gender identity can mark researchers as both outsiders and insiders to musical cultures.

My gender identity as a woman in Za’atari and in Jordan more broadly did affect my positionality and the way in which I came to understand Arab musical culture. Many events in the camp are gender segregated, meaning I was unable to attend and observe certain male practices; I recall an instance in Za’atari where I had wanted to observe a session with TFG but was told that it was a male-only event and that the men would feel ‘uncomfortable’ with my presence. When I did attend male-only events, this was mainly with younger boys during music classes. In addition, my identity as a woman was clearly contentious for older Syrian male facilitators in Zarqa owing to ideas they held about the place of women in positions of power over men. In these instances, I did not occupy what Babiracki identifies as the ‘ungendered researcher’ – the conceptualisation of the scholar as ‘gender neutral’ (2008: 169). Rather, it is clear that my gender was also entangled with age and notions of power (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014a: 404; Joseph 1996: 14).

In other regards, however, my position as a woman afforded me crucial insights into aspects of Za’atari’s music culture. While conducting fieldwork with QS, I spent considerable amounts of time with female volunteers within the organisation, and participating in women’s activities, such as Zumba. Being a woman enabled me to observe Zumba classes where women work out in safe women-only spaces without head coverings. Women from QS would also invite me to spend time with them during coffee

breaks or in their free time between sessions for their respective programmes. On several mid-morning coffee breaks, I would regularly find myself in one of QS's music caravans with Basma, Farah, and Rawan. Rawan is the youngest of the group, being in her early twenties. Farah and I are about the same age. Basma is in her forties and cuts a maternal figure for many people in the camp. Knowing that the caravan was empty between sessions for students, the three women would jump at the opportunity to use the space to sing songs, and avail of the microphone, org, and sound system in the caravan. They would also coax me into joining them. During these impromptu gatherings, the women would sing some of their favourite songs, and as a result I learnt a lot about the kinds of repertoire listened to and enjoyed by women in the camp, mostly the love songs and ballads of the shabābī genre. In the small, shaded caravan, curtain closed to block out the sun and preying eyes (or ears) of other volunteers in the centre, Basma, Farah and Rawan and I sang the melodies of female Arab stars such as Elissa, Sherine, or Nancy Ajram. These sessions were always full of laughter and silliness, with the women play fighting for turns with the microphone or attempting to convince me to sing something solo for them. Sometimes, when I was unable to make it to the camp for one reason or another, the women would record videos of them singing, and send them to me on WhatsApp (see figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1. Screenshot of video of women singing in Za'atari. (Video sent to author via WhatsApp, 19 August 2021).

On one occasion when the four of us were together, Farah began to sing her favourite song, Elissa's 'Maktūba Līk' (Written for You). Mid-way through her performance, she began to cry. She continued to sing even through her tears. I cannot remember whose hand reached out first, but she and I held hands tightly as she sang, reading the lyrics from her mobile phone. When she finished, she explained why the song had made her so emotional: it reminded her of life with her husband in Syria before the events and fleeing to Za'atari. Remembering those times, she revealed, was difficult because they made the reality of her life in the camp all the more upsetting. From this moment on, I came to understand Farah's deep discontent with her circumstances; she regularly speaks of her desire to leave Za'atari and travel to a place where she can sing and dance without the scrutiny of 'the donkeys' of Za'atari camp (interview with the author, 26 July 2021).

Language and appearance were also tied up in my positionality as a woman. Elisabeth is an anthropologist by training, and we often found ourselves examining our

experiences in Za'atari and Jordan in great detail. At one point, Elisabeth suggested that her outward appearance (petite, white, blonde hair) and lack of Arabic language skills afford her more mobility in the Za'atari environment (for instance, being able to attend male events). When I followed this up with her in our interview, Elisabeth explained how she uses her outsider role to her advantage as a project manager. 'I'm very outspoken and open about the fact that I'm from a different culture where we are quite direct', she says. 'It's mainly just about opening their minds on the fact that there is not just one way to do things' (interview with the author, 8 October 2020). But Elisabeth also stated that she thinks Syrians in Za'atari hold me 'to a higher standard' (meaning I cannot be as outspoken as she is) because I speak Arabic well and because of my appearance (interview with the author, 8 October 2020). Throughout my time in Jordan (and while travelling elsewhere across the Middle East), the majority of people automatically assumed that I was Arab, or at least in part Arab or Arab-American because of my dark hair, dark features, my knowledge of aspects of Arab culture, and my Arabic linguistic proficiency (I have a very stylistically Ammani accent). Both Syrians and NGO employees in Za'atari even referred to me as Mahaba, not Graihagh; in LWF, I was not referred to as Graihagh in any capacity. Some of the men in QS, known for being the jokers of the pack, would call me 'village' in English, based on how the English word is translated from the Arabic (*qariyeh*). There is no letter G in Arabic, and Arab speakers often transliterate it in Arabic as the letter *ghayn* (غ) or, less commonly, with the letter *qāf* (ق), the latter of which in the Dera'a and (male) Jordanian accents is pronounced as

a hard guttral ‘guh’ sound. [94] As such, spelling ‘Graihagh’ in Arabic using the letter qāf resembles the Arabic word for village (qariyeh) when spoken in certain accents.[95] For my male friends in QS, shouting out to me across the courtyard in English with ‘Yā, Village!’ was a great source of amusement. In addition, the acts of bestowing Arabic names in this way seemed to appear as markers of familiarity and assumed enmeshment with the local culture.

The role of ethnicity and language in researcher positionality has been widely interrogated in the anthropological and ethnomusicological literature. Shared ethnicity and language have traditionally been viewed as affording researchers with ‘indispensable’ insider views of a musical culture, not least in terms of communication and eliminating the need for translators, scholars contend that the equation of linguistic commonalities (O’Laoire 2003: 118; Strathern 1987: 17; Stock and Chou 2008: 118). However, in his studies of Tory Island off the West coast of Ireland, mainland Irish researcher O’Laoire contends that being cast as a ‘native insider’ during his research simply because he spoke the same language was a ‘classic instance of the assumption that a common ethnicity automatically confers equivalent status on all who share it’ (2003: 118). While I share the language of Levantine Arabic with Syrians in Za’atari, I did not share the distinct Dera’a dialect that many in camp speak on a daily basis. Attempting to get to grips with the Dera’a accent represented a real difficulty for me, and there were several instances where I had to ask research participants to repeat themselves, to explain something in a different way, or simply had to admit defeat. I was also sometimes simply

[94] Many women across the Levant, particularly those from higher social classes and in parts of Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, do not pronounce the ‘qaff’ letter, and instead use a glottal stop in its place.
[95] I choose to spell my name in Arabic using the letter ‘*ghayn’*.

too embarrassed or shy to reveal that I had not understood something, especially because it was expected by my interlocuters that I should speak and understand Arabic fluently. Having said this, Syrians in Za'atari are aware of the difficulties that the Dera'a accent presents for many Arabic speakers, thus adapting their accents for different individuals, repeating or explaining certain words, and even making jokes (frequently at my expense) which involved a play on Dera'a, standard Jordanian Arabic, or English words.

But to what extent is shared ethnicity sometimes 'presumed' rather than a 'fact'? It is vital to state that I do not intend to assume in any way that appearance or linguistic ability alone confers a kind of pseudo-ethnicity. It is the fact that I am white, Manx (from the Isle of Man) with English and German ancestry, and grew up speaking English. I have lived and studied throughout the UK, including Oxford, since leaving home at 18 and until I moved to Jordan for my doctoral fieldwork. Although I took lessons in the summer when I first moved to Amman, my fluency developed over time, particularly during corona when I remained in Jordan and was living with Arab speakers during lockdown.

There were instances where I occupied a decidedly 'foreign' identity. Many Syrians in Za'atari tend to superficially conflate any non-Arab ethnicity with being 'foreign' (*ajnābī*) be it American, European, British or whatever else. In certain contexts, I felt my foreignness keenly, like the times I chatted with some of the men in QS about the politics or asylum policies of Western states, and their use of phrases such as 'your country' or 'your government'. Additionally, I was frequently approached by Syrians in the hope that I would somehow be able to help or support them with regards to securing asylum in a Western state or securing citizenship (some men even joked about offering to marry me so that they could receive British citizenship). I was regularly asked to bring back gifts or certain items with me whenever I travelled to the UK. Having said that, I was also

designated as not *as* foreign as other non-Arabs who either did not work closely with or 'care about' refugees, or those who worked in Za'atari and did not speak Arabic (for example, donors or ambassadors who would visit the centre). I recall one Syrian in Za'atari commending me for not having left Jordan during corona: 'You didn't leave us behind'.

These experiences suggest that research participants choose how they perceive and identify researchers. Anthropologist A. Maria Kastrinou's experiences conducting fieldwork on the politics of marriage and identity among the Druze community in Syria may shed light on my positionality in Za'atari. Kastrinou notes how she was not seen by Druze research participants as wholly 'foreigner' because her Greek ancestry meant she 'looked similar' to those with whom she worked (2016: 27). By not appearing as physically 'European' to research participants, Kastrinou could neither be 'perceived to be enmeshed in the familiar (stereotypical) fabric of the Middle East', 'nor as a threatening, imposing or completely ignorant outsider (a European, an American, an Orientalist)' (ibid). In Za'atari, my appearance as well as linguistic proficiency and entrenchment in the local culture, similarly seemed to place me in a strange middle point somewhere between insider and outsider, somewhere between researcher and NGO worker, somewhere between facilitator and friend. These murky identities were not only chosen by me in an effort to address the multivalent imbalances that often exist between academics and displaced persons in the field, but also by Syrians themselves, and based on myriad interconnected factors such as age, gender, status, language, physical appearance, and political ideology.

Conclusions

The above discussion has revealed how manifold interconnected factors come together to dynamically shape relationships between Syrians, NGOs, and researchers in the displacement context. Within each set of the relationships in the Za'atari context, multiple layers of imbalances, hierarchies, identities, and social, political, and cultural experiences intermingle, sometimes contradicting and sometimes reinforcing one another. These layers demonstrate how music itself does not determine the extent to which musical endeavours are empowering for refugees, but rather the different interconnected identities and agendas at play between actors in the ghurba environment.

I want to return to the words of camp poet, Maher, as stated at the beginning of this chapter. Maher argues that as Syrian refugees, 'We are not able to speak for ourselves. The world speaks for us' (interview with the author, 11 July 2021). I do not believe that Maher is saying that Syrians are inherently unable to speak. But rather that certain infrastructures privilege some voices over others. In fact, Maher goes onto express the extent to which Syrians do have a voice, and the problem is not with speaking, but rather with how people choose to listen:

> Come and see what we have. We're talented people. That's why it's important that we express to you, and we express in a unique way, in a talented way, so that they understand who we are. […] Syrians are incredibly intelligent. The image [before the war] was one of an intelligent people. This war, it's hard. That why we have to show who we are, to let out our voice. (Interview with the author, 11 July 2021)

Maher's invitation is to listen to the talents and the musical cultures (whatever they may sound like) nurtured by Syrians in their effort to be heard. Repositioning ideas about

'speaking' to those of 'listening' may be significant for ethnographers and advocates alike in displacement contexts. The concept of 'deep listening' (Oliveros 2005) is interesting in this regard. In their reading of the concept of deep listening in contexts of international development, Impey and Mercédès Pavlicevic use deep listening to advocate for multi-dimensional and reflexive listening stances that 'suggest opportunities for shared and negotiated, multi-levelled reframing of people's experiences, addressing social structural dismantling as transacted by sustained conflict' (2013: 249). In this way, deep listening 'seeks to balance the familiar with the unfamiliar, holding tensions and frictions rather than "resolving" and creating "inauthentic" homogeneity, for the sake of imposed health and well-being currencies' (2013: 250).

I want to end this chapter with an example of how deep listening might be applied to participatory music projects in contexts of ghurba. In the summer of 2020, I was approached by my managers at LWF to put together a 'communications video' for LWF's funding efforts to secure funds for their music and arts programming in Za'atari. The initial proposal planned to create a short video that 'explores the musical culture and life of residents in Za'atari Refugee Camp, the benefits and effects of music for those who have been forcibly displaced, and how the Lutheran World Federation helps to support and implement musical activities for residents and children in Zaatari camp' (LWF 2020c). The objectives of the video were not only to showcase how the organisation supports musical activities in the camp in order to target potential funding opportunities, but also to show an 'alternative' perspective of refugee life (ibid). At that time, one of the Syrian volunteers within LWF, Adam, was a professional videographer and photographer. To a constant background of jokes from our colleagues that we should one day get married, we worked to create an eight-minute video about the importance of

music in Za'atari. From the outset, Adam and I agreed that we wanted to present multiple perspectives of music's role in the camp, including 'the very real struggles faced by the refugee community and the assistance required in order to support their livelihoods' as well as the 'joy, celebration, creativity and everyday life that [does] not negatively stereotype refugees' (LWF 2020c). We also decided that we would interview different individuals that play a part in Za'atari's musical culture: from Syrian volunteers to youth participant in music classes, NGO project managers, and ethnomusicologists.

The video opens with scenes of Za'atari camp, showing its bustling markets, busy streets, and children playing joyfully in the street, interjected with footage of LWF's Syrian music teacher in Za'atari, Haroon, playing the oud. Haroon, the main narrator in the video, explains the difficulties encountered by musicians in the initial period living in the camp: 'In the beginning, the music we played was mainly sad songs about our homeland, about our displacement, and about the difficulties of the situation we were in' (LWF Music Comms Video 2021).[96] But Haroon also guides us through other stories about music from students in LWF's music lessons (see Figure 6.2) and LWF staff members (including myself) (see Figure 6.3).

[96] The translations I provide here are my own directly from the spoken Arabic in the video. I do not use the translated subtitles included in the video as these bear a number of incongruencies between the spoken Arabic and the translated English. I note that I did not provide the initial subtitles for the video as here presented, but did provide LWF with corrections after having received the first draft video.



Figure 6.2. Screenshot of interview with music student (LWF Music Comms Video 2021).



Figure 6.3. Screenshot of interview with the author (LWF Music Comms Video 2021).

Interviews with these different actors exhibit the myriad ways different people in Za'atari use music: to teach Syrian youth new skills and present them with new opportunities, to heal trauma, to maintain a sense of community, or to positively impact global perspectives on displacement. For instance, in my interview, I state: 'So often we see stereotypical images of refugees […] but the reality is that refugees are human beings who sing and dance and play […] Wherever you turn in Za'atari, there is music and there is creativity. So, it's our job to harness that music and that creativity to help change lives for the better' (LWF Music Comms Video 2021).

Similarly, towards the end of the LWF video as his performance of the song ‘Biktub Ismik Yā Bilādī’ plays in the background, Haroon explains: ‘We are not just refugees in a camp. We are Syrians. Through music, we’ve achieved great things both inside and outside the camp. Music is a universal language: it can convey important messages and is a common language between different groups’ (LWF Music Comms Video 2021) (see Figure 6.4).

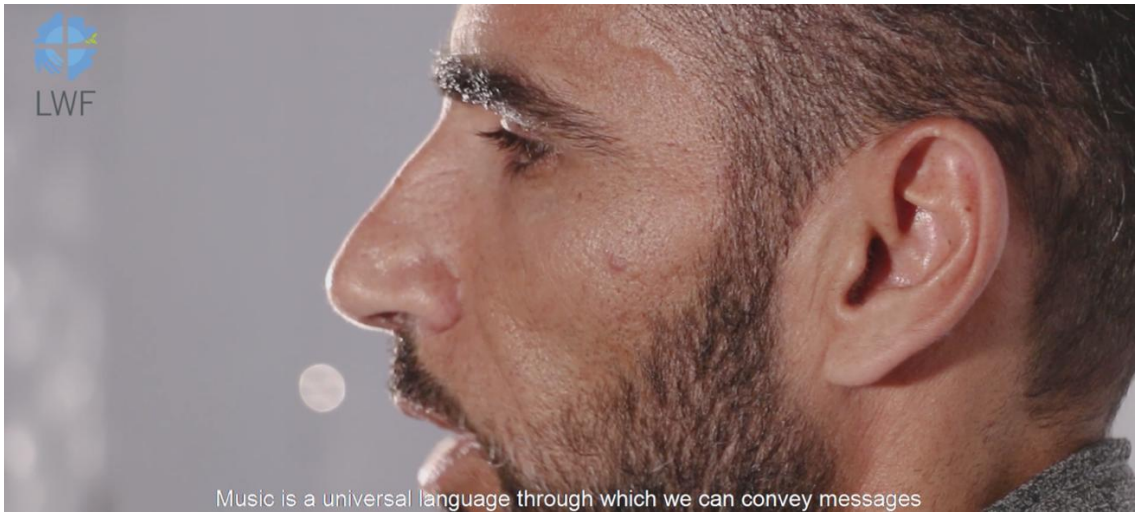


Figure 6.4. Screenshot of interview with Haroon (LWF Music Comms Video 2021).

Conclusions

Let's journey back to those events that took place in Za'atari Refugee Camp on World Refugee Day in June 2021, as explored in the opening to this thesis. On that day, Syrians in the camp performed a play that used the theme of music to tell stories about the reality of life for many Syrian refugees. The play and the wider events that took place that day evoked the complex entanglements of music in ghurba, revealing aspects such as celebration and creativity, but also grief and trauma, as well as the importance of customs and traditions (as in the performance of dabke and on instruments like the mijwiz and org), of gender (as in the role of Rawan as the nagging wife, or the separate roles of women and men in the day's celebrations), and of humanitarianism (as in the presence of NGOs and their involvement in the activities). In this thesis, I have attempted to dive into some of these entanglements in greater detail in order to tell the different stories about music and its roles in the context of displacement. In what follows, I summarise the key themes of these stories.

Musical Dynamism and Multivalency

Recent scholarship on contexts of forced displacement has sought to move beyond tropes of victimhood that perpetuate images of camps as places of passivity and stagnancy. Rather, scholars have demonstrated how music-making in communities affected by forced displacement may 'include those related to conflict and dispossession' but also of the 'celebrations, joy, leisure, and of the seemingly routine every-day and every-night' (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018). This thesis has extended this research to Za'atari by tracing the different aspects of the camp's musical culture. In doing so, I have revealed how

Za'atari's musical culture is in fact multivalent and complex. There are a whole host of music-making activities in Za'atari that constitute the camp not as a one-dimensional or passive space, but rather a dynamic one. Each layer of this culture involves different individuals or groups, takes place in different settings, according to different social codes, and uses music to different ends.

For instance, there are cultural events like weddings, as explored in Chapter 1, as well as the parties and gatherings I described in Chapter 2. Both women and men take part in these events, and often musical activities are shaped not only to suit different social or gender codes, but also according to the environment of ghurba. Within the camp there are also performances by male and female musicians. Male musicians perform at gatherings at work, or as hired musicians at weddings. Female musicians also perform and listen to music in their everyday lives: women compose songs that document their experiences in displacements and perform at family gatherings or segregated wedding celebrations. Listening constitutes yet another level of Za'atari's musical culture, with Syrians listening to different kinds of music in different spaces, be it at home or work, to engender different emotional states. In addition to the everyday music practices of Syrians, humanitarian actors implement music programmes in the camp that aim to support the Za'atari community in different ways. These activities, supported by Syrians who work as facilitators across projects, range from music therapy to instrumental instruction, as well as Zumba and capoeira.

The dynamism of Za'atari's musical culture is also demonstrated through the variety of musical genres performed and listened to across these different activities, including the meta-genres of contemporary Arab musical culture such as sha'bī, shabābī, ṭarab, khalījī, and al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh. For instance, male musicians perform ṭarab at

gatherings to engender emotional changes in their listeners. Others use sha'bī and shabābī genres in music classes with youth or during wedding celebrations. But Syrians also listen to genres outside of this culture, including Western classical music and categories of ṣawt, as in the description in Chapter 2 of Maryam listening to recordings of Beethoven and the call to prayer, the adhān.

Sometimes the story of Za'atari's musical culture is complex and murky. One pertinent example is the role of technology in music-making. During corona, Syrians in Za'atari faced several technological, socio-cultural, and political challenges. By exploring these challenges and the way in which Syrians approach them, through frameworks of flexibility and precarity (Steingo 2017; Awad and Tossell 2018), I have shown how Za'atari's cyberspace is a complex space in which flexibility is not inherent and rather emerges in different and unequal ways. The case study of music-making in Za'atari during corona sheds light on many of the binaries constructed in the relevant literature regarding the internet: online music-making in the camp shifts between the binaries of liberating/constraining, private/public, real/virtual, depending on factors such as who is using the technologies and why.

Negotiating and Mediating Displacement Through Music

Scholarship on forced displacement across disciplines demonstrates the ways in which refugees' lives are socially, politically, and culturally meaningful. The story of this dissertation is shaped by the people who turn to music as a way of negotiating and mediating their everyday experiences of ghurba. Their experiences are joyful, celebratory, nostalgic, difficult, messy, liberating, constraining, routine, spontaneous, challenging and everything in between.

Wedding customs and traditions, including wedding songs, dabke, zaffeh, and instruments like the mijwiz and tabl, enable Syrians to articulate, and construct different individual and communal ideas about identity, belonging, heritage (turāth), and the past. For example, the wedding song 'Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Ala Umo' is framed as a traditional Hawrani song that enables women in the camp to 'return to the past' but is also performed in other contexts like Palestine. Others contend what types of musical genres constitute turāth. Some choose not to engage in certain aspects of weddings either as a result of individual musical preferences or feelings of dissonance between the celebratory aspects of weddings and the challenges of the ghurba environment.

Beyond events like weddings, Syrians navigate their experiences of displacement through everyday performance and listening practices in the home or at work. In Chapter 2, I told the stories of three characters, Ayman, Iman, and Maryam, to demonstrate how acts of performing and listening in the camp engender processes of taghyīr al-jaww. Through Ayman's story, I showed how male professional musicians perform at events both inside and outside the camp in order to bring about change to personal, physical, social, and economic circumstances. This is also the case for women in the camp. For example, in Iman's story, I have illustrated how women sing and compose songs as a cathartic process in which they document and process the emotions and events of their lives. Syrian women also use music to negotiate gender identity and gender roles. Iman sings in order to reconfigure herself as 'ajnabīyeh', a category that allows her to challenge ambivalent views about women and acts of music-making and to envision a new set of life prospects for her and her family. Similarly, Maryam's act of listening to the adhān to bring about feelings akin to spirituality or meditation shows how women in Za'atari

approach ideologies concerning music, sound, religion, and gender, even in private, intimate listening acts.

Corona presented both a challenge and opportunity for Syrians in Za'atari. While I argued that corona exacerbated many of the precarities facing Syrians living in camps, it is also clear that Syrians exercised their creativity and agency during the pandemic by approaching online music-making in flexible ways. Musicians negotiated challenges by building their own recording studios, and Syrian facilitators prepared programme content using WhatsApp. In LWF, Syrian facilitators even used music to address wider public health concerns in the online series Ḥadīqa al-ma'lūmāt. However, my discussion also revealed that flexibility is not inherent because of precarity: flexibility emerges in different ways and according to different factors. Take, for instance, the fact that some individuals had access to technologies that others did not, or the case of Zumba whereby the internet is neither entirely liberating nor constraining for women in the camp.

Music as an Effective Humanitarian Tool in Ghurba Contexts

There are countless examples of music being harnessed for its therapeutic and socio-cultural capacities in contexts of humanitarianism and international development. The story is no different in Za'atari. In my case studies of music projects in the two organisations Questscope and the Lutheran World Federation, I show how music plays an effective role in humanitarian programming by providing four key functions: music for cultural education, music for social cohesion, music for MHPSS, and music for representation and empowerment.

Music lessons provide youth in the camp with a cultural education. This is crucial given the challenges facing young Syrians regarding enrolment in formal education. For Syrians, it is also paramount to help youth learn about their culture and heritage. As a

result, music education in Za'atari focuses on contemporary Arab genres, particularly al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh, which emerges as a musically and thematically appropriate genre for students: 'When we hear something about 'the homeland', we remember *our* homeland' (Nermeen, interview with the author, 5 July 2021).

Capoeira al-Shababi's work in Za'atari used a Brazilian cultural form to cultivate social cohesion and consolidation among the camp community. By enabling participants to work together to overcome difficulties, Capoeira al-Shababi nurture networks of support between Syrians, and thus help constitute the 'roda de Za'atari' – 'this small life within life itself' (Leandro, interview with the author, 13 November 2020). Zumba is focused on representation and empowerment. As in programming in other contexts of international development, gender equality and empowerment are major concerns for NGOs and Syrians in Za'atari. My analysis has shown that Zumba has an impact on female bodily autonomy, self-expression, freedom, and emotional release. I argued that Zumba bolsters feelings of being 'qadd ḥali' (up to it or capable), the boundaries of which are set by Syrian women themselves. Women note feeling stronger and more capable after taking part in Zumba to the extent they can re-negotiate their identity with their families and social circle. These functions may be crucial considering evidence that suggests Syrian women face significant gender-based challenges in Za'atari.

However, my analysis of Zumba and capoeira also complicates the view that humanitarian programming attends to female empowerment and representations. For instance, what is potentially liberating in Zumba or capoeira in 'Western' contexts may in fact be constraining within patriarchal systems such as Za'atari and other locales in Jordan. A similar story can be told about women practicing Zumba during corona: where technologies and online media have been said to be liberating for women in other

contexts, in Za'atari the prospect of online activities presented challenges for female instructors wishing to preserve their modesty and the experiences of freedom and trust engendered through Zumba. Conversely, what is constraining in Western contexts (such as ideologies of thinness and body dissatisfaction) may be liberating for women in Za'atari who see physiological changes as an important facet of exercising bodily autonomy within the socio-cultural and political restrictions of the camp. In addition, while online activities during corona at first appeared to be constraining for women, instructors claim that online activities ended up being beneficial in reaching women who are not usually able to attend Zumba classes in person.

Another major function of music programming in Za'atari is MHPSS. In Questscope's Music Therapy project, drumming, singing, improvisation, and guided meditation exercises aim to have therapeutic benefits such as facilitating and accelerating healing, encouraging personal agency and leadership skills, and cultivating positive behavioural changes among youth who have suffered trauma as a result of conflict and ghurba. While Syrian music therapy facilitators note the several positive outcomes of the Music Therapy project, my fieldwork surfaced many of the pitfalls that can arise in using music as a tool for MHPSS such as lack of clear boundaries about what constitutes 'music therapy', the roles that music therapy facilitators in Za'atari are expected to play, and the role of external project managers or consultants in determining the direction and content of a project on the ground.

A major theme that emerged in my analysis was the suitability of certain genres for music programming in camps. The existing literature has explored the use of Western classical music in projects in contexts of humanitarianism and development. Many in Za'atari agree that Western classical music projects like the 2014 Music for Life Initiative

are less effective because music is not a 'universal language'. Others, including NGO donors and managers as well as Syrian music facilitators, point out that the boundaries between 'Western' and 'Eastern' musics may, in reality, be unhelpful. Compositions by camp musicians like 'Ḥabaytak Yā Waṭani', for instance, make use of musical features that musicians claim are shared between cultures and includes lyrics that can be sung in either Arabic or English.

Neither is al-musiqa al-ajnabīyeh a dividing phenomenon in Zumba and capoeira. In Zumba, instructors in Za'atari explain how 'foreign music' provides the nighmāt (tones, sounds, melodies) that engender positive emotions, motivate women to dance, and release negative energy; the focus is on how the music makes women *feel*. Capoeira al-Shababi worked to illuminate the resonances between the culture of capoeira and the context of Za'atari in order to make the project seem less 'foreign' or intimidating; project leaders highlighted capoeira's slave history and its links with Muslim African slaves to Brazil.

In assessing the functions of music programming in Za'atari, I argued that music is an effective and integral facet of programming in ghurba contexts for attending to the multiple concerns and needs of the camp community. However, as I explained in Chapter 5, it is not only important to consider what musical genre is being employed, but also *who* implements a project, *how* they implement it, and *why*. By interrogating the relationships (between donors and NGOs, and between NGO project managers or project leaders and Syrians) and political infrastructures (such as the system of incentive-based volunteering and methodologies such as training of trainings) that exist in the camp environment, I have suggested that the most sustainable and effective programmes are those in which project leaders, NGO project managers, and donors alike work to support long-term, bottom-up, participatory approaches to programming in which Syrians are

empowered as active agents of change capable of shaping their own musical cultures from within.

Methodological Approaches to a Study of Forced Displacement

Throughout this thesis, I have drawn on a wide-range of literatures from the migration studies in order to reveal the most interesting insights about life in ghurba contexts like Za'atari. I have also been concerned with privileging and amplifying the voices and experiences of Syrians who live in Za'atari. As such, I have foregrounded the oral histories, testimonies, interviews, conversations, interactions, anecdotes, and stories of Syrians and other actors in Za'atari to guide me through the different thematic areas of this project.

To evoke the experience of Syrians in the camp, I have called on methodologies such as narrative ethnographic techniques. In Chapter 2, I crafted three characters who act as hakawātīyeh in order to give a sense of locally lived life but also to bring the feelings, experiences, thoughts and beliefs of different individuals in Za'atari into focus. In doing so, I illustrated how the techniques of storytelling and antropoesía are effective forms of ethnography in research pertaining to contexts of conflict and displacement, rendering intelligible previously hidden experiences, attending to the ethical responsibility to move a reader, and shedding light on the 'intersubjectivities' and power disparities between researchers and their participants in contexts of displacement (Kusserow 2017; Rosaldo 2013).

Attending to power imbalances and hierarchies is a fundamental concern in any research, but particularly so in research with communities who have been affected by the trauma and loss of conflict and displacement. Taking an applied ethnomusicological stance during my research constituted one way of addressing these concerns. Like other

scholars working beyond the academy, I fulfilled a variety of administrative and action-based roles in my work with Questscope and the Lutheran World Federation to address asymmetries of power, overcome powerlessness, and encourage the empowerment of Syrians living in the camp.

But these approaches were not without complications. There were myriad tensions between me and my partner organisations throughout my fieldwork, including control over my research activities and differing approaches between the 'arts world' and the 'humanitarian world'. My role as an applied ethnomusicologist working with NGOs also impacted my relationships with Syrians. Accordingly, I have concluded that as much as ethnomusicologists may attempt to occupy roles such as 'facilitator' and 'catalyst' rather than an 'all-knowing leader', factors like gender and age, as well as political infrastructures and competing agendas undoubtedly impact the researcher's positionality and her ability to use music for beneficial ends in her research context. I have therefore come to understand my role in Za'atari not as a facilitator or catalyst, but rather as an intermediary bridging the gaps between different worlds and different actors.

The Future: For Research and for Syrians

As this thesis comes to its close, there are a few topics that require further consideration. One such topic is the place of categories of sound and religious practices like the adhān or tajwīd. There appears to be significant scope to investigate the 'sonic map' of the adhān (Bakri et al. 2019) in Za'atari and refugee contexts throughout Jordan. It would be interesting to build on emerging scholarship by those like Al-Bakri (2019) and Scott (2021) to understand how the adhān is experienced by a wider range of Syrians in Za'atari. What is the significance of the fact that Za'atari is not part of the unification of the adhān in Jordan? How do men experience the adhān in Za'atari? How does this

compare to other refugee contexts, such as Syrians living in host communities in Jordan, or Syrian communities elsewhere in the diaspora?

Admittedly, owing to the restrictions I faced doing research, there are areas of interest that I simply was not able to investigate myself, such as weddings and nighttime activities such as saharāt that take place in private residences. Additionally, aspects such as gender, age, and perceived identity meant that some male music-making was closed off to me. As such, future research might ask questions such as: What music activities take place at night in camps? How do these activities impact ideas about musical and social life in displacement? What music-making activities do men take part in? What do those activities reveal about notions and perspectives on music, gender, and Islam? How is music-making embedded in male domestic life? What insights about Za'atari would other researchers from different backgrounds uncover? Some of these questions would build on a growing body of research into male livelihoods and masculinities in Za'atari camp (Al-Hourani et al. 2019a; Lewis 2020). Gender is evidently a rich area of potential research. It would be interesting to assess in more detail the entanglement of narratives of liberation or constraint with the activities of Arab and Muslim women in Za'atari, including positionalities of female researchers, as in recent work by Susanna Hast (2021) who explores frameworks of body, movement, and participatory research in relation to capoeira in Za'atari.

Perhaps most importantly, I wish to consider the future of those with whom this project has been concerned over the last five or so years. Many of my interviews with Syrians in Za'atari concluded with talk of the future. In my conversation with camp poet (and my never-ending source of wisdom), Maher, he revealed that he never thinks about his own future ('my life is done and over', he says) only the future of his children

(interview with the author, 11 July 2021). But in doing so, he claims that he is reluctant to teach them about the power of the arts in realising their future: 'I mean, I give my children all my energy. But equally I don't tell them that the arts will change their lives or that it will help them to get to a better place in life. That's a personal choice I make [being a poet], but I don't want to promise them something I don't actually believe. That wouldn't be humane' (ibid).

Is Maher right? Can music or the arts have any impact on the long-term futures of Za'atari's youth? Is music research like this project worth anything? Or is the situation simply too bleak?

The final stages of writing this thesis came at a crucial moment in the history of the region. March 2024 marked thirteen years since the peaceful demonstrations in Dera'a in 2011 that were met with violence and the onset of years of destruction and suffering for millions of Syrians. In March 2024, with Bashar Al-Assad still in power and a host of international actors still fighting within Syria's borders, Syrians once again took to the streets across the country to demand their freedom and justice. But as the conflict now enters its fourteenth year, the loss continues, with regime-led bombings and human rights violations, attacks from Israel in the Golan Heights, Damascus, and Aleppo, and the continued deterioration of the country's humanitarian situation. Circumstances for those Syrians living in ghurba elsewhere in the region are also increasingly uncertain. Funds and international support for places like Za'atari are rapidly diminishing. In April 2024, Syrians in Za'atari watched as missiles fired by Iran travelled across the night sky towards the illegal Israeli occupation in Palestine in retaliation for attacks on the Iranian embassy in Damascus. The significance of the ongoing occupation and genocide in Palestine and

Israel's escalation of attacks in Lebanon can also not be overstated, not least in terms of the potential for conflict to escalate across the region.

Reflecting on these events, one might be forgiven for agreeing with Maher about the place of the arts in his children's future and for feeling equally ambivalent about the potential for a musical study like this one to have any impact on the lives of those who have been affected (and continue to be affected) by war, injustice, and inequality.

But I am inclined not to lose hope. In his resignation letter of 28 October 2023 to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Craig Mokhiber, the former Director of the New York office, condemned the UN for abandoning its core principles of international law, human rights, and integrity, and for failing in its duty to prevent the Palestinian genocide (Mokhiber 2023). But Mokhiber is adamant that failure is no reason to withdraw. He argues: 'We will all be accountable for where we stood at this crucial moment in history. Let us stand on the side of justice' (ibid: 2 and 4).

No single academic thesis or music project is enough in and of itself to restore or resolve the injustice incurred by Palestinians, Syrians, or any other displaced community. But I do believe that it is vital that we each make our own sensitive, humane, and politically committed contributions to the cause of justice. This thesis is one such contribution. Admittedly, the path to justice is not always easy. But it is perhaps by traversing that path, replete with challenges, risks, complexities, and slipperiness, that will reveal the just, equal, and free world that we seek. Indeed, as Maher himself reminds us:

> There's a saying: a ship that doesn't leave her harbour will never be destroyed. But the thing is, a ship is meant to sail. She's meant to leave her berth. She has to go and see the dangers of the sea. That's her job!

She has to get stronger and see more of life […] And that's us! If we had just stayed in Syria, maybe we wouldn't have faced any challenges. But the challenges that we have faced, well, they've taught us a lesson […] Maybe this thing had to happen so that we could know who we really are. So that I could know: who am I? (Interview with the author, 11 July 2021)

Appendix I

Song Texts

CHAPTER 1

Ḥabāytak, Yā Waṭani

Music and Lyrics: 'Walid'
Year: 2021

I love you, I love you	*Ḥabaytak, ḥabaytak*
My country, I love you	*Yā waṭani, ḥabaytak*
From my heart, I miss your love	*Min qalbi mishtāq al-mughram*
From my longing, I called you	*Min shawqi nadaytak*
You are my first love	*Inta a'shqi al-awwal*
And no matter how hard you try…	*A'nak ma biṭḥawal…*
To keep me away	*Muhma biāmi a'nak ṭawil*
I will return to your house	*Ana raja' a' baytak*
I sang to your dirt (earth)	*La trābak ghaneyt*
And I called your name	*Wa bi ismak nadayt*
I sang to your eyes	*La a'yūnak ghaneyt*
I never forgot you	*badan ma nsītak*

Yā Tuffaḥna Yā Ḥamil 'Al Umo

Trad.
Lyrics from Zanar Ensemble Recording, 2021[97]

Oh, our olives, carried by our mother,	*Yā zaytūna yā ḥamil 'al umo*
Oh, our olives, oh my dear mother	*Yā zaytūna yā mīmti yamma*
The ones who love us come to our homes,	*Yīju 'ad-dūrna wili yiḥibūna*
They come to our homes, Welcome,	*Yīju 'ad-dūrna*
welcome	*Yā hala wa ḥay Allah*
Oh, our apples, carried by our mother	*Yā tuffaḥna yā ḥamil 'al umo*
Oh, our apples, oh my dear mother	*Yā tuffaḥna yā mīmti yamma*

[97] https://youtu.be/TjqxJHSfcls?si=IhoIzAyzXOr6P8h6 (Accessed 30 March 2024).

The ones who love us come to our weddings	*Yīju ʻal farāḥna wili yiḥibūna*
They come to our weddings	*Yīju ʻal farāḥna*
Welcome, welcome	*Yā hala wa ḥay Allah*
Oh, our dandelions, carried by our mother	*Yā sirīsna yā ḥamil ʻala umo*
Oh, our dandelions, oh my dear mother	*Yā sirīsna yā mīmti yamma*
Celebrate our groom with *zaffeh*, those of you who love us,	*Zaffo ʻal ʻarīsna Wili yiḥubuna*
Celebrate with *zaffeh*,	*Zaffo ʻal ʻarīsna*
Welcome, welcome	*Yā hala wa ḥay Allah*
We are, oh we are, the dandelion leaves	*Aḥna yā aḥna yā waraq as-sirīs*
How beautiful is the *ḥinna* on our groom's hands	*Yā maḥla ḥinna ʻala īdayn ʻarīs*
We are, oh we are, the apple leaves	*Aḥna yā aḥna yā waraq al-tuffaḥ*

CHAPTER 2

Sīd al-ḥabayib (Master of my love)

Artist: Shadia
Music: Fathi Qoura
Lyrics: Munir Murad
Year: 1962

You are the master of my love	*Sīd al-ḥabayib*
You are my most beloved	*Yā ḍanāyā yā inta*
You are all I hope and wish for	*Wa kull amilī wa manāyā yā inta*
The most beautiful song in a beautiful world	*Yā aḥla ghanweh fi dunyā ḥilweh*
You sang to me and told me you are with me	*Ghanayt wa qālat maʻyeh*
You are the master of my love	*Inta sīd al-ḥabāyi*
You are my most beloved	*Yā ḍanāyā yā inta*
From your smile and from your words	*Min ibtisāmak wa min kalāmak*
My eyes rejoice	*Farḥa ʻayni*
My heart takes me to you when you are in my arms and wrapped around me	*Qalbi biākhudni wa inta fi ḥudni wa yalif bīya*
You call to me, 'Oh mother, my dear mother'	*Atqūl ʻyā māmā, yā qalb māmā'*
I will never get enough of these words	*Mā ashbʻash ʻumri min al-kilma dīa*
You are the master of my love	*Sīd al-ḥabayib*
You are my most beloved	*Yā ḍanāyā yā inta*

When you are gone from me, my soul calls to you	*An ghaybit ʻani yā ḥeta mini rūḥi tanādīlak*
I forget all my concerns when I call out to you and carry you in my arms	*Wa binsa hamī sāʻa mā ismi ʻalayk ashīlak*
Even if they take away the light in my eyes	*Law yerḥamūni min nūr ʻayūni*
Wherever you are, I will still see you	*Maṭraḥ mā tabqā ashūf wa jīlak*
You are the master of my love	*Sīd al-ḥabayib*
You are my most beloved	*Yā ḍanāyā yā inta*

Uktubna yā zamān (Oh time, write to us)

Music and Lyrics: ʻBasmaʼ
Year: 2022

Oh time, write to us	*Uktubna yā zamān*
With letters on the wall	*Bi ḥarūf aʻla al-ḥayṭan*
No matter how many days pass	*Mahuma murat ayām*
The words will never be erased	*Ma bitimḥi hal kalām*
We built this place	*Asasna hal makān*
Our camp	*Bi mukhayimna ili kān*
Made of caravans	*Al-lawḥ min al-karavān*
Bringing together the sweetest youth	*Bitjmaʻ aḥla shubān*
We designed this place	*Ṣamumna hal makān*
With love and dedication	*Bi ḥub wa kul itqān*
To build a bouquet of love	*L-insāʻd bāqet ḥub*
Holding together our boys and girls	*Fiha bināt wa ṣubiān*
IT, art, sports	*Ḥāsūb wa fan wa riādeh*
Complete our happiness	*Ḥatta itkamal al-saʻdeh*
Music and photography	*Musīqa dalīl taṣwīr*
To educate so many	*L-anaʻlam nās ktīr*
English and Trainings	*Ingalīzi wa tadrībāt*
Add to all our gatherings	*Bitkamal aʻna al-jamaʻāt*
Don’t forget the most beautiful programmes	*Ma ninsa aḥla barāmij*
MeWe and Mentoring	*MeWe wa al-ṣadīq*
Through these we support our children	*Mindaʻim fihum utfāl*
All the youth and teenagers	*Shabāb wa murāhiqīn*
We still have morning coffee	*Qahwitna as-ṣubuḥ bitbaqa*
All of us together	*Maʻ baʻḍ mitjamaʻīn*

The sound of our laughter rises	*Ḍaḥkāt as-ṣawṭ ibta‘la*
And we are happy	*Wa aḥna mabsūtīn*
Silver and black colours	*Fuḍi wa aswad hal lawn*
Emerge from afar	*Min ba‘īd aḥna shayfīn*
Cars begin to appear	*Sīyarāt a‘m tudkhul*
And our loved ones greet us	*Wa balāqi hal ghālīn*
Ashraf, Ziad and Hanan	*Ashraf wa Ziad wa Hanan*
Ahmed and Turkman	*Ahmad wa Turkman*
When they visit us	*Lama biṭla‘u a‘layna*
They light up this place	*Bizīnu hal makān*
Questscope, don’t forget us	*Questscope la tinsīna*
But if we are gone, remember us	*Wa an ghayibna itdhakurīna*
In our embrace you raised us	*Biḥuḍnak aḥna trubīna*
Think of us as your children	*Awlādna bas ā‘taburīna*
Oh time, write to us	*Uktubna yā zamān*
With letters on the wall	*Bi ḥarūf a‘la al-ḥayṭan*
No matter how many days pass	*Mahuma murat ayām*
The words will never be erased	*Mā bitimḥi hal kalam*

CHAPTER 3

Abu Hayba

Music and Lyrics: Hisham Alhadrab
Year: 2020

Oh dear, oh Abu Hayba	*Yā ghazāl, yā Abu Hayba*
Welcome!	*Marḥabtayn wa marḥaba*
You’ve visited us and have honoured us!	*Zurtūnā wa sharaftūnā*
Welcome!	*Ahlān wa sahlān!*
Your presence lights us up!	*Nawartūnā!*
Oh, ba!	*Uff yābā!*

CHAPTER 4

Eid

Music and Lyrics: 'Walid'
Year: 2020

Please excuse me	*Lakin 'afwān minak lakin*
But can't you see the sadness of all places?	*Mu shāyif ḥuzun al-amākin?*
The wound living inside us	*Al-juruḥ jūwāna sākin*
When everyone is far from their families	*Wa kul waḥad a'm ahilo ba'īd*
How will you come to us	*Kīf bidak tījī tāwfīna*
And light up our nights	*Wa tuḍwī biqarbak līālīna*
The joy inside of us is dead	*Wa al-farḥa maqtūleh fīna*
Tell me, do you like it, Eid?	*Quli bitruḍāha yā Eid?*

Washing Hands Song

Music and Lyrics: 'Haroon'
Year: 2020

Wash, wash your hands, dear one	*Ghasil, ghasil, yā ḥilū īdayk*
It will give you hygiene and health	*Al-naẓafeh wa ṣaḥa bia'tīk*
Wash, wash your hands, dear one	*Ghasil, ghasil, yā ḥilū īdayk*
We must wash our hands	*Lāzim minghasil īd*
With soap and water	*Bel ṣabūn wa may*
It will protect you from the germs	*Min al-jarathīm taḥmīk*
After this step, keep repeating	*Ba'd al-khutweh wallah na'īd*
So that you and I will be happy	*A'shān ana wa inta sa'īd*
We'll greet each other with signals	*Mansalim bi ishārāt*
And say the nicest phrases	*Neḥki ajmāl a'bāreh*
Protect me, oh neighbour	*Taḥmīni yā jār!*

Appendix II

Logframe: Dream Day Activities and Outputs

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	OUTPUT	TARGET GROUP
Obj. 1 To support the financial sustainability and career development of Syrian youth	**1.1.** Construction of recording studio in Questscope Youth Centre **1.2.** Recruitment and training of sound/recording engineers **1.3.** Recording, production and distribution activities of music recordings and goods **1.4.** Recording of training videos for Youth Center distance learning activities	**1.1.** 1 caravan in the QS centre fully equipped as a recording studio for use by Za'atari community **1.2.** 2 certified facilitators trained in sound and recording engineering skills **1.3.** # of products created/sold/ distributed **1.4.** # of beneficiaries and facilitators using recording studio	Syrian youth beneficiaries aged 10-30 Facilitators and teachers from both music and other activities carrying out distance learning
Obj. 2 To promote and improve the social, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being of Syrian youth	**1.1.** Purchase of new instruments • Percussion: daff/riq • Orgs • Qanun • Ney flutes • Violins • Ouds • Melodicas **1.2.** Distribution of instruments to beneficiaries' homes for distance learning **1.3.** Recruitment of external trainers to provide training	**1.1.** # of daff/# of riq/# of orgs/# of qanun/# of oud/ # of ney/# of melodicas purchased **1.2.** # of beneficiaries receiving instruments in their homes **1.3.** # of external trainers providing # of weeks/months of training activities **1.4.** # of Syrian volunteers trained as music therapy facilitators	Professional musicians living in Jordan Syrian youth aged 10-30

	and workshops for Syrian facilitators and youth **1.4.** Training of Syrian volunteers in music therapy activities **1.5.** Recruitment of new Syrian volunteers for future music activities	**1.5.** # of Syrian volunteers trained as music facilitators with # of weeks/months of training	

Appendix III

Glossary

ʻAjam	one of the maqāmāt (melodic modes) of Arabic music. Most similar to major scale in Western music	عجم
ʻalm imraʼa tʼalim mujtimaʼha	‘Teach a woman, and she teaches society’	علم امراة تعلم مجتمعها
ʻayib	shame, fault, disgrace, flaw, weakness	عيب
ʻurus,ʼa ʻrās	wedding	عرس، أعراس
adhān	call to prayer	أذان
ahlān wa sahlān	welcome	أهلا وسهلا
ajnābī, ajnābīyeh	foreign, strange, from the outside	اجنابي، اجنابية
ajnābī, ajnābīyeh, ajānib	foreigner(s)	اجنابي، اجنابية، اجانب
al-Aragoz	traditional form of hand puppetry using a portable theatre and glove dolls	الازجوز
Alhamdulillah	Thank God	الحمدالله
al-jaysh al-sūrī al-ḥurr	Free Syrian Army	الجيش السوري الحر
al-mahd al-thawra	The cradle of the revolution	المهد الثورة
al-mufawwaḍīyeh	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (lit. commission, delegation)	المفوضية
al-musīqa al-ajnabīyeh	foreign music	الموسيقى الأجنبية
al-musīqa al-gharbīyeh	Western music	الموسيقى الغربية
al-musīqa al-klasīkīyeh	classical music	الموسيقى الكلاسيكية
al-musīqa al-shaʻbīyeh	commercial genre of shaʼbī music	الموسيقى الشعبية

al-musīqa al-sharqīyeh	Eastern music	الموسيقى الشرقية
al-musīqa al-ṣīnīyeh	Chinese music	الموسيقى الصينية
al-musīqa al-waṭanīyeh	nationalistic music	الموسيقى الوطنية
al-nās reja‘t la-wurra	people journeyed back, people remembered the past (lit. the people went back/returned)	الناس رجعت لوراء
Allah!	Allah! Also used as an emotive phrase to signify praise, contentment, surprise etc.	الله!
Allahu Akbar	God is great	الله أكبر
ana qadd ḥali	I’m up to it, I’m capable (lit. I am up to myself)	انا قد حالي
atabaque	Afro-Brazilian hand drum	اتابك
atabūki	play on words *atabaque* and *abūki* (meaning your father)	اتبوكي
awwal	leader of the dabke line (lit. the first)	اول
ayūb	rhythm of Egyptian origin used in folk music, with a short, cyclical feel	ايوب
Aylūl al-Aswad	Black September, also known as the Jordanian Civil War between the Jordanian military and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation between 1970 and 1971	أيلول الأسود
aywa	Oh, yes! (e.g., expression of praise or pleasure with something)	أيوا
ba‘ṭi jismi ḥaqqo	I honour my body (lit. I give my body its worth)	بعطي جسمي حقه
balad, bilād	territory, state, nation, country, town, city, village, muncipality	بلد، بلاد
banadūra	tomato	بندورة
baṭāṭa	potato	بطاطا
Bayāti	name of maqam (melodic mode) in Arabic music similar to the natural minor scale	بياتي

bayt, bayūt	house, home	بيت، بيوت
berimbau	traditional Angolan single-stringed bow attached to a gourd resonator	بيريمباو
Bismillah	In the name of God	بسم الله
dabke	a genre of dance music popular throughout the Levant region	دبكة
daf	frame drum	دف
ḍayf, ḍayūf	guest, visitor, caller	ضيف، ضيوف
ḍayfa	guesthood, hospitality	ضيافة
dār, diyār	house, home	دار، ديار
darbūkkeh	hand drum	دربوكة
deq	ancient practice of permanent facial tattoos	دق
dibl	wedding bands, rings	دبل
diktūr, diktūrā, dikātir	doctor, professor, physician	دكتور، دكتورة
diwān, dawāwīn	gathering place, hall, court, tribunal, assembly	ديوان، دواوين
fāḍī, fāḍīyeh	free, available, empty	فاضي، فاضية
farāq	separation, distance, difference	فراق
fez	felt hat with tassel	فز
firqeh	Arab music ensemble (lit. troop, team, squad, ensemble, party, a portion of something)	فرقة
galabiyeh	long shirt or dress	جلابية
ghasīl al-ʻarīs	bathing of the groom and his friends as part of wedding celebrations	غسيل العريس
ghurba	Psychological or emotional state in displacement/exile, when one is far away or separated from home/family/friends, a sense of loss or loneliness (lit. strangeness, foreignness, weirdness, alienation, estrangement, or homesickness)	غربة
ḥabībī, ḥabībtī, ḥabāyibī	my dear, my love	حبيبي حبايبي، حبيبتي ،

ḥadīqa al-ma'lūmāt	Online video series created by LWF (lit. The Information Garden)	حديقة الحيوانات
ḥakawātī, ḥakawātīyeh	storyteller(s)	حكواتي، حكواتية
ḥalāl	allowed, permissible, permitted, admissible, lawful, legal, legitimate	حلال
ḥammām	Turkish bath	حمّام
ḥarām	forbidden, unlawful, illegitimate, inviolable, taboo	حرام
heyk ad-dinyā	'that's life', akin to 'c'est la vie'	هيك الدنيا
hijra	migration, displacement, emigration, exile, departure, exit	هجرة
ḥiluw, ḥilweh	beautiful, nice, charming, pleasant, sweet	حلو، حلوة
ḥinna	dying of hands using henna, part of wedding celebrations for the bridal party	حناء
hitaf	forceful male sound made as a sign of welcome, usually in genre of sha'bī music	هتف
ikhtiṣār, ikhtiṣārāt	shortcut(s)	اختصار، اختصارات
ikh, ikhwān	brother(s), company	اخوان
Inshallah	God willing	ان شاء الله
jaww	ambience, air, atmosphere, feeling, mood, scenery, status quo, style, vibe, weather	جوّ
kāfr, kāfreh	disbeliever, infidel, ingrate, unbeliever	كافر، كافرة
karam	generosity	كرم
khabi qarshak al-abyaḍ lil-youmak al-aswad	save your money for a rainy day (lit. hide your white money for your black day)	خبي قرشك الأبيض ليومك الاسود
khalāṣ	stop, that's enough, it's done, it's over	خلاص
khalījī	genre of music originating in the Gulf (lit. from/of the Gulf)	خليجي
khalīnī aḥlīlik quṣa	allow me to tell you a story (lit. leave me to tell you a story)	خليني احكيلك قصة

khayāl al-ẓill	shadow play, shadow puppeteers	خيال الظلّ
Khaymeh, khiyām	tent(s), tarpaulin(s), pavilion(s), encampment(s)	خيمة، جيام
khiyār	cucumber	خيار
kibbeh	fried balls of ground meat and bulgur wheat, popular in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan	كبّة
knāfeh	unripe cheese baked with shredded phyllo dough	كنافة
kuffīyeh	square cotton scarf in white, red, or black, often seen as symbol of Bedouin culture and/or Palestinian solidarity	كوفّية
Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh'	'There is no might and no power except by God'	ا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِٱللَّهِ
lāji', lāji'eh, lāji'yīn	refugee	لاجئة ، لاجئين , لاجئ
laymūn	lemon	ليمون
līra	pound, denomination of currency used in Syria and Lebanon	ليرة
ma'lish	don't worry, take it easy, calm down, chill, it's nothing	معلش
Mahaba	female name meaning loveable/beloved	محبّة
mahr	dowry	مهر
majnūneh	lit. crazy, mad, insane. Also, local name for bougainvillea plant throughout Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine	مجنونة
makān, amākin	place(s)	مكان، اماكن
makdūs	small aubergines stuffed with walnuts and chillies, preserved in olive oil	مكدوس
maqām, maqāmāt	system of melodic modes in Arabic music	مقام، مقامات
maqsūm	Arabic rhythm found predominantly in *sha'bī, ṭarab*, and nationalistic genres	مقسوم

maskīn, maskīneh, masākīn	poor, destitute, wretched, forlorn, miserable, hard done by (as in, 'poor guys', said to inspire pity)	مسكين، مسكينة، مساكين
Mashallah	expression of gratitude for a blessing or recognition of divine intervention (lit. God has willed it)	ما شاء الله
mawwāl	vocal improvisation	موّال
mdāras, mdāraseh, mdārasīn	educated, schooled	مدرسين
mensaf	traditional Jordanian dish of lamb, rice, and fermented yoghurt. Can refer to any rice and meat dish in parts of Syria	منسف
metteh	herbal drink from Argentina popular throughout Syria and Lebanon in the winter	متّة
mijwiz	high-pitched, double-piped single-reed instrument commonly played at weddings and celebrations	مجوز
min 'ashar al-qawm 'arbayīn yawm ṣar minhum	belief that spending time with different people makes you more like them (lit. 'if you spend 40 days with a people, you will become one of them')	من عاشر القوم أربعين يوما صار منهم
misbaḥa	Islamic prayer beads	مسبحة
mish fāḍī yifraḥ	Not in the mood/unable to celebrate (lit. not free to be cheerful)	مش فاضي يفرح
mizmār	single or double reed wind instrument. Also called mijwiz.	مزمار
mnitfarraj 'ala ḥalna	looking inward, reflecting, contemplating (lit. we watch/observe ourselves)	منتفرّج على حالنا
mulūkhīya	popular dish across MENA made from jute leaves, often served with chicken and rice	ملوخية
mua'llim, muallimīn	teacher, educator, tutor, educator, master, sir, someone who is respected	معلّم، معلمين
muazzin, muazzinīn	person(s) who calls the prayer	مؤذّن، مؤذّنين

mukhayyim, mukhayyimāt	camp, encampment	مخيم، مخيمات
muḥadath	new, modernised, modern, contemporary, recent. Also, traditional or cultural more broadly (i.e., something that relates to culture and society)	محدث
musīqa	music	موسيقى
muṭrib, muṭribīn	singer, vocalist	مطرب، مطربين
muwashshaḥ, muwashshaḥāt	Andalusian form based on complex, irregular time signatures	موشح، موشحات
nafsīyeh ta'bāneh	to be struggling with mental health, experiencing mental health challenges, or to not be a in a great place psychologically speaking (lit. a tired mind)	نفسيتها تعبانة
Nakba	ethnic cleansing of Palestine and expulsion of Palestinian society by Zionist forces in 1948 (lit. catastrophe, disaster)	نكبة
ney	end-blown flute	ناي
nighmeh, nighmāt)	tone, sound, song, melody, note	نغمة، نغمات
nuzuḥ	displacement (of people)	نزح
org	electronic keyboard	أورغ/أورج
oud	short-neck fretless lute	عود
pandeiro	hand frame drum popular in Brazil	بنديره
qānūn	string box zither	قانون
qariyeh	village	قرية
qaṭāyif	small deep-fried pancakes filled with cream or walnuts, commonly eaten during the holy month of Ramadan	قطايف
quṣa, quṣaṣ	story, tale, relation, plot	قصة، قصص
raï	Algerian folk music that emerged in 1970s as a pop genre, and a hybrid fusion genre by 1990s	راي

rakweh	pot for making coffee	ركوة
raqṣ sharqī	belly dancing (lit. Eastern dancing)	رقص شرقي
raqm, arqām	number, numeral, figure, rate	رقم، أرقام
raqm al-mufawwaḍīyeh	official identification number given to Syrians registered in Za'atari by camp authorities (literally meaning commission/delegate number)	رقم المفوضية
riqq	handheld frame drum	رقّ
rubābā	long necked bowed instrument popular throughout the Arab world, particularly in Bedouin cultures	ربابا
ṣabāḥ an-naq	morning of nagging (from *ṣabāḥ al-kheir,* meaning good morning or lit. morning of goodness)	صباح النق
sadīq al-kutub	friend of books	صديق الكتب
sātir	barrier, rampart, block, screen, facade, covering, or embankment. Often used to protect or conceal something or in military purposes. In Za'atari, refers to the unofficial ways Syrians come and go from the camp (i.e., crossing the fencing without formal permissions)	ساتر
saudade	Portuguese term for emotional state of longing or yearning akin to nostalgia	سوداد
ṣawt, aṣwāt	sound(s), voice(s)	صوت، أصوات
servīs	white coloured taxis in Amman with shared service and fixed routes	سرڤيس
sha'bī	popular, folkloristic	شعبي
shabābī	youth	شبابي
shamāgh	traditional headdress worn by men across the Middle East	شماغ
shurish	traditional female clothing consisting of long black velvet dress with gold embroidery from Dera'a in Syria	شرش
shway, shway	slowly, gradually, step by step (singular *shway* meaning 'bit')	شوي شوي

sujūd	act of prostration during prayer in Islam	سجود
tabbūleh	Levantine salad made from parsley, tomatoes, mint, onion, bulgar wheat and a dressing	تبولة
ṭabl baladi	large double-sided drum	طبل بلدي
ṭabla	drum	طبلة
tafarraja	to look at, to observe, to watch	تَفَرَّجَ
taghyīr; yighyīr (v)	changing, altering; to change, to alter	تَغَيُّر
taghyīr al-jaww	lit. changing the atmosphere/weather/scenery/energy. Used to describe processes of emotional or physical changes in circumstances, moods, place, energy etc.	تَغَيُّرالجوّ
tajwīd	pronunciation and recitation of the Qur'an	تجويد
takht	classical Arab chamber ensemble	تخت
taqsīm, taqāsīm	instrumental improvisation	تقسيم، تقاسيم
tatrīz	traditional cross-stitch style of embroidery originating from Palestine	تتريز
tayib	good, nice, fine, charming, pleasant, tasty. Also used to affirm (i.e., OK)	طيّب
thaqāfeh	culture	ثقافة
thawb	ankle-length robe with long sleeves	ثوب
thikl, thikleh	one bereaved of a child	ثكل، ثكلة
tuffaḥ	apple	تفاح
ṭulba	ceremony where the groom formally asks the bride's male relatives for her hand in marriage	طلبة
turāth	heritage	تراث
turāth klasīki	classical heritage	تراث كلسيكي

turāth sha'bī	popular heritage	تراث شعبي
turāth surrīyeh	Syrian heritage	تراث سورّية
waḥdat al-thaqāfeh	cultural unity	وحدة الثقافة
wasaṭ al-balad	Downtown Amman (lit. middle of the town)	وسط البلد
waṣla, waṣlāt	suite of songs or set of pieces	وصلة
waṭan, awṭān	homeland, nation, home, native country, fatherland, motherland	وطن، اوطان
yā Allah!	Oh, God! Oh, Allah!	يا الله!
yā ḥarām	poor thing (expression of compassion)	يا حرام
yā layli	lit. Oh, my night. Used rhetorically in song, often in the mawwāl to express emotions	يا ليلي
yā rab	Oh, God!	يا رب
yā salām!	lit. Oh, peace. Expression to convey amazement, appreciation, astonishment, interest. Often used sarcastically.	يا سلام
yā shāṭrīn!	Oh, clever ones!	يا شطرين
yalla	let's go, come on, hurry up, get ready, do it. Can also be used to say goodbye	يلا
yamma!	Lit. my mother but used as an expression of amazement, pleasure, satisfaction but also of fear, worry, and even mockery	يمّا
yiḥtifil	to celebrate, to party	يحتفل
zaatar	oregano and thyme herb mix	زعتر
zaffeh	wedding procession including musicians and dancers	زفّة
zaffet al-'arīs	procession of the groom to take the bride	زفّة العريس
zaghārīt/zaghārīd	ululations	زغاريت، زغاريد
zaman	time, age	زمن

zaytūn	olives	زيتون
ẓulūm	unfair, unjust, darkness, iniquity, oppressive	ظلوم

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Interviews

‘Abeer’. Interview with the author. 26 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Abu Moath’. Interview with the author. 22 December 2020. Zarqa, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Amar’. Interview with the author. 16 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Amina’. Interview with the author. 11 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

———. Interview with the author. 12 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Anas’. Interview with the author. 4 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Basma’. Interview with the author. 6 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

———. Interview with the author. 7 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Batool’. Interview with the author. 27 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Deema’. Interview with the author. 16 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Diana’. Interview with the author. 4 June 2021. Beirut, Lebanon. (Arabic/English)

‘Elisabeth’. Interview with the author. 8 October 2020. Amman, Jordan. (English)

‘Farah’. Interview with the author. 26 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Fia’. Interview with the author. 20 August 2020. Online. (English)

‘Ghaith’. Interview with the author. 12 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Hussein’. Interview with the author. 19 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Jawad’. Interview with the author. 4 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Lama’. Interview with the author. 30 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Leandro’. Interview with the author. 13 November 2021. Online. (Arabic/English)

‘Lucy’. Interview with the author. 22 January 2021. Online. (English)

‘Maher’. Interview with the author. 11 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Nermeen’. Interview with the author. 5 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Oday’. Interview with the author. 1 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Orlando’. Interview with the author. 19 August 2020. Amman, Jordan. (Arabic/English)

‘Rawan’. Interview with the author. 7 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Robert’. Interview with the author. 3 February 2021. Online. (Arabic/English)

‘Sajida’. Interview with the author. 30 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Shams’. Interview with the author. 9 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Walid’. Interview with the author. 21 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Wasim’. Interview with the author. 27 July 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

‘Wedad’. Interview with the author. 5 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan. (Arabic)

Photographs

‘A gathering in QS, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 26 February 2020. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘A music caravan in QS, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 14 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Al-Jazeera broadcasting ‘Khalīk Bel Bayt by Fairuz’. Photo by the author. 15 March 2020. Amman, Jordan.

‘Audience members, World Refugee Day’. Photo by the author. 22 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Caravan in Za’atari painted to denote use as mosque’. Photo by the author. 1 February 2019. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘COVID-19 testing and quarantine facility in Za’atari’. Photo by MSF. https://www.msf.org/msf-responds-coronavirus-jordan%E2%80%99s-largest-refugee-camp (Accessed 13 April 2021).

‘Dabke performance, World Refugee Day’. Photo by the author. 22 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Dancing during a gathering, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 26 February 2020. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Domestic residences, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 1 February 2019. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Donkey drawn cart, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 22 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Drumming/leadership exercises at Dayr Yusuf in Irbid’. 5 November 2020. Irbid, Jordan.

‘Fayez leading the dabke, World Refugee Day’. Photo by the author. 22 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Female youth playing capoeira instruments in LWF’s Peace Oasis’. Photo by Emily Massel for Lutheran World Federation. https://lutheranworld.org/news/bring-out-bravery-everyone ‘Bring out the bravery in everyone’. https://lutheranworld.org/news/bring-out-bravery-everyone (Accessed 26 March 2024).

‘Garden in private residence, Za’atari’. Sent to author via WhatsApp. 28 August 2021.

‘Ḥakawātī performing for LWF, World Mental Health Day, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 21 October 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Inside a grocery shop, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 23 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Inside music caravan in LWF ‘Peace Oasis’, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 26 January 2020. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Inside second music caravan in QS, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 27 February 2020. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Kharub Street, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 23 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Laith and Walid in character for World Refugee Day play’. Photo by the author. 22 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Meditation exercise using ocean drum in Music Therapy session in QS with male youth’. Photo by the author. 29 August 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Mijwiz performer, World Refugee Day’. Photo by the author. 22 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Mural in Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 1 February 2019. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Music class in QS, Za’atari with male youth’. Photo by the author. 11 November 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Music for Life concert in QS, Za’atari’. Photo by Questscope. https://www.questscope.org/en/blog/music-zaatari-building-community-creating-opportunity (Accessed 26 March 2014).

‘Music therapy session with female youth led by Ibrahim in Dayr Yusuf Community Centre in Irbid’. Photo by the author. 5 November 2020. Irbid, Jordan.

‘Painted caravans in Za’atari’. Photo by the author. Za’atari’. 1 February 2019. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Public bus delivering bread during the lockdown in Mecca Street, Amman’. Photo by the author. 24 March 2020. Amman, Jordan.

‘QS music therapy facilitators preparing for online implementation in QS music caravan, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 14 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Questscope Youth Centre, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 6 October 2021 Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Seating area, World Refugee Day’. Photo by the author. 22 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Shams Elysée, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 1 February 2019. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Shop in downtown Amman’. Photo by the author. 15 September 2021. Amman, Jordan.

‘Sports field in Lutheran World Federation ‘Peace Oasis’, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 21 October 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Stage area, World Refugee Day’. Photo by the author. 22 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Tariq and the author in QS music caravan, Za’atari’. Photo by the author. 28 October 2019. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘View of Za’atari camp from top of waste-water plant’. Photo by the author. 1 February 2019. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Walid’. 2020. Recording studio built in private residence in Za’atari’. Sent to author via WhatsApp. 14 May.

‘Whiteboard in QS music caravan showing the opening melody to ‘Mawṭinī’ written out in solfège using Arabic script’. Photo by the author. 22 January 2020. Za’atari, Jordan.

‘Whiteboard in QS Music Therapy caravan spelling out names of instruments in Arabic and English, and the lyrics to ‘Abu Hayba’’. Photo by the author. 14 June 2021. Za’atari, Jordan.

Personal Communications

Ebbini, Noor and Asil Abu Summaqa. Communication with the author via WhatsApp. 5 April 2024.

'Walid'. Communication with the author via WhatsApp. 14 May 2020.

'Wasim'. Communication with the author via WhatsApp. 19 August 2021.

Maps

'Refugee Camps in Jordan'. UNHCR. 31 October 2023. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/104697 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

'Map of districts in the governorate of Dera'a'. OCHA Humanitarian Altas. 2017. https://humanitarianatlas.org/syria/assets/files/SYRIA_HUMANITARIAN_ATLAS_JANUARY_2017.pdf (Accessed 26 March 2024).

'Map of Jordan'. United Nations Geospatial. 2018. https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/jordan (Accessed 10 January 2024).

'Map of Syria'. OCHA Humanitarian Altas. 2017. https://humanitarianatlas.org/syria/assets/files/SYRIA_HUMANITARIAN_ATLAS_JANUARY_2017.pdf (Accessed 26 March 2024).

'Map of Zaatari Refugee Camp: Infrastructure and Facilities'. UNHCR. May 2019. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/69690 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Primary Data and Reports (Published)

UNDP and Tkiyet Um Ali. 2020. 'COVID-19 Impact on Most Vulnerable Households in Jordan: Overview of Findings from a Rapid Impact Assessment'. UNDP: Amman.

UNFPA. 2021. ‘Country Programme Evaluation 2018-2022’. https://jordan.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/vacancies/tor_cpe_jordan_co_final_without_annexes.pdf (Accessed 26 March 2024).

UNHCR. 2020a. ’10 Facts about Refugees’. https://www.unhcr.org/neu/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2021/08/10-facts-about-refugees-2021-ENG_Vi2.pdf (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2022. ‘Incentive-Based Volunteering in Zaatari Camp: Standard Operating Procedures’. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/102643 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2023a. ‘Azraq and Za’atari Camps Dashboard’. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/102686 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2023b. ‘Operational Update – Syria’. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/105611 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2023c. ‘Impact on Funding Costs on Operations in the Mena Region’. https://reporting.unhcr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa-impact-funding-cuts-operations (Accessed 4 February 2024).

———. 2024b. ‘Operational Data Portal: Jordan’. https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/jor (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2024c. ‘Operational Data Portal: Syria Regional Refugee Response’. https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2024d. ‘Operational Data Portal: Zaatari Refugee Camp’. https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/53 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2024e. ‘Syria Situation’. https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/syria-situation (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2024f. ‘Zaatari Camp Fact Sheet’. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/106925 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

UNICEF. 2019. ‘A Qualitative Study on the Underlying Social Norms and Economic Causes that Lead to Child Marriage in Jordan’. Retrieved from www.unicef.org/jordan/media/1796/file/Jordan-Reports.pdf (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Unpublished Data and Reports

LWF (Lutheran World Federation). 2020a. ‘Online Music Plan: Peace Oasis Za’atari’. Internal proposal prepared by Graihagh Cordwell on behalf of LWF. Unpublished.

———. 2020b. ‘Pre, Post Test Music’. Internal LWF Questionnaire. Unpublished.

———. 2020c. ‘Communications Video: Music. Storyline/Brainstorming’. Internal concept note prepared by Graihagh Cordwell on behalf of LWF. Unpublished.

Questscope. 2021a. ‘Catalyst Project: Music Therapy and Creative Writing’. Internal report prepared by Questscope for The Catalyst Foundation. Unpublished.

———. 2021b. ‘The Dream Day Performing Arts School, Za’atari Refugee Camp, Jordan’. Proposal prepared by Graihagh Cordwell on behalf of Questscope for private Dream Day donors. Unpublished.

———. 2022. ‘Innovation Center: A Space for Change’. Internal concept note prepared by Questscope for UNFPA. Unpublished.

Treaties & Conventions

United Nations. 1951. ‘Convention relating to the Status of Refugees ‘(189 U.N.T.S. 15. Entered into force April 22, 1954.

Videos

LWF (Lutheran World Federation). 2020. ‘Pre-recorded online music theory class for LWF explaining tuning for the oud’. YouTube. https://youtu.be/ly7aqHqVrRU (Accessed 18 December 2022).

———. 2020. ‘Washing Hands’ episode of LWF’s ‘Al-ḥadīqa al-ma‘lūmāt’ series. YouTube. https://youtu.be/rco8rp7lcNA (Accessed 1 October 2022).

———. 2020. Pre-recorded listening activity for LWF with two instructors playing the oud and ṭabla. YouTube. https://youtu.be/EESbNEX43iM (Accessed 18 December 2022).

———. 2021. ‘Music Comms Video’. Unpublished.

‘Video of women singing in Za’atari’. Sent to author via WhatsApp. 19 August 2021.

‘Woman singing in Za’atari’. Sent to author via WhatsApp. 31 January 2022.

Bushar Al-Najar. 2021. ‘يا زيتونا يا حامل على امه اغنية لفرقة زنار من بلدة عصيرة الشمالية’ (*Yā zaytūna yā ḥamil a‘l umo: Ferqat Zubar min baldat Asira ash-Shamaliya*/Oh, our olives, carried by our mother: Zunbar Ensemble from Asira ash-Shamaliya). YouTube. https://youtu.be/TjqxJHSfcls?si=H4NbC-qmK-y8y7fB (Accessed 30 March 2024).

Cordwell, Graihagh. 2020. ‘Training video produced by the author for LWF. 2 June. Also available on YouTube at https://youtu.be/wMPakqNF2M4 (Accessed 18 December 2022).

Secondary Sources

Abbas, Rasha. 2016. *Die Erindung der duetschen (The Invention of German Grammar).* Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag GmbH.

———. 2017. *The Gist of It (Mulakhaṣ mā jarā).* Milan: Manshurat Al-Mutawassi.

Abd al-Karim, Ahmad, Jean-Marie Dentzer, Mishil Issa, And Salim al-Issa. 1988. *Hauran: recherches archeologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l'époque hellénistique et romaine.* Damascus: Al-Ahli.

Abdulbaki, Hasan. 2020. 'Using culture-specific music therapy to manage the therapy deficit of post-traumatic stress disorder and associated mental health conditions in Syrian refugee host environments'. *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy* 12(2): 211-223.

Abu Hader, Mohamed. 1979. ' الأغنية الشعبية في حوران (The popular song in Hawran)'. *Literary Criticism (Mawqif al-Adbi)* 99: 112-116.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1993. *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 1998. *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 2008. 'Writing Against Culture'. In *The Cultural Geography Reader*, edited by Tim Oakes and Patricia Lynn Price, 62-71. London: Routledge.

———. 2013. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

———. 2016 [1986]. *Veiled sentiments: Honor and poetry in a Bedouin society*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Abu-Odeh, Adnan. 1999. *Jordanians, Palestinians, & the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Abulhawa, Susan. 2006. *Mornings in Jenin.* London: Bloomsbury.

———. 2015. *The Blue Between Sky and Water.* London: Bloomsbury Circus.

———. 2020. *Against the Loveless World*. London: Bloomsbury.

Aburamadan, R., Trillo, C., & Makore, B.C. 2020. 'Designing refugees' camps: temporary emergency solutions, or contemporary paradigms of incomplete urban citizenship? Insights from Al Za'atari'. *City, Territory and Architecture* 7(1): 1-12.

Abu Rashid, Hana. 1961. *حوران الدامية : الحلقة الثانية من الرحلة الشرقية العامة (Bloody Hawran: The Second episode of the Eastern Journey*). Beirut: Maktab Al-Fakr al-Arabi.

Abu Shumays, Sami and Johnny Farraj. 2019. *Inside Arabic Music: Arabic Maqam Performance and Theory in the 20th Century.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Abusharaf, Rogaia Mustafa. 2002. *Wanderings: Sudanese Migrants and Exiles in North America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Achilli, Luigi. 2014. 'Disengagement from politics: Nationalism, political identity, and the everyday in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan'. *Critique of Anthropology* 34(2): 234-257.

———. 2015. 'Syrian refugees in Jordan: a reality check'. Migration Policy Centre Policy Brief (February). https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/34904 (Accessed 5 December 2024).

———. 2016. ‘Back to Syria? : conflicting patterns of mobility among Syrian refugees in Jordan’. *Orient* 57(1): 7-13.

Adey, Peter and David Bisseel, Kevin Kannam, Peter Merriman, and Mimi Sheller, eds. 2013. *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities*. London and New York: Routledge.

Adileh, Mu’tasem. 2011. ‘Arabic Music between the Hammer of Technological Creativity and the Anvil of Cultural Identity (A Critical Study)’. *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 42(1): 145-163.

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agier, Michel. 2002. ‘Between war and city: towards an urban anthropology of refugee camps’. *Ethnography* 3(3): 317-341.

Agier, Michel. 2011. *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government.* English edn. Cambridge and Malden: Polity.

———. 2014. ‘Introduction: L’emcampment du monde’. In *Un Monde Camps*, edited by Michel Agier, 11-29. Paris: La Découverte.

Akhtar, Sheraz and Elizabeth Rata. 2022. ‘Refugee Education under International NGOs: A Major Shift from National Institutions to Patron-Client Relationships’. *Social Sciences* 11(494): 1-16.

Al-Akash, Ruba and Morgen A. Chalmiers. 2021. ‘Early marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan: exploring contested meanings through ethnography’. *Adolescents and young people* 29(1): 287-302.

Al-Duraidi, Hamza, Feras Al-Karmi, Anas Mustafa, Marah Al-Zu’bi, Nada Odeh, Jawad Al-Rawabdeh, and Muntaser Al-Zyoud. 2024. ‘The Impact of War Trauma

and Housing Environment on Mental Wellbeing of Syrian Refugees: A Comparison between In-Camp and Urban Populations'. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 45(2): 186-195.

Al-Jenaibi, Badreya. 2017. 'The Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Emirati Women in the Media Field'. *Global Media Journal* 4(1/2): 1-22.

Al-Mahdi, Saleh.1993. *Arabic Music: Modes and Studies [Al Musīqa Al Arabiya: Maqāmāt wa Dirasat]*. Beirut: Dar Al Gharb Al Islami.

Al-Bakri, Tsonka, Mohammed Mallah, and Nedal Nuserat. 2019. 'Al Adhān: Documenting Historical Background, Practice Rules, and Musicological Features of the Muslim Call to Prayer in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan'. *Musicologica Brunensia* 54(1): 167-186.

Al-Fahoum, Amjed S., Marianna Diomidous, Aggelos Mechili, Olga Archangelidi, Panos Theodoromanolakis, and John Mantas. 2015. 'The Provision of Health Services in Jordan to Syrian Refugees'. *Health Science Journal* 9(2:2): 1-7.

Al-Faruqi, Lois Ibsen. 1985. 'Music, Musicians and Muslim Law'. *Asian Music* 17(1): 3-36.

———. 1989. 'The Shari'ah on Music and Musicians'. '*Al-'ilm,* 9: 33-53.

Al-Hourani, Mohammed Abdel Karim, Abdel Baset Azzam, and Rania Jaber. 2019a. 'Manifestations of Lifeworld Crisis Among Male Youth in Jordanian Refugee Camps'. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies* 10(4.1): 3-23.

Al-Hourani, Mohammed Abdel Karim, Abdel Baset Azzam, and Addison J. Mott. 2019b. 'Sexual Harassment of Syrian Female Youth in Jordanian Refugee Camps'. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies* 10(4.1): 24-43.

Al-Mahaidi, Ala. 2021. ‘Securing economic livelihoods for Syrian refugees: the case for a human rights-based approach to the Jordan compact’. *The International Journal of Human Rights* 25(2): 203-230.

Al-Makhamreh, S. S. and Hundt, Gillian. 2008. ‘Researching ‘at Home’ as an Insider/Outsider: Gender and Culture in an Ethnographic Study of Social Work Practice in an Arab Society’. *Qualitative Social Work* 7(1): 9-23.

Al-Qaralleh, Amir Salameh. 2022. ‘Jordan and Syrian humanitarian refugees’ dilemma: international law perspective’. *Heliyon* 8: 1-11.

Al-Rousan, Tala, Zaker Schwabkey, Lara Jirmanus, and Brett D. Nelson. 2018. ‘Health needs and priorities of Syrian refugees in camps and urban settings in Jordan: perspectives of refugees and health care providers’. *EMHJ* 24(3): 243-253.

Al-Shoubaki, Hind. 2022. *War Victims and the Right to a City: From Damascus to Zaatari.* Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Al-Zoabi, Sohaib. 2020. ‘Deraa Province: Conflict Dynamics and the Role of Civil Society’. Conflict Research Programme London School of Economics (April). https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/106606/ (Accessed 2 February 2024).

Al Jazeera English. 2024. ‘Healing through music: Volunteers teach children Palestinian songs’ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkX4pPrE-VU (Accessed 12 December 2024).

Al Jazeera. 2012. ‘Jordan opens first Syrian refugee camp’. *Al Jazeera,* 29 July. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2012/7/29/jordan-opens-first-syrian-refugee-camp (Accessed 5 April 2020).

Aljanada, Rose and Aseel Alfaisal. 2020. ‘Metaphorical Conceptualization of Food in Jordanian Arabic’. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies* 2(3): 94-107.

All Good Tales. 2018. ‘Storytelling traditions across the world: Lebanon’. https://allgoodtales.com/storytelling-traditions-across-world-lebanon/ (Accessed 7 February 2024).

Allen, Roger. 2000. *An Introduction to Arabic Literature.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

AlSalhi, Ahmad Ali. ‘Ṣaut In Bahrain and Kuwait: History And Creativity In Concept And Practice’. Ph.D diss., Royal Holloway, University of London.

Alshaboul, Asia, Marwan Jarrah, Sharif Alghazo, and Ekab Al-Shawashreh. 2022. ‘A socio-linguistic analysis of intensifiers in Ammani Arabic’. *Ampersand* 9(1): 1-10.

Alshoubaki, Hind and Lucio Zazzara. 2020. ‘The fragility in the land of refugees: Jordan and irrepressible phenomenon of refugee camps’. *Journal of International Studies* 13(1): 123-142.

Alshoubaki, Wa’ed and Michael Harris. 2018. ‘The impact of Syrian refugees on Jordan: A framework for analysis’. *Journal of International Studies* 11(2): 154-179.

Alyan, Hala. 2017. *Salt Houses.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Alzaben, Mamduh, Abdallah Almahaireh and Fatima Eid Zaid Al-Adwan. 2022. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and its Relationship with Future Anxiety among Syrian Refugees in Al-Zaatari Refugee Camp-Jordan in Light of the Corona Pandemic (COVID-19)’. *Clinical Schizophrenia & Related Psychoses* 16: 1-19.

Alzoubi, Zedoun, Omar Abulaziz Hallaj, Shaib al Zoub, and Jadd Hallaj. 2022. 'The Making of Syria's administrative divisions: one hundred years of a problematic relationship between the centre and the periphery'. Conflict Research Programme London School of Economics (September). https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/116961/3/The_making_of_Syria_administrative_divisions_map.pdf (Accessed 2 February 2024).

American Anthropological Association. 2012. 'Ethics Task Force – Draft Principle: Do No Harm'. https://blog.americananthro.org/ethics-task-force/ethics-task-force-first-principle/ (Accessed 18 March 2019).

Amnon Shiloah. 1995. *Music in the World of Islam: A Socio-Cultural Study.* Aldershot: Scolar Press.

Andemicael, Awet. 2011. 'Positive energy: A Review of the Role of Artistic Activities in refugee camps'. UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service (June). https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/4def858a9.pdf (Accessed 13 December 2019).

Applefeld Olson, Cathy. 2023. 'World's Largest Syrian Refugee Camp Gets Music Program, Recording Studio'. *Forbes Magazine,* 20 June https://www.forbes.com/sites/cathyolson/2023/06/20/worlds-largest-syrian-refugee-camp-gets-music-program-recording-studio/?sh=6674a7a97719 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Arafat, Zaina. 2020. *You Exist Too Much.* London: Catapult.

Armbrust, Walter. 1996. *Mass* Culture and Modernism In *Egypt*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Assunção, Matthias Röhrig. 2022. 'Street Capoeira and the Memorialization of Slavery in Rio de Janeiro'. *Luso-Brazilian Review* 59(1): 143-180.

Athamneh, Waed. 2017. *Modern Arabic Poetry: Revolution and Conflict.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Atifa Nasir and Aqleem Fatimah. 2021. 'Women Imagery in Folk Wedding Songs: An Ethnographic Study of Rajput Folksongs'. *Biannual Journal of Gender and Social Issues* 16(2): 25-46.

Awad, Isabel and Jonathan Tossell. 2021. 'Is the smartphone always a smart choice? Against the utilitarian view of the "connected migrant"'. *Information, Communication and Society* 24(4): 611-626.

Babiracki, Carol M. 2008. 'What's the Difference? Reflections on Gender and Research in Village India'. In *Shadows in the Field*, edited by Greg Barz and Timothy Cooley, 167-182. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Backzo, Adam, Gilles Dorronsoro, and Arthur Quesney. 2018. *Civil War in Syria: Mobilization and Competing Social Orders*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Badarin, Emile. 2023. 'Israel-Palestine war: Why Gaza genocide is seen as an existential threat to Jordan'. *Middle East Eye*, 8 December. https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/israel-palestine-war-jordan-gaza-genocide-existential-threat (Accessed 3 January 2024).

Badawi, Muhammad Mustafa. 1975. *A critical introduction to modern Arabic poetry.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 1993. *Modern Arabic Literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Badran, Margot and Miriam Cooke. 2004 [1990]. *Opening the gates: an anthology of Arab feminist writing.* 2nd edn. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Baily, John. 2001. *Can You Stop the Birds Singing? The Censorship of Music in Afghanistan.* Copenhagen: Freemuse.

———. 2015. *War, Exile and the Music of Afghanistan.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Baily, John and Michael Collyer. 2006. 'Introduction: Music and Migration'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 32(2): 167-182.

Baker, Geoff. 2016. 'Editorial introduction: El Sistema in critical perspective'. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 15(1): 10-32.

Bakewell, Oliver. 2014. 'Encampment and Self-Settlement'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long and Nanda Sigona, 127-138. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bakker Kellogg, Sarah. 2015. 'Ritual sounds, political echoes: Vocal agency and the sensory cultures of secularism in the Dutch Syriac diaspora'. *American Ethnologist* 42(3): 431-445.

Bakkour, Samer. 2022. 'Daraa and the Altered Trajectory of the Syrian Crisis'. *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 16(2): 225-242.

Balanche, Fabrice. 2018. *Sectarianism in Syria's Civil War*. Washington: Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Bank, André. 2016. 'Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Between Protection and Marginalisation'. *GIGA Focus* 3: 1-10.

Banki, Susan. 2014. 'Precarity of place: A complement to the growing precariat literature.' *Global Discourse* 3(3-4): 450-463.

Barbelet, Veronique, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, and Dina Mansour-Ille. 2018. 'The Jordan Compact: Lessons learnt and implications for future refugee compacts'. ODI Global Briefing (February). https://covid19.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/ODI_TheJordanCompact_LessonsLeanrtandimplicationsforfuturerefugeecompact_PolicyBrief.pdf (Accessed 7 March 2023).

Barker, Pat. 2018. *The Silence of the Girls.* London: Hamish Hamilton.

———. 2021. *The Women of Troy.* London: Diversified Publishing.

Bartleet, Brydie-Leigh and Lee Higgins. 2018. 'Introduction: An Overview of Community Music in the Twenty-First Century'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Community Music*, edited by Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Lee Higgins, 1-20. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bartulović, Alenka and Miha Kozorog. 2017. 'Gender and Music-Making in Exile: Female Bosnian Refugee Musicians in Slovenia'. *Two Homelands* 46: 39-55.

Barz, Gregory and Timothy J. Cooley. 2008. 'Casting Shadows: Fieldwork is Dead! Long Live Fieldwork! Introduction'. In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 3-24. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Batti, Rehema. 2014. 'Challenges facing local NGOs in resource mobilization'. *Humanities and Social Sciences* 2(3): 57-64.

Beaudry, Nicole. 2008. 'The Challenges of Human Relations in Ethnographic Inquiry: Examples from Artic and Subartic Fieldwork'. In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 224-243. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beck, B.D., S.L Meyer, E. Simonsen, U. Søgaard, I. Petersen, S. M. H. Arnfred, T. Tellie, and T. Moe. 2021. 'Music therapy was noninferior to verbal standard treatment of traumatized refugees in mental health care: Results from a randomized clinical trial'. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 12: 1-15.

Beckles-Willson, Rachel. 2013. *Orientalism and Musical Mission: Palestine and the West.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2014. 'Music Teachers as Missionaries: Understanding Europe's Recent Dispatches to Ramallah'. In *The Ethnomusicology of Western Art Music*, edited by Laudan Nooshin*,* 17-41. Routledge: Abingdon.

———. 2021. 'Migration, music and the mobile phone: a case study in technology and socio-economic justice in Sicily'. *Ethnomusicology Forum* 30(2): 226-245.

Behar, Ruth. 1993. *Translated woman: crossing the border with Esperanza's story.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Bensaid, Said. 2013. 'Al-Waṭan and Al-Umma in Contemporary Arab Use'. In *The Foundations of the Arab State*, edited by Ghassan Salame, 149-174. London: Routledge.

Bergh, Arild and John Sloboda. 2010. 'Music and art in conflict transformation: A review'. *Music and Arts in Action* 2(2): 2-18.

Bergh, Arild. 2007. 'I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing'. *Music Scientiae*: 141-157.

Bernard, Gabriella and Abbey L. Dvorak. 2023. 'Using Music to Address Trauma with Refugees: A Systematic Review and Recommendations'. *Music Therapy Perspectives* 41(1): 3-43.

Berry, Mike, Garcia-Blanco, Inaki, and Moore, Kerry. 2015. 'Press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU: A content analysis of five European countries'. Report prepared for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (December). http://www.unhcr.org/56bb369c9.html (Accessed 22 March 2024).

Berti, Benedetta and Jonathan Paris. 2014. 'Beyond Sectarianism: Geopolitics, Fragmentation, and the Syrian Civil War'. *Strategic Assessment* 16(4): 21-34.

Betts, Alexander. 2023. 'Socio-economic integration – what is it, and why does it matter?'. *Forced Migration Review* 71.

Betts, Alexander, Ali Ali, and Fulya Memişoğlu. 2017. 'Local Politics and the Syrian Refugee Crisis Exploring Responses in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan'. Refugee Studies Centre University of Oxford, 24 November. https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/local-politics-and-the-syrian-refugee-crisis-exploring-responses-in-turkey-lebanon-and-jordan (Accessed 5 December 2024).

Bietti, Lucas, Ottilie Tilston and Adrian Bangerter. 2019. 'Storytelling as Adaptive Collective Sensemaking'. *Topics in cognitive science* 11(4): 710-732.

Bleich, Erik, Bloemraad, Irene, and Els de Graauw. 2015. 'Migrants, minorities and the media: Information, representations and participation in the public sphere'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41(6): 857-873.

Bluemel, James. 2016. 'Exodus: Our Journey to Europe'. https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09dh6jn/episodes/guide (Accessed 12 April 2024).

———. 2020. 'Once Upon a Time in Iraq'. https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m000kxws/once-upon-a-time-in-iraq (Accessed 14 March 2024).

Bloch, Alice. 1999. ‘Carrying Out a Survey of Refugees: Some Methodological Considerations and Guidelines’. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 12(4): 367-383.

Bocco, Riccardo. 2010. ‘UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees: A History Within History’. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28(2&3): 229-252.

Bohorquez, Natalia, Emily Davis, Rose Martus, and Sandra Rivera. 2021. ‘The Gift of Notes’. *El Sistema Greece*, 19 December. https://globalleadersinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/El-Sistema-Greece-2021.pdf (Accessed 25 February 2024).

Bolden, Benjamin, Sean Corcoran and Alana Butler. 2020. ‘A scoping review of research that examines El Sistema and Sistema-inspired music education programmes’. *Review of Education* 9(3): 1-23.

Born, Georgina. 2005. *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC.* London: Vintage.

———. 2013. ‘Introduction—Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience.’ In *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience*, edited by Georgina Born, 1–69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____(ed). 2013. *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bothwell, Beau. 2013a. ‘Song, State, Sawa Music and Political Radio between the US and Syria’. Ph.D diss., School of Arts, Columbia University.

———. 2013b. ‘Sonic Consumerism and Audience Manufacture in US Music Broadcasts to the Middle East’. In *The Soundtrack of Conflict The Role of Music in Radio Broadcasting in Wartime and in Conflict Situations*, edited by M. J. Grant

and Férdia J. Stone-Davis, 231-247. Hildesheim, Zürich, and New York: Georg Olms Verlag.

———. 2018a. ‘Heavy Metal as Global Resistance’. *Tyranny and Music*, edited by Joseph E. Morgan and Gregory N. Reish. Lanham: Lexington Books.

———. 2018b. ‘State, Song, and ‘Shabāb’ in Syria’s Prewar Radioscape. *Asian music* 49(1): 80-119.

———. 2020. ‘For Thee America! For Thee Syria?”: Alexander Maloof, Orientalist Music, and the Politics of the Syrian Mahjar’. *Journal of the Society for American* Music 14(4): 383-418.

Bouchard, Marie-Eve. 2021. ‘Popular Brazilian Portuguese through capoeira: from local to glocal’. *Ethnográfica* 25(1): 95-116.

Bouchghoul, Hanane, Emmanuel Hornez, Xavier Duval-Arnould, Henri-Jean Philippe and Jacky Nizard. 2015. ‘Humanitarian obstetric care for refugees of the Syrian war. The first 6 months of experience of Gynécologie Sans Frontières in Zaatari Refugee Camp (Jordan)’. *Acta Obstetricia et Gynecologica Scandinavica* 94 (7): 755-759.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Boym, Svetlana. 2001. *The Future of Nostalgia.* New York: Basic Books.

Bozdağ, Cigdem and Kevin Smets. 2017. ‘Understanding the Image of Alan Kurdi with “Small Data”: A Qualitative, Comparative Analysis of Tweets About Refugees in Turkey and Flanders (Belgium)’. *International Journal of Communication* 11: 4046-4069.

Braemer, Frank. 2011. '*Badia* and *Maamoura*, the Jawlan/Hawran regions during the Bronze Age: landscapes and hypothetical territories'. *Syria* 88: 31-46.

Brubaker, Rogers. 2005. 'The "diaspora" diaspora'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(1): 1-19.

Bruneau, Michel. 2010. 'Diasporas, transnational spaces and communities'. In *Diaspora and Transnationalism,* edited by Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, 35-49. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Buholtz, Mary. 2000. 'The politics of transcription'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 32(2000): 1439-1465.

Burkhalter, Thomas. 2012. Local Music Scenes and Globalization. Hoboken: Transnational platforms in Beirut. London: Routledge.

Burkhalter, Thomas, Kay Dickenson, and Benjamin J. Harbert, eds. 2013. *The Arab Avant-Garde: Music Politics Modernity.* Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Burlin, Alexander. 2019. 'Empowerment through Development? Towards a Political Critique of the Jordan Compact'. *OxMo* 8(1): 123-136.

Butler, Howard and Aisha Muhammed Ali Moussa. 2021. *العمارة القديمة في سوريا: جنوب حوران (Ancient Architecture in Syria: Southern Hauran).* Leiden: Brill.

Cabot, Heath. 2016. '"Refugee Voices": Tragedy, Ghosts, and the Anthropology of Not Knowing,' *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 45(6): 645-72.

Campbell, Kay Hardy. 2002. 'Music in Performance: A Saudi Women's Wedding Party'. In *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 6: The Middle East,* edited by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds, 691-694. New York: Garland Publishing.

Carlisle, Lilly. 2022. ‘Jordan’s Za’atari refugee camp: 10 facts at 10 years’. *UNHCR,* 29 July. https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/jordans-zaatari-refugee-camp-10-facts-10-years (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Chambers, Robert. 1997. *Whose reality counts? Putting the First Last.* London: Intermediate Technological Publications.

Chatelard, Géraldine. 2009. ‘Migration from Iraq between the Gulf and the Iraq wars (1990–2003): Historicaland socio-spatial dimensions’. Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) Working Paper No. 68, University of Oxford.

———. 2010a. ‘What visibility conceals: Re-embedding refugee migration from Iraq’. In *Dispossession and Displacement: Forced Migration in the Middle East and Africa*, edited by Dawn Chatty and Bill Finlayson, 17-44. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 2010b. ‘Cross-border mobility of Iraqi refugees’. *Forced Migration Review* 34: 60-61.

Chatty, Dawn. 2017a. ‘How Syria’s Neighbors Have Treated Its Refugees’. *Current History* 116(794): 337-341.

———. 2017b. *Syria: The Making and Unmaking of a Refuge State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2010. *Displacement and Dispossession in the Modern Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chatti, Sami. 2023. ‘Metaphors We Love By: The Shift from Animal to Fruit Metaphors in Classical Arabic Ghazal’. *Metaphor and Symbol* 38(2): 184-197.

Chaudhary, Suchitra Bajpai. 2014. ‘Hakwati: the ancient Arab art of storytelling’. *Gulf News*, 5 April. http://gulfnews.com/life-style/culture/hakawati-the-ancient-arab-art-of-storytelling-1.712001 (Accessed 26 March 2024)

Chen, Tianshe. 2009. ‘Palestinian Refugees in Arab Countries and Their Impacts’. *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)* 3(3): 42-56.

Christidis, Ioannis. 2020. ‘“Hurriya, Azadi, Freedom Now” An Ethnomusicological Report on the Events of Thessaloniki, Greece 2016’. Report for Music and Minorities Research Centre. https://musicandminorities.org/research/projects/music-in-the-experience-of-forcedmigration/initial-research-findings/ (Accessed 1 October 2022).

_____.2021. ‘Adelaida Reyes: Pioneer in the Field of Music and Forced Migration – A Review of Her Theoretical and Methodological Contribution’. *Music and Minorities* 1: 1-30.

———. 2022. ‘Music in the experience of Forced Migration from Syria to the European Borderland’. Paper presented in the 21st Quinquennial Congress of the International Musicological Society. 22-26 August. Athens, Greece.

Clarke, Killian. 2018. ‘When Do the Dispossessed Protest? Informal Leadership and Mobilization in Syrian Refugee Camps’. *Perspectives On Politics* 16(3): 617-633.

Clifford, James and George E. Marcus, eds. 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.* California: University of California Press.

Clifford, James. 1994. ’Diasporas’. *Cultural Anthropology* 9(3): 302-338.

Clutterbuck, Martin, Yara Hussein, Mazen Mansour, and Monica Rispo. ‘Alternative protection in Jordan and Lebanon: the role of legal aid’. *Forced Migration Review* 67: 52-56.

Cohen, Cynthia. 2003. ‘Engaging with the Arts to Promote Reconciliation.’ In *Imagine Coexistence: Restoring Humanity After Violent Ethnic Conflict*, edited by Antonia Chayes and Martha Minow, 267-294. New Jersey: Jossey-Bass.

———. 2005. ‘Creative Approaches to Reconciliation’. In *The Psychology of Resolving Global Conflicts: From War to Peace Vol. 3 – Interventions*, edited by Mari Fitzduff and Chris Stout, 69-102. Westport: Praeger Security International.

Cohen, Dalia and Ruth Katz. 2006. *Palestinian Arab Music: A Maqam Tradition in Practice.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Conquergood, Dwight. 1988. ‘Health Theatre in a Hmong Refugee Camp: Performance, Communication, and Culture’. *TDR* 32(3): 174-208

Cooke, Miriam. 1996. *Women and the War Story*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press.

———. 2016. *Dancing in Damascus: Creativity, Resilience, and the Syrian Revolution.* London: Routledge.

Cottrell, Stephen and Angela Impey. 2018. ‘Community Music and Ethnomusicology’. In *The Oxford Handbook of Community Music*, edited by Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Lee Higgins, 525-542. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crisp, Jeff. 1999. ‘A State of Insecurity: The Political Economy of Violence in Refugee-Populated Areas of Kenya’. UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit New Issues in Refugee Research Working Paper No. 16 (December). https://www.unhcr.org/media/state-insecurity-political-economy-violence-refugee-populated-areas-kenya-jeff-crisp (Accessed 15 February 2024).

Crisp, Jeff and Greg Garras, Jenny McAvoy, Ed Schenkenberg, Paul Spiegel, and Frances Voon. 2013. 'From Slow Boil to Breaking Point: A Real-Time Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to the Syrian Refugee Emergency'. UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service No 10 (July). https://www.unhcr.org/uk/media/slow-boil-breaking-point-real-time-evaluation-unhcrs-response-syrian-refugee-emergency-jeff (Accessed 12 July 2020).

Cusick, Suzanne. 2006. 'Music as Torture/Music as Weapon'. T*RANS: Transcultural Music Review* 10. http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/articulo/152/music-as-torture-music-as-weapon (Accessed 11 June 2014).

Cuthbert, Olivia. 'Forget Game of Thrones: The master of the cliffhanger is back'. *Middle East Eye*, 18 June. https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/story-telling-lebanon-hakawati-tale (Accessed 8 January 2024).

Cutini, Valerio and Marco Buonocore. 2017. '"We were building a camp, they were building a city": Refugee camps as a spatial laboratory for social inclusion'. Proceedings of the 11th Space Syntax Symposium. https://arpi.unipi.it/retrieve/e0d6c92b-2510-fcf8-e053-d805fe0aa794/Paper%20Buonocore_Cutini%2011%20SSS.pdf (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Da Costa, Rosa. 2006. 'The Administration of Justices in Refugee Camps: A Study of Practice'. UNHCR Legal and Protection Policy Research Series (March). https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/44183b7e2.pdf (Accessed 3 January 2024).

Dalal, Ayham. 2015. 'A Socio-economic Perspective on the Urbanisation of Zaatari Camp in Jordan'. *Migration Letters* 3: 263-278.

Daniel, Valentine and John Knusden, eds. 1995. *Mistrusting Refugees*. London: University of California Press.

Danielson, Virginia and Alexander J. Fisher. 2002. 'History of Scholarship: Narratives of Middle Eastern Music History'. *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: The Middle East (Volume 6)*, edited by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds, 15-27. Routledge: London.

Danielson, Virginia. 1996. 'New nightingales of the Nile: popular music in Egypt since the 1970s'. *Popular Music Cambridge* 15(3): 292-312.

———. 1997. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Davis, Rochelle, Grace Benton, Will Todman and Emma Murphy. 2017. 'Hosting Guests, Creating Citizens'. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 36(2): 1-32.

Davis, Ruth. 1986. 'Modern Trends in the Arab-Andalusian Music of Tunisia'. *Magreb Review* 11: 58-63.

De Tapia, Stéphane. 2010. 'New migratory configurations: transnationalism/s, diaspora/s, migratory circulation'. In *Migration in a globalised world: New research issues and prospects*, edited by C. Audebert and M Doraï, 127-141. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Deebi. Aissa. 2011. 'Who I Am, Where I Come From, And Where I Am Going: A Critical Study of Arab Diaspora as Creative Space'. Ph.D diss., University of Southampton, Faculty of Business and Law.

Delprato, Marcos, Linda Morrice, and Saja Al-Nahi. 2020. 'A summary of key patterns in the Jordanian education system by school type, gender and region'. University of Sussex Assessment of Education Strategies and Interventions Adopted in Jordan as a Response to the Syrian Crisis (January). https://sussex.figshare.com/articles/report/A_summary_of_key_patterns_in_the_Jor

danian_education_system_by_school_type_gender_and_region/23487650?file=41196212 (Accessed 7 February 2024).

DeNora, Tia. 2013. *Music Asylums: Wellbeing Through Music in Everyday Life*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Department of Statistics (DoS) and ICF. 2023. 'Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023: Key Indicators'. Department of Statistics Amman, Jordan (July). https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/Population/Health/DHS2023_Survey.pdf (Accessed 18 September 2022).

Diken, Bülent. 2004. 'From Refugee Camps to Gated Communities: Biopolitics and the End of the City 1'. *Citizenship Studies* 8(1): 83-106.

Doubleday, Veronica. 1988. *Three Women of Herat.* Leicester: Ulverscroft.

———. 2008. '"Sounds of Power": Musical Instruments and Gender'. *Ethnomusicology Forum* 17(1): 3-39.

Dream Day Foundation. 2024. https://dreamday.org/ (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Dueck, Byron. 2011. 'Migrants: Introduction'. In *Migrating Music,* edited by Jason Toynbee and Byron Dueck, 21-27. London: Routledge.

Dwight, Emma. 2016. 'Celebrity Humanitarianism: Bridging the Gap'. *Harvard International Review* 37(3): 18-20.

Eapen, Valsamma, Abdel Azim Mobrouk and Salem Bin-Othman. 2006. 'Disordered eating attitudes and symptomatology among adolescent girls in the United Arab Emirates'. *Eating Behaviors* 7: 5360.

Ebbini, Noor. 2022. ‘What are Arabs Listening to? Contemporary Arab Music: Categorization and Musical Understanding’. *Bulgarian Musicology* 4: 99-123.

Ebbini, Noor and Tsonka Al-Bakri. 2021. ‘The Art of Irtijal in Musīqa Al-Ṭarab: Theoretical Concepts and Emotional Connection in the Performance of Mawwāl and Taqasīm’. *Advanced Research and Studies Journal* 12(2): 1-20.

Edwards, Jane. 2017. ‘Introduction: Conceptualizing Music Therapy: Five Areas that Frame the Field’. In *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy*, edited by Jane Edwards, 1-14. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

El-Abed, Oraub. 2014. ‘The discourse of Guesthood: Forced Migrants in Jordan’. In *Managing Muslim Mobilities: Between Spiritual Geographies and the Global Security Regime*, edited by Anita Fábos and Riina Isotalo, 81-101. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

El-Aswad, El-Sayed. 2014. ‘Metaphors Arab Women Live By’. *Hawwa* 12(1): 36-48.

El-Shamy, Hasan. 2004. *Types of the folktale in the Arab world: a demographically oriented tale-type index.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

El-Shawan, Salwa. 1980. ‘The Socio-Political Context of al-műsîía al-carabiyaii in Cairo, Egypt: Policies, Patronage, Institutions, and Musical Change (1927-1977)’. *Asian Music* 12(1): 86-128.

Elsaman, Radwa S. and Mohamed A. Arafa. 2012. ‘The Rights of the Elderly in the Arab Middle East: Islamic Theory versus Arabic Practice’. *Marquette Elder’s Advisor* 14(1): 1-52.

Elsamni, Abdulrahman. 2016. ‘Threat of the downtrodden: Framing Arab refugees on CNN’. *Arab Media & Society* 22: 1-17.

Emery, Ed. 2017. ‘Radical Ethnomusicology: Towards a politics of “No Borders” and “insurgent musical citizenship” – Calais, Dunkerque, Kurdistan’. *Ethnomusicology Ireland* 5: 48-74

Enam Al-Wer. ‘Jordanian and Palestinian dialects in contact: vowel raising in Amman’. In *Language change: The interplay of internal, external, and extra-linguistic factors,* edited by Mari Jones and Edith Esch, 63-79. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Erdreich, Lauren. 2006. ‘Marriage talk: Palestinian women, intimacy, and the liberal nation-state’. *Ethnography* 7(4): 493-523.

Erlich, Reese W. 2014. *Inside Syria: The Backstory of Their Civil War and what the World Can Expect*. New York: Prometheus Books.

Erlmann, Veit. 1993. ‘The Politics and Aesthetics of Transnational Musics’. *The World of Music* 35(2): 3-15.

Ersan, Mohammad. 2023. ‘Israel-Palestine war: Anti-Israel rhetoric in Jordan intensifies as kingdom braces for chaos’. *Middle East Eye,* 16 November. https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestine-war-jordan-rhetoric-intensifies-braces-chaos (Accessed 3 January 2024).

Espinosa-Dulanto, Miryam. 2018. ‘*Abrazando Nopales*–Prickly Embrace: Undocumted Women’s Life Stories/Poetic Performance Narratives’. *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies* 18(3): 177-180.

Esses, Victoria, Medianu, Stelian, and Andrea S. Lawson. 2013. ‘Uncertainty, threat, and the role of the media in promoting the dehumanization of immigrants and refugees’. *Journal of Social Issues* 69(3): 518-536.

Faist, Thomas. 2010. 'Diaspora and transnationalism: What kind of dance partners?'. In *Diaspora and Transnationalism,* edited by Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist, 9-34. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Farmer, Henry G. 1929. *A History of Arabian Music to the Thirteenth Century.* London: Luzac.

Feld, Steven. 1987. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Feldman, Ilana. 2012. 'The Humanitarian Condition: Palestinian Refugees and the Politics of Living'. *Humanity* 3(2): 155-172.

Felton, Emma. 2015. 'Migrants, refugees, and mobility: How useful are information communication technologies in the first phase of resettlement'. *Journal of Technologies in Society* 11(1): 1-13

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena and Yousif M. Qasmiyeh. 2013. 'Muslim Asylum-Seekers and Refugees: Negotiating Identity, Politics and Religion in the UK'. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23(3): 294-314.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena, Gil Loescher, Katy Long and Nando Sigona. 2014. 'Introduction: Refugee and Forced Migration Studies in Transition'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long and Nando Sigona, 1-19. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena. 2014a. 'Gender and Forced Migration'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long and Nando Sigona, 395-408. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____2014b. *The Ideal Refugees: Gender, Islam and the Saharawi Politics of Survival.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

———. 2018. 'Shadows and Echoes in/of Displacement: Temporalities, Spatialities and Materials of Displacement'. *Refugee Hosts,* 19 November. https://refugeehosts.org/2018/11/19/shadows-and-echoes-in-of-displacement/ (Accessed 20 November 2018).

Fisher, Karen and Eiad Yafi. 2018. 'Syrian Youth in Za'atari Refugee Camp as ICT Wayfarers: An Exploratory Study Using LEGO and Storytelling'. *COMPASS 2018: Proceedings of the 1st ACM SIGCAS Conference on Computing and Sustainable Societies* 32: 1-12.

Fisher, Karen. 2020a. 'Bringing Books to the Desert'. *American Library Association*, 1 July. https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2020/07/01/bringing-books-desert-zaatari-refugee-library/ (Accessed 2 February 2021).

———. 2020b. 'Co-designing on the Jordanian-Syrian border: how 2,000 Syrian refugees created the Za'atari Camp cookbook'. *Interactions* 27(5): 72-75.

———. 2022. 'People First, Data Second: Humanitarian Research Framework for Fieldwork with Refugees by War Zones'. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work* 31: 237-297.

Flick, Uwe. 2024. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications

Foley, Catherine E. 2014. 'Negotiating the 'native self' and the 'professional self': Ethnochoreological and ethnomusicological challenges in the field'. *Fagbokforlaget:* 227-241.

Fresia, Marion and Andreas Von Känel. 2016. ‘Beyond Space of Exception? Reflections on the Camp through the Prism of Refugee Schools.’ J*ournal of Refugee Studies* 29(2): 250-272.

Fricker, Toby. 2019. ‘The role of aid agencies in the media portray of children in Za’atari refugee camp’. In *Global Humanitarianism and Media Culture*, edited by Michael Lawrence and Rachel Tavernor, 167-186. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Frishkopf, Michael. 2009. ‘Meditated Qur’anic recitation and the contestation of Islam in Contemporary Europe’. In *Music and the Play of Power in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia,* edited by Laudan Nooshin, 75-114.. Ashgate: Farnham.

———. 2010. ‘Introduction Music and Media in the Arab World and Music and Media in the Arab World as Music and Media in the Arab World: A Metadiscourse’. In *Music and Media in the Arab World*, edited by Michael Frishkopf, 1-64. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

———. 2018. ‘Paralinguistic Ramification of Language Performance in Islamic Ritual’. *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 4(1): 5-27.

_____.2021. ‘Musical Journeys’. In *Global Middle East: Into the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera, 145-161. Oakland: University of California Press.

Fukushima, Kiko. 2011. ‘Peace and Culture: Fostering Peace through Cultural Contributions.” In *Conflict and Culture: Fostering Peace through Cultural Initiatives,* edited by Joint Research Institute for International Peace and Culture, Aoyama Gakuin University, 5-14. New York: The Japan Foundation.

Fundación Barenboim-Said. 2021. ‘West-Eastern Divan Orchestra’. https://barenboim-said.org/en/west-eastern-divan-orchestra/ (Accessed 13 December 2024).

Gale, Peter. 2004. ‘The refugee crisis and fear: Populist politics and media discourse’. *Journal of Sociology* 40(4): 321-340.

Gandolfo, Luisa. 2022. ‘Navigating Trust and Distrust in the Refugee Community of Malta’. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 23(61): 61-83.

Gatter, Melissa. 2018. ‘Rethinking the lessons from Za’atari refugee camp’. *Forced Migration Review* 57: 22-24.

———. 2023. *Time and Power in Azraq Refugee Camp*: *A Nine-to-Five Emergency.* Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

Gauch, Suzanne. 2007. *Liberating Shahrazad: Feminism, Postcolonialism, and Islam.* Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Gibney, Matthew. 2004. *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum: Liberal Democracy and the Response to Refugees.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2014. ‘Political Theory, Ethics, and Forced Migration’. In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long and Nando Sigona, 48-59. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gidron, Yotam. 2024. ‘Survivalist mobilities: freedom of movement and the economic lives of settlement refugees in Uganda’. *Journal of Refugee Studies*: 1-19.

Giebel, Cecilia and Simon Kolbe. 2019. ‘Al Zaatari: From a Refugee Camp to a Refugee-City?’ Herausgeber: Zentrum Flucht und Migration, Katholische Universität Eichstätt.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337991625_Al_Zataari_-_From_a_Refugee-Camp_to_a_Refugee-City_Herausgeber_Zentrum_Flucht_und_Migration_Katholische_Universitat_Eichstatt (Accessed 26 January 2024).

Gilbert, Shirli. 2005. 'Music as Historical Source: Social History and Musical Texts'. *International review of the aesthetics and sociology of music* 36(1): 117-134.

Gillespie, Marie, Souad Osseiran and Margie Cheesman. 2018. 'Syrian Refugees and the Digital Passage to Europe: Smartphone Infrastructures and Affordances'. *Social Media + Society* 4(1) (SI: Forced Migrants and Digital Connectivity): 1–12.

Gopinath, Sumanth and Jason Stanyek. 2019. 'Technologies of the Musical Selfie'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Music in Digital Culture*, edited by Nicholas Cook, Monique M. Ingalls and David Trippett, 89-118. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gottlieb, Alma. 2016. 'The Anthropologist as Storyteller'. In *The Anthropologist As Writer: Genres and Contexts in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Helena Wulff, 93-117. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

Goulding, Ellie. 2023. 'Yesterday I had the honour of opening…'. *Instagram,* 26 September. https://www.instagram.com/elliegoulding/p/CxqJs5doUrY/?img_index=1 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Govias, Jonathan. 2011. 'The five fundamentals of El Sistema'. *The Canadian Music Educator,* 53(1): 21-23.

Granqvist, Hilma. 1935. *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*. Centraltryckeri Och Bockbinderi AB: Helsingfors

Grant, MJ, Rebecca Möllemann, Ingvill Morlandstö, Simone Christine Münz, and Cornelia Nuxoll. 2010. ‘Music and Conflict: Interdisciplinary Perspectives’. *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 35(2): 183-198.

Greatbach, Jacqueline. 1989. ‘The Gender Difference: Feminist Critiques of Refugee Discourse’. *International Journal of Refugee Law* 1(4): 51-527.

Greenleaf, Christy, Rosemary McGreer and Heather Parham. 2016. ‘Physique attitudes and self-presentational concerns: Exploratory interviews with female group aerobic exercisers and instructors’. *Sex Role*s 54(3/4): 189-199.

Grippo, James. 2010. *Analysis What's Not on Egyptian Television and Radio! Locating the 'Popular' in Egyptian Sha‘bi’*. In *Music and Media in the Arab World*, edited by Michael Frishkopf, 137-162. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

Guo, Li. 2020. *Arabic Shadow Theatre 1300-1900*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Guterres, António. 2014. ‘Remarks’. Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation – Supporting Stability in the Region. 29 October. Berlin. https://www.unhcr.org/publications/remarks-antonio-guterres-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees-conference-syrian (Accessed 5 April 2023).

Gutowski, Stacey. 2022. ‘Playing Host Since 1948: Jordan’s Refugee Policies and Faith-Based Charity’. *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 13(2): 163-184.

Habash, Dunya. 2021. ‘‘Do Like You Did in Aleppo’: Negotiating Space and Place Among Syrian Musicians in Istanbul’. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34(2): 1370-1386.

Habjan, Urška. 2015. ‘Embodiment of Capoeira Skills’. *IIASS* 8(3): 118-134.

Haddad, Rana. 2018. *The Unexpected Love Objects of Dunya Noor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hajj, Hussain. 2016. 'The Syrian Musicians in Istanbul: The Relationship Between Repertoire and Stage.' *Alternatif Politika* 8(3): 474-487.

Halabi, Anna. 2018. *Syrian Brides*. Caerphilly: Petra.

Hall, Patricia, ed. 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship.* Oxford: Oxford Univerrsity Press.

Hallam, Susan and Andrea Creech, eds. 2010. *Music education in the 21st century in the United Kingdom: Achievements, analysis and aspirations.* London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Halstead, Narmala. 'Life Writing: Anthropological Knowledge, Boundary-Making, and the Experiential'. In *The Anthropologist As Writer: Genres and Contexts in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Helena Wulff, 129-142. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

Hammond, Andrew. 2017. *Pop Culture in North Africa and the Middle East.* Santa Barbara California: ABC-CLIO.

Hamod, H. Samuel. 1963. 'Arab and Moslem rhetorical theory and practice'. *Central States Speech Journal* 14: 97-102.

Haravon Collins, Leslea. 2002. 'Working out the contradictions: Feminism and aerobics'. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 26(1): 85-109.

Harb, Iman K. 2024. 'Path of Least Cost: Assuaging Public Protest in Jordan'. Arab Center Washington DC, 1 April. https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/path-of-least-cost-assuaging-public-protests-in-jordan/ (Accessed 3 January 2024).

Haripriya, Soibam. 2018. ‘Poetry and Ethnography: Tracing Family Resemblances’. *Society and Culture in South Asia* 5(1): 126-146.

Harrell-Bond, Barbara and Eftihia Voutira. 2007. ‘In Search of ‘Invisible’ Actors: Barriers to Access in Refugee Research’. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20(2): 281-298.

Harrell-Bond, Barbara.1986. *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2002. ‘Can Humanitarian Work with Refugees Be Humane?’. *Human Rights Quarterly* 24(1): 51-85.

Hart, Jason, Natalia Paszkiewicz and Dima AlBadra. 2018. ‘Shelter as Home?: Syrian Homemaking in Jordanian Refugee Camps’. *Human Organization* 77(4): 371-380.

Haskell, Erica. 2015. ‘The Role of Applied Ethnomusicology in Post-Conflict and Post-Catastrophe Communities’. In *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, edited by Svanibor Pettan and Jeff Todd Titon, 453-480. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hast, Susanna. 2019. ‘Belonging in Movement: Capoeira for Children and Youth at the Za’atari Refugee Camp’. *Nordic Journal of Dance* 10(1+2): 16-27.

———. 2021. ‘In Touch With the Mindful Body: Moving With Women and Girls at the Za’atari Refugee Camp’. In *Arts-Based Methods for Decolonising Participatory Research,* edited by Tina Seppälä, Melanie Sarantou, and Satu Miettinen, 43-58. London: Routledge.

Hattar-Pollara, Marianne. 2019. ‘Barriers to education of Syrian refugee girls in Jordan: Gender-based threats and challenges’. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 51(3): 241-251.

Hemetek, Ursula, Gerda Lechleitner, Inna Narditskaya and Anna Czekanowska, eds. 2004. *Manifold Identities: Studies on music and Minorities.* London: Cambridge Scholars Press.

Herz, M. 2008. ‘Refugee camps or ideal cities in dust and dirt’. In *Urban transformation*, edited by I. Ruby and A. Ruby, 276-289. Berlin: Ruby Press.

Herzog, Thomas. 2012. ‘Orality and the Tradition of Arabic Epic Storytelling’. In *Medieval Oral Literature*, edited by Karl Reichl, 629-652. Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter.

Heynan, Evelyn, Vivian Bruls, Sander van Goor, Ron Pat-El, Tineke Schoot, and Susan van Hooren. 2022. ‘A Music Therapy Intervention for Refugee Children and Adolescents in Schools: A Process Evaluation Using a Mixed Method Design’. *Children* 9(1434): 1-21.

Hinnebusch, Raymond and Adham Saouli. 2019. *The War for Syria: Regional and International Dimensions of the Syrian Uprising.* London: Routledge.

Hirschkind, Charles. 2006. *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counter public*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hoffmann, Sophia. 2018. ‘Refugee Rights Hit the Wall’. *Middle East Report* 286: 37-40.

Hood, Kathleen. 2002. ‘Music and Memory in a Global Age: Wedding Songs of the Syrian Druze’. Ph.D diss., University of California, Los Angeles.

Hovannisian, Richard and Georges Sabagh. 1997. *The Thousand and one nights in Arabic literature and society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Howell, Gillian. 2018. 'Community Music Interventions in Post-Conflict Contexts'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Community Music*, edited by Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Lee Higgins, 43-70. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Huang, Cindy and Kate Gough. 2019. 'The Jordan Compact: Three Years on, Where Do We Stand?'. *Center for Global Development*, 11 March. https://www.cgdev.org/blog/jordan-compact-three-years-on (Accessed 28 January 2023).

Human Rights Watch. 2020a. '"I Want to Continue to Study": Barriers to Secondary Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan'. 26 June. https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/06/26/i-want-continue-study/barriers-secondary-education-syrian-refugee-children-jordan (Accessed 1 April 2024).

———. 2020b. 'Jordan: Free Speech Threats Under COVID-19 Response'. 5 May. https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/05/jordan-free-speech-threats-under-covid-19-response (Accessed 1 October 2022).

———. 2024a. 'Syria'. https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/syria (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2024b. 'Jordan: New Threats to Civic Space'. 11 January. https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/11/jordan-new-threats-civic-space (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Hyndman, Jennifer. 2004. 'Refugee Camps as Conflict Zones: The Politics of Gender'. In *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, edited by Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, 193-212. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ibrahim, Camellia N. and Ute J. Bayen. 2019. 'Attitudes towards aging and older adults in Arab culture: A literature review.' *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie* 52(3): 180-187.

Impey, Angela. 2002. 'Culture, Conservation and Community Reconstruction: Explorations in Advocacy Ethnomusicology and Participatory Action Research in Northern Kwazulu Natal'. *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 34: 9-24.

———. 2008. 'Sound, Memory and Dis/placement: Exploring Sound, Song and Performance as Oral History in the Southern African Borderlands'. *Oral History*, 36(1): 33-44.

———. 2018. *Song Walking: Women, Music, and Environmental Justice in an African Borderland.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Indra, Doreen, ed. 1999. *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice.* Oxford: Beghahn Books.

IOM (International Organization of Migration). 2020. 'Basic Migration Terminologies (Al-mustalahat al-asasiat lilhijra)'. https://publications.iom.int/books/key-migration-terms-arabic-0 (Accessed 26 January 2024).

Irwin, Robert. 2010 [1994]. *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*. 3rd edn. London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks.

Ishkanian, Armine and Isabel Shutes. 2022. 'Who Needs Experts? The Politics and Practices of Alternative Humanitarianism and Its Relationship to NGOs'. *International Society for Third Sector Research* 33: 397-407.

Issa, Dima. 2023a. 'Essay: Arabness, Al-Waṭan & Fairouz'. Essay for the Fiker Institute (June). https://fikerinstitute-uploads.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wp-

content/uploads/2023/05/02171510/Arabness-Al-Watan-Fairouz_Fiker-Institute.pdf (Accessed 26 March 2024)

———. 2023b. *Fairouz and the Arab Diaspora: Music and Identity in the UK and Qatar*. New York: Bloomsbury.

Jabbar, Sinaria and Haidar Zaza. 2014. 'Impact of Conflict in Syria on Syrian children at the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan'. *Early Child Development and Care* 184(9-10): 1507-1530.

Jaber, Rola and Ayat Nashwan, 2022. 'Aid Programmes Integration: Case Study of Alzaatri Refugee Camp in Jordan' *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 49(5): 581–596.

Jacobsen, Karen, and Loren Landau. 2003. 'Researching refugees: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science and forced migration'. UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit New Issues in Refugee Research Working Paper No. 9 (June). https://www.unhcr.org/media/researching-refugees-some-methodological-and-ethical-considerations-social-science-and-forced (Accessed 4 February 2020).

Jad, Islah. 2009. 'The Politics of Group Weddings in Palestine: Political and Gender Tensions'. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 5(3): 36-53.

Jarjour, Tala. 2018. *Sense and Sadness: Syriac Chant in Aleppo.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Jayusi, Salma. 1991. *Modern Arabi Poetry: An anthology.* New York: Columbia University Press.

JIF (Jordan INGO Forum). 2018. ‘Syrian refugees in Jordan, a protection overview’. https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/syrian-refugees-jordan-protection-overview-january-2018 (Accessed 6 January 2023).

Joseph, Suad. 1996. ‘Patriarchy and Development in the Arab World’. *Gender and Development* 4(2): 14-19.

Jungen, Christine. 2002. ‘Tribalism in Kerak: Past memories, present realities’. In *Jordan in Transition 1990–2000*, edited by George Joffé, 191-207. London: Urst & Company.

Kaddour, Ibrahim, Rawan Khattab, Amro Yaghi and Lubna Alawneh. 2022. ‘Instant Cities and Their Impact on the Environment: Al Zaatari Case Study.’ In *Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability. Advances in Science, Technology & Innovation,* edited by He, BJ., Prasad, D., Pignatta, G., Jupesta, J. Cham: Springer Publishing.

Kagan, Elizabeth and Margaret Morse. 1988. ‘The Body Electronic: Aerobic Exercise on Video: Women’s Search for Empowerment and Self-Transformation’. *TDR* 32(4): 164-180.

Kalach, Najla. 2020. ‘Folk Songs in Homs’ Weddings: a Sociolinguistic Perspective’. In *Mediterranean Contaminations: Middle East, North Africa, and Europe in Contact,* edited by Giuliano Mion, 232-242. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.

Kamat, Sangeeta. 2004. ‘The Privatization of Public Interest: Theorizing NGO Discourse in a Neoliberal Era’. *Review of International Political Economy* 11(1): 155-176.

Kapoor, Ilan. 2012. *Celebrity Humanitarianism: The Ideology of Global Charity.* London: Routledge.

Kartomi, Margaret. 1981. ‘The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact’. *Ethnomusicology* 25(2): 227-249.

———. 2010. ‘Toward a Methodology of War and Peace Studies in Ethnomusicology: The Case of Aceh, 1976-2009’. *Ethnomusicology* 54(3): 452-483.

———. 2014. ‘Toward a Methodology for Research into the Revival of Musical Life after War, Natural Disaster, Bans on All Music, or Neglect’. In *The Oxford Handbook to Music Revivals*, edited by Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill, 372-390. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kashu, Masaya. 2022. ‘Incompatibility between the Characteristics of Aid Organizations and Development’. *The International Journal of Sport and Society* 14(1): 81-92.

Kastrinou, A. Maria A. 2016. *Power, Sect and State in Syria: The Politics of Marriage and Identity Amongst the Druze.* London and New York: IB Tauris.

Kattaa, Maha. 2016. ‘Syrian Refugees’ Status in the Jordanian Labor Market’. *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 15(3): 71-78.

Kavak, Sinem, Mo Hamza, Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, and Russell A. Stone. 2024. ‘Refugee agency in secondary mobility decision-making: a systematic literature review’. *Frontiers in Human Dynamics* 6: 1-13.

Keo Films. 2020. ‘Once upon a Time in Iraq’. https://www.keofilms.com/projects/1878/#:~:text=With%20unique%20personal%20archive%20from,they%20have%20ever%20been%20before (Accessed 13 April 2024).

KfW. 2018. ‘Social cohesion: Green power for Zaatari’. https://www.kfw.de/stories/society/social-cohesion/solar-plant-zaatari/ (Accessed 22 January 2024).

Khachab, Walid. 2010. ‘Sufis on Exile and Ghurba: Conceptualizing Displacement and Modern Subjectivity’. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 30(1): 58-68.

Khoser, Khalid. 2007. ‘Refugees, Transnationalism, and the State’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33(2): 233-254.

Khosravinik, Majid. 2010. ‘The representation of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in British newspapers: A critical discourse analysis.’ *Journal of Language and Politics* 9(1): 1-28.

Khoury, Philip Shukry. 1987. *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Khuri, Fuad. 1968. ‘The Etiquette of Bargaining in the Middle East’. *American Anthropologist* 70(4): 698-706.

Kilito, Abdelfattah. 2014. *Arabs and the Art of Storytelling: A Stranger Familiarity,* translated by Mbarek Sryfi and Erick Sellin. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Kim, Yoonjeon, Tahany Albeiz, Saeed Aburizaizah, Margaret Bridges, Bruce Fuller, and Manal Qutub. 2019. ‘Cognition and Participation: Classroom Reform in the Arab World’. *Comparative Education Review* 63(4): 529-561.

Kisliu, Anita and Lina Darras. 2018. ‘Highlighting the gender disparities in mental health among Syrian refugees in Jordan’. *Journal of Mental Health and Psychological Support in Conflict Affected Areas* 16(2): 140-146.

Kisliuk. Michelle. 2008. ‘(Un)doing Fieldwork: Sharing Songs, Sharing Lives’. In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 183-205. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Klarenberg, Kit. 2024. ‘Why is Jordan cracking down on support for Gaza?’. *The Cradle*, 10 April. https://thecradle.co/articles-id/24331 (Accessed 3 January 2024).

Kligman, Mark. 2009. *Maqām and Liturgy: Ritual, Music, and Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Kloetzer, Laure, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. 2018. ‘“My Course, My Lifeline!” Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za’atari Camp’. In C*hallenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe*, edited by Fabio Dovigo, 113-136. Boston: Brill Sense.

Klöster, Maren Olene. 2020. ‘From complexity to simplicity – how chasing success stories affects gendered NGO practices’. *Development in Practice* 30(4): 437-447.

Korpe, Marie, ed. 2004. *Shoot the Singer: Music Censorship Today*. London: Zed Books.

Krafft, Caroline, Maia Sieverding, Colette Salemi, and Caitlyn Keo. 2018. ‘Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Demographics, Livelihoods, Education, and Health’. Economic Research Forum Working Paper No. 1184 (April). https://erf.org.eg/publications/syrian-refugees-in-jordan-demographics-livelihoods-education-and-health/ (Accessed 5 December 2024).

Krause, Monika. *The Good Projects: Humanitarian Relief NGOs and the Fragmentation of Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Krause, Sandra, Holly Williams, Monica A Onyango, Samira Sami, Wilma Doedens, Noreen Giga, Erin Stone, and Barbara Tomczyk. 2015. 'Reproductive health services for Syrian refugees in Zaatri Camp and Irbid City, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: an evaluation of the Minimum Initial Services Package'. *Conflict and Health* 9(1:S4): 1-10.

Krause, Ulrike. 2017. 'Researching forced migration: critical reflections on research ethics during fieldwork'. Refugee Studies Centre University of Oxford Working Paper No. 123 (August). https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/researching-forced-migration-critical-reflections-on-research-ethics-during-fieldwork (Accessed 16 November 2019).

Krüger, Simone and Ruxandra Trandafoiu. 2014. 'Introduction: Touristic and Migrating Musics in Transit'. In *The Globalization of Musics in Transit*, edited by Simone Krüger and Ruxandra Trandafoiu, 1-31. New York: Routledge.

Kusserow, Adrie. 'Anthropoetry'. In *Crumpled Paper Boat*, edited by Anad Pandian and Stuart McLean, 71-90. Durham: Duke University Press.

Lagerkvist, Amanda. 2013. *Media and Memory in New Shanghai: Western Performances of Futures Past.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

LaLiga. 2024. 'LALIGA brings the excitement and passion of football back to the Za'atari and Azraq refugee camps'. 22 February. https://www.laliga.com/en-GB/news/laliga-brings-the-excitement-and-passion-of-football-back-to-the-zaatari-and-azraq-refugee-camps (Accessed 3 March 2024).

Landau, Carolyn. 2011. '"My own little Morocco at home" A Biographical account of migration, mediation and music consumption'. In *Migrating Music*, edited by Jason Toynbee and Byron Dueck, 38-54. London: Routledge.

Landmann, Helen, Robert Gaschler, and Anette Rohman. 2019. 'What is threatening about refugees? Identifying different types of threat and their association with emotional responses and attitudes towards refugee migration'. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 49 (7):1401-1420.

Lassiter, Luke Eric. 2005. 'Ethnography and Public Anthropology'. *Current Anthropology* 46(1): 83-106.

Laub, Zachary, Lindsay Maizland, Kali Robinson and Jonathan Masters. 2023. 'Syria's Civil War: The Descent into Horror'. *Council for Foreign Relations*, 20 December. https://www.cfr.org/article/syrias-civil-war (Accessed 26 March 2024)

Law, John. 2004. *After method: mess in social science research.* London: Routledge.

Ledwith, Alison. 2014. *Zaatari*: The *Instant City*. Boston: Affordable Housing Institute.

Lenette, Caroline and Noami Sunderland. 2016. '"Will there be music for us?" Mapping the health and well-being potential of participatory music practice with asylum seekers and refugees across contexts of conflict and refuge'. *Arts & Health* 8(1): 32-49.

Lenette, Caroline, Donna Weston, Patricia Wise, Naomi Sunderland, and Helen Bristed. 2016. 'Where words fail, music speaks: the impact of participatory music on the mental health and wellbeing of asylum seekers'. *Arts & Health* 8(2): 125-139.

Lenner, Katharina. 2020. 'Biting Our tongues": Policy Legacies and Memories in the Making of the Syrian Refugee Response in Jordan'. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 39(3): 273–298.

Lenner, Katharina and Lewis Turner. 2024. 'Beyond indicators: lessons from financing the Jordan Compact'. *Forced Migration Review* 74: 27-30.

Lesch, David. 2017. *Syria: The fall of the house of Assad*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

———. 2019. *Syria: A Modern History.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Leurs, Koen and Kevin Smets. 2018. 'Five questions for digital migration studies: Learning from digital connectivity and forced migration in(to) Europe'. *Social Media+Society* 4(1): 1-6.

LeVine, Mark and Jonas Otterbeck. 2021. 'Muslim Popular Music: An Enchanted Century'. In *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives*, edited by Ronald Lukens-Bull and Mark Woodward, 797-821. Switzerland: Springer Cham.

Lewis, John Lowell. 1992. *Ring of Liberation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Libal, Kathryn and Scott Harding. 2011. 'Humanitarian Alliances: Local and International NGO Partnerships and the Iraqi Refugee Crisis'. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* 9(2): 162-178.

Liimakka, Satu. 2011. 'I am my body: Objectification, empowering embodiment, and physical activity in Women's Studies students' accounts'. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 28(4): 441-460.

Lindholm Schulz, Helena. 2003. *The Palestinian Diaspora: Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland*. London: Routledge.

Lipsitz, George. 1993. 'Foreword'. In *My Music: Explorations of Music in Daily Life,* edited by Susan D. Crafts, Daniel Cavicchi, and Charles Keil, xi-xix. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Livingstone, Sonia. 2005a. ‘Critical debates in internet studies: reflections on an emerging field’. In *Mass Media and Society*, edited by James Curran and Michael Gurevitch, 9-28. London: SAGE.

———. 2005b. ‘In Defence of Privacy: Mediating the Public/Private Boundary at Home’. In *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere*, edited by Sonia Livingstone, 163–85. Bristol: Intellect Books.

———. 2005c. ‘On the Relation between Audiences and Publics’. In *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere*, edited by Sonia Livingstone, 17–41. Bristol: Intellect Books.

Lloyd, Moya. 1995. ‘Feminism, aerobics, and the politics of the body’. *Body & Society* 2(2): 79-98.

Lombardini, Simone and Franziska Mager. 2019. ‘Livelihoods in the Za’atari Camp: Impact evaluation of Oxfam’s Cash for Work activities in the Za’atari camp (Jordan)’. Oxfam Effectiveness Review Series (October). www.oxfam.org.uk/effectiveness (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Long, Katy and Jeff Crisp. 2010. ‘Migration, mobility and solutions: an evolving perspective’. *Forced Migration Review* 35: 56-57.

Maani, Nada. 2017. ’From Refugee Camp to Resilient city: Zaatari Refugee Camp, Jordan’. *Footprint* 10(2): 145-148.

MacNevin, Audrey. 2003. ‘Exercising options: Holistic health and technical beauty in gendered accounts of bodywork’. *The Sociological Quarterly* 44(2): 271-289.

Madanat, Hala, Ryan Lindsay, Steven R Hawks, and Ding Ding. 2011. ‘A comparative study of the culture of thinness and nutrition in university females in four countries’. *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 20(1): 102-108.

Maguire, Joseph and Louise Mansfield. 1998.' No-body's perfect: Women, aerobics, and the body beautiful'. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 15(2): 109-137.

Mahdi, Waleed. 2019. Representation without Recognition: A Survey of Arab American Images in Egyptian Cinema. *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 59(1): 89-111.

Mahmoud, Walaa Mohamed. 2021. 'The symbolism of the movie Al-Aragoz and its role in consolidating the values of Egyptian society (Analytical documentation study)'. *The Journal of Heritage and Design* (مجلة التراث والتصميم) 1(6): 292-314.

Maitland, Carleen and Ying Xu. 2015. 'A Social Informatics Analysis of Refugee Mobile Phone Use'. Paper presented at the 43rd Research Conference on Communication, Information and Internet Policy. 24 September. Arlington, Virginia. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2588300 (Accessed 3 March 2019).

Makdisi, Saree and Felicity Nussbaum. 2008. *The Arabian nights in historical context: between East and West.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Malabonga, Royce Lyssah. 2019. 'The Endangerment And Re-Creation Of An Intangible Cultural Heritage Element: The Case Of Ḥakawātī, Lebanon's Oral Storytelling Tradition'. *E-dialogos Annual Digital Journal on research in Conservation and Cultural Heritage* 7: 34-35.

Malkki, Liisa. 1995. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania.* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

———. 1997. 'News and Culture: Transitory Phenomena and the Fieldwork Tradition'. In *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science,* edited

by Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 86-101. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2007. ‘Tradition and Improvisation in Ethnographic Field Research’. In *Improvising Theory: Process and Temporality in Ethnographic Fieldwork*, edited by Allaine Cerwonka and Liisa Malkki, 162-187. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mallon, Tina and Monika Hoog Antink. 2021. ‘The Sound of Lost Homes –Introducing the COVER Model – Theoretical Framework and Practical Insight into Music Therapy With Refugees and Asylum Seekers’. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 21(2): 1-10.

Malti-Douglas, Fedwa. 1995. *Men Women and God(s): Nawal El Saadawi and Arab Feminist Poetics*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press.

Mandour, Sahar. 2016. *32*. Translated by Nicole Fares. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Mansour-Ille, Dina, Simone Haysom, Sebastian Ille, and Jessica Hagen-Zanker. 2019. ‘Jordan: Between the Making of a Nation and the Politics of Living’. In Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership World Commission on Forced Displacement: Research Report, 254-289. https://chumirethicsfoundation.org/documents/World-Commission-on-Forced-Displacement-Steering-Committee-Research-Report.pdf (Accessed 5 December 2024).

Marcus, Scott. 2004. ‘Creating a Community, Negotiating Among Communities: Performing Middle Eastern Music for a Diverse Middle Eastern and American Public’. In *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles*, edited by Ted Solís, 202–214. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2007. *Music in Egypt.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Markula, Prikko. 2004. 'Embodied movement knowledge in fitness and exercise education'. In *Knowing bodies, moving minds: Toward embodied teaching and learning*, edited by Liora Bresler, 61-76. Netherlands: Springer Dordrecht.

Maryniak-Halstead, Nadia. 2003. 'Ethnographic reflections'. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 12(1): 55-66.

Marzolph, Ulrich. 2007. *The Arabian nights in transnational perspective.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Massad, Joseph. 2001. *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Massialas, Byron and Samir A. Jarrar. 1987. 'Conflicts in Education in the Arab World: The Present Challenge'. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 9(1): 35-52.

———. 1991. *Arab Education in Transition: A Source Book.* London: Routledge.

Mason, Victoria. 'The Im/mobilities of Iraqi Refugees in Jordan: Pan-Arabism, 'Hospitality' and the Figure of the 'Refugee'. *Mobilities* 6(3): 353-373.

Matsumoto, Monica, Gabrielle Wimer, and Aisha Sethi. 2019. 'Health needs of refugees: port of arrival versus permanent camp settings'. *EMHJ* 25(5): 306-312.

McCann, Katherine, Megan Sienkiewicz and Monette Zard. 2023. 'The role of media narratives in shaping public opinion toward refugees: A comparative analysis'. IOM Migration Research Series 72: 1-24. https://publications.iom.int/books/mrs-no-72-role-media-narratives-shaping-public-opinion-toward-refugees-comparative-analysis (Accessed 2 February 2024).

McDonald, David, Moslih Kanaaneh, Stig-Magnus Thorsen, and Heather Bursheh. 2013. *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance since 1990*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

———. 2009. 'Poetics and the Performance of Violence in Israel/Palestine'. *Ethnomusicology* 53(1): 58-85.

———. 2010. 'Geographies of the Body: Violence and Manhood in Palestine'. *Ethnomusicology* 19(2): 191-214.

———. 2013a. *My Voice is My Weapon: Music, Nationalism and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance.* Durham: Duke University Press.

———. 2013b. 'Imaginaries of Exile and Emergence in Israeli Jewish and Palestinian Hip-Hop'. *The Drama Review* 57(3): 69-87.

———. 2019. 'Framing the "Arab Spring": Hip Hop, Social Media, and the American News Media'. *Journal of Folklore Research* 56(1): 105-130.

———. 2020. 'Hip-Hop Activism, Gendered Violence, and Vulnerability in Palestine'. *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 32(1): 26-43.

McHugo, John. 2014. *Syria: From the Great War to Civil War.* London: Saqi Books.

Melisse, Bernou, Edwin de Beurs and Eric F. van Furth. 2020. 'Eating disorders in the Arab world: a literature review'. *Journal of Eating Disorders* 8(59): 1-19.

Melloni, G. M., Parpaleix, L. A., & Pajak, J. 2016. 'Sanitation management and information technology in Za'atari refugee camp, Jordan'. Paper presented at the 39th WEDC International Conference. 1-15 July. Kumasi, Ghana. https://wedc-knowledge.lboro.ac.uk/resources/conference/39/Melloni-2509.pdf (Accessed 13 January 2019).

MeWe. 2024. ‘Our Story’ https://www.meweintl.org/ (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. ‘Program Methodology’. https://www.meweintl.org/about/methodology (Accessed 26 March 2024)

Middle East Eye. 2016. ‘Poet Mohammed El-Kurd: ‘A pen is like a weapon’. YouTube. https://youtu.be/ucOIu_T_HRw?si=Am6tVVDHh00P6tWd (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Minority Rights Group. 2023. ‘Palestinians in Jordan’. https://minorityrights.org/communities/palestinians-2/ (Accessed 12 December 2024).

Mokhiber, Craig. 2023. ‘Letter from Craig Mokhiber to United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’. 28 October. https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/24103463/craig-mokhiber-resignation-letter.pdf (Accessed 8 February 2024).

Momani, M. Aaliyah, Hamza Al-Duraidi, and Abeer Zaghmouri. 2023. ‘“Safety and Security are everything”: a qualitative study on the quality of life of Syrian refugees living in Za’atari camp’. *International Journal of Migration, Health, and Social Care* 19(3/4): 407-416.

Mommers, Christian and Margit van Wessel. 2009. ‘Structures, values, and interaction in field-level partnerships: the case of UNHCR and NGOs’. *Development in Practice* 19(2): 160-172.

Moore, Lindsey. 2008. *Arab, Muslim, Woman: Voice and Vision in Postcolonial Literature and Film*. London: Routledge.

MoPIC (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation). 2021. ‘Planning Ministry Urges International Community to Fund Jordan Response Plan 2021’. https://mop.gov.jo/En/NewsDetails/Planning_ministry_urges_international_community_to_fund__Jordan_Response_Plan_2021 (Accessed 29 May 2023).

Mosse, David. 2005. *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice*. London: Pluto Press.

Mostafanezhad, Mary. 2013. ‘“Getting in Touch with your Inner Angelina”: celebrity humanitarianism and the cultural politics of gendered generosity in volunteer tourism’. *Third World Quarterly* 34(3): 485-499.

Mrayan, Suhair and Amany Saleh. 2020. Female Refugees’ Perception of Children Education at Za’atari Camp-Jordan. *International Journal of Sociology of Education* 9(2) 191-212.

Mrayan, Suhair. 2016. ‘Female Refugees' Resilience and Coping Mechanisms at the Za'atari Camp- Jordan’. Ph.D diss., Arkansas State University, Jonesboro.

Muhawi, Ibrahim and Sharif Kanaanah. 1989. *Speak, bird, speak again: Palestinian Arab folktales*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mukasa, Sarah. 1999. ‘Are expatriate staff necessary in international development NGOs? A case study of an international NGO in Uganda’. Centre for Civil Society International Working Paper Series 4: 1-33. https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/29092/1/int-work-paper4.pdf (Accessed 5 July 2023).

Müller, Tanja R. 2013. ‘The Long Shadow of Band Aid Humanitarianism: revisiting the dynamics between famine and celebrity’. *Third World Quarterly* 34(3): 470-484.

Musaiger, Abdulrahman O. 2014. ‘Body size preferences among young women in five Arab countries: a cross-cultural story’. *Journal of Adolescent Medical Health* 26(3): 417-421.

Musiager, Abdulrahman and Mariam Al-Mannai. 2013. ‘Association between exposure to media and body weight concern among female university students in five arab countries: a preliminary cross-cultural study’. *Journal of biosocial sciences* 46: 240-247.

Music for Life International. 2019. ‘Initiatives’. https://music4lifeinternational.org/initiatives/ (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Musicians without Borders. 2024. ‘About Us’. https://www.musicianswithoutborders.org/org/about-us/ (Accessed 12 December 2024).

Naser, Akram Rafaa. 2021. *ألغنية الشعبية في تراث جبل العرب (Popular song in the heritage of Jabal al-Arab).* Jabal Al Arab Encyclopaedia Online.

Nassar, Hala Kh. 2006. ‘Stories from under Occupation: Performing the Palestinian Experience’ *Theatre Journal* 58(1): 15-37.

Nasser-Eddin, Nof. 2017. ‘Gender performativity in diaspora: Syrian refugee women in the UK’. In *A gendered approach to the Syrian refugee crisis*, edited by Jane Freedman, Zeynep Kivilcim, Nurcan Özgür Baklacioğlu, 142-155. New York: Routledge.

Nawyn, Stephanie J. 2010. ‘Gender and Migration: Integrating Feminist Theory into Migration Studies’. *Sociology Compass* 4(9): 749-765.

Nelson, Kristina. 2001. *The Art of Reciting the Qur’an.* 2nd edn. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

Nettl, Bruno. 2005. *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts.* Champaign: University of Illinois.

Nevo, Joseph. 1986. 'Syria and Jordan: The Politics of Subversion'. In *Syria Under Assad*, edited by Moshe Maoz and Avner Yaniv, 140-156. London: Routledge.

Nicholson, Rebecca. 2020. 'Once upon a time in Iraq review – a gripping, harrowing masterpiece'. *The Guardian*, 13 July. https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2020/jul/13/once-upon-a-time-in-iraq-review-a-gripping-harrowing-masterpiece (Accessed 13 April 2024).

Niconchuk, Michael, Mohammed Kheir Refai, Amina Azmat, Vivian Khedari DePierro, Justine Hardy, Basma Jaber, and Jonathan Niconchuk. 2020. *The Field Guide for Barefoot Psychology.* Boston: Beyond Conflict.

Nieri, Tanya and Elizabeth Hughes. 2016. 'All about having fun: Women's experience of Zumba fitness'. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 33(2): 1-33.

———. 2023. 'Zumba Instructor Strategies: Constraining or Liberating for Women Participants?' *Leisure Sciences* 45(7): 684-701.

Nooshin, Laudan. 2005. 'Subversion and Countersubversion: Power, Control and Meaning in the New Iranian Pop Music'. In *Music, Power and Politics*, edited by Annie J. Randall, 231-272. New York: Routledge.

———. 2005. 'Subversion and Countersubversion: Power, Control and Meaning in the New Iranian Pop Music'. In *Music, Power and Politics*, edited by Annie J. Randall, 231-272. New York: Routledge.

———. 2009. ‘Prelude: Power and the Play of Music’. In *Music and the Play of Power in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia,* edited by Laudan Nooshin, 1-31. Ashgate: Farnham.

———. ed. 2009. *Music and the Play of Power in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia.* Ashgate: Farnham.

———. 2011. ‘Hip-hop Tehran: Migrating style, musical meanings, marginalized voices’. In *Migrating Music*, edited by Jason Toynbee and Byron Dueck, 92-111. Routledge: London.

———. 2015. *Iranian Classical Music: The Discourses and Practice of Creativity.* Ashgate: Farnham.

———. 2017. ‘Whose liberation? Iranian popular music and the fetishization of resistance’. In *Popular Communication* 15(3): 163-191.

———. 2018. ‘“Our Angel of Salvation”: Toward an Understanding of Iranian Cyberspace as an Alternative Sphere of Musical Sociality’. *Ethnomusicology* 62(3): 342-374.

O’Brien, Edna. 2019. *Girl.* London: Faber and Faber.

O’Connell, John Morgan and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, eds. 2010. *Music and Conflict.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Ó’Laoire, Lillis. 2003. ‘Fieldwork in common places: An ethnographer’s experiences in Tory Island’. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 12(1): 113-136.

O’Reilly, Karen. 2012. *Ethnographic Methods*. London: Routledge.

Ögut, Evrim Hikmet. 2021a. ‘Music, Migration, and Public Space: Syrian Street Music in the Political Context’. *Arts* 10(71): 1-10.

———. 2021b. ‘The Short History of Syrian Street Music in Istanbul: Challenges and Potentials’. *Music and Minorities* 1: 1-28.

Olaimat, Farhan and Khalaf Al-Tahat. 2022. ‘The Situation of Communication and Media in the Syrian Refugee Camps in Jordan (The Zaatari Camp as a Model)’. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences* 49(1): 44–61.

Oliveros, Pauline. 2005. *Deep Listening: A Composer’s Sound Practice.* Bloomington: iUniverse.

Olwan, Mohamed Y. 2009. ‘Iraqi Refugees in Jordan: Legal Perspective’. Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) Analytic and Synthetic Notes 22. https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/11253 (Accessed 1 February 2024).

Otterbeck, Jonas. 2012. ‘Music and Islam’. *Islam* 6: 227-233.

———. 2021. *The Awakening of Islamic Pop Music*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Owens, Patricia. 2009. ‘Reclaiming “Bare Life”?: Against Agamben on Refugees’. *International Relations* 23(4): 567-582.

Oxfam. 2022. ‘Syrian refugees pushed to the brink as Za’atari refugee camp turns 10’. *Oxfam,* 29 July. https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/syrian-refugees-pushed-brink-zaatari-refugee-camp-turns-10 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Palmberger, Monika. 2022. ‘Refugees enacting (digital) citizenship through placemaking and care practices near and far’. *Citizenship Studies* 26(6): 781-798.

Pamies, Antonio, Lei Chunyi, and Margaret Craig. 2015. '"Fruits are Results": On the Interaction between Universal Archi-Metaphors, Ethno-Specific Culturemes and Phraseology'. *Journal of Social Sciences* 11(3): 227-247.

Parker, Deborah and Dana Mufti. 2016. 'Music Therapy Meets the Syrian Refugee Community: A Pilot Project for Psychosocial Music Training'. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 25(1): 56-57.

Parker, Deborah, Liliane Younes, Mohamad Orabi, Simon Procter, Milena Paulini. 2021. 'Music therapy as a protection strategy against toxic stress for Palestinian refugee children in Lebanon: A pilot research study'. *Approaches: Mousikotherapeia kai Eidikī Mousikī Paidagōgikī* 15(1) (2023): 58-81.

Pasha, Suraina. 2021. 'Humanitarianism, securitization, and containment in Jordan's Za'atari Refugee Camp'. *British Journal of Sociology* 72(4): 1141-1155.

Pavlicevic, Mercédès and Angela Impey. 2013. '*Deep listening:* towards an imaginative reframing of health and well-being practices in international development'. *Arts and Health* 5(3): 238-252.

Pengelley, Ryan and Anne Irwin. 2017. 'Twenty-first century narratives from Afghanistan: Storytelling, morality, and war'. In *The Routledge Handbook of War and Society: Iraq and Afghanistan,* edited by Steven Carlton-Ford and Morten G. Ender, 44-55. London: Routledge.

Pérez, Michael Vicente. 2011. 'Identifying Palestinians: Palestinian Refugees and the Politics of Ethno-National Identity in Jordan'. Ph.D diss., Michigan State University, Anthropology.

Peteet, Julie. 2005. *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

———. 2007. ‘Problematizing a Palestinian Diaspora’. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39(4): 627-646.

Peters, F.E., ‘The Nabateans in Hawran’. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 97(3): 263-277.

Pettan, Svanibor, ed.1998. *Music, Politics and War: Views from Croatia.* Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research: Zagreb.

———. 2010. ‘Music in War, Music for Peace: Experiences in Applied Ethnomusicology’. In *Music and Conflict,* edited by John Morgan O’Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, 177-192. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Pew Research Centre. 2009. ‘Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Muslim Population’. https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2009/10/Muslimpopulation.pdf (Accessed 18 January 2024).

PfC (Playing for Change). 2024. ‘Zaatari Music Program’. https://playingforchange.org/zaatari-music-program/ (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Phillips, Christopher and Nicholas Kitchen. 2012. ‘After the Arab Spring: power shift in the Middle East? Syria’s bloody Arab Spring’. *LSE IDEAS* 11: 37-42. https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43464/1/After%20the%20Arab%20Spring_Syria%E2%80%99s%20bloody%20Arab%20Spring(lsero).pdf (Accessed 12 April 2023).

Phillips, Christopher. 2016[2013]. *The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

———. 2022. ‘The International System and the Syrian Civil War’. *International Relations* 36(3): 358-381.

Pilzer, Joshua D. 2015. ‘The Study of Survivor’s Music’. In *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, edited by Svanibor Pettan and Jeff Todd Titon, 481-510. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Poché, Christian. 1995. *La musique arabo-andalouse*. Madrid: Cité de la Musique.

‘Poet with Sweet Feelings’ (شاعر عذب المساعر) (Blog Username). 2010. ‘Popular Wedding Songs from the City of Hebron and Its Villages’ (اغاني الاعراس الشعبية في مدينة الخليل وقراها)’, *Frinkbook YouTube* (Blog), 21 November. https://k234.yoo7.com/t142-topic#251 (Accessed 30 March 2024).

Ponzanesi, Sandra. 2019. ‘Migration and Mobility in a Digital Age: (Re)Mapping Connectivity and Belonging’. *Television & New Media* 20(6): 547-557.

Pratt, Nicola. 2020. ‘Making Sense of the Politics of the Egyptian Revolution in and through Popular Culture’. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 52: 531-535.

Price, Matthew. 2009. *Rethinking Asylum.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Provence, Michael. 2003. ‘A nationalist rebellion without nationalists? Popular mobilizations in mandatory Syria 1925-1926’. In *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives,* edited by Nadine Méouchy and Peter Sluglett, 673-692. Leiden: Konninklikje Brill.

Questscope. 2014. ‘Music in Zaatari: Building Community, Creating Opportunity’. 1 September. https://www.questscope.org/en/blog/music-zaatari-building-community-creating-opportunity (Accessed 26 March 2014).

———. 2019. ‘Creative Writing: Self-expression, tradition, and healing through creativity in Za’atari Refugee Camp’. 30 July. https://www.questscope.org/en/creativity-hub/creative-writing (Accessed 2 August 2023).

Racy, A.J. 1981. ‘Music in Contemporary Cairo: A Comparative Overview’. *Asian Music* 13(1): 4-26.

———. ‘A Dialectical Perspective on Musical Instruments: The East-Mediterranean Mijwiz’. *Ethnomusicology* 38(1): 37-57.

———. 2004. *Making Music in the Arab World: The Culture and Artistry of Ṭarab.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2019. ‘Theoretical Perspectives on Weddings, Locally and Beyond’. In *Music in the American Diasporic Wedding,* edited by Inna Naroditskaya, 21-43. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ramnarine, Tina. 2007. ‘Musical Performance in the Diaspora: Introduction’. *Ethnomusicology Forum* 16(1): 1-17.

Rasheed, Parveen. 1998. ‘Perception of body weight and self-reported eating and exercise behaviour among obese and non-obese women in Saudi Arabia’. *Public Health* 112: 409-414.

Rasmussen, Anne K. 2002. ‘The Popular Music of Arab Detroit.’ In *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 6: The Middle East*, edited by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds, 279–287. New York: Routledge.

———. 2004. ‘Bilateral Negotiations in Bimusicality: Insiders, Outsiders, and the ‘Real Version’ in Middle Eastern Music Performance’. In *Performing*

Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles, edited by Ted Solís, 215–228. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2005. "'An Evening in the Orient': The Middle Eastern Nightclub in America'. In *Belly Dance: Orientalism, Transnationalism, and Harem Fantasy*, edited by Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young, 172–206. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers.

———. 2010a. 'The Qur'an in Indonesian Daily Life: The Public Project of Musical Oratory'. *Ethnomusicology* 45(1): 30-57.

———. 2010b. *Women, the recited Qur'an, and Islamic music in Indonesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2016. "The Music of Arab Detroit: A Musical Mecca in the Midwest." In *Musics of Multicultural America: A Study of Twelve Musical Communities*, edited by Kip Lornell and Anne K. Rasmussen, 109–136. New York: Schirmer.

———. 2019. 'Framing the Roundtable'. In "Call and Response: SEM President's Roundtable 2016, 'Ethnomusicological Responses to the Contemporary Dynamics of Migrants and Refugees.' *Ethnomusicology* 63(2): 279–314.

Rasmussen, Susan. 1995. 'Zarraf: a Tuareg Women's Wedding Dance'. *Ethnology* 34(1): 1-16.

Recchi, Ettore and Mirna Safi. 2024. *Handbook of Human Mobility and Migration.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.

Rechberger, Herman. 2018. *The Rhythm in Arabian Music.* Helsinki: Fennica Gehrman.

Reyes, Adelaida. 1989. 'Music and Tradition: From Native to Adopted Land through the Refugee Experience'. *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 21: 25-35.

———. 1990. ‘Music and the Refugee Experience’. *The World of Music* 32(3): 3-21.

———. 1999. *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free: Music and the Vietnamese Refugee Experience.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

———. 2010. ‘Asymmetrical Relations: Conflict and Music as Human Response’. In *Music and Conflict*, edited by John Morgan O’Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, 126-138. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Riach, George and Zoe James. 2016. ’Strengthening the Rule of Law on the Margins: Experiences from Za’atari Refugee Camp, Jordan’. *The International Journal of Human Rights* 20(4): 1-18.

Rice, Timothy. 2008. ‘Toward a Mediation of Field Methods and Field Experience in Ethnomusicology’. In *Shadows in the Field*, edited by Greg Barz and Timothy Cooley, 42-61. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2014. ‘Ethnomusicology in Times of Trouble’. *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 46: 191-209.

Ritter, Jonathan and Martin Daughtry, eds. 2007. *Music in the Post-9/11 World.* New York: Routledge.

Ritholtz, Samuel and Rebecca Buxton. 2021. ‘Queer kinship and the rights of refugee families’. *Migration Studies* 9(3): 1075-1095.

_____2022. ‘Sanctuary after Asylum: Addressing a Gap in the Political Theory of Refuge’. *American Political Science Review* 117(3): 1166-1171.

Robertson, Craig. 2010. ‘Music and Conflict Transformation in Bosnia’. In *Music and Arts in Action* 2(2): 38-55.

Robson, James. 1938. *Tracts on Listening to Music*. London: The Royal Asiatic Society.

Rosaldo, Renato, Smadar Lavie, and Kirin Narayan. 1993. 'Introduction: Creativity in Anthropology'. In *Creativity/Anthropology,* edited by Renato Rosaldo, Smadar Lavie, and Kirin Narayan, 1-8. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Rosaldo, Renato. 1989. *Culture & Truth: the remaking of social analysis.* Boston: Beacon Press.

———. 2013. *The Day of Shelley's Death: the poetry and ethnography of grief.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Rosenthal, Joshua M. 2018. 'Capoeira and Globalization'. In *Imagining Globalization: Language, Identities, and Boundaries,* edited by Ho Hon Leung, Matthew Hendley, Robert Compton, and Brian Haley, 145-163. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rovsing Olsen, Miriam. 2002. 'Contemporary issues of gender and music'. *In The Garland Encyclopaedia of World Music Volume 6: The Middle East*, edited by Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds, 299-307. New York and London: Routledge.

Roya News. 2020. 'توقيف مدير عام قناة رؤيا ومدير أخبارها' ('The arrest of the general manager of Roya TV and its news director'). 10 April. https://royanews.tv/news/211028?1586503090 (Accessed 1 October 2022).

Ruano-Posada, Violeta. 2014. 'Researching Music in the Saharawi Refugee Camps: The Challenges of Doing Fieldwork in Semi-permanent Desert Settlements'. *The SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research* 6: 116-125.

Sabry, Tarik. 2010. *Cultural Encounters in the Arab World: On Media, the Modern, and the Everyday.* London: I.B. Tauris.

Sahner, Christian. 2014. *Among the Ruins: Syria Past and Present.* London: Hurst.

Saïd, Edward. 1991. *Orientalism.* London: Penguin.

Saleh, Lamis. 2020. 'A Friend or a Foe in Exile: An Experimental Analysis of Punishment in the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan'. *Social Science Research Network,* 3 June. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3594357 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Salehyan, Idean. 2007. 'Transnational rebels: neighboring states as sanctuary for rebel groups'. *World Politics* 59(2): 217-242.

Salhi, Kamal. 2014. 'Introduction: The paradigm of preforming Islam beyond the political rhetoric'. In *Music, Culture and Identity in the Muslim World,* edited by Kamal Salhi, 1-14. London: Routledge.

Salih Gulbay. 2021. 'Exploring the Use of Hip Hop-Based Music Therapy to Address Trauma in Asylum Seeker and Unaccompanied Minor Migrant Youth'. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 21(3): 1-16.

Salih, Shakeeb. 2006. 'The British-Druze connection and the Druze rising of 1896 in the Hawran'. *Middle Eastern Studies* 13: 251-257.

Salim, Nesreen, Shroq Meyad, Faleh Sawair, Julian Satterthwaite and Samiha Sartawi. 2021. 'Satisfaction with healthcare services among refugees in Zaatari camp in Jordan'. *BMC Health Services Research* 21(507): 1-8.

Sassoon, Joseph. 2009. *The Iraqi Refugees: The New Crisis in the Middle East.* London: IB Tauris.

Scalettaris, Giulia. 2009. ‘Refugees and mobility’. *Forced Migration Review*. 33: 58-59.

Scheding, Florian, Derek Scott, Eric Levi, Justin Williams, Catherine Tackley, and Tom Western. 2018. ‘“Who is British Music?” Placing Migrants in National Music History.’ *Twentieth Century Music* 15(3): 439-492.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1995. ‘The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology’. *Current Anthropology* 36(3): 409-440.

———. 2004. ‘Parts Unknown’. *Ethnography* 5(1): 29-73.

Schuck, Sandy, Matthew Kearney and Kevin Burden. 2016. ‘Exploring Mobile Learning in the Third Space’. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education* 26(2): 121-137.

Scott, Melissa. 2021. ‘The Call to Prayer and the Sonic Materiality of Displacement in Amman, Jordan’. Paper presented at The Society for Ethnomusicology 66th Annual Meeting. 31 October. Online.

Seeger, Anthony. 2008. ‘Theories Forged in the Crucible of Action: The Joys, Dangers and Potentials of Advocacy and Fieldwork’. In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 271-288. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2010. ‘The Suyá and the White Man: Forty-five Years of Musical Diplomacy in Brazil’. In *Music and Conflict,* edited by John Morgan O’Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, 107-125. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Seraj Libraries. 2024. ‘Storytelling Program: Resilience through Narrative’. https://www.serajlibraries.org/storytelling-center (Accessed 8 January 2024).

Sewell, Abby. 2017. ‘In Arab world, an ancient tradition of oral storytelling gets a 21st century spin’. *Nieman Storyboard*, 6 June. https://niemanstoryboard.org/2017/06/06/in-arab-world-an-ancient-tradition-of-oral-storytelling-gets-a-21st-century-spin/ (Accessed 8 January 2024).

Shacknove, Andrew. 1985. ‘Who Is a Refugee?’. *Ethics* 95(2): 274-284.

Shaffi, Sarah. 2022. ‘Hakawatis: Reclaiming the Arabian Nights’. *The New Arab*, 15 December. https://www.newarab.com/features/hakawatis-reclaiming-arabian-nights (Accessed 8 January 2024).

Shah, Ritesh. 2017. ‘Evaluation of NRC’s education programming in the camps of Jordan’. Norwegian Refugee Council Evaluation Report (December). https://www.flyktninghjelpen.no/globalassets/pdf/evaluations/camps-education-clean.pdf (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Shakatreh, Mamoun and Ahmad Mohamad Ahmad Mansour. 2023. ‘Risk Management Ramifications – Syrian Za’atari Refugee Camp during COVID19 in Jordan’. *Journal of Financial and Business Studies* (مجلة الدراسات المالية والتجارية) 1: 39-61.

Shaker, Saher Nafaa. 2021. ‘المدرجات النهرية لوادي حوران (The River Terraces of Wadi Hawran)’. *Al-Adab Journal* 44: 71-100.

Shaltout, Hanaa Hosni. 2024. ‘The effectivenss of some recreational activities on improving incompatible behavior among children of determination (learnable mental handicapped people). *Sinai Journal of Sports Science* 1: 143-168.

Shannon, Jonathan Holt. 2003a. Sultans of Spin: Syrian Sacred Music on the World Stage. *American Anthropologist* 105(2): 266-277.

———. 2003b.‘“Al-Muwashshaḥât” and "al-Qudûd al-Halabiya": Two Genres in the Aleppine "Waṣla"’. *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 37(1): 82-101.

———. 2005. ‘Metonyms of modernity in contemporary Syrian music and painting’. *Ethnos* 70(3): 361-386.

———. 2006. *Among the Jasmine Trees: Music and Modernity in Contemporary Syria.* Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

———. 2011. ‘Suficized Musics of Syria at the Intersection of Heritage and the War on Terror; Or “A Rumi with a View”’. In *Muslim Rap, Halal Soaps, and Revolutionary Theater: Artistic Developments in the Muslim World*, edited by Karin van Nieukerk, 257-274. Austin: Texas University Press.

———. 2012. ‘Night Falls Silent in Damascus’. *Cultural Anthropology Online* (30).

———. 2015. ‘Jewish Fingers and Phantom Musical Presences: Remembrance of Jewish Musicians in Twentieth-Century Aleppo, Syria’. In *Musical Exodus: Al-Andalus and its Jewish Diasporas*, edited by Ruth F. Davis, 125-139. Rowman and Littlefield: Maryland.

———. 2015. ‘Musical and Culinary Itineraries around the Mediterranean: Taking Cultures Offshore’. In *Oxford Handbook Topics in Music*, edited by The Oxford Handbooks Editorial Board. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935321.013.41 (Accessed 4 January 2024).

———. 2015. *Performing al-Andalus: Music and Nostalgia across the Mediterranean.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

———. 2018. “Old Anxieties in New Skins: The Project of al-Andalus and Nostalgic Dwelling in the New Mediterranean’. In *Critically Mediterranean*, edited by Yasser Elhariry, 113-218. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

———. 2019. ‘From silence into song: Affective horizons and nostalgic dwelling among Syrian musicians in Istanbul’ *Rast Musicology Journal* 7(2): 2169-2180.

———. 2022. ‘Playing the Street: Syrian Musicians in Istanbul’. *Arab Stages*: 1-21.

Shaoul, Jean. 2024. ‘Jordan clamps down on protests against Israel’s Gaza genocide’. *World Socialist Web Site*, 8 April. https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2024/04/08/tamp-a08.html (Accessed 3 January 2024).

Sheehy, Daniel. 1992. ‘A Few Notions about Philosophy and Strategy in Applied Ethnomusicology’. *Ethnomusicology* 36(3): 323-336.

Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 1998. *Let Jasmine Rain Down.* Chicago: University of Chicago.

Shewcharan, Narmala. 1994. *Tomorrow is Another Day*. Leeds: Peepal Tree Books.

Shokouhi, Mohammad Ali and Abdullah Yusof. 2013. ‘The Influence of Islamic Culture and Holy Quran on performing Arts: Relating to Sacred Vocal Music’. Proceedings of The 3rd Annual Quranic Conference. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/162012376.pdf (Accessed 12 December 2023).

Silverstein, Shayna. 2012. ‘Syria’s Radical Dabka’. *Middle East Report* 263: 33-37.

———. 2013. ‘Transforming Space: The Production of Contemporary Syrian Art Music’. In *The Arab Avant-Garde: Music, Politics, Modernity,* edited by Thomas Burkhalter, Kay Dickinson and Benjamin Harbert, 37-73. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

———. 2015. ‘Cultural liberalization or marginalization? The cultural politics of Syrian folk dance during social market reform’. In *Syria from Reform to Revolt,*

edited by Christa Salamandra and Leif Stenberg, 77-91. New York: Syracuse University Press.

———. 2016. ‘Public Pleasures: Negotiating Gender and Morality through Syrian Popular Dance’. In *Islam and Popular Culture*, edited by Martin Stokes, Mark LeVine, and Karin van Nieuwkerk, 278-296. New York: University of Texas Press.

———. 2019a. ‘Disorientating Sounds’. In *Remapping Sound Studies*, edited by Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes, 241-259. Duke: Duke University Press.

———. 2019b. ‘On Sirens and Lamp Posts: Sound, Space, and Affective Politics’. *Music and Politics* 13(1): 1-9.

———. 2022. ‘Singing Impassibility: Song, Seas, and Mediterranean Migration’. In *Encounters in Ethnomusicology: Essays in Honor of Philip V. Bohlman*, edited by Jaime Jones, Michael Figueroa, Timothy Rommen, 203. Münster: Lit Verlag.

———. 2024. *Fraught Balance: The Embodied Politics of Dabke Dance Music in Syria.* Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Sirisena, Mihirini. 2014. ‘A love letter’. *Journal of comparative research in anthropology and sociology* 5(2): 19-28.

Sistema Europe. 2017. ‘What is El Sistema?’ https://www.sistemaeurope.org/What_is_El_Sistema/ (Accessed 12 December 2024).

Slobin, Mark. 1994. ‘Music in Diaspora: The View from Euro-America’. *Diaspora* 3(3): 243-251.

Smadi Ahmad and Alla Shadeh. 2018. ‘The Effectiveness of Rational Emotive Behavior Program in Reducing Abusive Behaviours Among a Sample of Refugees

Mothers in Zaatari Camp'. *International Journal of Research in Education and Psychology* 6(1): 12-31.

Smith, Kate and Louise Waite. 2019. 'New and enduring narratives of vulnerability: Rethinking stories about the figure of the refugee'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45(13): 2289-2307.

Snir, Reuven. 1999. 'The Palestinian al-Ḥakawātī Theatre: A Brief History'. *The Arab Studies Journal* 7(2): 57-71.

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights). 2023. 'Syrian Revolution 12 years on: Nearly 614,000 persons killed since the onset of the revolution in March 2011'. 15 March. https://www.syriahr.com/en/291981/ (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Soulié, Floriane. 2018. 'An Urbanizing Camp? Zaatari Syrian Refugee Camp in Jordan'. *Conflits et Migrations*, 9 May. https://lajeh.hypotheses.org/1076 (Accessed 26 March 2024)

Sounds of Palestine. 2025. 'About'. https://soundsofpalestine.org/about/ (Accessed 13 December 2024).

Spivak, Gayatri. 1988. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'. In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture,* edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271-313. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Sreberny, Annabelle and Gholam Khiabany. 2010. *Blogistan: The Internet and Politics in Iran.* London: I. B. Tauris.

Srivastava, Ambey. 2017. 'Documenting 'Success' in Social Development Projects: A Necessity, Skill and Challenge.' *Journal of Health Management* 19(1): 16-27.

Stanyek, Jason, and Sumanth Gopinath, eds. 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music* (Volumes 1 and 2). New York: Oxford University Press.

Stave, Svein Erik, Tewodros Aragie Kebede and Maha KAttaa. 2021. 'Impact of work permits on decent work for Syrians in Jordan'. International Labor Organization Report (September). https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@arabstates/@ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_820822.pdf (Accessed 16 February 2024).

Steingo, Gavin. 2017. 'Actors and Accidents in South African Electronic Music: An Essay on Multiple Ontologies'. *Contemporary Music Review*: 1-21.

Stewart-Brown, Sarah and Kulum Janmohamed. 2008. 'Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale: User Guide Version 1'. Warwick Medical School. University of Warwick (June) http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/resources/user-guide.pdf (Accessed 12 September 2023).

Stige, Brynjulf, Gary Ansdell, Cochavit Elefant and Mercédès Pavlicevic, eds. 2010. *Where Music Helps: Community Music Therapy in Action and Reflection.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Stock, Jonathan P.J and Chou Chiener. 2008. 'Fieldwork at Home: European and Asian Perspectives'. In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 108-124. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stokes, Martin and Ruth Davis, eds. 1996. *Popular Music: Middle East Issue* 15(3).

Stokes, Martin. 1992. *The Arabesk Debate: Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

———. 2003. ‘Music nationalism and transnationalism in the “New Global Order”’. *Revista Portuguesa de Musicologia* 13: 163-180.

———. 2020. ‘Migration and Music’. *Music Research Annual:* 1-24.

Stoller, Paul. 2016. ‘Writing for the Future’. In *The Anthropologist As Writer: Genres and Contexts in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Helena Wulff, 118-128. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

———. 2017. ‘Storytelling, Rouch, and the Anthropological Future’. *Journal des africanistes* 87(1-2): 368-378.

Storsve, Vegard, Inger Anne Westby, and Even Ruud. 2010. ‘Hope and Recognition: A Music Project among Youth in a Palestinian Refugee Camp’. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* 10(1). https://voices.no/index.php/voices/article/view/1853/1616 (Accessed 3 November 2019).

Strathern, Marilyn. 1987. ‘The Limits of Auto-Anthropology’. In *Anthropology at Home,* edited by Robert Jackson, 16-37. London: Tavistock Publications.

Sugarman, Jane. 1997. *Engendering song: singing and subjectivity at Prespa Albanian weddings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sullivan, Denis and Sarah Tobin. 2014. ‘Security and Resilience Among Syrian Refugees in Jordan’. *Middle East Report Online*, 14 October. https://merip.org/2014/10/security-and-resilience-among-syrian-refugees-in-jordan/ (Accessed 26 March 2024)

Suri, Manjula, Namita Saini, and Rekha Sharma. 2017. ‘Physiological Responses of Zumba: An Overview Understanding the Popular Fitness Trend’. *Indian Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Applied Science* 7(4): 23-31.

Sweers, Britta. 2010. 'Music Against Facism: Applied Ethnomusicology in Rostock (Germany)'. In *Music and Conflict*, edited by John Morgan O'Connell and Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco, 193-216. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Sykes, Jim. 2018. *The Musical Gift: Sonic Generosity in Post-War Sri Lanka.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Symons, Jessica and Rodolfo Maggio. 2014. '"Based on a true story": Ethnography's impact as a narrative form' *Journal of comparative research in anthropology and sociology* 5(2): 1

Syria Nationality. 2024. 'Refugees from Syria in Jordan'. https://www.syrianationality.org/index.php?id=37 (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Szeto, Hannah. 2023. 'Jordan: From Shelters to Dwellings: The Za'atari Refugee Camp'. *The Middle East Journal* 76(4): 558.

Tan, Sooi Beng. 2010. 'Crossing Stylistic Boundaries and Transcending Ethnicity through the Performing Arts'. In *Building Bridges, Crossing Boundaries: Everyday Forms of Inter-Ethnic Peace Building in Malaysia*, edited by Francis Loh Kok Wah. Selangor: The Ford Foundation, Jakarta.

———. 2015. 'Cultural Engagement and Ownership Through Participatory Approaches in Applied Ethnomusicology'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Ethnomusicology*, edited by Svanibor Pettan and Jeff Todd Titon, 109-133. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Terry, Fiona. 2002. *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Ticktin, Miriam. 2011 ‘The gendered human of humanitarianism’. *Gender & History* 23(2): 250-265.

Tobin, Sarah A. 2018. ‘Vernacular Politics, Sectarianism, and National Identity Among Syrian Refugees in Jordan’. *Religions* 9(7): 1-13.

Todd Titon, Jeff. 2008. ‘Knowing Fieldwork’. In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 25-41. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Toma, Shivan Shlaymoon. 2022. ‘A Study of Food and Drink Metaphors in Iraqi Syriac’. CREID Working Paper No. 13, Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development. https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/articles/report/A_Study_of_Food_and_Drink_Metaphors_in_Iraqi_Syriac/26429170?file=48182323 (Accessed 12 September 2024).

Touati, Samia. 2018. ‘Wine, love or divine love? Analysing three short traditional Algerian Sha‘bī Songs’. *The Journal of North African Studies* 25(2): 167-188.

Toynbee, Jason and Byron Dueck, eds. 2011. *Migrating Music.* New York: Routledge.

Tracy, Ibtisam. 2010. *The Eye of the Sun (‘Ayn Al-Shams)*. Beirut: Arab Scientific Publishers, Inc.

———. 2021. *Daughters of Lahlouha (Binät Laḥalūḥa)*. UAE: Thaqafa Publishing and Distribution LLC.

Turino, Thomas. 2020. *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Turkle, Sherry. 2011. *Alone together: why we expect more from technology and less from each other.* New York: Basic Books.

Turner, Lewis. 2015. ‘Explaining the (non-)encampment of Syrian refugees: security, class and the labour market in Lebanon and Jordan’. *Mediterranean Politics* 20(3): 386-404.

Turner, Edward Lewis. 2018. ‘Challenging Refugee Men: Humanitarianism and Masculinities in Za‘atari Refugee Camp.’ Ph.D diss., SOAS University of London.

Turner, Lewis. 2023. ‘Who is a Refugee in Jordan? Hierarchies and Exclusions in the Refugee Recognition Regime’. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 36(4): 877-896.

Turner, Simon. 2005. ‘Suspended Spaces—Contesting Sovereignties in a Refugee Camp’. In *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants and States in the Postcolonial World*, edited Finn Stepputat and Thomas Hansen, 312-332. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 2012. *Politics of Innocence: Hutu Identity, Conflict and Camp Life*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

Turton, David. 2003. ‘Conceptualising Forced Migration’. Refugee Studies Centre Working Paper Series No. 12. https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/files-1/wp12-conceptualising-forced-migration-2003.pdf (Accessed online 23 January 2019).

Twigt, Mirjam A. 2018. ‘The Mediation of Hope: Digital Technologies and Affective Affordances within Iraqi Refugee Households in Jordan’. *Social Media + Society*: 1-14.

UEFA Foundation. 2020. ‘Football in Zaatari refugee camp’. 21 April. https://uefafoundation.org/action/football-in-zaatari-refugee-camp/ (Accessed 8 June 2021).

UNFPA. 2023. ‘Syria’. https://www.unfpa.org/syria (Accessed 26 March 2024).

UNHCR. 2016. ‘Site Planning and Shelter: Camp Restructure Project Report (April 2016)’. https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/site-planning-and-shelter-camp-restructure-project-report-zaatari-refugee-camp-april (Accessed 26 June 2024).

———. 2020b. ‘These refugee chess masters…’ Facebook Video. 29 September. https://www.facebook.com/13204463437/videos/249197916490913/?__so__=watchlist&__rv__=video_home_www_playlist_video_list&locale=mk_MK (Accessed 3 March 2021).

———. 2021. ‘Refugee Camps Explained’. 6 April. https://www.unrefugees.org/news/refugee-camps-explained/ (Accessed 26 March 2024).

———. 2024a. ‘Dadaab Refugee Complex. https://www.unhcr.org/ke/dadaab-refugee-complex (Accessed 26 March 2024)

USA for UNHCR. 2024. ‘Syria Refugee Crisis Explained’. 23 December. https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/#:~:text=Since%202011%2C%20more%20than%2014,live%20below%20the%20poverty%20line (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Unity Centre for Arab Studies. 2004. *Arabic Music: Questions of Authenticity and Innovation [Al Musīqa Al Arabiyah: As’ilat Al Asalah wal Tajdid].* Beirut: Unity Centre for Arab Studies.

University of Oxford. 2017. ‘Oxford University’s Bate Collection loans violin to Syrian child refugee’. 19 June. https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2017-06-19-oxford-university%E2%80%99s-bate-collection-loans-violin-syrian-child-refugee (Accessed 12 December 2024).

Urbain, Olivier, ed. 2008. *Music and Conflict Transformation: Harmonies and Dissonances in Geopolitics.* London: IB Tauris.

Valassopoulous, Anastasia. 2008. *Contemporary Arab women writers: cultural expression in context*. London: Routledge.

Valdivia Ramirez, Olimpia Montserrat. 2013. *'*Space and Identity in Refugee Camps: Experience of the Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars Band'. *Migraciones internacionales* 7 (2): 127-155.

Van Hear, Nicholas. 2006. 'Refugees in Diaspora: From Durable Solutions to Transnational Solutions'. *Refuge* 23: 9-14.

Van Nieuwkerk, Karin. 1995. *A Trade Like Any Other: Female Singers and Dancers in Egypt.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

———. 2012. 'Popularizing Islam or Islamizing popular music: new developments in Egypt's wedding scene'. *Contemporary Islam* 6: 235-254.

Vendramin, Barbara, Marco Bergamin, Stefano Gobbo, Lucia Cugusi, Federica Duregon, Valentina Bullo, Marco Zaccaria, Daniel Neunhaeuserer, Andrea Ermalao. 2016. 'Health Benefits of Zumba Fitness Training: A Systematic Review'. *PMR: Journal of Injury, function and rehabilitation* 8: 1181-1200.

Verdirame, Guglielmo and Barbara Harrell-Bond, Zachary Lomo, Hannah Garry, and Albie Sachs, eds. 2005. *Rights in Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism.* Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books.

Vigouroux, Cécile B. 2007. 'Transcription as a social activity: An ethnographic approach'. *Ethnography* 8(1): 61-97.

Viterna, Jocelyn. 2016. ‘The Organizational Complexities of Transnational Humanitarian Aid’. *Contemporary Sociology* 45(4): 394-397.

Vogler, Pia. 2007. ‘Into the Jungle of Bureaucracy: Negotiating Access to Camps at the Thai-Burma Border’. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 26(3): 51-60.

———. 2008. ‘Sleeping as a Refuge? Embodied Vulnerability and Corporeal Security during Refugees’ Sleep at the Thai-Burma Border’. In *Worlds of Sleep*, edited by Lodewijk Brunt and Brigitte Steger, 193-210.

———. 2016. ‘In the absence of the humanitarian gaze: refugee camps after dark’. UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service New Issues in Refugee Research Research Paper 17 (December). https://www.refworld.org/reference/research/unhcr/2006/en/81042 (Accessed 22 November 2019).

———. 2016. ‘Night-Time and Refugees: Evidence from the Thai-Myanmar Border’. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29(1): 1-18.

Vougioukalou, Sofia, Rosie Dow, Laura Bradshaw and Tracy Pallant. 2019. ‘Wellbeing and Integration through Community Music: The Role of Improvisation in a Music Group of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Local Community Members’. *Contemporary Music Review* 38(5): 533-548.

Wardat, Mahmud and Omar Alkhateeb. 2020. ‘Congratulation Strategies in Syrians’ Wedding Parties in Jordan’. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research* 7(2): 87-109.

Watson, Tony J. 1995. ‘Shaping the story: rhetoric, persuasion and creative writing in organizational ethnography’. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations, and Societies* 1(2): 301-311.

Weiss, Sarah. 2019. *Ritual Soundings: Women Performers and World Religions*. Bloomington: University of Illinois Press.

West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. 2023. 'Divan Orchestra'. https://west-eastern-divan.org/divan-orchestra (Accessed 13 December 2024).

Western, Tom. 2020. 'Listening with Displacement: Sound, Citizenship, and Disruptive Representations of Migration'. *Migration and Society: Advances in Research* 3: 294-309.

Wheeler, Barbara L. 2017. 'Music Therapy Research: An Overview'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Music Therapy*, edited by Jane Edwards, 720-747. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

White, Ben, Simone Haysom, and Eleanor Davey. 2013. 'Refugees, host states, and displacement in the Middle East: an enduring challenge'. *Humanitarian Exchange HPN* 59: 20-22.

Witteborn, Saskia. 2018. 'The digital force in forced migration: Imagined affordances and gendered practices'. *Popular Communication* 16(1): 21-31.

Wolf, Christa. 1984. *Cassandra.* London: Virago.

Wong, Deborah. 2008. "Moving: From Performance to Performative Ethnography." In *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 76-89. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yassin-Kassab, Robin and Leila Al-Shami. 2018. *Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War*. Pluto Press: London.

Yalim, Asli Cennet and Filomena Critelli. 2023. ‘Gender roles among Syrian refugees in resettlement contexts: Revisiting empowerment of refugee women and needs of refugee men’. *Women’s Studies International Forum* 96(102670): 1-10.

Youssef, Maya. 2021. ‘The Seven Gates of Damascus’. https://mayayoussef.com/projects/the-seven-gates-of-damascus-a-musical-intervention-with-syrian-refugee-children/ (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Zahran, Mudar. 2012. ‘Jordan is Palestinian’. *Middle East Quarterly* 19(1): 3-12.

Zaher, Yasmin. 2023. *The Coin*. New York: Catapult.

Zaiotti, Ruben. 2006. ‘Dealing with non-Palestinian refugees in the Middle East: Policies and practices in an uncertain environment’. *International Journal of Refugee Law* 18(2): 333-353.

Zeidan, Josef. 1995. *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Zetter, Roger. 1991. ‘Labelling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity’. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 4(1): 39-62.

———. 1996. ‘Indigenous NGOs and refugee assistance’. *Development in Practice* 6 (1): 37-49.

———. 2007. ‘More Labels, Fewer Refugees: Remaking the Refugee Label in an Era of Globalization’. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20(2): 172-192.

Zheng, Su. 2010. *Claiming Diaspora.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zubaida, Sami. 2019 [1987]. ‘Components of Popular Culture in the Middle East’. In *Mass Culture, Popular Culture, and Social Life in the Middle East*, edited by Georg Stauth and Sami Zubaida. New York: Routledge.

Zuboff, Shoshana. 2019. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism.* New York: Public Affairs.

Zumba Fitness LLC. 2024. ‘About’. https://www.zumba.com/en-US/about (Accessed 26 March 2024).

Zuhur, Sherifa. 2022. *Popular Dance and Music in Modern Egypt.* North Carolina: McFarland and Company.

Zwettler, Michael. 1978. *The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Poetry: its character and implications.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press.