

Rethinking Refugee Resettlement: A Call for Place-Based Homemaking Approaches

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Abstract: *Social workers have a vital role supporting refugees resettling in Canada, however current practice approaches are limited in their capacity to address place-based (social and material) barriers and opportunities refugees face in resettlement contexts. In fact, social work has always specialized in social interventions over material or spatial interventions, resulting in only partial responses to hardships faced by structurally vulnerable communities, such as refugees. Homemaking is a key avenue to explore refugee resettlement holistically, taking into consideration place-based, social and material needs and desires of refugees to make home in new places. This article proposes social workers working alongside refugees take up a homemaking practice approach to meet the unique needs of refugees to improve their resettlement conditions.*

Keywords: *Refugees, resettlement, home, homemaking, place, social work*

Professional social work draws from various practice approaches to meet the needs of refugees resettling in Western countries. The multilayered complexities refugees face, including trauma and systematic oppression, both prior to migration and in the resettlement context, underscores Nardon and Hardi's (2022) assertion that newcomer integration is a wicked problem, both complex and unpredictable. Social work is well-suited to support refugees during and beyond resettlement as it aims to find solutions to perplexing, multilayered social issues rooted in systemic injustice (Canadian Association of Social Workers [CASW], 2020).

Current social work practice, however, rarely considers the role of the material environment within refugee resettlement, generally ignoring the material world in favor of the social world (Grittner & Burns, 2021). Accordingly, this article makes a case for social work to engage in place-based (socio-material) homemaking practices to support refugee resettlement. Boccagni and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2023) expand on traditional conceptions of homemaking as "gendered practices of social reproduction which underpin family and domestic life" (p. 155), describing it as a place-based process (Easthope, 2004; Low, 2016) in which the social and material environments converge to inform opportunities and hinderances to making home in new places.

We organize this conceptual article in six analytical frames. First, we present a critical perspective on the legal context definition of a refugee. The second outlines the resettlement context in Canada and the third details social work practice with refugees. In the fourth analytical frame, we elucidate a case for conducting place-based research through a review of social work literature on the material environment and home. In the fifth section of analysis, we review interdisciplinary scholarship dedicated to refugee

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homemaking. In the final analytical frame, we propose a placed-based homemaking conceptual model for social workers and the settlement sector to respond to the complex needs of refugees.

Who are Refugees?

Forced migration or refugeehood, broadly speaking, "involves limited choices by people who are forced to move through colonization, slavery, human trafficking, or to flee conflict, human rights abuses, persecution or environmental degradation" (Clark-Kazak & Hyndman, 2024, p. 27). However, the label refugee is far from neutral in its application and is part of a legal framework that constitutes insiders and outsiders within the Canadian settler-state immigration apparatus (Alcaraz et al., 2021; Clark-Kazak & Hyndman, 2024). The label refugee produces legal subjects who are granted permanent residency in Canada and receive certain rights and benefits that other non-status migrants do not qualify for, even though their circumstances may also be life-threatening (Bhuyan et al., 2016). Non-status migrants are composed of (1) individuals who come to Canada through legal channels (i.e., the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, student visas, visitor visas) but end up staying beyond what their permit allows (Alcaraz et al., 2021) and, (2) refugee claimants who apply for resettlement once in Canada, however are rejected by the Canadian Government, choosing to stay despite being legally mandated to return their home country (Alcaraz et al., 2021).

Refugeehood is sometimes politically or socially constructed through dominant discourse. For example, Ukrainians who came to Canada in large numbers in recent years due to the Russia-Ukraine war did not arrive in Canada as refugees but through a temporary public policy measure called the Canadian-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (Government of Canada, 2022). However, dominant discourse proliferated through media refers to Ukrainians as refugees (Hart, 2024) and they are thus subjected to a host of social benefits (i.e., public sympathy resulting in charity donations) and consequences (i.e., lack of power/agency, invisibility; Vigil & Abidi, 2018). Some 962,612 Ukrainian applications were approved by the Canadian Government between March 2022 and April 2024, with a total of 298,128 (Hagigi, 2024). In early 2024 a similar temporary residency program was developed in response to the Palestinian genocide, however altogether only 4,782 applications have been accepted over the course of one year, with a mere 616 Palestinians resettled in Canada (Government of Canada, 2025). This unequal response of the Canadian Government shows how discrimination ripples through immigration policy, ultimately positioning some people worthy of rescue while others are considered undeserving of humanitarian support.

We consider refugees as an inclusive categorization that resists the hierarchies imposed by border imperialism, in line with the definition put forth by The Critical Refugee Studies Collective (n.d.) that considers refugees according to what they have been through and how they self-identify and not the "limited definitions proffered by international and state laws" ("Refugee," para. 1). In this way, the differential effects of categorization are not denied but acknowledged as only one constituent element that informs refugee subjectivity and not the entire story of refugee identity.

Refugee Resettlement Context in Canada

A total of 74,979 refugees and protected persons, those who face life threatening circumstances but do not qualify as Convention Refugees (Canadian Council for Refugees, n.d.), were admitted as permanent residents to Canada in 2023 (Government of Canada, 2024). An additional 10,199 individuals were admitted on humanitarian, compassionate, and public policy grounds (Government of Canada, 2024). An estimated 20,000-500,000 of non-status migrants are living in proximity to the Canada's three largest cities, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver (Alcaraz et al., 2021).

While Canada's acceptance of relatively large numbers of refugees is in line with its humanitarian reputation (Sivakumer, 2023), this narrative is challenged by the lack of resources available to support refugees and others who do not have any legal status or protection (Bhuyan et al., 2016). Often refugees are unable to afford quality housing and reside in overcrowded, sub-standard housing in unsafe, high-risk neighborhoods (e.g., flood zones, toxic industrial chemical exposure, food deserts, hazardous traffic, and high crime rates; Oudshoorn et al., 2020). Refugees commonly live in high levels of poverty due to ongoing barriers to employment (e.g., limited language proficiency and lack of recognition of foreign education credentials), limited income supports, and the financial burden of repaying sponsorship loans (Ellis & Triandafyllidou, 2023; Lacroix et al., 2015; Senthanar et al., 2020). These structural and place-based inequities entangle with other stressors refugees experience in the resettlement stage, including health problems and lack of access to healthcare (Antonipillai et al., 2018; Pandey et al., 2022; Saberpor, 2016); mental health issues due to the trauma of forced displacement (Huminuik et al., 2022); discrimination resulting from intersectional oppressions such as racism, xenophobia, sexism, and homophobia (Ghahari et al., 2020; Hoselton & Drolet, 2025; Lee & Brotman, 2013); and the process of acculturation (Berry & Hou, 2021). These multilayered issues illustrate how trauma, oppression, and marginalization dominate refugee constructs.

Of course, resettlement is not only a journey of suffering and hardship (Hutchinson & Doresett, 2012), it is also characterized by social connections, community, and relationships that foster resilience during resettlement (Drolet et al., 2020). Resilience is defined as "both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their wellbeing, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways" (Ungar, 2008, p. 225). In a study of the resettlement experiences of Syrian refugees in Alberta, Canada, Drolet et al. (2020) illustrated how different forms of sponsorship (government or private) resulted in divergent experiences of support by refugee recipients. Immigrant-serving agencies that support government sponsored refugees, for example are focused on finding refugees housing, schools, employment, etc., whereas private sponsors offered additional social, psychological, and emotional supports. Grassroots Refugee Community Organizations can act as private sponsors; however, they provide supports to not only to privately sponsored refugees, but to refugee claimants and non-status migrants as well. These organizations address important gaps that are not filled by traditional resettlement services, such as the transmission of cultural heritage through initiatives and programs (i.e., cultural classes, choir, and dance groups) to meet specific

community needs (Lacroix et al., 2015). The socio-emotional supports provided to privately sponsored refugees leads to increased resilience among this demographic, whereas the lack of support in this area for government sponsored refugees reduces the capacity for resilience.

Hutchinson and Doresett's (2012) literature review highlighted that personal qualities, external supports, and religion and spirituality all contribute to refugee resilience in resettlement. They however failed to account for systemic factors that underscore the capacity and choices available for one to obtain the resources that foster resilience (Ungar, 2013). This underscored the ideas of resilience as produced within individuals depending on "personal circumstances, social opportunities, diverse environments, and systemic structures" (Drolet et al., 2020, p. 69). Therefore, to ensure resilience and opportunities among refugees, the provision of robust resources is necessary, whereas ongoing lack of resources will perpetuate trauma and oppression (Drolet et al., 2020). A key consideration is the degree to which material attributes can enrich the resettlement experience for refugees, and how valuing the material world's role in refugee homemaking and resettlement might enhance the strategies employed by the resettlement sector. Prior to reviewing the literature on social work, home, and materialism, we first outline social work practice with refugees, highlighting the role of culturally responsive approaches that thread through social work practice considerations.

Social Work Practice With Refugees

The social work practice literature on refugee resettlement is growing, with calls to establish social work with immigrants (inclusive of refugees) as its own field of practice (Drolet et al., 2017). Although social workers have the skills to respond to issues faced by refugees on micro, mezzo, and macro levels (Drolet et al., 2017), they disproportionately provide direct practice on the micro level. This approach is not efficacious for meeting the needs of refugees, due to the broader structural challenges that produce the oppressive conditions for this population. Social workers most often enter working relationships with refugees in mainstream social service organizations, such as child welfare, schools, hospitals and so forth (Dettlaff & Fong, 2016; Potocky & Nesah, 2019).

Although dated, the Canadian Council for Refugees (1998) recommended 12 core values that should inform settlement practices with refugees that are still relevant today: access, inclusion, client empowerment, user-defined services, holistic approach, respect for the individual, cultural sensitivity, community development, collaboration, accountability, orientation toward positive change, and reliability. Common social work practice approaches with refugees that have been advanced are human rights-based practice (Chammas, 2022), trauma-informed care (Drolet et al., 2017), community-based practice (Dubus, 2022), feminism (Heffron et al., 2016), cultural competency (Osborn & Karandikar, 2023), and anti-oppressive practice (Clarke & Wan, 2011; Sakamoto, 2007). In the table below, social work interventions with refugees on the micro, mezzo, and macro levels are detailed (Drolet et al., 2017).

Table 1. *Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Social Work Interventions*

Level of Practice	Examples of Social Work Interventions
Micro	• Consider demographic characteristics when providing support. • Assist with affordable housing. • Facilitate family reunification. • Connect refugees with language, employment, education, social, and mental health supports.
Mezzo	• Support immigrant and refugee serving organizations. • Develop culturally-informed interventions. • Promote community-based settlement and integration initiatives.
Macro	• Advocate for income and financial supports. • Conduct refugee resettlement research. • Become informed about and advocate for immigration policy

Across social work theories, frameworks, and interventions, attention to culture is underscored. Cultural competency is hailed as key for working across cultures in social work (Danso, 2018). Various definitions of cultural competency are available, with the most widely used describing it as "a set of attitudes, skills, behaviors, and policies enabling individuals and organizations to establish effective interpersonal and working relationships that supersede cultural differences" (Cross et al., 1989, p. 3). Fisher-Borne et al. (2015) critiqued cultural competency, highlighting the following limitations: (1) a focus on comfort with "others" framed as self-awareness, locating practitioners' increased comfortability working across cultural differences as a key indicator of self-awareness, when in fact self-awareness should be cultivated through critical analysis of power differentials between practitioners and clients by examining one's biases and assumptions; (2) racial/ethnic group identity as a proxy for "culture," meaning that race and ethnicity are conflated with culture, leading to the essentialization of identity and the erasure of other aspects of identity that shape one's experience; (3) mastering knowledge of the "other" critiques the use of the word competence, which implies the ability to "know the life experiences of an individual client" (p. 170). This framing positions white Western culture as the normative standard while suggesting that non-White individuals can be known and understood through generalized cultural knowledge, reinforcing the belief that culture is monolithic and perpetuating stereotypes; (4) failure to challenge systemic inequalities addresses the idea that by understanding the "other," one can combat inequality. This mentality fails to consider structural oppression, including racism and poverty, and its role in perpetuating social inequities.

Cultural humility has been put forth as an alternative to cultural competency (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015; Gottlieb, 2021). Unlike the shallow implementation of cultural competency, cultural humility recognizes the contextual, fluid, and subjective nature of culture and aims to engage in structural analysis to respond to systemic oppression (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015). Critical reflexivity is also central to cultural humility, put forth as an accountability to active and responsible self-reflection, and a life-long pursuit (Fisher-

Borne et al., 2015). While the above values (Canadian Council for Refugee, 1998) and practice considerations (Drolet et al., 2017) do not detail the meaning of cultural sensitivity or cultural interventions in their descriptions, it is evident based on this brief review of the social work literature that cultural humility is a more appropriate conceptual framework for meeting the needs of refugees in the resettlement context. While the rigor of Drolet et al.'s (2017) practice considerations is evident, an even more comprehensive framework would attend to the effects of the material world on refugee resettlement, or the conditions for which refugees can create home. Certainly, as Drolet et al. (2017) does point toward, adequate housing is a critical feature of the material world that impacts the everyday lives of refugees (Bragg & Hiebert, 2022; Fozdar & Hartley, 2014; Oudshoorn et al., 2020), however materialism includes other important elements such as the role of nature (Taylor, 2013; Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021; Van Liempt & Staring, 2021), neighborhood (Carter et al., 2009), material objects within one's neighborhood (van Liempt & Staring, 2021), the proximity of services and supports to where one lives (Lo, 2011; Lo et al., 2015; Teixeira, 2014), and other features of the built environment that "provide people with living, working, and recreational spaces" (Nabaweesi et al., 2023, p. 592). Next, we establish a rationale for incorporating place-based practices into social work, through linking the material world, home, and refugees.

A Rationale for Place-Based Practices: Social Work, the Material World, Home, and Refugees

Social work research has examined the connection between the material world and various marginalized groups; however, the link between materialism and refugees is underexamined. Grittner and Burns (2021) for example, outline the significance of the built environment, suggesting that social work has neglected the salience of the material realm on vulnerable populations by placing disproportionate emphasis on the impacts of the social environment on vulnerable people and groups. Growing social work scholarship attests to the effects of the material realm on good health and well-being, and demonstrates how locational disadvantage limits opportunity (Bryant & Williams, 2020). Kemp (2011). This details how environmental inequities disproportionately burden poor and racialized people, segregating these communities from jobs and social resources, negatively impacting psycho-social outcomes and perpetuating cycles of poverty and violence. With the social work profession's longstanding commitment to holistic examinations of the person in the environment, it is fit for addressing both the social and material aspects of the environment. Social workers are "critically implicated in producing space" (Bryant & Williams, 2020, p. 323) and research and practice domains can address the ways in which the material realm can function as a producer of various socio-material inequities or a field of possibility for redressing socio-material justice (Grittner & Burns, 2021; Kemp, 2011).

Homemaking as a concept to explore refugee resettlement is well documented in various disciplines, however, home scholarship within social work remains in its infancy. A notable exception is Zuffery et al.'s (2020) exploration of how home is experienced and understood in Australia among 13 participants, including 2 refugees and 2 new migrants. For participants, home and belonging were associated with: "(1) material aspirations of

homeownership in a 'correct suburb,' (2) emotional connections to multiple homes, (3) as place to be with family and (4) cultural, ethnic and religious identifications" (Zuffery et al., 2020, p. 1105). However, migrant and refugee participants described only a partial sense of home due to discrimination and power inequalities. The authors suggested that social workers can enhance homemaking endeavors by supporting:

- (1) the freedoms of religious and cultural expression; (2) the re-settlement process in a new country; (3) the building of connections with family; (4) access to secure housing in safe suburbs and neighbourhoods and (5) the affirming of diverse housing choices including resistances to homeownership. (p. 1106)

Although place-based interventions are incorporated in Zuffery et al.'s (2020) study, homemaking can contribute other kinds of materialities that either facilitate or hinder the process.

Research that explores refugee homemaking in resettlement showcases how the social and material world inform homemaking processes. Social work's emphasis on supporting vulnerable populations such as refugees in navigating various social problems has unintentionally resulted in minimizing the critical role of the material world in producing un/justice. Homemaking is a key avenue for understanding refugee experiences of resettlement related to both the social and material environment. Because refugees have been forcibly displaced from home, how they seek to recreate home and what contributes to feeling at home in a new environment becomes a critical aspect of their experience and can encompass social and material negotiations (Taylor, 2013). Accordingly, equipping social workers with a place-based approach to practice supports refugees to resettle in their country of arrival. Homemaking, which is a place-based process, can be useful for social workers working alongside resettled refugees.

Homemaking: Exploring Place-based Experiences of Resettlement

Dossa and Golubovic (2019) illuminate the connection between those who are forcibly displaced and homemaking. They suggest that displacement entails immeasurable loss but those who are displaced are active agents who draw from a "repertoire of experiential and border-crossing knowledge which makes them uniquely positioned to suggest alternative ways of being" (p. 172). They state further:

- ...home-making practices are not only the domain of migrants and displaced persons; each of us engages in imagining and sustaining a sense of home every day, however passively. But the experience of forced displacement deeply unsettles our received notions of home, exposing the significant labour that goes into cultivating and achieving this most basic sense of security. This task entails struggles as well as accomplishments, continuities as well as discontinuities, dilemmas as well as resolutions. (Dossa & Golubovic, 2019, p. 172)

Importantly, understanding how the material world contributes to refugees feeling at home in different resettlement contexts sheds light on the crucial role place has in securing refugee futures. Refugees are subject to marginalization in countries such as Canada due

to institutions, laws, and policies that create hostile environments and sustain a feeling of precarity among refugees, even if legal permanence is achieved (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018).

In conceptualizing home in the context of belonging, Yuval-Davis et al. (2018) suggests that "belonging relates to emotional (or even ontological) attachment, about feeling 'at home'" (p. 230). She further highlights a definition proposed by Blunt (2005) who states that home is a "material and an affective space, shaped by everyday practices, lived experiences, social relations, memories and emotions" (p. 506). Home is also about being in a safe space and who belongs and who does not is determined by carceral systems such as border control (Yuval-Davis et al., 2018). The crucial intersection between home, belonging, and borders makes visible the ways in which home and belonging are politicized. Boccagni (2017) argues that, in the context of migration, home becomes a contested site through which legitimate membership and belonging are negotiated, shaping who is recognized as an insider and who is positioned as an outsider. Overarchingly, home is produced through socio-material relations, and the politicization of home shapes the barriers and possibilities within these webs of relations. To demonstrate the relevance and use of place-based practices in social work, we review the two overlapping fields of homemaking, social (human) and material (non-human), as case examples. These examples illustrate how place-based analyses expand beyond social aspects of resettlement to include the material environment as well.

Homemaking as a Social Phenomenon

The social side of home and homemaking infers a relational ontology, however in this article we use "social" more broadly to convey the variety of human experiences and activities involved with the nature of home and homemaking. This is inclusive of psychologically driven experiences such as memory, attachments, and emotions, along with the relational nodes of home and homemaking such as family, social connections, culture, and social capital, which is a positive derivative of social connection (Cook, 2014).

Psychological

Boccagni (2017) suggested that home can be categorized into three psychological domains: security, familiarity, and control. Security refers to "a sense of personal protection and integrity, attached to a place of one's own"; familiarity alludes to emotional experience "pointing to intimacy and comfort, and cognitively, including familiarity with the space, stability, routine and continuity"; and describe control as interchangeable with autonomy, which permits the use of a "certain place according to one's needs and tastes" (Beeckmans & Geldof, 2024, p. 1131). The portrayal of home as separate from the material world aligns with Murray (2014), who discovered that material or spatial was not a key factor for gender diverse refugee claimants, instead, home was described as a "complex and diverse continuum of feelings, attachments, and memories" (p. 148). The conceptualization of home through an individual or psychological lens sheds light on the hearts and minds of refugees when they arrive in new countries.

Relational/Cultural

Dam and Eyles (2012) investigated the journey of home from premigration to resettlement among Vietnamese refugees resettled in Hamilton, Canada and highlighted that family was a critical factor. The crucial role of social networks and social capital that evoke feelings of home in the resettlement context has also been noted. Simich et al. (2010) for example, defined home as "nodes of social relations...that unfold in everyday life" (p. 201), proposing that during resettlement, the re-creation of home depends on social functions, family roles, and relationships. Others have highlighted how the lack of social connection and social capital greatly impacted participants' ability to feel at home during resettlement (Kinefuchi, 2010). Social capital is defined in the literature as a "a set of direct or indirect resources produced by social networks, based on trust, within family, friends, and community members" (Hanley et al., 2018, p. 126).

The value of social connection is reinforced in Taylor's (2013) narrative research with Greek and Turkish Cypriot refugees who were resettled in London, England, and evidenced by Kinefuchi's (2010) study of the homemaking experiences of Montagnard refugees in the United States (US). In Kinefuchi's (2010) study, refugees found it difficult to feel at home in their resettlement context due to the U.S. emphasis on individual autonomy, which differed from the communal culture in their home country. Language competency was also a central theme related to social capital (Kim & Smets, 2020).

Kim and Smets' (2020) examination of Syrian Refugees resettled in the Netherlands found that those who had proficiency in English or Dutch had more interaction with Dutch residents and consequently increased their social capital, compared to those who did not. Similarly, Kinefuchi (2010) found that Montagnard refugees who immersed themselves in American culture and lifestyle, and sought active communication with locals while keeping a distance from their Vietnamese community, were better able to adapt to their new environment and create home. Taylor (2013) discussed how language barriers of Cypriot refugees meant that they were unable to apply their skills gained through education, in effect reducing their social capital.

Evidentially, culture, defined most often as the pattern of beliefs, values, and customs held by a group of people, was not explicitly highlighted as a key element of homemaking; however, culture notably threads throughout the socio-relational nodes that were emphasized in the refugee homemaking literature. Language both produces and is symbolic of culture (Jiang, 2000), and certainly the research studies outlined demonstrate that social connection and social capital are in part mediated by the extent to which refugees are competent in the language of the host country.

Structural inequalities such as classism, racism, and sexism greatly impact refugees' ability to gain social capital in the resettlement context despite the variety of skills refugees have to offer. The loss of social capital in resettlement can ripple through future generations, causing significant repercussions: "just as social capital is inherited, the effects of war and displacement can also be inherited as ongoing poverty or insecurity" (Taylor, 2013, p. 149). Despite this loss, drawing on Loizos (2000), Taylor (2013) argued that refugees can be understood as social capitalists who generate social capital through the

experience of exile, underscoring the notion that home and homemaking are political projects (Boccagni, 2017). Systemic injustices that impose marginalization onto refugees pose significant barriers to establishing home in the resettlement context, however, refugees' resilience and ongoing resistance to these oppressive conditions make home possible and create conditions for refugee futures in resettlement contexts.

Material Homemaking

The material world, central to the experience of home, is underexamined in forced migration research (Taylor, 2013). Available research on the material dimensions of refugee homemaking is often focused on the house that people live in and the ways in which the house is decorated. For example, Fozdar and Hartley (2014) explored the housing and homemaking experiences of 35 male and 41 female refugees from Africa, the Middle East, Burma, and Sri Lanka in Australia using photovoice methodology. The study revealed aspects of housing that operate as facilitators and barriers to homemaking. Vital discussions of housing affordability and availability is limited and expanded conceptions of home that include place (i.e., community or neighborhood) are necessary. A more holistic examination of homemaking processes recognize that "creating a feeling of home and a sense of belonging is not only bound to a person's house but is also related to the person's attachment to neighbourhood" (van Liempt & Miellet, 2021, p. 2381).

In this regard, Taylor (2013) distinguished between material and spatial aspects of home, defining spatial home as the "houses and other places of dwelling, the habitual spaces of everyday life, such as streets, churches, mosques, shops and cafes, as well as mountain ranges and valleys" (p. 138). Material home according to Taylor (2013) refers to the:

[O]rganic matter found in natural configurations of mountains, lakes, and forests or in the ways people have manipulated the land to respond to their economic, nutritional, social and aesthetic needs, through planting of orchards and crops, gardens and village squares. Trees, flowers, food, and soil create a context within which to live, as well as providing the raw material to sustain life. (p. 149)

An example of material home in Taylor's (2013) findings was food as symbolic and constitutive of culture, group identity, religion, economic wealth, and social relationships

Van Liempt and Miellet's (2021) study examined homemaking and place attachment among 11 Syrian refugee families and a single adult resettled in the Netherlands, identified cooking and sharing Syrian food as critical to feeling at home in an unfamiliar environment. Participants in their study shared that in smaller communities it was challenging to find supermarkets that sold the ingredients to make food from back home and this impacted their ability feel at home (Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021). In the face of language barriers, private gardens served as important places to bridge connections with local neighbors and stay connected to their home in Syria.

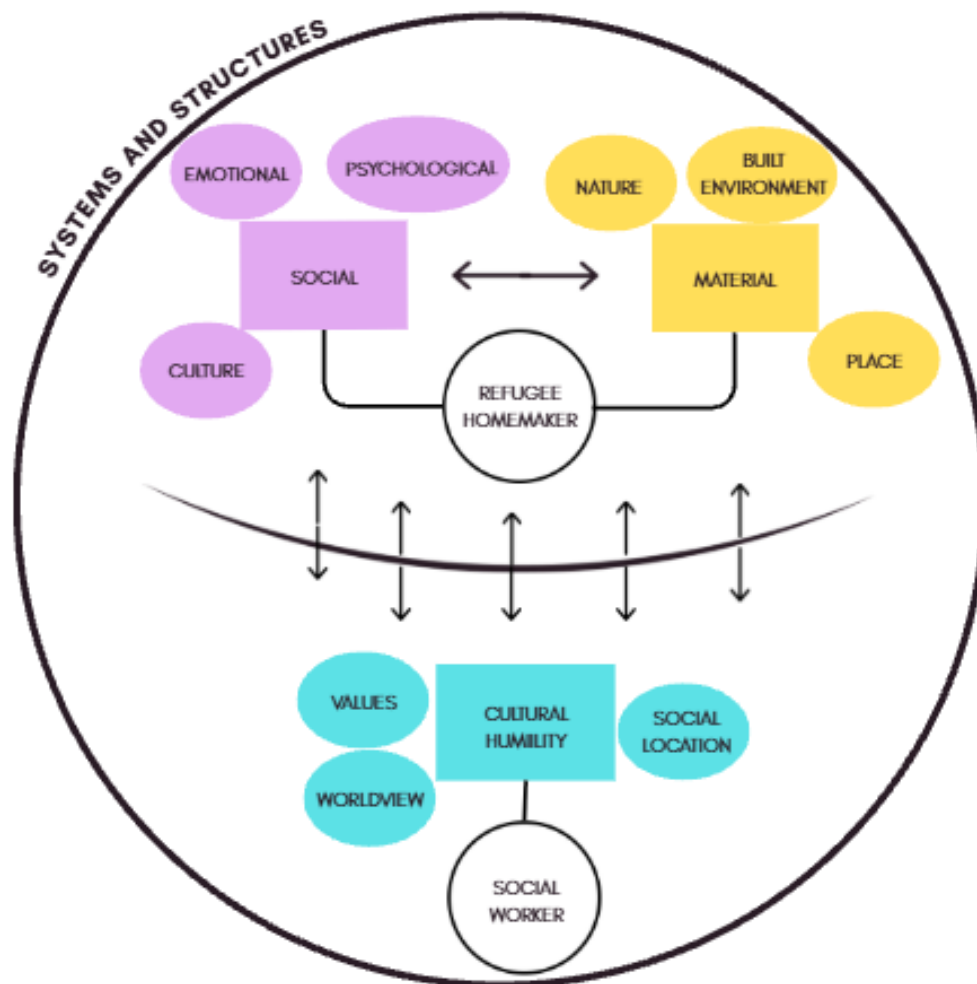
Van Liempt and Staring's (2021) in-depth qualitative interviews with 49 Syrian refugees elicited their perspectives on their everyday experiences of settlement and homemaking in the Netherlands. Study findings revealed four central themes: material

dimensions of homemaking, spaces of restoration, the social dimension of homemaking, and places that harm, which distilled the impact place has on these participants' ability to feel at home. Places of restoration, such as parks, green spaces, and natural areas by bodies of water, were identified as sites where belonging could be established. Material practices such as smoking shisha evoked memories of the past. Additionally, the solitude and quietness experienced by participants in these restorative places was twinned with empowerment. Having faced ongoing restriction to mobility as refugees, discovering spaces to enjoy life and belong supported participants to reclaim control over their lives. However, participants also discussed how living in smaller urban areas also posed barriers to establishing a sense of belonging. Stigma was identified as a challenge in small towns and Van Liempt and Staring's (2021) participants responded to these structural injustices by choosing how their identity was visibly expressed, symbolizing the political nature of homemaking and belonging.

Homemaking Conceptual Practice Approach

We have provided a strong rationale for social workers to employ a place-based homemaking lens that attends to socio-material elements of homemaking to support refugees throughout the resettlement process. While culture was not explicitly described as a component shaping refugee homemaking, cultural effects and considerations are infused within this place-based approach. For example, Kinefuchi (2010) showcased how culture was a factor in the homemaking of Montagnard refugees from Vietnam residing in the US. In their home country, collectivity informed social relations, in which emotional and material exchanges were commonplace not only in times of hardship, but daily. However, in the US resettlement context, individuality is emphasized, with each person or family responsible for their emotional and material needs. Therefore, the Montagnard refugees had to create home in these unfamiliar conditions, which made homemaking more challenging. Language was another cultural feature that impacted refugee homemaking. Social capital, recognized as critical in homemaking processes was greatly facilitated or inhibited by language competency (Kim & Smets, 2020).

Cultural considerations were also pertinent to the material elements of homemaking. Food from one's home country was showcased as a marker of culture, group identity, religion, economic wealth, and social relationships (Taylor, 2013). Gardening was described as useful for homemaking, (Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021), illuminating the close connection between food, culture, and homemaking. Finally, the material environment was showcased as a critical connection between homemaking, social connections, and culture. We have generated a homemaking conceptual practice model for social workers that can be used to determine the needs, strengths, and desires of refugees holistically (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Homemaking Conceptual Practice Model for Social Work*

This model shows the interplay of social and material features of homemaking that social workers should attend to in their practice alongside refugees. Additionally, it depicts how systems and structures and social worker positionality (values, worldview, social location), impact refugee homemaking. Reciprocity is represented by the dual direction arrows between the social worker and refugee homemaking to suggest that social workers shape and are shaped by those they work alongside and vice versa. We also offer the following tenets for social workers working alongside refugees in various practice contexts:

1. Consider the place-based (social-material) elements that inform the service-user's homemaking in the resettlement context. Discuss these different parts in collaboration with the service-user.
2. Inquire about how place-based elements interact to inform the strengths and challenges faced by service-users. For example, how might the location of

transit or the grocery store be impacting their day-to-day life? What contents within the grocery store can support refugees to feel at home? What aspects of the built environment in their neighborhood or home are facilitating or inhibiting homemaking?

3. Consider how service-users themselves respond to, engage with, or resist their place-based conditions that shape the ability to make home. Consider how cultural factors might impact service-user engagement, employing cultural humility to resist making assumptions or perpetuating stereotypes about service users' cultures. Instead, attend to the place-based context of the individual, family, or community by asking questions and listening and learning about their culture from their own perspective.
4. Identify how stigma and discrimination impact the conditions of service-user homemaking. Consider how systemic oppressions such as sexism, racism, classism/poverty, legal status, sexual orientation, et cetera, effect homemaking.
5. Again, harness cultural humility to avoid making assumptions surrounding homemaking. Categories of privilege and oppression are not static and show up in different ways depending on context.
6. Examine how interventions can respond to place-based inequities to effect change on micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
7. Engage in ongoing critical reflexivity to consider how your own positionality might impact your relationship with the service-user and aim to find solutions to any barriers that might arise.

Implications

This article has provided a comprehensive review of intersecting bodies of literature pertinent to refugee resettlement and homemaking. We argue that incorporating place-based considerations for refugees resettling in Canada is necessary practice scope for social work and the resettlement sector. Policies and practices directed toward refugees should reflect place-based considerations. Beyond housing supply and quality, other aspects of the built environment, including housing location, neighborhood services, and material objects in the built environment, must also be considered to effectively support refugees in creating a sense of home and successfully resettling in Canada and other similar countries that have the resources to address socio-material needs and desires.

Additionally, how culture informs the preferences and uses of materialities cannot be ignored. This calls for flexibility in policies and practices to meet the needs and desires of refugees in alignment with their culture and place-based contexts within Canada. Research that explores the relationship between the material world and refugee resettlement is scant in Canada and beyond. Accordingly, future research that gleans insight into this critical juncture is vital for expanding on current policies, practice, and education directed toward supporting refugees in a holistic fashion. By moving beyond the improvement of social conditions alone, toward socio-material justice, refugees will not just survive but thrive in new places.

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