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The Childhood and Play of Young Iraqi and Syrian Refugee Children Living in Lebanon

Dr Sandra El Gemayel & Professor Rosie Flewitt

Children, armed conflict and displacement

RQ1: How are the childhoods of young Iraqi and Syrian child refugees affected by armed conflict and their forced displacement to Beirut's northern suburbs?

RQ2: How are the young Iraqi and Syrian child refugees' opportunities to play and constructions of play affected by their experiences of armed conflict and forced displacement in Beirut's northern suburbs?

RQ3: How might young refugee children's play opportunities be improved in Beirut's northern suburbs?

Theoretical model

Bringing together multiple, interrelated, and overlapping theories to shed light on the three interlinked themes of 'War and displacement', 'childhood' and 'play'.

Foucauldian critical lens:

- Regimes of truth
- Power as exercised
- Power circulates through networks of relations
- Heterotopia

FP: Unique capacity of each child, Integrity of childhood in its own right

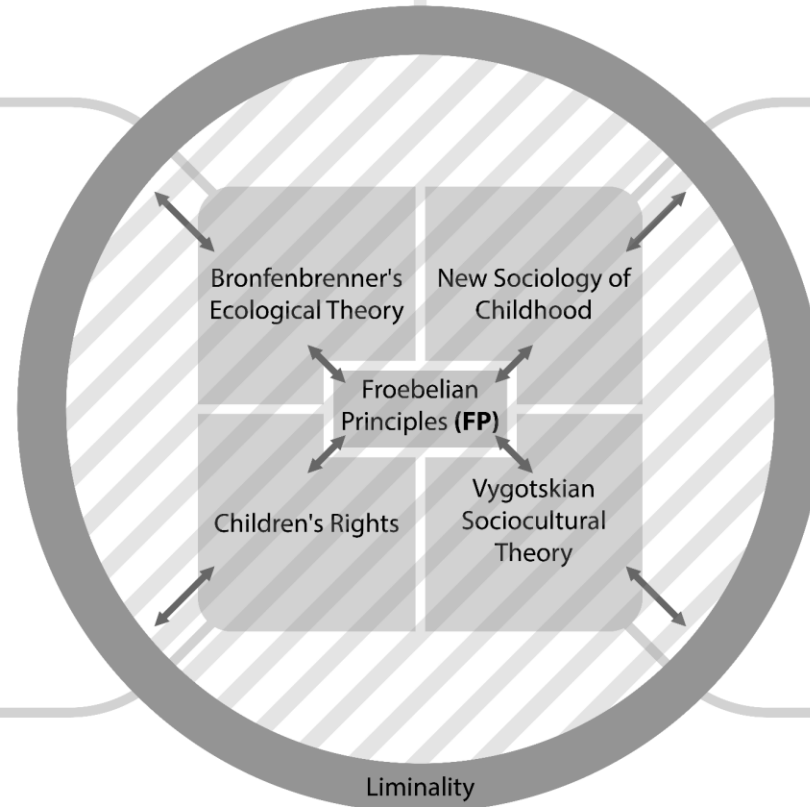
- Childhood as a culturally specific, historically situated and socially constructed phenomenon
- Children as social agents
- Children as human beings

FP: Relationship between child and environment

- Children develop as they interact with the multiple environmental systems that surround them (micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, chrono-systems)

FP: Indispensable benefits of play for children, Protection of children from harm and abuse, Relationship between child and environment

- Non-discrimination (Article 2)
- Life, survival and development (Article 6)
- Protection from harm and abuse (Article 19)
- Health and health services (Article 24)
- Right to Education (Article 28)
- Leisure, play and culture (Article 31)
- Protection from child labour (Article 32)



FP: Indispensable benefits of play for children, Relationship between child and environment

- Sociocultural features shape and impact on children's play
- Children learn 'interpersonal[ly]' then 'intrapersonal[ly]'
- Importance of imagination and creativity in play
- Importance of 'scaffolding' and 'guided participation' to advance in ZPD
- Play not only important for children's development but also as a socially organised practice in and of itself

- Polluting
- Invisible
- In-between
- Communitas

A Day in the Life (DITL) (Gillen & Cameron, 2010)














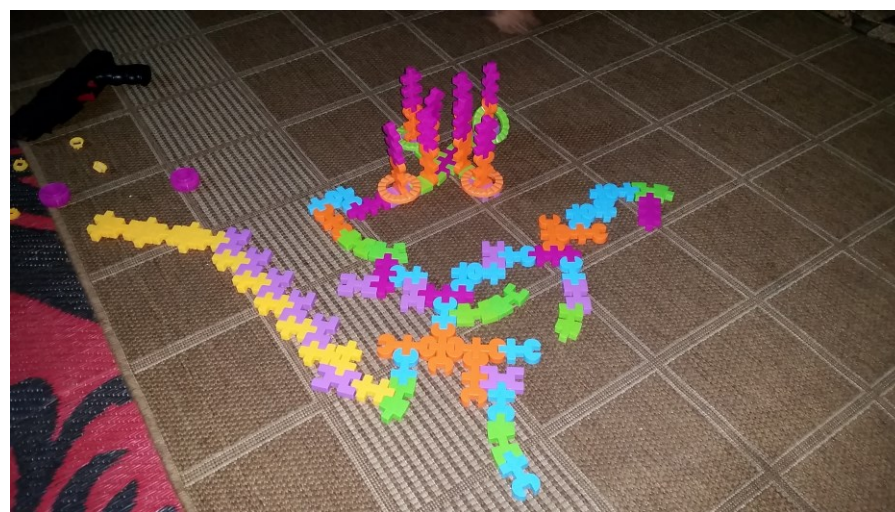
Two Syrian Families

Two Iraqi Families



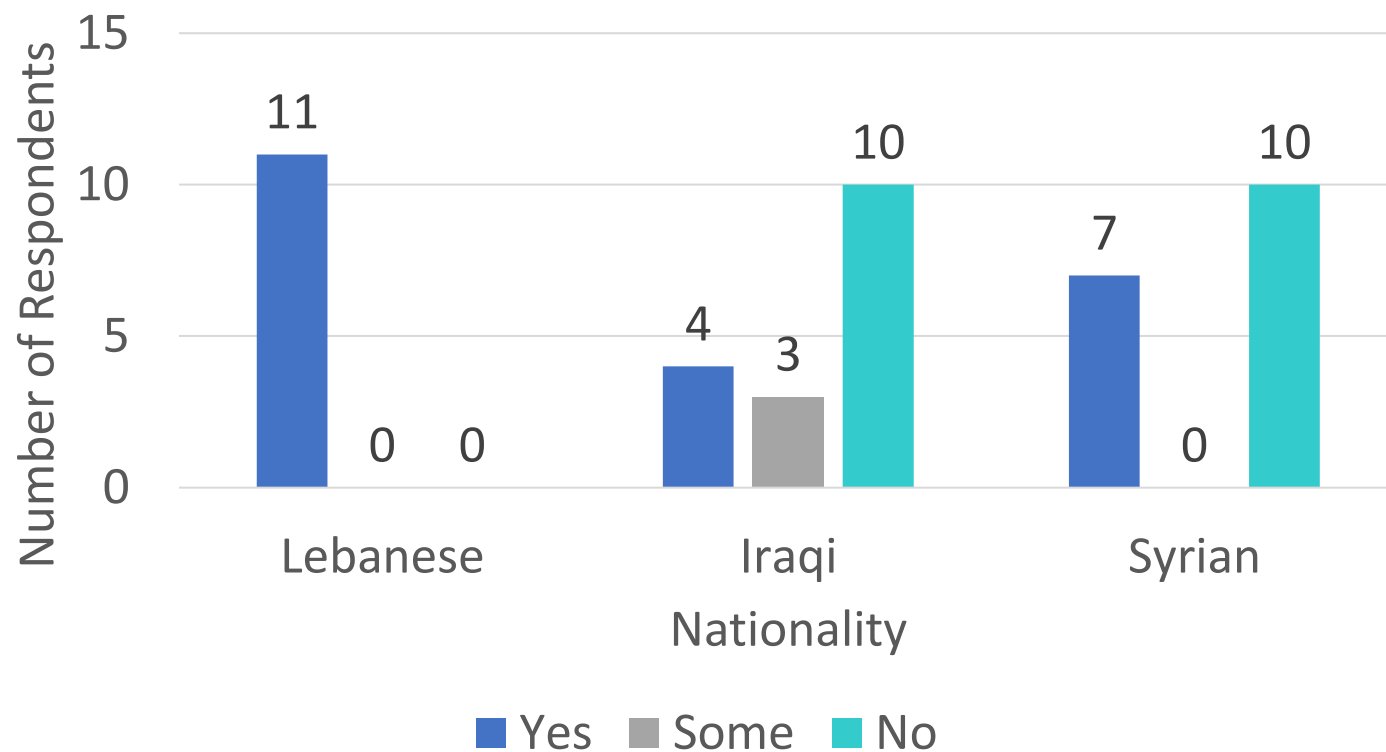
DITL: Ongoing Informed Consent + Participatory Methods

<p></p> <p>The Impact of Armed Conflict and Displacement on the Play and Childhood of Young Iraqi and Syrian Child Refugees in Lebanon PhD research project April 2017 - January 2018 Information for Children</p> <p>My name is Sandra El Gemayel. I am a PhD student at UCL, Institute of Education in London. This leaflet tells you about my research. I hope this leaflet will be useful, and I would be pleased to answer any questions you have.</p> <p>Why is this research being done?</p> <p></p> <p>More and more children are experiencing war, fighting and displacement from their homes. I want to find out how war and displacement affects children's play and childhood, and how their play opportunities may be improved in Lebanon.</p>	<p>Who will take part in the project?</p> <p></p> <p>Children below the age of 8 and their parents/guardians.</p> <p></p> <p>People who come in contact with the children such as teachers or neighbours</p>	<p>What will happen during the research?</p> <p>Yes! I will ask you if you would like to take part in the research.</p> <p></p> <p>If you would like to take gag! I will ask you to make a thumbs up sign.</p> <p></p> <p>If you would not like to take gag! I will ask you to make a thumbs down sign.</p>	<p></p> <p>If you say 'yes' and make the thumbs up sign then I will ask you to draw a picture to show what you enjoy doing during the day.</p>	<p></p> <p>I will ask you to play using building blocks.</p> <p></p> <p>I will give you a camera to take pictures of your environment and of your play. You will get a copy of all the photographs when I develop them.</p>	<p></p> <p>I will then talk with you about the things you have drawn, built with blocks and taken photographs of (around 15 mins each). I will use a voice recorder and I will keep your drawings and photographs so that I can think about them.</p> <p></p> <p>I will spend one whole day with you (around 6 hours) and will observe your play wherever you go (home, school, playground, streets, etc.).</p>
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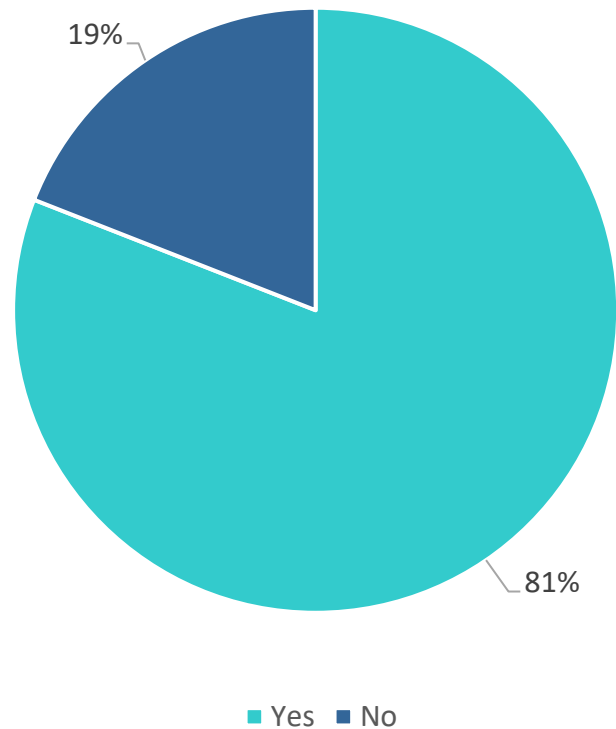
Questionnaire Data: School Attendance

Do Your School-Aged Children Attend school?

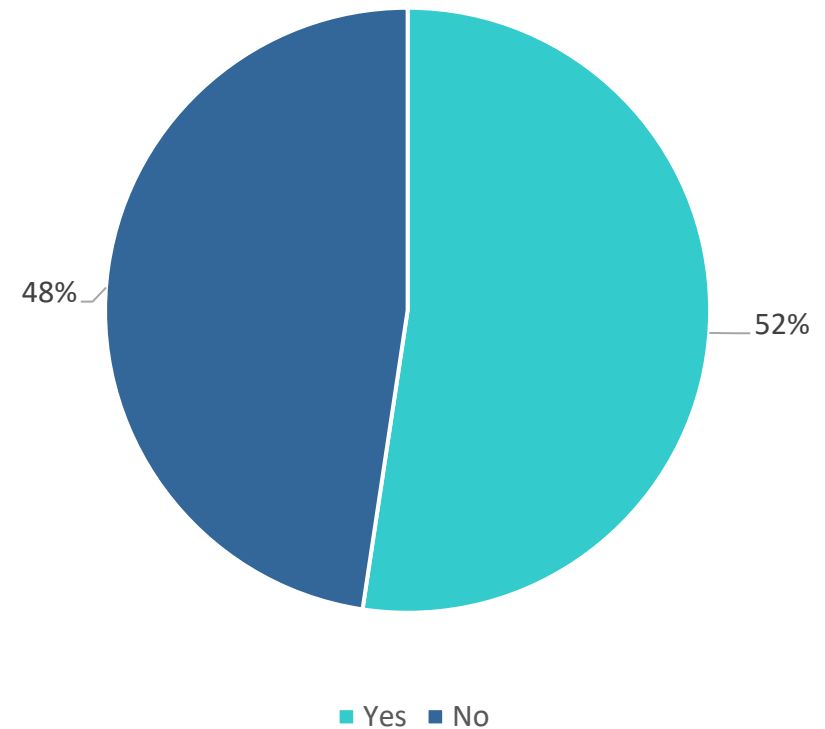


Questionnaire Data: Play

Does Your Child Play at Home?



Does Your Child Play Anywhere Else?



Maria Case Study

Maria Case Study	
Location (Country; region)	Lebanon; Northern suburbs of Beirut/ Mount Lebanon
Case study child age and gender	Maria, Female, 7.6
Parents' pseudonym and age	Thalia (Mother, 32) Yohannan (Father,38)
Sibling(s) age and gender	Gerges, Male, 5.11
Date they left their home	August 2014
Date they arrived in Lebanon	February 2015
Area and country of origin	Nineveh Plains, Iraq
Day in the Life	
Visit 1 date: Introductory visit	September 9, 2017
Visit 2 date	September 13, 2017
Visit 3 date	September 20, 2017
Visit 4 date	October 7, 2017



Limited
play
resources



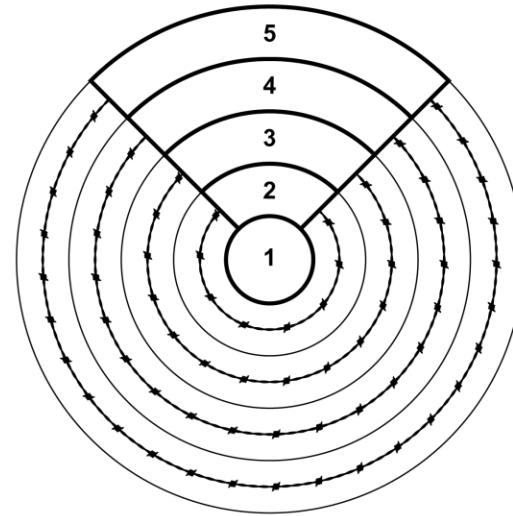
Culture, weddings, music and dance



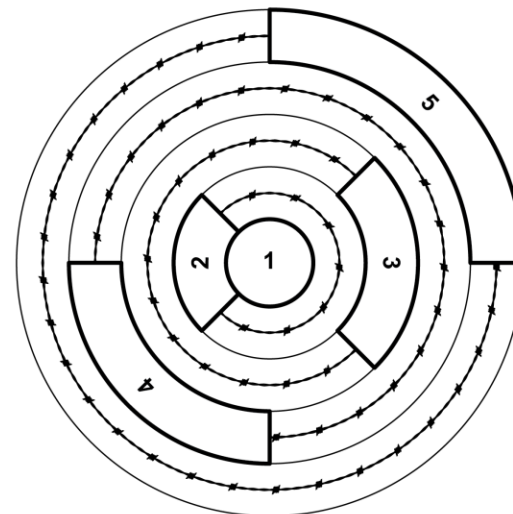
Happy, Healthy, Playful Child with Rights

Lifelines

- Safety, stability and routine
- Enforcement of children's rights
- Regular status of displaced child and family
- Alignment of international and national legislation
- Alignment of policy and practice
- Children's representation in Lebanese laws and policies
- Long-term and short-term planning and funding
- Access to high-quality education, healthcare and housing
- Rich resources and opportunities for play
- Acceptance in the community
 - Psychological support for traumatised children and families
- Promoting cultural practices
 - Taking control



Liminal Child



Barriers

- Conflict and displacement
- Children's rights violations
- Irregular status of displaced child and family
- Disparity between international and national legislation
 - Disparity between policy and practice
- Children's lack of representation in Lebanese laws and policies
 - Lack of long-term planning
 - Low-quality and insufficient education, healthcare and housing provision
 - Lack of play opportunities
- Racism, exploitation and oppression in the community
 - Limiting cultural practices
 - Loss of control

Conclusion

- 1 - Child
- 2 - Family
- 3 - Community
- 4 - GoL/ UNHCR/ Civil Society
- 5 - Historical/ Social/ Political/ Economic/ Cultural/ Religious

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