

Syrian Archives: Global Moments, Things and Home in Brazil and the Arctic

Gisele Fonseca
Department of Anthropology
Universidade Federal Fluminense
Brazil

Nefissa Naguib
Department of Social Anthropology
University of Oslo
Norway

Abstract

The aim of this co-authored paper is to understand through words, pictures, and artefacts the practices and textures of the everyday experiences of Syrian refugees as they piece their lives together against a backdrop of history, human disruption and impermanence. By focusing on individual narratives of displacement, dispossession, temporary settlement, and perhaps permanent resettlement, this paper seeks to humanize and lay bare the significance of such experiences while also celebrating the uniquely adaptive quality of humans as social beings and the aesthetic *archive* of resilience. Here the term “archive” refers to the articulation and materialization of cultural processes in migrancy. Two cases will represent hubs of recent arrival of Syrian refugees: Brazil and Arctic Norway. Brazil is an ancient migration route and refugees arrive in cities where there are established Syrian communities. Arctic Norway is a new route taken for the first time in the fall of 2015. Each case will be articulated around a particular historic event and an archive of storylines, objects, and practices that establish the link between moments of historic ruptures, persons and their possessions, practices, spaces, and places. Comparative aspects are important, both within each case study and between the case studies. The aim is to identify patterns in the representations—primarily visual and verbal narratives—but also to clarify genres and motifs.