



Methodological Handbook

SYREALITY

سيريااليتي

Chapter 1: Data Management

Version 1.0 (January 2023)

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Funding

This work is part of “SYREALITY: Syrian Imaginations of Europe meet Reality” and has received funding from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) under grant agreement No. V 823-G.



Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

Website

<https://syreality.com/>

Suggested citation

Müller-Funk, Lea. 2023. “Chapter 1: Data Management. Version 1.0.” *Methodological Handbook SYREALITY*. January 2023.

Version History

Version No.	Date	Changes
1	27.01.2023	Initial version published on website

Publication available on :

<https://syreality.com/publications-and-working-papers/>

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Introduction

The SYREALITY project wants to learn about the outlook of people from Syria in Europe, specifically about their life plans, their experiences in Europe and challenges they have faced. SYREALITY collects individual survey data in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and Greece as well as life history interviews and cognitive maps in Vienna, Berlin, Amsterdam, and Athens. More specifically, the project aims to understand:

- How did Syrian forced migrants in Europe envision their future lives before the conflict, and how do they pursue or discard these plans in the face of war and continuing displacement?
- How do unfulfilled or newly forged life aspirations influence forced migrants' displacement trajectories and migration, return and stay aspirations?
- How are life aspirations and displacement trajectories linked to social class?

SYREALITY collects and analyses a large amount of data in different forms across four countries (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece). The project will generate the following types of new research data: (i) a survey data set (one wave); (ii) audio material and transcripts of approx. 100 life history interviews (two waves); (iii) cognitive maps which will be drawn as part of the qualitative interviews. Participants in the research project are defined as people born in Syria and/or holding Syrian nationality, having left Syria to Europe after 2011, and living in one of the four countries. The project will also reuse the research data generated by my previous SYRMAGINE project (2017-2019), thus an individual survey data set (n=757) and 41 in-depth interviews collected with Syrians living in Tripoli, Beirut (Lebanon), Istanbul and Izmir (Turkey) in 2018.

The SYREALITY Methodological Handbook aims at documenting the methodological strategy and making the data collection process openly accessible. The chapters are living documents which are started during fieldwork preparation and evolve during data collection and data cleaning. Chapter 1 elaborates on data management. Chapter 2 focuses on the SYREALITY survey and the quantitative data set. Chapter 3 elaborates on the qualitative data collection (life histories and cognitive maps). Subchapter 1.1 presents the Data Management Plan prior to the fieldwork. Subchapter 2.2 discusses how the original Data Management Plan was adapted during and after data collection.

Chapter 1.1: Data Management Plan (October 2022)

As SYREALITY will collect and analyse a large amount of data in different forms across four countries (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece), well-planned data management is therefore essential for using resources efficiently and achieving the analytical objectives of the project. The principal investigator (PI) considers the Data Management Plan (DMP) to be a living document which will evolve throughout the course of the project. A first Data Management Plan (DMP) was prepared and submitted to the Austrian Science Fund according to the guidelines of the Austrian Science Fund prior to the start of the project in October 2020 and approved by the Austrian Science Fund. This DMP was updated in October 2022 after the project had started in preparation for the ethical review of the project (see below) and approved by the ethics board of the University for Continuing Education Krems (Danube University Krems). A more detailed version of the DMP will be drafted during data collection, data cleaning and analysis (See Chapter 1.2).

SYREALITY will produce three data sets, of which only the metadata will be made accessible in open access due to the sensitivity of the collected data. However, in a spirit of making data 'FAIR', which means ensuring that they are findable, accessible, interoperable, and re-usable, data will be shared with selected researchers as well as student assistants who are part of the data collection process if they choose to write their MA or PhD thesis on a topic related to SYREALITY based on certain criteria. The data security measures described in this DMP seek to minimise the likelihood and consequences of (1) unauthorised data access and (2) data corruption or loss. The PI anticipates that the DMP will make the work more efficient and secure by following a detailed and logical system for organizing and naming files and folders, by using a secure storage repository and by ensuring that data is transferred in a safe and organised way.

	Data Officer	Mag.a Katharina Ranjan, katharina.ranjan@donau-uni.ac.at
I	Data Characteristics	
I.1	Description of the data	SYREALITY will collect new research data and meta data and re-use research data collected in the frame of a previous project of the PI (SYRMAGINE). The project will generate the following types of new research data: (i) audio material and transcripts of approx. 80 narrative interviews (two waves); (ii) approx. 80 cognitive maps which will be scanned and stored; (iii) a survey data set (n=800-1000, one wave). Participants in the research project are defined as people born in Syria or holding Syrian nationality, having left Syria to Europe after 2011, and living in one of the four countries. The project will also reuse the research data generated by my previous SYRMAGINE project (2017-2019), thus an individual survey data set (n=757) and 41 in-depth interviews collected with Syrians living in Tripoli, Beirut, Istanbul, and Izmir in 2018.

II	Documentation and Metadata	
II.1	Metadata standards	The approach to naming, keywords, versioning and metadata creation will follow the Austrian Social Science Data Archive (AUSSDA) metadata schema which follows international standards set by the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) and the Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA ERIC).
II.2	Documentation of data	Each data set will be accompanied by the documentation of the data collection process, including detailed guides about how the data is planned to be collected and how it was realised ultimately. These documents will be stored with the data sets but will also be made openly accessible as the SYREALITY Handbook. The tables below provide a short overview of the data sets and their envisaged documentation.
II.3	Data quality control	The PI is responsible for the overall quality assurance and integrity of the data. Day-to-day quality assessment will be the responsibility of the project team members who are overseen by the PI of the project, who will herself participate in the fieldwork in all four research areas. The PI will also check the quality of all data before their storage. Detailed protocols will document how data is collected, treated, cleaned, and stored, which will be published as chapters of the SYREALITY Handbook.
III	Data Availability and Storage	
III.1	Data sharing strategy	<p>SYREALITY adheres to the principle of making data 'FAIR', which means ensuring that it is findable, accessible, interoperable, and re-usable.</p> <p><u>Making data findable:</u> Research data and associated metadata will be stored in the AUSSDA The Austrian Social Science Data Archive. With the publication in AUSSDA repository, research data become citable because they are given a persistent identifier, namely a "Digital Object Identifier (DOI)". By assigning a DOI for each data project, easy citation and better findability of the research data is guaranteed.</p> <p><u>Making data openly accessible:</u> SYREALITY will only publish metadata in open access (see ethics section). Research data will only be made openly accessible for members of the research team and selected researchers I closely cooperate with. For data collection, I will collaborate with a small research team of young Syrians in each location who have experienced displacement themselves. If some of the RAs choose to write a thesis based on the SYREALITY data, they will have access to the data sets. Within the AUSSDA repository, the data of SYREALITY will be listed with</p>

		<p>“restricted access”, which means that the PI decides on the access rights for subsequent use and that the research data is only available to a limited extent.</p> <p><u>Making data interoperable</u>: Basic interoperability is ensured using standard file types, adherence to naming conventions, and provision of detailed documentation. The data file type for the qualitative interview data sets will be archived as audio files (MP3) and accompanying Pdf documents. The cognitive data set will be archived as individual .jpeg files and will be linked through a unique identifier to the qualitative interview data set. The survey data sets will be archived as a .dta file for Stata. The survey questionnaire will draw on existing questions and classifications where possible and relevant.</p> <p><u>Increase data re-use</u>: Based on these principles, the planned storage date for the SYREALITY data sets is during the final month of the project. The PI may decide on a later release of a data set if there are unresolved issues relating to data quality or data protection. The data will remain re-usable for an indefinite period, with the option of granting open access after 100 years, following the rules of access of the ICRC archive. Their analytical value will change as time passes and empirical realities change.</p>
<p>III.2</p>	<p>Data storage strategy</p>	<p>My approach to mitigating data security risks consists of measures that minimise (i) the likelihood and (ii) the consequences, respectively, of unauthorised data access and data corruption or loss. Much of the SYREALITY research data will be acquired and initially stored in a dispersed way before it is stored and managed centrally on the project's password-protected cloud server, SYREALITY OneDrive.</p> <p><u>Dispersed storage</u>: Dispersed storage of data will occur during data collection. The interview guide, the cognitive maps guide, and the survey guide will include workflow for data management from the moment it is collected until it is posted in the final data set, specifying: (i) how data are stored as they are being collected, (ii) how data are initially stored and backed up in the field, (iii) how raw data are transferred from RAs to the PI (using Filr for safe transfers). Furthermore, whenever possible, storage in protected locations or with protection measures such as encryption is preferred. Storage devices should be locked away or be under supervision. Special precautions against theft or loss will be taken when a storage device is unprotected and/or contains the only copy of the data. The deletion of data processed by research assistants will be governed by data processing agreements between the PI and the respective RAs.</p> <p><u>Central storage (SYREALITY OneDrive)</u>: Only the PI will have access to the SYREALITY OneDrive folder and will be responsible for naming, saving and posting files in the central storage. Exceptional access to the central storage will be set at the level of folders and individuals if data access is</p>

		authorised for analytical purposes and will be revoked once a project has been finished. People assigned to a folder will only get the permission to view files, not edit them. OneDrive is hosted in Sharepoint Online, where information is secured as part of the service and according to data protection schemes in Microsoft Azure. Data will be frequently, reliably and automatically backed up in the cloud through the OneDrive folder.
IV	Legal and Ethical Aspects	
IV.1	Legal aspects	<p>The project is in compliance with international, national and EU legislation, in particular the Declaration of Helsinki, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and the EU-Regulation 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.</p> <p>Data authorship will be formally established when the data sets are assigned a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) by the data archive. Everyone listed as an author should have made a substantial direct academic contribution. The PI will be entitled to be the first author, all other authors will subsequently be listed alphabetically. All data that are archived with the AUSSDA repository will have a Creative Commons CC license.</p>
IV.2	Ethical aspects	<p>I acknowledge and agree with the European Commission’s Guidance Note on research on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants that research on refugees concerns a particularly vulnerable group which needs particular safeguards in terms of research ethics. Ethical issues involved are benefit-sharing potentials, cultural sensitivity, the recruitment of participants, informed consent, participants’ safety and confidentiality. I am aware that the biggest risk in social science research relates to the disclosure of a person’s identity and insufficient protection of private information, which is particularly important when studying a refugee population. The situation in Syria and the region is very volatile, and the respondents are vulnerable in many ways, from the government and other groups from Syria, from the current host environment, and in relation to receiving asylum in European countries. There are too many unknowns involved in determining what may or may not be sensitive for these individuals, now or in future, for this to be a suitable project for an open access research data project. Prior to the fieldwork, the researcher will consult with the Ethics Advisory Board of the Danube University Krems.</p>

Table 1: Summary of the SYREALITY qualitative interview data set

<i>Data type</i>	Interview data
<i>Unit of analysis</i>	Individuals by city
<i>Sample size</i>	N = 80 (20 in each of the 4 research areas (Vienna, Berlin, Athens, Amsterdam)), two waves
<i>Population</i>	People born in Syria or holding Syrian nationality, aged 18+ (upper age limit to be determined), having left Syria to Europe after 2011, and living in one of four cities for more than three months
<i>Data origin</i>	Audio-recorded interviews
<i>Thematic coverage</i>	The autobiographical-narrative interviews will have three main parts: (i) a first part where the participant is invited to narrate his/her autobiography which remains uninterrupted; (ii) a second part which allows for narrative probing; and (iii) a third part reserved for why-questions to draw more abstract conclusions. The thematic coverage of the third part will be developed in the first six months of the project as part of the fieldwork preparation.
<i>Detailed documentation</i>	A detailed interview guide was developed, which will specify the interview questionnaire, the sampling strategy, and instructions for transcription and note-taking. A second document will describe the data collection process and describe the data collected. Both documents will be published online as SYREALITY Handbook Chapter 3.1 and Chapter 3.2.
<i>Data files</i>	Audio files (MP3), Word documents (transcriptions and translations)
<i>Supplementary files</i>	SYREALITY Handbook Chapter 3.1 and Chapter 3.2

Table 2: Summary of the SYREALITY cognitive maps data set

<i>Data type</i>	Drawn cognitive maps
<i>Unit of analysis</i>	Individuals by city
<i>Sample size</i>	N = 240 (3 maps per 20 individuals of the 4 research areas (Vienna, Berlin, Athens, Amsterdam))
<i>Population</i>	People born in Syria or holding Syrian nationality, aged 18+ (upper age limit to be determined), having left Syria to Europe after 2011, and living in one of four cities for more than three months
<i>Data origin</i>	Scans of hand-drawn maps
<i>Thematic coverage</i>	(i) places respondents went to/inhabited in some way in their pre-war life in Syria and their position within them; (ii) daily social interactions and itineraries during the war; (iii) current daily interactions and itineraries.
<i>Detailed documentation</i>	A detailed cognitive maps guide was developed, which will specify the instructions for the data collection process and instructions for note-taking. A second document will describe the data collection process and describe the data collected. Both documents will be published online as SYREALITY Handbook Chapter 3.3 and Chapter 3.4.
<i>Data files</i>	Image files (jpeg)
<i>Supplementary files</i>	SYREALITY Handbook Chapter 3.3 and Chapter 3.4

Table 3: Summary of the SYREALITY survey data set

<i>Data type</i>	Survey data
<i>Unit of analysis</i>	Individuals
<i>Sample size</i>	N = 800-1,000 (200-250 individuals in each of the 4 research countries (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece))

<i>Population</i>	People born in Syria or holding Syrian nationality, aged 18+ (upper age limit to be determined), having left Syria to Europe after 2011, and living in one of the four countries for more than three months
<i>Data origin</i>	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) – online (LimeSurvey)
<i>Thematic coverage</i>	Developed in the first six months of the project. Thematic coverage: Modules: Eligibility (E), Demographics 1 (DEM1); Displacement trajectory (D); Life aspirations (ASP); Asylum policies (POL); Migration and stay aspirations (MIG); Demographics 2 (DEM2), Work, poverty and wealth (WPW); Subjective life satisfaction, well-being, hope (SAT).
<i>Detailed documentation</i>	A detailed survey guide was developed, including the questionnaire, the sampling strategy, and quality assurance mechanisms. A second subchapter will describe the data collection process and describe the data collected, including data set variables. Both documents will be published online as SYREALITY Handbook Chapter 2.
<i>Data files</i>	One .dta file (Stata)
<i>Supplementary files</i>	SYREALITY Handbook Chapter 2.1 and Chapter 2.2

Table 4: Summary of the SYRMAGINE qualitative interview data set

<i>Data type</i>	Interview data
<i>Unit of analysis</i>	Individuals by city/country (Turkey/Lebanon)
<i>Sample size</i>	N = 41 (11 Beirut, 9 Tripoli, 12 Istanbul, 9 Izmir,)
<i>Population</i>	People born in Syria or holding Syrian nationality, aged 18-39, living in one of the research areas in 2018 (Beirut, Tripoli, Istanbul, Izmir)
<i>Data origin</i>	Audio-recorded interviews
<i>Thematic coverage</i>	The in-depth interviews covered respondents' migration and flight trajectories, living conditions in the host country, stay, migration, and return aspirations, and imaginations of life in Europe.
<i>Detailed documentation</i>	A detailed interview guide was developed in the first six months of the project, which specified the interview questionnaire, the sampling strategy, and instructions for transcription and note-taking. A second document documented the data collection process and described the data collection.
<i>Data files</i>	Audio files (recordings), Word documents (transcriptions and translations)

Table 5: Summary of the SYRMAGINE survey data set

<i>Data type</i>	Survey data
<i>Unit of analysis</i>	Individuals
<i>Sample size</i>	N = 757 respondents (360 Turkey; 397 Lebanon)
<i>Population</i>	People born in Syria or holding Syrian nationality, aged 18-39, living in one of the research areas in 2018 (Beirut, Tripoli, Istanbul, Izmir)
<i>Data origin</i>	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) using tablets
<i>Thematic coverage</i>	Thematic coverage: demographic and socio-economic information, migration and flight trajectories, transnational ties, living conditions in the host country, stay, migration, and return aspirations, and imaginations of life in Europe.
<i>Detailed documentation</i>	A detailed interview guide was developed in the first six months of the project, which specified questionnaire, the sampling strategy, and quality assurance mechanisms. A second document documented the data collection process and described the data collection.
<i>Data files</i>	One .dta file (Stata)