RESPOND

# Working Papers

## Global Migration: Consequences and Responses

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# Integration

## Policies, Practices and Experiences

## Turkey Country Report

**Susan Beth Rottmann**

Özyeğin University

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to: susan.rottmann@ozyegin.edu.tr

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# List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AFAD | Disaster and Emergency Management Authority |
| AIDA | Asylum Information Database |
| ASAM | Association for Solidarity with Asylum and Migrants |
| CL | Citizenship Law |
| DGMM | Directorate General for Migration Management |
| EC | European Commission |
| ECHO | European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations |
| EU | European Union |
| ICG | International Crisis Group |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| IO | International Organization |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| LFIP | Law on Foreigners and International Protection |
| LWPF | Law on Work Permits for Foreigners |
| MIPEX | Migrant Integration Policy Index |
| MoI | Ministry of Interior |
| MoFLSS | Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services |
| MS | Member State |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PDMM | Provincial Directorate of Migration Management |
| TAC | Temporary Accommodation Centre |
| TEC | Temporary Education Center |
| TEPAV | *Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı* (Turkish Economics and Politics Research Foundation) |
| THEC | Turkish Higher Education Council |
| TOKI | *Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı* (Directorate of Public Housing Administration) |
| TPR | Temporary Protection Regulation |
| TPS | Temporary Protection Status |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| WALD | World Academy for Local Government and Democracy |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| YTB | Presidency for Turks Abroad |

# About the project

This country report is the fifth report of the European Commission (EC)-funded project, *RESPOND: Multilevel Governance of Mass Migration in Europe and Beyond* (herein after 'RESPOND'), and focuses on integration in Turkey with particular reference to developments between 2011-2017.

With the goal of enhancing the governance capacity and policy coherence of the European Union (EU), its member states and neighbours, RESPOND is a comprehensive study of migration governance. Bringing together 14 partners from 11 countries and several different disciplines, RESPOND aims to:

- provide an in-depth understanding of the governance of recent mass migration at macro, meso and micro levels through cross-country comparative research;
- critically analyse governance practices with the aim of enhancing the migration governance capacity and policy coherence of the EU, its member states and third countries.

The project probes policy-making processes and policy (in)coherence through comparative research in source, transit, and destination countries. RESPOND addresses how policy (in)coherence between the EU, Member States (MSs) as well as between states differentially positioned as transit, hosting and source countries affect migration governance. Specifically, by delineating interactions and outcomes between national refugee systems and the EU, RESPOND examines the reasons behind the apparent policy incoherence.

RESPOND studies migration governance through a narrative which is constructed along five thematic fields: (1) Border management and security, (2) Refugee protection regimes, (3) Reception policies, (4) Integration policies, and (5) Conflicting Europeanization. Each thematic field is reflecting a juncture in the migration journey of refugees and designed to provide a holistic view of policies, their impacts and the responses of affected actors.

The work plan is organized around 11 work packages (WPs) – of which 8 have research tasks. The project also includes two WPs to organize impact-related activities targeting different audiences, including the scientific community, policy actors and the public in general.

RESPOND's country reports on integration look at the topic in the context of migration governance in the countries that are under study in the project (Greece, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Poland, UK, Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon). The conceptual approach to integration is structured around the EU's principles and its key policy priorities on integration[1] as well as the categorizations made in recent academic studies on Migrant and Refugee Integration.[2] It mainly follows the analytical framework developed by Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninx (2016). The country reports use data derived from macro, meso and micro level questions and desk research based on the analysis of official papers, legislation, policy briefs, official data drawn from relevant ministries and public institutions, survey results, expert interviews and existing research.

[1] See 1) The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004. These form the foundations of EU initiatives in the field of integration. 2) the 2011 European Agenda on Integration, this Action Plan sets out policy priorities (PP) and the tools to support the implementation of these priorities, 2016. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf

[2] Bauböck, R. & Milena T. (2017). "The Integration of Migrants and Refugees. EUI Forum on Migration, Citizenship, and Demography." *Florence: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies*; Garcés-Mascareñas, B., & Rinus P. (2016) (Eds.) *Integration processes and policies in Europe: Contexts, levels and actors*. Springer Open.

# Executive summary

This *Integration in Turkey Country Report* focuses on integration policies, practices and responses to refugee immigration between 2011 and 2019. The report is composed of two main parts. First, the report defines integration according to EU guidelines and specifically as "differential inclusion" (Cases-Cortes et al 2015, p. 79-80). It provides an overview of Turkey's integration policy discourses, in particular the evolution of "guest," "charity," "hospitality" and "social harmony" discourses prominent in the country. It posits that despite lacking an official national integration programme and despite the rise of a return discourse (to Syria) among public officials and the media, there is a de facto national integration policy. The development of integration measures for employment, education, health and citizenship and the presence of many governance actors working in the field of migrant integration, demonstrate that integration is very much an on-going process and will continue in the years to come.

The report reviews the actions of the major integration governance actors, from the national and municipal levels to international, national and local organizations. It also points out that refugees and members of local communities are themselves major actors, not to be overlooked in our drive to measure official responses. Their perceptions are important for understanding cultural and religious dynamics and on-the-ground realities. Despite significant improvement in the integration area in recent years, Turkey's lack of a national policy means that there is a high level of policy incoherence, duplication of services and gaps.

Second, the report goes into detail for each of the major integration areas identified by the EU and scholars, namely, labor market, education, housing and space, health and citizenship. Within the area of labor market, we found that migrants are experiencing difficulties, as they are largely relegated to the informal sector and to low paid, irregular and sometimes dangerous work. Onerous bureaucratic and other barriers to obtaining work permits mean that Turkey's refugees are employed precariously and struggling to support their families. Further, their qualifications are often not recognized, their educational backgrounds tend to be under-valued, and they face difficulties entering or returning to university in Turkey. Child labor is also a growing problem.

With regards to education, around two thirds of Syrian children are now in school. Urgent steps are needed to ensure that the remainder enrol as soon as possible and that those currently in school do not drop out (especially at the secondary education level). New programmes supported by the EU and the National Ministry of Education have been implemented to smooth the transition of Syrians into Turkish schools and to improve educational outcomes of Syrians. Our research shows that there are still barriers to access and tensions in schools, among children and between children and teachers. The report points to the need for more cohesion programming and diversity education in schools in particular. Adult language education is an urgent need, requiring additional staffing, teacher training, resources and a national policy.

In the absence of any national programme for housing forced migrants (aside from a few low-capacity camps), migrants are responsible for securing their own housing. Many are living in poor conditions. Yet, they are managing to create spaces of comfort through furniture purchases and personal decorating choices. They generally speak positively of their neighbourhoods, and our research has shown that they are emplacing themselves vividly in their cities through newly opened restaurants, shops and cultural centres.

People who receive international protection status in Turkey are entitled to free healthcare (with a few exceptions), and they generally speak positively about the healthcare system. However, issues of access remain, including location-based registration requirements. Refugees also face a lack of translators, understaffing and sometimes discrimination on the part of medical staff. Mental health is an area in urgent need of attention and resources. Many migrants express sadness and stress in interviews and often claim that they do not know how to find help. Families and Islam are major sources of support and an aid with coping for most people, but additional professional help is still necessary and would particularly help those who are separated from their families or who have experienced

significant losses due to war. The research for this report was completed before anyone even heard of COVID-19, but, needless to say, it has had devastating economic and health impacts on migrants.

With regards to citizenship, most migrants in our sample claim that they want to become citizens; Syrians do not feel that their Temporary Protection Status confers them sufficient rights. The Turkish state has been bestowing citizenship on some migrants selectively, seemingly on an invitational basis and according to the refugee's educational or class qualifications. Introducing clearer criteria for citizenship would provide reassurance to both migrants and Turks about how determinations are made and who is prioritized for receiving citizenship. Migrants with and without citizenship are eager to participate in the political process, but this is difficult for those without citizenship in today's Turkey for both legal and social reasons. Syrian migrants feel a strong belonging in Turkey due to historical and cultural links, but in local communities, tensions are at an all-time high, which makes migrants feel very unwanted and stressed.

Gender, referring to the differential experience of men and women in society, is dealt with throughout the report. In particular, the report shows that Syrian women's entry into the labor market in Turkey is low, but is still creating significant changes in terms of social relations within the Syrian community. For some women, migration has led to a welcome easing of traditional roles, while others feel more stressed by new challenges and responsibilities. The need for language education is urgent for adult women who are desperate to establish positive social relationships with neighbours. Traditional family roles are under pressure, leading to divorce and a rise in domestic violence. Many men are unable to maintain their sole breadwinner status that they held in Syria. Instead, we saw several cases where wives and children are supporting their families too, leading to a sense of insecurity for fathers about their roles and their family's futures.

Overall, the report argues that however we define or measure integration, Turkey's forced migrants are gradually integrating in all major areas. However, integration is far from uniform, but varies according to gender, age, life stage, social class and other factors and across sectors, with health being among the most successful integration areas as compared to the others examined in this report. Among the three regions of Turkey in which we conducted micro-level research (Şanlıurfa, Izmir and Istanbul), integration seems to be slightly smoother for migrants due to shared linguistic and social ties in Şanlıurfa and slightly more challenging for migrants due to host community reception in Izmir. But, in general we observed only slight differences in service provision between the three cities. Strong national leadership in the area of integration—a national policy, as well as local level deliberations on the topic—would facilitate the integration process for forced migrants, ensuring that they are incorporated into the society on the basis of equality and fairness. It would also soothe the concerns of people in many local communities who lack information about the state's long-term policy and thus fill in their knowledge gaps with rumours fuelled by unwarranted fears about migrants.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Conceptualizing Integration

Any discussion of integration requires, first, a definition of what is meant by integration. Despite numerous policy programs and scholarly research agendas purporting to study integration, it remains a contested concept without an accepted definition or standard model (Castles et al., 2002, p. 112; Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore 2017). In conceptualizing integration, this report largely follows the EU's guidelines.[3] The EU defined integration for the first time in 2003 as a "two-way process based on mutual rights and corresponding obligations of legally residing third-country nationals and the host societies" (European Council 2003). EU integration guidelines were further developed in 2004 and 2011 and largely focus on formal inclusion in terms of legal rights, political participation, labor markets, healthcare, housing and schools (European Council 2016). In this report, I look to these guidelines and also beyond them, taking inspiration from scholars who also stress the importance of informal and abstract dimensions of integration, including social bridges, bonds and links (Ager and Strang 2008) and cultural/religious belonging (Garces-Mascarenas and Penninx 2016). Integration is both formal and informal, a quantifiable in-/ex-clusion and an ineffable feeling.

I am sensitive to critics who argue that the term integration is problematic because it sometimes means assimilation whereby the migrant sheds his or her identity in favour of a new identity. Thus, integration is a term that is sometimes used by those wishing to promote racism or national unity and to exclude social difference. When debated in Europe, integration often crystalizes around worries of transgressions of national values. Political leaders may posit culturally homogenous nations, and Europe's migration history and cultural diversity can be pointedly overlooked (Banulescu Bogdan and Benton 2017). Much theorizing on integration revolves around a normative framing of Europe, and new research is needed on integration outside of European borders. The case of refugees in Turkey provides one important opportunity to theorize integration in a different political and social context.

Rejecting the notion of assimilation that accompanies the concept of integration in many discourses does not mean that we should not study the process of group interaction or how migrants live in new societies. At its most basic level, integration has to do with "inclusion" and more precisely with "differential inclusion," which "describes how inclusion in a sphere, society or realm can involve various degrees of subordination, rule, discrimination, racism, disenfranchisement, exploitation and segmentation (Cases-Cortes et al 2015, p. 79-80). Although I use the word integration throughout the report, what I hope to show is differential inclusion. Turkey is an apt place for exploring differential inclusion as most forced migrants are not able to become refugees, remaining in legal limbo and social precarity indefinitely (Baban, Ilcan and Rygiel 2017). Yet, they are certainly also finding inclusion in particular spheres. This report shows that in addition to looking at differential inclusion for the group of refugees broadly, it is essential to disaggregate inclusion according to gender, social class, ethnic background, sexual identity, cultural capital and many other factors. There is not one level of migrant integration that applies to all group members, but rather integration for individuals is affected by a wide array of intersecting identities and structures of domination.

The main objectives of this report are to:

[3]For more information, see: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/the-eu-and-integration/framework and http://www.mipex.eu/ The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU were adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in November 2004 and form the foundations of EU initiatives in the field of integration. 2) the 2011 European Agenda on Integration, this Action Plan sets out policy priorities (PP) and the tools to support the implementation of these priorities, 2016. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf.

- Outline the integration policy of Turkey by looking at its legal, political and institutional frameworks
- Analyse the governance of integration at different levels for 5 thematic topics: Labour Market, Education, Housing & Space, the Psychosocial Role of Religion for Public Mental Health, and Citizenship, Belonging and Gender
- Explain how refugees negotiate their position in a new society and how they respond to and interact with policies aiming at their integration at legal-political, socio-economic, and cultural levels
- Suggest some policy recommendations for each thematic field

RESPOND studied migration as a multi-level phenomenon with affects on macro (national and international), meso (regional and municipal) and micro (individual migrant) levels. In the presentation of findings in this report, I have more or less integrated the three levels. However, the sections generally begin with presentation of the macro-level results and then proceed to analyze meso and micro level interview findings.

## 1.2 From Reception to Integration?

In most counties, "reception" refers to the liminal period between the refugee's arrival and application for asylum and the state's decision on his or her application. "Integration" begins after a positive decision in which the applicant is recognized as a legal refugee. Unlike many other countries studied by RESPOND, in Turkey, the demarcation between reception and integration is not clear cut, because there is no legal differentiation between reception and integration. As discussed in RESPOND's WP1 report "Turkey is a signatory party to the 1951 Convention and its additional protocol in 1967. However, Turkey has a geographical limitation on the refugee definition of the Convention and recognizes the refugee status only for those who meet the criteria of the Convention definition due to events happening in European countries[4]" (Cetin et al 2018, p. 38). This means that the majority of forced migrants in Turkey are not able to become refugees and by extension are not officially asylum seekers, because they did not arrive from Europe. They also never move out of "reception" status or were never in it, depending upon how you look at it.

Throughout the report, the term "refugee" is used inter-changeably with the term "forced migrant" or "migrant" to refer to all people seeking protection in Turkey, even though the Turkish state does not officially recognize most of these individuals as legal refugees. By using the term refugee, RESPOND lends its support to these migrants' claims of needing protection, while acknowledging that there are a variety of factors affecting migration motivations and state labelling.[5]

The three main legal statuses for forced migrants to Turkey are:

1. "international protection" for which people receive "conditional refugee status" if they are under direct personal threat in their country of origin
2. "subsidiary protection status" if they come from countries where a general situation of violence prevails;
3. "temporary protection," which is currently only given to migrants from Syria (AIDA, 2019, p. 17).

The similarities and differences between these statuses are discussed in depth in RESPOND's WP1 (Cetin et al 2018) and WP3 (Gökalp Aras and Mencutek 2020) reports. In brief, forced migrants who are not from Syria may become "conditional refugees" or receive "subsidiary protection status," but most Syrians in the country (unless they are among the small number

[4] LFIP [Art. 3(1)(b)] defines the term European countries as follows: "[*m*]*ember States of the Council of Europe as well as other countries to be determined by the Council of Ministers*."

[5] For more information on the categorization of migration and forced migrants, see Erdal and Oeppen (2018).

having citizenship or permanent residence) have Temporary Protection Status (TPS). All of these statuses come with the right to live in the country, but they do not confer unlimited permanent residence and may be cancelled at any time. Since Syrians are the overwhelming majority of forced migrants and the primary focus of RESPOND fieldwork, this report focuses on their experiences in most detail, but occasionally draws comparisons and contrasts with other migrant groups.

In the RESPOND WP4 report, Ayhan Kaya (2020a) writes that reception in the Turkish case covers "the liminal period between the arrival and the moment when the refugees decide to spend their efforts to integrate into the social, economic and cultural spheres of life of the receiving society" (p. 11). In general, for RESPOND, reception refers to the earliest period of arrival in Turkey whereas integration refers to the permanent settlement period. This delimitation still does not provide a hard and fast guide for determining the ending of reception and the beginning of integration. Aside from the impossibility of making a legal demarcation, it is often impossible for refugees to make a demarcation as well. Their desires to integrate and feelings of belonging may change according to personal circumstances as well as economic, political and social developments in the country. One of the aims of this report is in fact to trace these changing feelings of belonging. Yet, in order to differentiate this report from the WP4 report, for the most part, the report focuses on long-term settlement experiences, rather than initial impressions and conditions.

Given this grey area between reception and integration in Turkey, this report builds strongly on the foundational findings laid down in the WP4 report on reception (Kaya 2020a), but expands on certain relevant settlement issues and highlights micro-level findings in particular. First, using a macro-level analysis of policy and media, it summarizes the historical legal and political frameworks that are relevant to integration, namely the guest, charity and hospitality discourses that are reviewed in depth in WP4. This report goes into more depth on the notion of social harmony (*uyum*), which is the preferred term for integration in Turkey. In this report, the micro-level findings will be highlighted more than the meso-level findings because they provide a wealth of information about migrants' experiences, which brings their too-often overlooked voices to the fore. Additionally, migrants are often in the best position to show us the policy incoherence, overlaps and gaps as they experience these first-hand.

With regards to labor market, education and housing integration, the report summarizes statistical dimensions and issues of access that were discussed in WP4, but gives more in-depth details based on the micro-level interviews. It focuses more on challenges and barriers to employment, qualifications, educational experiences and challenges. With regards to housing, it goes into detail about decoration, neighbourhoods and spatial residence and the sense of feeling at home in certain cities. This report examines psychosocial health and gender in much more detail than the WP4 report, by drawing extensively on the micro-level interview material. Finally, with regards to citizenship and belonging, the report summarizes the points about citizenship, cultural belonging and local reception that are addressed in WP4, but it looks more closely at neighbourly ties, following the news and political participation.

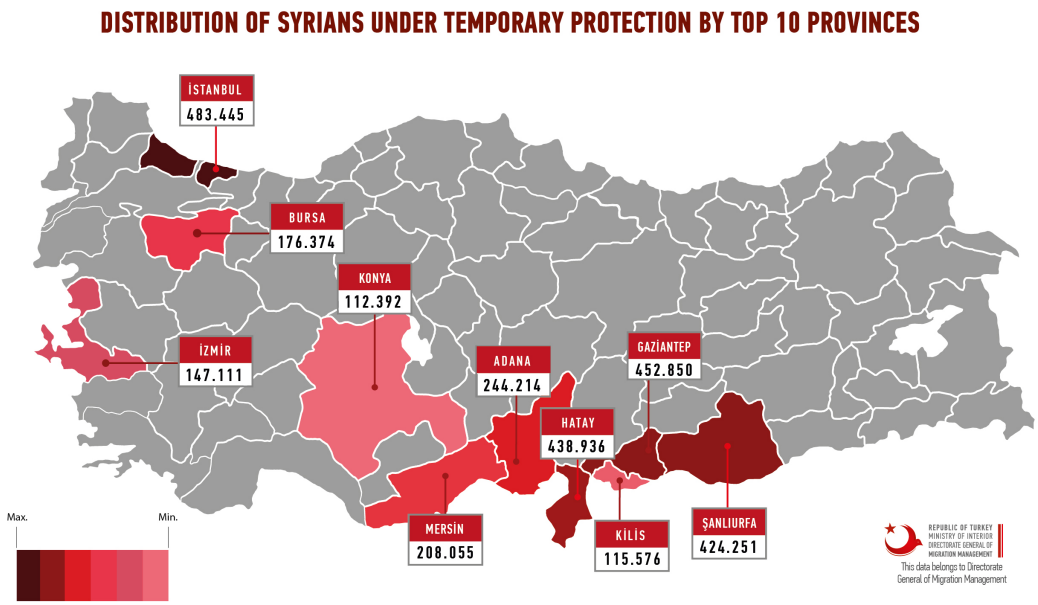
# 2. Methodology

## 2.1. Sampling and Data Gathering

Throughout the report I rely on a literature analysis of the post-2011 legal framework and political policy sphere and on analysis of meso- and micro- level qualitative interviews conducted by RESPOND researchers in 2018-2019.

Fieldwork was conducted in Istanbul, Izmir, Şanlıurfa, and Ankara. Interviews with meso-level actors (migration governance stakeholders) explored conditions for all forced migrants in Turkey, regardless of legal status. The majority of our micro-level interviews were conducted with Syrians. Syrians have been the primary focus of policy-making, NGO activity and public discussions after 2011. Our reason for focusing mainly on Syrians is because the number of other migrants are far below the number of Syrians (3.6 million). The major origin countries of non-Syrians are Iraq (68,685), Afghanistan (31,148), and Iran (9,619), among others[6] (DGMM, 2020). Syrians and members of other groups face different legal regimes, but in other respects share equivalent access to services. However, it is also important to highlight a few differences in Syrian experiences and the experiences of other forced migrants in Turkey, which the report does at several points. We also interviewed nine non-Syrian migrants from Iraq, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Morrocco.

**Figure 1: Distribution of Syrians under Temporary Protection by top Ten Provinces**




**Source: DGMM "Temporary Protection", Available at: <https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27> (Accessed February 4, 2020).**

Istanbul was chosen as a research site because it is the largest city in Turkey and the city hosting the highest number of Syrians (484,445 Syrians as of February 2020). Şanlıurfa is hosting the fourth highest population of Syrians in Turkey (424,251 as of 4 February 2020), which is 21% of the total population of the province (DGMM, 2020). Izmir was selected as an area of research in order to highlight differences in experiences between Syrians and non-

[6] Those countries are followed by Somali (1,082), Pakistan (350), Yemen (200), Turkmenistan (181), Palestine (167), Uzbekistan (111).

Syrians. It is the third most populous city in Turkey[7] and a main transit point for those traveling to the Greek islands. There are 147,111 registered Syrian refugees, who are under temporary protection in Izmir as of February 4, 2020. In Ankara, we wanted to understand the governance of migration and were able to interview state actors, but the city does not itself have a high population of migrants.[8] The below figure (Figure 1) shows the ten provinces hosting the largest numbers of Syrians.

The meso level analysis is based on interviews conducted in Istanbul (17), Izmir (29), Şanlıurfa (34), and Ankara (4) between July and November 2018. In order to select interviewees at the meso level, we considered the type of institution so that we would have representatives from all levels, including, national (Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM)), provincial public administration (PDMMs, branches of ministries, civil servants), representatives of local governments (e.g. municipalities, city councils, muhtars (village leaders)) International Organization (IO) (e.g. IOM, UNHCR), International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) representatives, refugee organizations, scholars, experts and lawyers or bar associations. We also selected interviewees based on their primary area of activity (national-central level-Ankara, urban-Istanbul, Izmir, Şanlıurfa and rural-non-urban areas in Izmir (Border-crossing points) and Şanlıurfa (Ceylanpinar, Siverek).

We conducted 103 total micro-level interviews with migrants in Izmir (43), Istanbul (40) and Şanlıurfa (20). Interviewee sampling was designed to approach representativeness in terms of the districts in which migrants were living, the time span of arrivals, gender, age, vulnerabilities and variations in legal status. The gender ratio of the interviewees was approximately equal. The ratio between early and later arrivals was also equal (Arrivals between 2011-2014 and 2015-2018 were approximately 50% each). The age ratio was as follows: 18-24, 40%; 27-50, 40%; and 50 +, 20%, which reflects the relative proportions of Syrians of respective age-groups in Turkey. Drawing on our dataset, with regards to education, we can say that roughly one third of our sample was illiterate or had only elementary or lower secondary school education, one third had higher secondary level education and one third did not report their educational level. With regards to employment in the home country, approximately one third of our sample never worked (34%), while one fourth (24%) were specialists (lawyers, doctors, bookkeepers, lecturers, IT specialists, teachers, translators) or managers, supervisors or directors. The remaining were unskilled or skilled workers or did not report their employment history. 84% of our interviewees were married or engaged, with the remainder divided nearly equally between people who were single and those who were widowed or divorced.

All interviews were carried out with full respect for ethical principles agreed upon by the RESPOND consortium and those approved by the institutions of the Turkey RESPOND research team (Özyeğin University, the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Istanbul Bilgi University). Interviews were conducted in Turkish, English and Arabic with the assistance of translators. Data was collected after taking voluntary, explicit and well-informed consent from research participants. Only data that is essential for specific research aims was collected and the collection of personal data was avoided. The principles of anonymity, confidentiality and privacy were fully respected during data gathering and reporting.

## 2.2. Data Analysis and Limitations

This report uses the commonly developed coding scheme for WP5 (Integration) of RESPOND, with a few country specific revisions and additions. We used both a deductive and also an inductive approach in creating the coding frame. Specific categories laid out in the WP5

[7] 4,279,677 in 2017 according to Turkish Statistical Institute, Available at: <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist> (Accessed May 16, 2018).
[8] Ankara has 88,373 refugees as of 27 December 2018 (Gocgov, 2018).

guidelines were created and then areas of specific relevance to integration in Turkey were selected for further analysis. The narrative analysis reflects the key themes/narratives associated with integration, including social cohesion (*uyum*) and a variety of issues related to labor market, education, housing and space, health, citizenship and gender. Please see the appendix of micro-level codes for more detail about coding themes. All data was analysed using the qualitative content analysis software programme Nvivo12 Plus.

The relative absence of minorities, disabled and LGBTQ+ individuals in the sample should be noted. Also, due to the relatively limited representation of non-Syrians in the sample, we should be cautious about making any conclusions about their integration from the findings of this report.

# 3. Integration Policies: Legal, Political and Institutional Framework

## 3.1. Brief Background of Migration Policy Development

Prior RESPOND reports have outlined the development of migration policy in Turkey in great detail (e.g. Cetin et al 2018; Gökalp Aras and Mencutek 2020; Kaya 2020a). Therefore, this report focuses only on integration policy. Further, it is limited to detailing developments since the beginning of the arrival of Syrian refugees in 2011, although it is important to remember that refugees from Iran, Iraq, Bosnia and other countries arrived to Turkey in large numbers in the 1990s (Duvell 2013), and "the number of non-Syrian refugees in Turkey also skyrocketed since 2005" (Simsek and Corbatir 2016, p.118).

The number of Syrians in Turkey has risen yearly since 2011, and today Turkey is hosting to the highest number of (unofficial) refugees in the world.[9] As of January 2020, the DGMM reports that Turkey is hosting 3,576,344 refugees from Syria under temporary protection.[10] According to 2018 data released by the DGMM, 4056 Syrians have residence permits.[11] It is not possible to obtain statistics about rejected residence permit applications, but in general, only upper middle or upper class Syrians are able to obtain residence permits due to costs and other requirements. Turkey is also hosting 114,537 non-Syrian asylum seekers and beneficiaries. "The number of remaining unregistered refugees is not known with any certainty, but is estimated by different sources to be between 250,000 and 350,000."[12]

Turkey initially welcomed forced migrants from Syria and provided housing in camps (Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs)) that some commentators praised.[13] Today, only 63,491 Syrians live in 7 camps in the provinces close to the Syrian border, including Kilis, Osmaniye, Adana, Kahramanmaraş and Hatay (see Table 2). The majority of Syrians do not live in the refugee camps, but in Turkey's major cities (Istanbul, Izmir, Adana, Ankara, Bursa) and outside of camps in the border provinces of Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Hatay and Kilis (See Table 4).

The Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) and the Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR) determine migrants' legal status and both came into force in 2014. These laws include provisions for education, financial allowances, health services, labor market access and information/counselling services for forced migrants. Further, they promise an open-door policy for all Syrians, no forced returns to Syria (non-refoulement) and unlimited duration of stay in Turkey (Kaya 2020a, p. 18-19). Yet, as Gökalp Aras and Mencutek (2020) report, "Starting from mid-2012, Turkey changed tack and effectively closed its border. Syrians without passports can no longer cross except in cases of urgent humanitarian need (AI, 2014: 10)" (p. 41). More information about Turkey's evolving border policy can be found in the RESPOND WP2 country report (Gökalp Aras and Mencutek, 2019).

## 3.2 Introducing (non-)Integration Policy Discourses

Initially, the Turkish government response to the arrival of large-numbers of Syrians can be characterized as disorganized. It appears that officials did not plan for the eventual numbers

[9] For more information on world refugee figures, see: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/working-group/80?sv=4&geo=113
[10] These figures may be found here: https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27 (accessed January 15, 2020).
[11] This is the most recent data available, but the numbers are probably fairly similar today. See: https://www.goc.gov.tr/ikamet-izinleri.
[12] These figures are provided by the EU and UNHCR. For more information, see: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/evaluation_final_report_echo_-_turkey_17.12.19.pdf
[13] For an example of laudatory news coverage, see: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/16/magazine/how-to-build-a-perfect-refugee-camp.html or https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkeys-syrian-refugee-camp-is-perfect/182365

that would arrive and for the length of time that the conflict would continue. The International Crisis Group (ICG 2016) summed up the situation in 2015-2016 like this:

> The concept of "temporary permanence" (*geçici kalıcılık*), pronounced by then Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's adviser in December 2015, summarised the convoluted approach and the government's difficulties to define a strategy. The chaotic policymaking, a patchwork of small initiatives with micro effects, left refugees having to find their own way (p. 3).

The DGMM, which is tasked with regulating all migration matters in the country was only established in the midst of the migration flow in 2014, three years after refugees had begun arriving in large numbers. DGMM was forced to hire and train staff while also developing policies and procedures quickly. According to Umut Korkut writing in 2016,

> What is particularly crucial for the Turkish government's position toward the Syrian refugees is the lack of integration policies and programmes. …officials follow a particular discursive framework appealing to the collective memory of the Turkish state and society as a charitable polity and a traditionally generous society. This particular discursive construction seeks to culminate in public support for the government's position vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, but falls short of institutionalizing comprehensive humanitarianism and integration policies to respond to the needs of refugees (p. 18).

Official discourses gradually crystalized around the idea of charity for people who were said to be only temporarily staying in the country. Ayhan Kaya's WP4 report (2020a) provides a concise summary of these discourses and how they evolved between 2011 and today.

> Political discourse about the Syrian refugees was primarily mainstreamed around the category of guesthood, which was later coupled with a Islamic mythology of Ansar spirit. As a metaphor, *Ansar* refers to the people of Medina, who supported the Prophet Mohammad and the accompanying Muslims (*muhajirun*, or migrants) who migrated there from Mecca, which was under the control of the pagans. The metaphor of Ansar originally points at a temporary situation as the Muslims later returned to Mecca after their forces recaptured the city from the pagans. Hence, the Turkish government has used a kind of Islamic symbolism to legitimize its acts on the resolution of the Syrian refugee crisis (p. 12).

In addition to the idea of charitably helping Muslim brothers, the state adopted a positive migration discourse based on hospitality as a Turkish cultural trait.

> In the protection field, it is common for Turkish politicians and citizens to refer to their "proud history of welcoming immigrants and refugees" and to present Anatolia as the hosting place of several migrants, which can (be) related to the current "hosting" mission and "hospitality" of the country. The notion of a 'rich' history of immigration towards Turkey is often supported by providing numbers of immigrants arriving to Turkey in the course of the pre-republic (1492-1922) and republican historical periods (1922-present). The web page of the DGMM has a section on "Migration History" providing the impression of the Turkish state as proud to be "hosting" large numbers of immigrants. It identifies Turkey's migration characteristics with the notions of being a "bridge between East and West", a "transit point for migrants aiming at going to the EU," "an attractive place for regular and irregular migration" and "a final stop of migration movements" (Gocgov History, 2019) (Gökalp Aras and Mencutek 2020, p.39).

Although the state's charity and hospitality discourses are welcoming of migrants, they do not imply long-term permanent integration of equal partners, which would represent a fully rights-based integration approach. Dawn Chatty (2017a), argues that such discourses of charity and hospitality are unique to Middle Eastern cultures where we find local and regional "constructions of duty-based obligations to the guest, stranger, and person-in-need, which are not sufficiently appreciated in the West" (p. 178). In Chatty's view, a rights-based formulation of international protection like that in European countries creates a heartless and faceless bureaucracy that even people in Europe are increasingly opposing. She believes migrants in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and other Middle Eastern states will be taken care of because "The family or lineage's reputation is in many ways hostage to correct behaviour with a guest/stranger, as inappropriate behaviour might lead to disrespect, danger, and insecurity (Shryock 2004)" (Chatty 2017a, p. 190). Controversially, Chatty argues that Turkey's temporary protection status is the best legal status for Syrians and what they actually want so that they can eventually return to Syria. She claims, "Syrians fleeing into Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, have been very reluctant to ›register‹ officially with the UN agencies as refugees. They have instead sought out arrangements where they could work, where their families were safe, and where they could access health and education possibilities for their children. In other words, they were searching for ways to sit out the armed conflict and were ready to return" (Ataç and Soykan 2017, p. 4).

In my view, Chatty does make a valid point in criticizing the language of rights for placing excessive stress on individualism and self-reliance and potentially hindering social solidarity and empathy. But, as discussed below, our research does not support her claim that most Syrians do not want dual citizenship. Further, her intervention does not take into account how these charity discourses position migrants as temporary guests rather than permanent settlers, making integration difficult or impossible and actually increasing tensions with the host community. Ataç et al (2017) write,

> **…**temporary protection has no accepted framework under international law, which makes it an exceptional measure at the state's sovereign discretion. In the Turkish context, although Turkey is party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Syrians' access to international protection is blocked under the temporary protection system (p. 17).

Rather than providing a better system of protection, charity and hospitality discourses associated with the temporary protection legislation, inhibit the development of a stable, secure integration programme for migrants and increase their precarity.

## 3.3 Over Before it Started? Political Polarization and Return Discourses

In the beginning of the Syrian conflict, many Turks supported their government's Syria policy and the accompanying charity/hospitality discourses, but this support has waned over time (Kaya 2020a, p. 12). Turkey's polarized political climate coupled with rising economic pressures in recent years, have almost completely closed off the possibility of a full integration discussion in the public sphere. The result is a plethora of rumours and misinformation about Syrians' long-term prospects in Turkey and the effect of migration on local communities. Tensions between migrants and members of local communities are extremely high today and have been since at least 2015 (ICG 2019; Erdoğan 2018).

> In 2016, Syrian shops and homes were attacked in the Demetevler district of Ankara, a 9-months pregnant refugee was murdered and another refugee was raped as part of a supposed revenge act by two of her husband's co-workers. In 2017, several racist hashtags, "#suriyelilerevinedonsun (Syrians should go home), #suriyelilersinirdisiedilsin (Syrians should be deported) and #suriyeliistemiyoruz (We

> do not want Syrians) went viral and trended on Twitter for almost a week (Ataç et al 2017, p. 15).

A recent survey conducted by Istanbul Bilgi University reported that 86% of Turks feel that Syrians should be sent home, including 83% of ruling AK Party supporters (Erdoğan, 2018).

In the past year, the prominence of a return discourse for Syrians has increased. It has become particularly "visible in the speeches of the Minister of Interior, Süleyman Soylu who started to give detailed accounts of Syrian returnees in his monthly organized press conferences in 2018 and 2019.[14] …These changes in policy practices show that what is happening to the Syrians is not only a discursive shift, but also an actual transformation of policies from guesthood to return" (Kaya 2020a, p. 39).

From one point of view, it appears that Turkey skipped from reception to return, bypassing the integration of refugees altogether. Kaya (2020b) argues that,

> the discourse of integration is no longer at the agenda of both government and oppositional parties. On the contrary, both sides promote a return discourse despite the fact that Syria is still far from being stable. The media announcements of the Minister of Interior every month put it very baldly how many Syrians voluntarily returned while the municipal mayors and oppositional party leaders constantly talk about the need for massive return of Syrians to their homeland. There is only one way out, that is to politically, socially and economically underline the need for a strong integration discourse, which has the potential of easing the growing societal tension in urban spaces.

More recently, the discourse of return is even tied to the creation of safe spaces within Syria by the Turkish military.

The policy incoherence and gaps highlighted by this report strongly suggest the need for development of integration policy in Turkey. But, despite the lack of a unified discourse or an integration programme, it is still possible to identify specific integration policies, as the next sections describe.

## 3.4 The Partial and Tenuous Governance of Integration

A fledgling integration policy developed in 2016 when the EU-Turkey Statement and subsequent enhancement of migration controls ended the flow of migrants from Turkey along the Balkan route. The EU-Turkey Statement of March 2016 linked Turkey's continued hosting of Syrians (and preventing their travel to Europe) to financial aid and visa-free travel for Turks in Europe (Elitok 2019). Reduced migration

> was a combination of the successive closure of the Balkan route (see Sabic and Boric 2016), the enhancement of controls on the EU side as well as new controls combined with the granting of certain rights to refugees on the Turkish side that helps to account for the ending of mass migration from Turkey to Greece. Further to this, many of those people who wanted to move on had already done so in 2015, while many of those who stayed might well have done so anyway (Duvell 2018, p. 11)

The realization that many migrants would be staying whether they initially planned to or not prompted more integration policy development. Icduygu and Simsek (2016) point out that the EU plays a strong role in Turkey's integration policy development. "Most of the public and policy debates on the integration of migrants and refugees have occurred due to Turkey's EU affairs, which require the harmonization of relevant regulations to the EU acquis" (p. 62).

[14] For an example of such press conferences of the Minister of Interior see http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-granted-citizenship-to-over-92-000-syrians-145480 accessed on 11 August 2019.

The preferred way of discussing integration in Turkey is in terms of "*uyum*," which is usually translated as "social harmony." This word literally means harmonization or social cohesion. The word "integration" has a bad connotation in Turkey because of Turkey's migration history to Germany and perceived mistreatment. German-Turks were continuously criticized for failing to integrate and disturbing German "leitkultur" (Rottmann 2019b). Originally, integration and language courses were foreseen as requirements for Turkey's foreigners, but the LFIP law drafters removed these requirements from the final version, due in part to "Turkey's emigration past and Turkish migrants' often mixed experiences with the integration policies of, for the most part, European countries" (Açıkgöz and Ariner 2014). In the Turkish context, integration thus takes on a more assimilation tinged meaning whereas "*uyum*" is perceived to be voluntary. According to Açıkgöz and Ariner (2014), *uyum* is "felt to have a more innocuous meaning in Turkish and therefore better reflects the aim of the Turkish approach which is to understand the indigenous-migrant interaction as a dynamic two-way relationship in which migrants are not confined to a passive role regarding issues which relate to them" (p. 22-23).

During our meso-level interviews, interlocutors frequently told RESPOND researchers that "integration" is a problematic term or not used in Turkey. For example, during one interview with a national NGO employee, we were informed:

> We do not use the term integration (*entegrasyon*), because it is a very hierarchal term. It's like saying, 'I am from here. I own this place, and they are from there, and they have to integrate with me.' We don't use such language, therefore, we say '*uyum*.' '*Uyum*' is 'harmony' in Turkish. We want to create social harmony (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_1).

Another national NGO employee explained,

> We do not defend the concept of integration…. It means to adapt [Syrians'] behaviour to Turkish society and follow Turks, but no. We adopt the concept of social cohesion, and we are working towards it…. The perspective of society is still to support the guest narrative. I can end my answer by saying that the state does not have a social cohesion policy (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, BilgiMeso_4).

As this latter statement makes plain: although social cohesion is the preferred way of conceptualizing integration for many actors, from the state level, there is no standard social cohesion policy for NGOs and others to adopt.

Many interviewees working on the issue in the public or NGO sector explained that they are waiting for a social cohesion policy to be announced by state officials. For example, a representative from an international humanitarian agency working closely with the government explained,

> We are waiting for the State's Social Harmony Strategy to be published. They should expand the number of social harmony activities. They should strengthen the society. And not only the society of people here, but also they should strengthen and increase the participation of refugees. Correct information should be transmitted and disinformation reduced. NGOs need to arrange activities with local participation…." (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, BilgiMeso_7).

A representative of another international agency cooperating with the Turkish government claimed that he knew that a national policy had been created, but he was not sure when it would become public (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_5).

Although there are good reasons to use the term "*uyum*," including its stated preference among interlocutors, there are also some problematic aspects to this term. Reluctance to use the word integration may stem from the fact that it implies long-term legal and practical inclusion, whereas temporariness may align with the notion of harmony. The

long term residence permit is often portrayed as a "gift" in the Turkish context, for example. Thus, *uyum* potentially supports Turkey's precarious temporary protection system. Another potential issue with the term "*uyum*" is that rights are not part of the formulation of social harmony, as they are when integration is discussed. Belonging is instead premised on culture and religious harmony. Therefore, migrants from Africa, such as Somalis, who are in general not seen as culturally similar cannot access "*uyum*" to the extent that nearer neighbour migrants, such as Syrians or Iraqis, can. Thus, *uyum* brings some conceptual problems to the fore, even as it solves other problems with the use of the term integration.

Whether we use the term "integration" or "*uyum*," ultimately, it is important to look empirically at the differential inclusion that we find in the spheres that migrants traverse.

## 3.5 Integration Governance Actors, Programmes and Differential Inclusion

### State Actors

Although Turkey does not have an official, national integration policy or programme for forced migrants, a defacto integration policy programme is readily observable. Also, we can certainly speak about the integration of forced migrants if we take realities on the ground into account as others have described (AIDA 2019, p. 122; Daniş and Nazli 2019; Erdoğan 2015; İçduygu and Şimşek 2016), and as we shall see in the coming pages. There are many organizations that promote "*uyum*" and take an active role in creating it and governing it.

The state is an important *uyum* actor. Notwithstanding significant funding from the EU and partnership with international agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Turkish state is firmly in control of refugee support in Turkey, in contrast to many other refugee hosting countries.[15] According to the LFIP law, the DGMM will have a special section concentrating on the integration of migrants. ARTICLE 96 of the law reads that

> (1) In order to facilitate the mutual harmonization of the society and of foreigner, applicant or beneficiary of international protection and to equip them with knowledge and skills that will facilitate their self-reliance in all spheres of their social lives without any dependency to third persons in our country, in the resettlement countries or in their home countries when they return, the Directorate General may plan harmonization activities within the bounds of economic and financial possibilities of our country, also taking advantage of the recommendations and contributions of public institutions and organizations, local administrations, non-governmental organizations, universities and international organizations.
> (2) Foreigners may attend introductory courses in which the political structure, language, legal system, culture and history of the country as well as their rights and obligations are explained.
> (3) The Directorate General shall, in cooperation with public institutions and organizations as well as non-governmental organizations, increase courses, distant education and similar systems to implement awareness and information campaigns on areas such as benefiting from public and private goods and services, access to education and economic activities, social and cultural interaction, and receiving primary healthcare services.[16]

It is notable that the law does not specifically regulate the rules regarding political participation, access to nationality and anti-discrimination (Baban, Ilcan and Rygiel 2017).

[15] For more information about the EU and UNHCR's role in Turkey and their perception of state actions, see: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/evaluation_final_report_echo_-_turkey_17.12.19.pdf
[16] The full text may be accessed on the DGMM website, here: https://en.goc.gov.tr/about-harmonisation.

DGMM has organized several programmes and workshops. Its website lists "Workshops on Security and Social Harmony," "Harmony Meetings," "Harmony Neighborhood Meetings" or "Harmony Between Us Conversation Activities" in a variety of regions (e.g. Eskişehir, Kahramanmaraş, Antalya, Erzurum, Van, İstanbul, Muğla, Aydın, Mersin, Adana, Konya, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Kocaeli, Uşak, Sakarya, Ankara, and more).[17] I attended one such meeting in Istanbul in April of 2019 that consisted of several speeches of DGMM officials, an art show, refreshments and a musical performance. At the meeting, migrants were encouraged to integrate by learning Turkish and following laws. The DGMM has also produced several brochures in Turkish and a mobile application in Turkish, German, English, Persian, Russian and Arabic, which outlines important information about daily life, education, legal matters and more.[18] The application also includes a link to the "Foreigners Communication Center" (YIMER 157), which serves as a 24/7 hotline for queries, complaints and reports of emergencies or human trafficking. DGMM has also prepared a website for youth refugee integration where information is provided in Turkish, English and Arabic.[19]

Additional clear indications of the national government acceptance of migrant integration are the provision of education and healthcare to migrants with TPS, each of which are discussed in this report. Although this report indicates that there are areas in need of improvement, the findings support Icduygu and Simsek's (2016) claim that "even though there are still problems with the process of integrating refugees, the integration policies on access to labor markets, education, and health services are gradually improving" (68). Further, it is notable that, "The Government of Turkey has shouldered the bulk of the financial burden of the refugee response in Turkey. According to the latest estimates, the Government of Turkey has invested more than U.S.$37 billion in hosting Syrians under temporary protection."[20] Through overall management and regulation of the situation as well as direct financial contributions, the Turkish government is a key facilitator of migrant integration.

## Local Municipalities

Another key integration actor are local municipalities, but their service provision is very uneven due to uncertainty as to whether or not municipalities are allowed to provide services to non-citizens. In fact, Article 13 (Hemşerilik ilkesi) of the Municipality Law permits the equal treatment of all the residents irrespective of their citizenship.

> In principle, municipalities in Turkey are authorized to provide social assistance and services by Law No. 5393 on Municipalities. Article 14 indicates that "municipal services are offered at the closest level to citizens and with the most appropriate methods". Thus, the use of the word 'citizens' generally seems to be a barrier to providing social assistance and services to foreigners in general, and refugees in particular. However, Article 13 clearly states that everyone residing in the boundaries of a municipal district is entitled to be provided equal services. According to the same article, "everyone is a fellow-towns(wo)man (*hemşehri*) of his/her own neighbourhood (Kaya 2020a, p. 45-46).

This discrepancy in whether Article 13 or Article 14 should apply, results in a high level of variability between the services provided to migrants by municipalities, with some doing much more than others (Coskun and Ucar 2018; Erdoğan 2017b). Even within Istanbul, "municipal services for refugees dramatically differ from district to district. While some municipalities have developed systems related to the issue, it has been determined that some municipalities have consciously avoided providing services" (Erdoğan 2017b, p. 77). Not surprisingly, many

[17] The full listing in Turkish can be found on the DGMM website, here: https://www.goc.gov.tr/galeri; translations are my own
[18] This is a link to the brochures: https://www.goc.gov.tr/brosurler
[19] This is a link to materials: https://www.uyumcocuk.gov.tr/tr
[20] This figure was reported by the EU in March 2019. For the full report, see here: https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/turkey-3rp-country-chapter-20192020-entr . Another report of figures spent in

service gaps can be expected in this context. Additionally, "The cooperation of district municipalities with each other on the issue of refugees remains extremely limited" (Erdoğan 2017b, p. 87).

Some Istanbul municipalities, such as the Sultanbeyli, Şişli and Zeytinburnu Municipalities, have taken leads in fostering integration by setting up affiliated associations or finding other ways to serve refugee communities within their service provision mandate. As one Sultanbeyli association representative noted in an interview, "The Syrian people are calling us the "Syrian municipality"" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_7). The Sultanbeyli municipality has set up an affiliated refugee association thereby bypassing the perceived requirement of only serving Turkish citizens. They have also set up a "Refugees Community Center" that "provides free services and support to both refugees and asylum seekers about issues such as health, sheltering/housing, education, culture, law, interpreting and employment."[21]

Each month in Şişli, meetings for women are arranged by an association affiliated with the municipality, during which they share food and listen to Turkish, Kurdish and Arabic language music. An expert interviewee related, "It's like a conversation club where they can discuss their problems and how to solve them" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, BilgiMeso_3). In Şişli, they are also supporting LGBTQ+ refugees through weekly "Tea and Talk" meetings.[22]

A representative from the Zeyntinburnu Municipality explained that they arranged, "a 21 session project on the topic of child development." An interviewee informed us,

> It was designed by psychologists on our team. It explained Turkish society on a basic level. I mean: who are we? What is normal? What are our national and spiritual values? How do we make friends? How many regions are there in Turkey? What kind of a place is Zeytinburnu? …It involved a variety of activities with Turkish and refugee children as well as psycho-social trauma-sensitive activities for children. We think it was very useful (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, BilgiMeso_6).

Municipalities also provide (or support the provision of) vocational training and job placement services, healthcare, child care, legal aid and social and economic aid to varying degrees. Outside of Istanbul, the Şanlıurfa Municipality is also actively working on the topic of social cohesion by running a Municipal Migration Center, similar to one in Gaziantep, both funded by IOM.

> These centres conduct activities that increase knowledge and awareness of migrants' rights, the political situation in Turkey, social and economic systems and culture. These efforts support the implementation of integrated public services and awareness-raising campaigns that strengthen the capacities of local authorities and promote social cohesion (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_18).

One reason for the positive approach in Şanlıurfa may be the openness to coordination and the leadership of the Provincial Governate of Migration Management (PGMM). A representative of a national NGO in Şanlıurfa related,

> At the local level, in Şanlıurfa, there are provincial coordination meetings at the level of the governorate. It invites all NGOs and other actors. An agenda is discussed and some decisions are taken about what should be done. However, in provinces like Antep and Hatay, there are no similar meetings or coordination activities. The dynamics of these provinces do not allow them to undertake new activities. On the other hand, in Şanlıurfa, Mersin and in some other provinces, such coordination

[21] This information is provided by the association on their website and may be accessed here: https://multeciler.org.tr/. See the file "Refugees Association Welcome" pptx. (2018)

[22] For more information about this and other activities, see the municipal website, here: http://gocmendd.org/faaliyet-detay.php?faaliyet_id=22

activities happen under the leadership of Governorate (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_2).

State leadership and inclusion of a variety of actors encourages municipalities to develop tailored programmes that directly meet local needs.

Municipalities that are not active may be inactive because they fear legal and social repercussions. "It is understood that these municipalities are afraid of the negative reaction of locals/electors, and they are trying to avoid the problem thinking that if they conduct some support programs for refugees, it would encourage more refugees to come and settle in their districts" (Erdoğan 2017, p. 77). An additional reason for low service provision to migrants is that the budgets of municipalities may be insufficient because they are determined based on the population of citizens.[23] An interviewee in Şanlıurfa related, "According to the [Research of the Turkish Municipality Association], Şanlıurfa is a city that takes a minimum of national and international funding. When we look at the population-funding ratio, it is inadequate…. Although the municipality has a population of 2.5 million, the budget allocated for us is only 1.9 million, because Syrians are not counted when calculating the budget" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_18). Yet, the municipality makes no discrimination between Syrians and Turks when providing services, he claimed.

## IOs and NGOs

IO and I/NGOs are also major integration actors both because of the direct social cohesion programmes that they run and also because they are a close link between Turkish society and migrants.[24] For some migrants, I/NGO workers are among the only Turks with whom they interact on a regular basis. IOs and NGOs help migrants to realize their legal rights to education, health care and employment by filling the "gaps between official policies and the actual reality that originates from limited and mismatching features of the legal framework" (Sunata and Tosun 2018, p. 12). IO and I/NGOs provide translation services and run programmes related to formal integration measures, such as vocational training, language education, and healthcare. Another key area in which IO and I/NGOs are active is in "creating spaces where locals and newcomers may meet, spend time together and get to know one another" (Paker 2019, p. 13). One example of such space creation is WALD's (World Academy for Local Government and Democracy) social and cultural harmony project organized together with UNHCR funding. They organized 45 social harmony events in 6 municipalities, including the following activities:

a. Women Together
    i. Hand Craft Workshops
    ii. Food Introduction Programmes
    iii. Historical Peninsula Trips
b. Children as Siblings
    i. Camping
    ii. Vialand Theme Park Programme
    iii. Turning the Pedals for Brotherhood
    iv. Darıca Zoo Trip
    v. 10 November Ankara programme
    vi. Football Tournament[25]

[23] A UNHCR (2019) report also notes that population increases due to migration are putting pressure on some municipalities: "The increase in demand continues to strain infrastructure and accessibility of services, in particular waste and waste management, public transportation and fire-fighting services" (6). Available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/turkey-3rp-country-chapter-20192020-entr (Accessed 22 February 2020)

[24] The integration efforts of migrant-led organizations are discussed in the section on Citizenship, Belonging and Gender below.

[25] For more information, see: http://www.wald.org.tr/tr/projeler/sosyalkultureluyum; translations are my own

Many other IO and I/NGOs are active in the social harmony field. For example, a representative of an IO in Şanlıurfa explained,

> We do social harmony activities such as museum trips, picnics, meals, Syrian and Turkish food preparations. In Siverek, we did such an event with more than 30 women. Each of them cooked their own food…. We organized picnics for Syrians and their neighbours, 61 people joined in Siverek. In Halfeti, we did trips with women. There are Turkish courses for women" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_7).

Another integration initiative bringing Turkish and migrant communities together through social events is the "Flying Library Project" of a national NGO in Istanbul. This project is one of several "peace building activities" bringing Turkish and Syrian children together outside of school hours.[26] During fieldwork we also learned about a national NGO event called, "Republic and Living Together" that involved celebrating Turkish Republic day with Turkish and migrant children in Istanbul. The event included poetry recitals, singing songs together and learning about Turkish history.[27] Another national NGO arranges "activities focusing on intercultural exchange" throughout Turkey, organized according to the slogan: "A great future together is going to be great for everyone."[28]

In Izmir, international agencies and NGOs have focused on outreach to local communities to reduce social tensions. An interviewee from an IO related,

> We bring together the two societies, both refugees and local people. We do activities to reduce social tensions. With the assistance of the *müftülük* [religious affairs office], we bring muhtars [local political leaders], municipal officials and imams [religious leaders] together. We have regular focus group discussions with local people, because their perceptions of refugees are important in order to prevent incidents due to social tensions" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRIIMeso_10).

International organizations, including IOM, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO), the U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM), Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and national NGOs, such as ASAM, Kizilay, International Blue Crescent and several others, have implemented community centre projects that could also be considered integration programmes as they serve to provide public spaces for migrants and local communities to meet, and they run a variety of practical programmes (for more information, see Biehl 2019; Icduygu and Simsek 2016, p. 65; Paker 2019). For example, the Director of a national NGO indicated in one of our interviews that their organization is able to "…capture social harmony by making spaces for it in our community centres. We have iftar dinner [fast-breaking dinners during Ramadan]. At that time, we bring Syrians and people from the neighbourhood together" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_3).

In sum, the governance of integration is addressed by almost every major governance actor active in the migration field, from the state to municipalities, to international organizations and international and national NGOs. There are some bright spots with very active municipalities in Istanbul and Şanlıurfa and wonderful programmes run by IOs and I/NGOs. And yet, there is a lack of coordination and coherence. Sometimes national NGOs feel pushed aside by the larger UN agencies who work more closely with the Turkish government (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_3). Many organizations "are uneasy and sensitive in their relation to the government in the current circumstances of Turkey, because of the closure and repression of a huge number of NGOs…. Organizations showing religious references and proximity to the governing party's ideology" feel more comfortable (Sunata and Tosun 2018,

[26] For more information, see https://www.yuva.org.tr/en/protection/peace-building-activities/
[27] For more information, see https://www.ibc.org.tr/EN/931/republic-and-living-together
[28] For more information, see: http://www.hayatadestek.org/refugee-support/?lang=en.

p.17). Danis and Nazli (2019) suggest that many NGOs working in the refugee field should be considered "pro-governmental organizations" rather than "non-governmental organizations" (p. 145).

Most initiatives demonstrate an understanding that local tensions need to be addressed, however there does not seem to be consensus about how to go about doing this or how to make social cohesion programmes effective. Many programmes focus on forced migrants, but our interviews suggest that it is most often Turkish citizens who reject interacting with their new neighbours, rather than migrants lacking a desire or ability to integrate. Many NGO workers are aware of this issue, but seem unsure how to address it. For example, one NGO worker working for a national Turkish NGO in Istanbul confided that she tells her own close Turkish friends that she works with "children," not with "Syrians," because they have such negative feelings about Syrian migrants (personal communication, Istanbul, 2018, OzU). During an interview, a representative from a national NGO in Şanlıurfa, explained difficulties they face including members of host communities in their activities.

> In the beginning, there was not so much of a problem, [Turks] embraced [Syrians], showed them hospitality, opened our houses. We considered them temporary, but in the last year, social harmony does not work to some extent. When we do activities, like tea parties, Turkish locals rarely join the activities. They only come if we invite them (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_19).

There is no centralized system for reporting activities and needs assessments. It is impossible to know how the needs of women, men, children or LGBTQ+ migrants might be getting served (or not) systematically via the various integration programming. There are many programmatic overlaps. One national NGO director related, if two organizations want to do the same project in an area that is technically being coordinated by the UN, the UN doesn't have the authority to tell either what to do to avoid duplication. "If there's money, both organizations are going to do something" he said. "That is why you see a lot of organizations in the same place and none in other places" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_3). The lack of coordination and information sharing among NGOs working in Turkey's migration sphere is often highlighted in reports and articles (cf. Aras and Duman 2018, p. 11; Cloeters and Osseran 2019, p. 30; Danis and Nazli 2019, p. 151; Corbatir 2016, p. 14), and the case of integration seems to demonstrate this particularly clearly.

"Uyum" and the meaning of cohesion may be interpreted very differently by different actors, with different targets and strategies implemented to achieve it. Some organizations implement mainly social activities, while others focus on the celebration of religious or national holidays and educational programming. Even municipalities do not offer similar services to one another, thereby demonstrating disparate understandings of migrant needs and state expectations. Further, the main target of services often differs. Some organizations focus on women or children, others on all members of a neighbourhood. Men are rarely a focus of targeted programming, even though they have specific unaddressed needs, especially for psychosocial support. Many I/NGO workers related that men seem to not want to participate in their activities either due to their long working hours or to "cultural taboos" against expressing any problems, which might be seen as weaknesses.

There is a real need for a coordinated and welcoming integration discourse and accompanying policy from the highest levels of government. With a clear national plan outlining objectives implemented by DGMM, municipalities and IOs and I/NGOs can be empowered to offer uniform, coordinated services and to identify best practices. A representative from Sultanbeyli's migrant association claimed to be eager to take on more integration responsibilities if national support was available,

> Actually, as local government, we would like to get more responsibility and rights for the local level, because we can handle this problem at the local level, not the national level. But for sure, we need a master plan, the ministry, and well-qualified people, and

> the collaboration mechanism should be more developed (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_7).

Political and economic realities in Turkey make this very unlikely in the near term, leading to an absence of organization that results in highly precarious, differential inclusion for migrants.

## Integration in Local Communities

An important question to ask about the integration of Syrians in Turkey is the extent to which Syrians may or may not need integration in the first place. Conceptually, integration usually presupposes that two different social or cultural groups are coming into contact for the first time. This is certainly *not* the case for Syrians and Turks who were both members of the Ottoman empire, and living together in a region that has been a site of numerous cross-border migrations for hundreds of years (Chatty 2017a; 2017b). There are longstanding business and family ties spanning from Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa to Aleppo and Idlib. As one migrant from Şanlıurfa related in an interview, "As I had been travelling to Turkey quite often (before the war), I did not feel anything different, not a feeling of being foreigner" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_4). The first refugee commission can even be traced to Ottoman Istanbul (Chatty 2017b, p. 25). Strong networks of historical, cultural and religious connection between Turks and Syrians go far beyond the simple geographical proximity between the two countries to a shared cultural intimacy (Kaya 2016; 2017; Rottmann and Kaya 2020). Syrian refugees in Istanbul and Izmir "construct bridges between themselves and the members of the majority society by means of visual, musical, religious, gastronomic, and even linguistic iconicities, which create a space of intimacy with the host communities" (Kaya 2020a, p. 34-35).

When asked about integration directly during interviews, many interviewees did not know what this word ("integration" or "*uyum*") meant exactly, and the question had to be explained via examples. When the question was finally understood, the most common response, was that of course, integration is necessary. For example, a woman from Aleppo, living in Istanbul explained: "Integration is something good. We have to mix with [Turks] in order to learn, for example, from their [way] of talking and their ways, and to take from them their [qualities]" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_7). For this woman as for many others, integration is understood as related to getting along with neighbours through communicating with them.

Some migrants point out that integration is difficult because of lack of language ability, and many felt that it was necessary to learn the language before integration could be possible. For instance, one man explained, "The most important barrier is language. If we overcome the language barrier, no problems will remain for integration, as culturally we have similarities" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_4). During interviews, when asked about whether or not he or she had participated in an integration programme, most migrants responded by relating whether or not they had attended language courses. It is not insignificant that migrants immediately think of language courses when asked to consider integration programming. Clearly, they see language mastery as essential. The importance of language competence is also an important component of the message they are given about belonging by Turkish actors, for whom culture is less often seen as a point of difference between the two groups, but language (Turkish vs. Arabic) is often seen as an unbridgeable divide. Below, language training initiatives are discussed in detail.

Some migrants claim that integration was easier for them (they thought) because they were speakers of Turkmen or Kurdish or they were Arabic-speaking and living in Şanlıurfa where there is a high number of Arabic speakers. One young woman living in Şanlıurfa related,

> Since there are a lot of Arabs and maybe also Muslims, in Şanlıurfa it is always said that 'we are all Muslims and need to help one another.' I didn't travel outside of Şanlıurfa, so I cannot be sure…. but for example, the fact that we are Arab and Muslim makes a big difference for people in Şanlıurfa…. I have some friends in university, and

> they are Arabs. We share a language, and therefore, we can speak to one another more easily. They understand Arabic…." (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_8).

Interviews with meso-level actors working in Şanlıurfa further confirm that shared language helps migrants to overcome social barriers.

Some migrants take a more negative view of the possibility of integrating, pointing out that integration is made difficult because of local community members' rejections and growing social tensions. One shop owner noted, "They don't accept integration. They may accept a short conversation (hello, how are you?), but more than that it is not accepted from Syrians. About 1/1000 Turkish people treat Syrians good." (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_14).

In sum, the meaning of integration can be as confusing for migrants as it is for scholars and Turkish citizens. Yet, if we understand integration as societal inclusion to some degree, most migrants perceive it as something necessary and possible, and for some, shared cultural values and past experiences in Turkey means it is already pre-existing their most recent migration arrival. Prior reports indicate that migrants find adaptation easier in cities like Şanlıurfa with high populations of Arabic speakers (Corbatir 2016: 15), though others have pointed to growing social tensions there (ICG 2019). In our data, there is only a slight difference in migrants' claims about integration possibilities or barriers in Istanbul, Izmir or Şanlıurfa, however, it is notable that shared language and ethnic background in Şanlıurfa makes the situation feel easier for some. In general, Syrians stress a shared cultural intimacy. Unfortunately, members of the host community do not always feel this shared intimacy with their Syrian neighbours. All of these changing relationships are explored in more detail when considering belonging below.

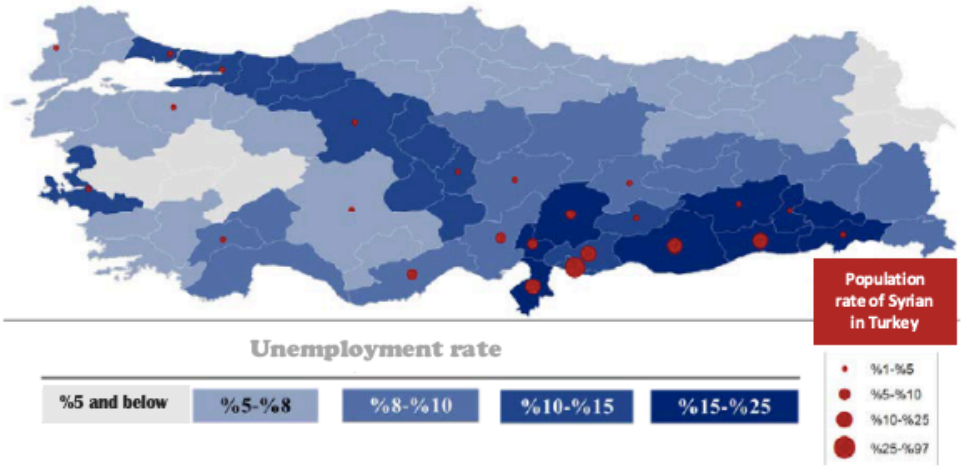
# 4. Labour Market

## 4.1 Employment Provisions and Socioeconomic Data

Turkey has a thriving industrial economy, with significant production of textiles, foods, automobiles and electronics as well as active tourism, mining, steel, petroleum, construction, lumber, and paper industries. Although it is the 19th largest economy in the world,[29] and Istanbul is a rising global financial centre, Turkey has been plagued by economic crises in recent years. In particular, in 2018, the lira (the Turkish currency) lost 34% of its value between January and August, and many commentators are predicting imminent further economic disaster.[30] The economy grew by only 2.6% in 2018, and the OECD and IMF predict future negative growth (Kirisci and Kolasin 2019, p. 4). Inflation is steadily rising, and according to Turkish government statistics, the unemployment rate is 14.0%, and the labour force participation rate is only 53.9% (August 2019).[31] The unemployment rate must be examined by taking into account the informal labor rate, which is high in Turkey, making up 40% of the country's total employment, even for Turks (Senses, 2016). Even taking this into account though, unemployment is becoming an increasing worry for Turks, and youth unemployment is especially high, which increases tensions between migrants and locals.

Most Syrians live in regions with high unemployment (and high levels of informal employment), and it is notable that Syrian populations are especially high in the South East of the country, close to the Syrian border, where unemployment is also high. The below figure (Figure 2) shows the locations of migrant settlement and the relative unemployment rates of Turkish citizens.

**Figure 2: Unemployment in Turkey and Syrian Spatial Settlement**




**Source:** The Syrian population from Migration Management statistics on 2 February 2016. Turkey's population and the unemployment rate were obtained from the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2015 and visualized by the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV). Red dots represent the proportion of the Syrian population to the Turkish population in the province. One percent and above rate is visualized.

[32]

[29] Rankings of countries according to GDP may be found here: https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/

[30] For example, news stories like this one with the title "Is Turkey heading for an economic crisis?" are common: https://www.bbc.com/news/business-45113472

[31] These statistics may be accessed here: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=30692

[32] This image was taken from a TEPAV 2016 study that may be accessed (in Turkish) here: tepav.org.tr/upload/files/1461746316-7.Turkiye___deki_Suriyeliler___Issizlik_ve_Sosyal_Uyum.pdf . TEPAV is a think tank affiliated with Turkey's national chamber of commerce. The graphic has been translated into English by Bahar Filiz.

A recent report suggests that tensions are rising in the South East in part due to Turkish youth unemployment and the migrant influx (ICG 2019). Some Turkish leaders insist that Syrians are not taking Turkish citizens' jobs, but some reports suggest otherwise. For example, one report draws from a World Bank study to argue:

> There is sufficient evidence to conclude that Turkish workers at the lower end of the scale—construction, textile, and seasonal agricultural workers—are indeed disadvantaged, as Syrian workers are generally more than willing to work in these sectors on an underground basis, meaning longer hours and less pay than Turkish workers would accept (Markovsky 2019, p. 18).[33]

Syrians with TPS were permitted to work in Turkey for the first time when the law governing work permits for migrants (Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under TP - Law no. 4817) was passed in January 2016. This law in principle, ensures that refugees' rights are protected from exploitation and that they receive at least minimum wage. The law allowed Syrians in Turkey to obtain work permits and legally work at least 6 months after they are given the TP status and subject to a limit of 10% of a given company's workforce.

Lawmakers and commentators hoped that the law would decrease participation in the informal labor market (cf. Icduygu and Simsek 2016), however it seems to have had little effect. For 2018, DGMM's (most recent) official figures list just 16,783 work permits for Syrians.[34] This number was just 65,000 at the end of 2019, according to news reports.[35] There are several barriers, preventing Syrians from receiving permits. In the first place, working informally is socially accepted and widespread in Turkey (Senses, 2016). Second, the law brings about complicated and costly bureaucratic procedures for obtaining work permits (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017). Permits are only granted if Turkish workers cannot be employed in the specific job, and only limited numbers of Syrians are allowed to be employed. Finally, as our interviews also show, many employers do not wish to pay minimum wage and social security insurance (see also, Akgündüz, van den Berg, & Hassink, 2015).

Naturally, it is not possible to find exact numbers of informally employed workers. One news source claims that 1 million Syrians are employed informally,[36] while figures from 2017 place the figure at 65% of the Syrian community (ICG 2019, p. 17). The financial allowances that migrants receive from the EU do not even come close to covering monthly expenses (see Kaya 2020a, p. 41-44). Therefore, we can assume that many working age Syrians (~2.1 million people aged 15-65) are working informally, if they are working at all (Kirişçi and Kolasin 2019, p. 3). Migrants are struggling to make ends meet. "Nearly 50 per cent of Syrians in Turkey live under the poverty line. Around 20 per cent of Syrian households have no working members" (ICG 2019, p. 17).

Most people who receive work permits are men. While we do not have statistics from 2019, the Turkish government provides statistics from 2017 indicating that just 1,641 women compared to 19,325 men received work permits.[37] This ratio likely has continued in the following years. There are numerous barriers to Syrian women's employment stemming from expectations among both Syrians and locals. In Syria, most families upheld a gender-based division of labor whereby men were the main breadwinners, and women were responsible for the housework and raising children (UN Women 2018, p. 56). This arrangement has continued for many in Turkey, due to desires to maintain traditional arrangements, as well as the fact

[33] To support this point, Markovsky (2019) cites the following data from a World Bank report in 2015: "According to a 2015 World Bank study, six Turks are displaced for every 10 Syrians that enter the informal economy. Hardest hit are Turkish workers without formal education. See Ximena V. Del Carpio and Mathis Wagner, "The Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Turkish Labor Market" (Washington: World Bank Group, Social Protection and Labor Global Practice Group, 2015), p. 4, available at http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/505471468194980180/pdf/WPS7402. pdf.

[34] These are Turkish government statistics and may be accessed here: https://www.goc.gov.tr/ikamet-izinleri

[35] See this report (in Turkish): https://t24.com.tr/haber/suleyman-soylu-bu-gune-kadar-76-bin-443-suriyeliye-vatandaslik-verdik,791996

[36] See here: https://tr.euronews.com/2019/08/05/chp-raporu-1-milyon-suriyeli-kayit-disi-calisiyor-200-bini-cocuk

[37] These statistics were retrieved from the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services website and may be accessed here: ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/3372/yabanciizin2017.pdf . Accessed February 2, 2020.

that the jobs available to Syrians (low-wage, informal jobs in construction, factories and agriculture) are generally perceived as more appropriate for men by both Syrians and also the host community.

In some cases, men do not give their wives permission to work. As one woman related, "I tried to tell my husband to search for a job for me, but he didn't want me to work. Also, I don't have time because of my kids (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_7). Sometimes family duties prevent women from working. This was reiterated by a woman from Şanlıurfa, "It can be a little challenging to find a job…. Maybe working from home is possible, but it is another challenge. I have a six-year-old boy. It is a big challenge, because he is always coming and asking questions and disturbing me. You have to wait until they sleep so you can work" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_22).

Yet, a number of Syrian women are working, unusually irregularly or through home-based piecework, and many interviewees described this as a big change in their lives. Below, I explore these changing gender dynamics in greater detail, but the next sections turn to a more broad-based description of employment experiences of Turkey's forced migrants. In general, it can be said that their differential inclusion in the labor market entails irregular, insecure and dangerous work.

## 4.2 Employment Experiences

Forced migrants work overwhelmingly in the lowest levels of the economy and even in the lowest levels of the informal sector (AIDA 2019, p. 136-137; ILO 2020), in what Canefe (2016) describes as 'hyper-precarious' conditions. They are concentrated in the construction, textile and clothing manufacture and agriculture and service sectors (Kaya 2020a, p. 55).

In micro-level interviews, migrants discuss many challenges related to employment. One of the biggest challenges is simply obtaining a job. For example, one man from Şanlıurfa related,

> Unemployment is our biggest difficulty because at the end of every month we have to pay the rent. You must work enough to pay the rent. Many Syrians are unemployed, and we wish that Turks would open up some employment areas for us…. The youth are on the streets and it would be better if jobs were found for them, and they were put to work. That would be better than their going to Europe or falling in with a gang (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_16).

Lack of work in certain fields coupled with psychological difficulties and familial pressures can create challenges. For example, a woman in Şanlıurfa explained, "Psychologically I got tired, because my child died. Then, these twins were born. I did not find an opportunity to look for a job. For teachers here, there are thousands of them. There is no job opportunity. If you know someone (*torpil*) you may find a job as a teacher. Otherwise you have no chance of finding a job as a teacher" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_5)

Once migrants have obtained a job, it is difficult for them to change jobs due to the fact that they are barely making ends meet with no savings. For example, one 25-year-old man from Istanbul had worked in home decoration in Syria, and is now working in a laundry ironing clothes in Istanbul. "There's no comfortable work," he said. He feels that he does not have time to look for another job. Even missing a day of work to look for a different job is impossible. "If you miss one day, you're affected the whole month. What about if you miss a whole week while you're looking for work?" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_17).

Many jobs are found via social network connections. For example, one man in Izmir explained, "The employer at my job is my mother's friend. She helped to employ me here. She is an Arab from Hatay" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_5). Another man described coming and finding employment through his former employees: "I came to my friends who used to work with me in Damascus. Immediately I came to work with them on the machine" (Interview,

Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_13). Highly educated people can find employment more easily, though not necessarily in the field for which they were trained. One man in Istanbul explained, "I wrote a CV. (I wasn't in need of a CV in Syria because I had my own company). Then I found a job immediately. So, from the first day in Istanbul I was working in a company. It was a private company, where I worked as a designer" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_19).

As other studies have reported (e.g. Simsek 2018; AIDA 2019: 136-138), migrants in our study often describe mistreatment in workplaces ranging from dirty and dangerous conditions and low salaries to not receiving their salaries when expected to refusal to provide work permits. One young man in Izmir explained, "I looked for a job, for a month, then I found one in this coffee house. I am making tea, serving it, and cleaning the place. Here, we are working for long hours with no insurance. I work 12 hour days. The work conditions are difficult here" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_14). Some jobs result in injuries for which migrants have little recourse for compensation.[38] A representative of an international organization based in Şanlıurfa reported, "We encountered cases in which construction workers fell down from the building, but they do not have insurance. They are not paid. The employer only gives a small amount of money to silence them" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_7). One woman in Izmir related, "It's very difficult for my husband to find a job. He was injured on a construction job and had to have an operation. He cannot use his hand much now" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_12). Even women who work at home face difficult conditions. One described how she assembled simple jewellery pieces in her home in Istanbul. When asked to describe her job, she explained, "It's ok. It's tiring. It hurt me a bit, my eyes [laughs]. And, I started to have an allergy in my nose from the smell of the glue material that we use. I'm always allergic, but I have to [mecbur]" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_7)

Forced migrants are often paid less than Turks for the same jobs. For instance, one man in Izmir explained to us, "Jobs for which Turks are paid 100 TL are given to Syrians at half the price. It's hard for us. It's very hard to pay the expenses of our children." (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_25). One of the most persistent complaints that migrants relate during interviews is not receiving payment on time or sometimes at all. A mother in Istanbul related, "My son is 17 years old. He worked with his father, and they didn't pay him for a long time. He should be paid 5000 TL until now, but they didn't pay anything" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_6). She even asked the researchers where she might complain about such treatment. However, since the work was not legally sanctioned with a work permit, it is impossible to complain and demand that authorities protect workers' rights. According to one woman in Istanbul, this possibility of lack of payment leads to a preference for daily, rather than monthly work, even though conditions are usually worse:

> With the jobs, which are paid monthly you are not guaranteed to receive your salary at the end. On the other hand, the daily-paid jobs are difficult: involving long hours of working and you are not guaranteed to have work every day (it depends on the weather and the mood of the employer…) …Despite this, most Syrian men prefer jobs that are paid daily, since at least they will be paid at the end of the day (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_1).

Informal employment is the norm for most people with whom we spoke. Even those educated migrants who do not find themselves at the lowest level of the employment ladder find conditions difficult and are often working without work permits. One highly educated man in Istanbul explained,

> Working conditions here in Turkey, unfortunately, are bad. Everyone says the same thing. Despite having worked, as a finance officer, I wasn't a worker in a workshop…. I wasn't from the class of those people who worked at just any job... I mean my work is desk work, and despite that, I feel that my rights are lost, because, first of all, I don't

[38] For example, see this article pointing to workplace deaths among Syrians in Turkey: Worker Health and Safety Council, 'Savaştan kaçıp geldiler iş cinayetinde can verdiler', 12 September 2017, Available in Turkish at: http://bit.ly/2DWzlQy.

have documents (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

In a recent article, Nimer and I (n.d.) argue that Syrians are in a similar position to working class Turkish or Kurdish informal workers, except that their lack of Turkish language skills makes it easier for these individuals to be taken advantage of by their employers. However, we also argue that

> learning a language does not automatically translate into advantages on the job market, but rather that benefits depend on the social position (formal education, linguistic and financial capital) and employment sector of individuals, which reproduces inequalities. Language knowledge provides some level of social mobility, but this is often relatively limited (p. 1).

This finding contrasts with conventional wisdom suggesting that language learning is always a path to career advancement.

Arabic language knowledge is a relevant advantage for some migrants who are lucky enough to be employed doing jobs in translation in NGOs, international companies that need translation services, outreach in NGOs and translation and transcription for research projects. Some use their language skills in call centres working for foreign companies, or they work in tourism. These workers can usually expect a reasonable, living wage. However, they face precarity in that their employment is often limited term (i.e. according to a particular project and dependent on foreign funding). They do not necessarily feel that their situation would be improved by learning Turkish. For example, this young man in Şanlıurfa explained, “Right now I work for this company, doing online marketing. For me it was no problem to find a job. But, some people need special experience, language, etc. I do my job in Arabic and English. If I feel pressure to learn Turkish, I will…. I have a diploma to be a machine technician from Syria, but it does not have any equivalence here” (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_2). Like many, he is working in a field different from his training, but facilitated by his language ability. By contrast, for people working in the precarious factory or construction sector, Arabic language is not valued, and Turkish language ability has only a modest effect on their chance of getting promoted. Contrary to many commentators who stress the importance of learning Turkish for labour market advancement, we found that this is much more variable and contextual.

Treatment in the labor market seems to be an area where Syrians and other forced migrants face similar difficult conditions, although non-Syrians may be even worse off as less programmes are directed towards them and they may face even more discrimination than Syrians. One man from Sudan explained that he works in a Syrian restaurant in Izmir today earning 10TL less than his Syrian co-workers. He related, “I looked for work in basketball and fitness. I started working on a construction site with a friend in Canakkale…I came to Izmir and worked construction. Then, I found a job in a Syrian restaurant. I just work 4-5 hours per day and get 50TL per day, but the Syrians that work there get 60TL” (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_22). His multiple searches for employment sound very similar to searches undertaken by Syrians, and he is now earning less than Turks and also less than his Syrian co-workers.

Overall, forced migrants face difficult labor conditions. They cannot easily find jobs or change jobs and even increasing some of their qualifications (like language ability) often has limited impact on employment opportunities.

## 4.3 Employment Training and Qualifications

As is common for migrants in other countries, among our interviewees, we came across many migrants who are not working in jobs that align with their training and experience (Sert 2016). For example, one man from Istanbul explained how he could not find suitable work as a blacksmith. “I work in an aluminium workshop” he said. “I am happy at work, but it is not my field. I am a blacksmith, but working as a blacksmith is hard because work is either far, or they

don't pay you enough. And if I don't get paid, I can't live, and I would have to borrow money from the family or neighbours" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_20). One migrant was even more unhappy about the situation of mismatch between his qualifications and current position. He had been a clothing designer in Syria and was now working as a simple tailor. When asked if his current job fit his training, he replied:

> Of course it isn't appropriate. I am a designer. I have a certificate from France in fashion design. I make templates. In Damascus, in my workshop, I wasn't in need of an accountant, or a designer or someone who would draw the templates. I did my own models, and I would design them. Here, I am working as a worker, like my workers (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_13).

For many migrants, coming to Turkey has meant a significant downgrade in their professional standing. One woman in Istanbul explained how many men's situation was turned upside down by migration: "Our husbands had shops in Aleppo. They were the managers, the bosses. Now, they work under someone's orders, and they (the managers) may be satisfied or not satisfied in their work and may give them their salary or not!" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_7). Other migrants are choosing to work illegally simply so that they can continue working in their preferred field. For example, in Şanlıurfa, we spoke with a dentist, working as a volunteer in a community centre. The translator confided that he works illegally serving both Syrians and locals. The dentist noted, "If they would allow dentists to work in Turkey, it would be great. It would be a great help to Syrians and also a benefit to the country" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_18).

Naturally, a lack of suitable employment for highly qualified people is one reason for migrants to move to Europe from Turkey. A Syrian imam (religious leader) in Şanlıurfa explained, "The biggest difficulty here is not finding work according to your skills. A highly qualified friend couldn't find work in his field, so he was forced to go to Europe. Turkey was just a stop-over for him…. (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_19).

The government of Turkey (Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) and the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)) together with EU funding has implemented several programmes to increase the regular employment of forced migrants, including a cash for work programme.[39] For those who are under-qualified, a number of organizations also offer employment trainings. İŞKUR

> offers on-the job trainings for workers and vocational trainings to increase the employability of low-skilled workers. Furthermore, İŞKUR offers business schools to promote entrepreneurship among Syrian nationals. In addition, United Work, a non-profit organization funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Trade and Development, assists Syrian job seekers with trainings on "Turkish Business Life" to raise awareness about the formal and informal rules in Turkey's economy (Clean Clothes Campaign Turkey 2019).

NGOs, such as the Association for Solidarity with Asylum and Migrants (ASAM) are also providing vocational trainings (Kaya 2020a, p. 57). Most migrants are aware of language courses, but other vocational courses are less well known. More projects are needed. Yilmaz (2019) argues that the EU-Turkey Statement and TPS status have meant that the public sector has been elevated above the humanitarian sector, and "Employment has been essentially disregarded, in both humanitarian and social policy programmes, which casts doubt on the prospect of successful economic integration" (p. 721). Increased courses and re-training are needed. It is also important to ease the process of recognizing diplomas for highly skilled

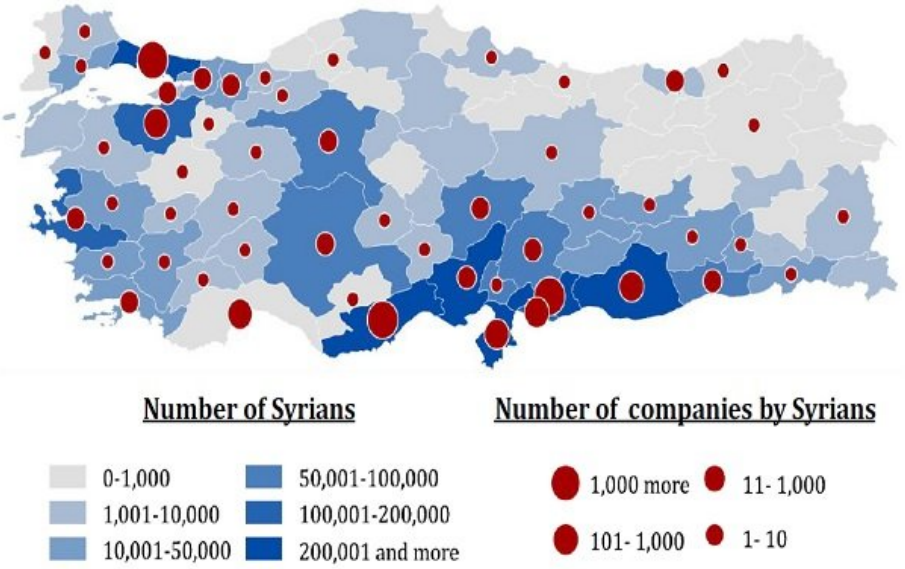
[39] For more information, see this website about the programme: https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/project/employment-support-project-syrians-under-temporary-protection-and-host-communities-7005

people and to make it easier to obtain work permits so that migrants can work legally and securely under good conditions.

## 4.4 Entrepreneurship

It is relatively easy to start a business in Turkey as a foreigner and a non-citizen compared to most European countries (Simsek 2018, p. 7-8). The below figure (Figure 3) shows the number of companies started by Syrians in Turkey.

**Figure 3: Syrian Companies in Turkey According to Population of Syrian Community**




**Source: TEPAV, 2018**[40]

According to a recent TEPAV (2018) study among entrepreneurs: "72 percent of the Syrian entrepreneurs surveyed indicated that they do not want to return to Syria even when the war is over. One apparent reason behind this decision has been the success of their businesses in Turkey" (p. 16). Syrian investment in Turkey is a win-win in terms of sustainable development. Indeed, one of our interviewees who worked for the Syrian Businessman and Entrepreneurs Association pointed out that coming together resulted in an $80,000 investment in Şanlıurfa (Interview, Şanlıurfa, SRIIMeso_10).[41]

During RESPOND research, we spoke with a few entrepreneurs who are self-employed or employers of others in small enterprises. They may be running traditional ethnic businesses (restaurants, clothing or food stores) for Syrians or other customers from Arab countries or online businesses for Arab markets (graphic design, media management and advertisements) for companies that work in the field of medical tourism, real estate or the hotel industry. These individuals do not necessarily need a university degree, but they usually have some education. For those working in the online area, they need to have access to the internet as well as computer skills. In other words, they need the cultural capital to use these technologies and to develop their skills whether or not they have formal education (Nimer and Rottmann, n.d).

[40]This chart is the result of a TEPAV (2018) study and may be found here: https://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/mce/2019/haberler/tepav_and_ebrd__syrian_entrepreneurship_and_refugee_startups_in_turkey_lever....pdf TEPAV is a think tank affiliated with Turkey's national chamber of commerce.
[41]This news story provides additional information about the endeavour: https://www.cnnturk.com/ekonomi/turkiye/suriyeli-is-adamlari-sanliŞanlıurfa da-fabrika-kuracak.

In general, entrepreneurs we spoke with seemed happier than those working in salaried work. About half feel that the state supports their efforts. One man related,

> Generally, they tolerate us and are not strict when applying the rules to us. If they applied the rules strictly, then we would have to close immediately (declare bankruptcy). So, they are dealing with us easily. I think it is because they are saying to themselves: 'This person is living here. Either we should feed him (support him) or let him eat (open a business)'. If they applied the rules to us strictly, they would find themselves in a situation where they must feed 3.5 million people (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_18).

This man was happily operating a successful restaurant in Istanbul.

Others we spoke with wished they received more state support, with the above mentioned TEPAV (2018) study also pointing to obstacles such as lack of access to finance, high tax rates, and onerous business laws (p. 16). For example, one man in Şanlıurfa shared his troubles accessing finance:

> Turkey needs to facilitate procedures for investors. Not all banks want to establish business link with us, as we are foreigners. They do not treat us like normal citizens. For example, among 50 banks, we are only able to work with 4-5 banks. Others make difficulties for us and do not give us credit or loans… We do not have the same rights that are enjoyed by Turkish citizens (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_4).

Other migrants related difficulties getting their enterprises off the ground: "When I arrived here, I opened a small market. I invested all of my money into this market… In four months, I lost $6000 in this market…" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_6). There can be many reasons for migrant businesses to fail, including lack of knowledge of the market, business regulations and Turkish, to a general lack of business experience. Besides streamlining laws, one solution would be to open or assist in opening alternative businesses for Syrians. Aras and Duman (2018) write,

> Syrian porcelain and mosaic works are well-known in Turkey, especially in Hatay. Turkey and Syria share many similar trades and crafts; however, there are many differences between them, too. The government, business organizations and initiatives, and I/NGOs may work together to encourage and advocate for financial support of these new businesses (p. 10-11).

Despite some complaints and a few bad experiences, in general (and not surprisingly), our research found entrepreneurs overall to be more satisfied in Turkey than wage earners. However, the majority of enterprises are small scale businesses that are in an economically fragile position, and they are subject to the whims of the market and broader economic developments in the country.

# 5. Education

## 5.1 Overview of Formal education

The total school aged population of Turkey is around 18 million, and currently 95% of school-aged children are enrolled in primary education while 86% are enrolled in secondary education (2018).[42] Turkey has a modern educational system, and the various types and numbers of schools in the country are listed in the below table (Table 1).

**Table 1: Turkish School Levels and Number of Schools (2018)**

| Type of School | Number of Schools |
|---|---|
| pre-primary | 10,669 |
| primary schools | 24,739 |
| lower secondary schools | 18,935 |
| upper secondary schools (general secondary education, vocational and technical secondary education and religious education) | 12,506 |
| universities and colleges | 207 |

**Sources: The National Ministry of Education and The Higher Education Council (compiled by the author)[43]**

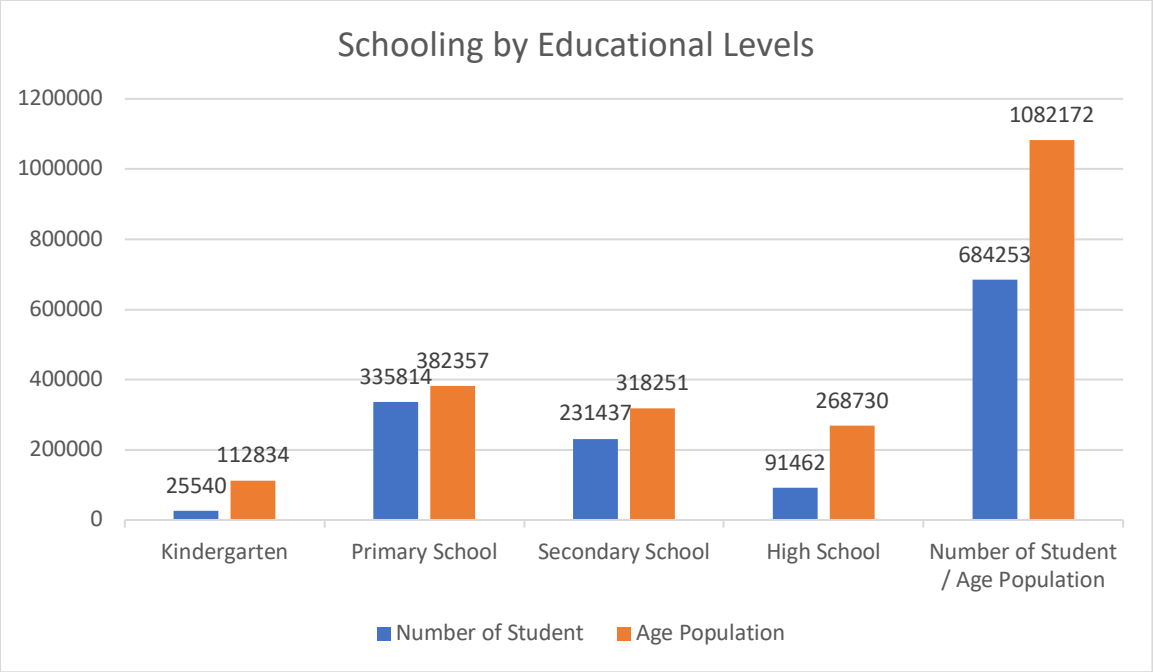
Since 2016, migrants under TPS are eligible to attend Turkish schools, including universities (AIDA 2019, p. 138-140; Kaya 2020a, p. 52). When they first arrived, forced migrants from Syria attended Temporary Education Centres (TEC) that had initially been set-up to teach the Syrian school curriculum in Arabic (Celik and Icduygu 2018; Kaya 2020b, p.52-54). Later, the state laid out more clear procedures for enrolling Syrians in Turkish national schools, and they began closing the TECs. In the early period, disorganization and lack of clarity in terms of regulations were to blame for many students being unable to enrol in the national schools (Gee and Bernstein, 2015).

> Even though the right to education is available for all, Syrian refugees had difficulties enrolling their children into the public school system, mainly because of a lack of any clear regulation indicating the formal procedures for the enrolment of the students. It appears that there have also been practical limitations such as language barriers and lack of space in the classrooms (Icduygu and Sımsek 2016, p. 66).

According to NMoE statistics for September 2019, there are 1,082,172 school-aged Syrian children.[44] Among these, 684,253 (63.2%) are in Turkish schools.[45] The below chart (Table 2) shows the numbers of registered students for each level of schooling.

[42] For schooling statistics in Turkey, see NMoE statistics here: https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2018_09/06123056_meb_istatistikleri_orgun_egitim_2017_2018.pdf
[43] The first four sets of figures are taken from the MoNE and may be found here: sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/icerik_goruntule.php?KNO=361. The final figures for universities and colleges are taken from the Higher Education Council and may be found here: istatistik.yok.gov.tr/.
[44] These figures are taken from the MoNE and may be found here: hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2019_10/02101034_09Eylul_2019_internetSunumu_.pdf
[45] These figures are taken from the National Ministry of Education and may be found here: hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2019_10/02101034_09Eylul_2019_internetSunumu_.pdf)

**Table 2: Enrolled and Unenrolled Syrian Students According to Educational Level**




**Source: National Ministry of Education of Turkey** [46]

As the table shows, even though migrants have access to Turkish schools, around one third are still not participating in the educational system. The gap between population size and participation number is particularly high for high school students.

Prior reports note that lack of schooling poses a grave danger for Syrians and Turks alike. An ICG (2019) study in Şanlıurfa found,

> Most immediately, the threats are to Syrian youth themselves, who are highly vulnerable to criminal networks' predation, need protection from efforts to mobilise them to join the fight in Syria and/or indoctrinate them with violent ideologies or sectarian hatred, and are at heightened risk of sexual exploitation. Left unaddressed, today's risks to Syrian youth will become tomorrow's problems not just for them, but for the people among whom the young refugees live (4).

Even Turkish municipalities recognize the seriousness of this issue, with one study pointing out that officials recognize that "without harmonization programs, in particular education of children and young people, serious security and social-cultural problems would be experienced in the future" (Erdoğan 2017, p. 93)

Our sample suggests a mixed picture in terms of children's education. Many families have enrolled their children in school now, unless the family's financial circumstances are economically desperate, and the children are needed to work to support the family. Syrian parents seem to highly value education, but they struggle to understand and navigate the school system, and they are anxious about maintaining their children's Arabic language ability. In general, our findings support Celik and Icduygu's (2018) conclusions that there are "significant limitations in terms of incorporating Syrian refugee children" into Turkish schools because the schools have a "monocultural organization and exclusionary institutional habitus"

[46] The information in this chart was provided the MoNE and may be accessed (in Turkish) here: hbogm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2019_10/02101034_09Eylul_2019_internetSunumu_.pdf. The chart was translated into English by Mahmut Sami Gurdal.

(254).Children are also encountering discrimination from other children, which negatively impacts academic performance and mental health.

## School Access

In our sample, we encountered several families whose children were not in school. One reason is that there are still some school directors who demand documents that families may not have when they try to register their children. One Istanbul mother related her difficulties finding a school that would enrol her daughter as follows,

> We faced some problems with the school registration. We had to register in a school in the same region where we were living. We were in Okmeydani, and we didn't have a house contract. We stayed in a house for which the contract of the previous family was still current, and the school didn't accept this. Then, I searched many schools until I found one that accepted registration without a contract, only requiring an ID card. But the school wasn't good. Then, when we moved to Fatih, we started again, and we got a house contract and registered our daughter in a school (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_9).

Sometimes families faced difficulties because they could not transfer documents from Syria or from the TEC they had attended initially into Turkish schools. For example, a mother explained that her son dropped out after ninth grade because he had initially attended a TEC.

> He studied here until the ninth grade. He went to register into the tenth grade but they didn't accept because of his ninth grade certificate. They didn't accept it. They said that the school is not an official school in Turkey. It is a Syrian school. He went to the Ministry of Education and talked with a lot of employees there, but they didn't accept it. So he stopped studying, and started working in web programming. He studied that through the internet (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_2).

On the other hand, some parents were able to transfer such TEC documents to national schools with no trouble. One mother, also in Istanbul, explained, "In [a city in Southern Turkey], they were registered in a Syrian school approved by the Turkish government, so their certificates are in Turkish and Arabic. So when I came to Istanbul it was easy to register them. They accepted their certificates" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_7).

One reason for some children not to be in school is due to having to work and contribute to the family's support (Gee and Bernstein 2015). One Syrian man in Izmir related, "I dropped out after high school, but I promised myself that my children would study. But they didn't. We came here with no money, so the children were forced to work. We came to Izmir. We didn't have ID cards. We faced many difficulties. For this reason alone, I want to go to Europe" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_16). Sometimes even university students had to stop and work to support their families in Turkey, as this Syrian woman in Istanbul related, "My sons were studying in Syria. One was in the third level of university, another in the first level (of university), and another one was in the ninth grade in school. When we came here, they left their studies and couldn't complete them here, because they had to work to support us" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_2).

The problem of child labour was raised by several interlocutors during interviews. One representative of a Syrian organization in Şanlıurfa said,

> Right now, many Syrian kids are out of school. They work. They became child laborers….The main reason for Syrians not to send their kids to school is the economic difficulties they face. They have to make their kids work. It is one of the serious problems of Syrians. If Turkey extends its own labor laws to Syrians, many Syrians will benefit from it, and their situation will get better (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_11).

As this interlocuter mentioned, this is an issue that certain state policies could solve. Currently, one solution is giving financial incentives to parents who enrol their children in schools through the Conditional Educational Assistance to Foreigners (CCTE, *Yabancılara Yönelik Şartlı Eğitim Yardım Programı)* programme.[47] Other measures could include sanctioning those who employ children and ensuring gainful employment for adults. A representative of a national NGO in Istanbul shared information about their programme to put adults to work and get children enrolled in school:

> We try to prevent child labour and direct the children to schools. But, we cannot do anything without the parent's support. If the child is supporting the family, even if the family wants him or her to go to school, it is not possible. The state needs to inspect these workshops and sanction those that employ children. I can give an example of what we try to do in Hatay. There was a family in which the father was an engineer and the mother was a biologist…. Today, the father is selling corn on the street. They have four children. Two of their children are highschool-aged and were very successful in Syria….. These children are selling simits [Turkish bagels] on the street…. The father told us, if you get me an electrical tool kit, I can do small repairs in houses. I can work in my neighborhood. We got him the tools through [one of our programmes] and the father was able to support the family. The children started school (Interview, Istanbul, OzUMeso_1).

This success story shows one possible way in which NGOs can combat child labour, but the state also needs to take a stronger role in this area by inspecting workplaces and easing work permit requirements for adults, among other possible actions.

EU projects have also sought to address the issue of access to schools

> by removing three major barriers to education access: (a) conditional cash transfers to parents aim to mitigate economic barriers, (b) school transport provision aims to mitigate distance barriers and (c) non-formal 'accelerated learning programmes' aim to help school children 'catch up' with their peer group, so as to more successfully (re)integrate them into formal schooling.[48]

In 2016, the Project for Promoting the Integration of Syrian Children in the Turkish Education System (PICTES) began with 300 million euros of funding from the EU. The program includes:

- Provision of Turkish and Arabic Language courses for Syrian children both in and out of school.
- Provision of catch-up training courses for Syrian children out of school.
- Provision of additional (back-up) training courses for Syrian children in schools and TECs.
- Provision of school transfer for Syrian students.
- Distribution of complementary teaching materials to Syrian children.
- Awareness raising on educational opportunities for Syrian students.
- Revision, development and purchase of education material.
- Development of examination system to determine the academic levels and Turkish language skills of Syrian teachers and students.
- Provision of secure, hygienic and proper learning environments in schools and education institutions. Provision of education equipment to schools and TECs.
- Provision of training for teachers, administrative and other staff of MoNE.[49]

[47] For more information, see Kaya 2019, p. 43-44.

[48] More information about these programmes may be found here. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/evaluation_final_report_echo_-_turkey_17.12.19.pdf Also see the WP4 Report.

[49] Full details about the programme may be obtained here: https://www.avrupa.info.tr/en/project/promoting-integration-syrian-children-turkish-education-system-7010

AIDA reports that "The project has funded approximately 6,000 Turkish teachers for language training and counselling to Syrian children in public schools, and has delivered positive results" (2019, p. 139). This programme is clearly needed to solve the educational needs of Turkey's Syrians, and comprehensive studies and reports in future years should examine its effectiveness with regards to educational integration.

## 5.2 Educational Experiences in Schools

Once children are enrolled in schools, various other challenges arise. Several parents feel confused and out of control in terms of managing their children's schooling because of lack of knowledge of the Turkish system and lack of language ability. For example, this mother related,

> I was registering my son in university and met a lot of people who offered to help, if I would pay them. I did pay, but they didn't help much. They knew the Turkish rules, but didn't help. Especially since we were coming new, and didn't know anything… Then, we discovered that the registration is easy. It is through the internet, but at that time we didn't know that. And, unfortunately, there are people who used this situation and took our money. It is just about knowing their rules. Everything is in Turkish. Also, for my daughter, there was a registration for the eighth grade, I went without knowing anything. Then, I discovered that I should choose schools in order to register my daughter, but I didn't know that, and I was upset because the school's manager chose for us, what he wanted. And, some of his choices were bad (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_4).

In addition, we heard from several parents who are worried that their children will forget Arabic or not learn to read and write in that language. One mother related, "Of course, we don't want our children to lose Arabic. The language is so important for us. It is easier to learn another language than to learn Arabic, so we don't want them to forget Arabic" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_7). Since Turkish school curriculum is only available in Turkish and the Arabic-language TECs are progressively closing, it is difficult for Syrian students to access education in Arabic.

For students who are in school, interrupted schooling or lack of Turkish may mean that older students are put into the same classrooms with younger students leading to academic and social problems. One mother in Istanbul related,

> In terms of the schools, my daughter studied until the third grade in [a Southern Turkish city]. When we moved to Istanbul, they accepted to put her in the fourth grade (in the Turkish school), but she wasn't good enough in Turkish. So, after 2 months, the manager called me and said, 'she is not good enough in Turkish. She can't understand.' So, he recommended putting her in first grade again, and I accepted that, although I was sad. And, she was sad about that too. But, it was good for her. Now, she speaks Turkish very good. Now, she will be in the third grade, but they will give her an exam, and if she is good enough, they will put her in the fourth grade. Actually, she should be in the sixth grade now. I told them to put her in the sixth grade, but they said that it is only allowed to skip one year, not more. They said we will put her now in the fourth grade and then in the following years we will do skips again (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_7).

Prior studies provide evidence that children face discrimination and bullying in schools (AIDA 2019, p. 139). Aras and Duman (2018) claim, "The majority of Syrian families in Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa who were interviewed during our field research reported that Syrian

children encounter physical and psychological violence from their peers on their way to and from schools or in their neighbourhoods" (p. 8). We found tensions among children to be high during RESPOND fieldwork as well. For example, a mother in Izmir related,

> In school, the other students did not talk to my kids and were saying, 'These are Syrians, do not talk to them.' My kids got upset. They wanted me to send them to another school or to let them go home, and were saying 'School friends do not like us, although we did not do anything wrong.' The mothers of Turkish students were saying to their kids: 'do not be involved with Syrian students.' When our kids gave other students some biscuits, parents did not allow their Turkish kids to accept them. They we saying, 'They are so dirty.' That's how it is. It was very difficult for our kids. I explain and talk to my kids, saying, 'Yes you are upset, but you have to go to school.' For kids it is difficult to get used to the situation. From time to time this humiliation continues in my children's school. But, they have also many friends in the school. Even though this neighbourhood is full of Arabs and Kurds, we are also hearing that 'Syrians should go' (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_2).

Another example was also given from Şanlıurfa. One man felt that Turks and Syrians should not be mixed in the same schools because of existing conflicts.

> Syrian children should go to the Turkish national schools, but not mixed with local children. There are problems when Syrians and Turks go to the same schools. There is a crisis. The customs and cultural differences create a reaction and start problems. There is othering. Now, we need to integrate with Turks. We need a roadmap for this that will work with both Turkish and Syrian psychology (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_17).

On the other hand, we also heard more positive stories from Şanlıurfa, like this mother who claimed that her children: "Learned Turkish and adapted to the village and school. They learned to read and write in Turkish. They love the village and got used to the other children and neighbours" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_11).

It is clear that caring teachers can make a big difference to children struggling to fit in. One mother from Istanbul explained the difference that caring teachers made in the life of her 8-year old son:

> School was so hard on him in the beginning; he didn't accept leaving me at the school door. He was crying a lot and screaming as if I had died, and he was saying goodbye to me. The school's manager and teachers helped in that regard until he got used to things. Especially his teacher (a woman) helped. I wish her all the best. She helped a lot. She always says to him, 'I am your mother, don't worry.' And she was staying with him all the time until he became better adjusted to the school. Also, there was a teacher (a man). Every day when he saw him, he hugged him and said, 'how are you?' So my son likes the school very much, and he doesn't want to change it (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_8).

RESPOND's results show that there is room for improvement in terms of increasing students' enrolment in schools, addressing language issues as well as improving relations between Syrian and Turkish students. With increased teacher training, continued EU and other funding and development of new programmes, the situation is likely to improve in the coming years.

## 5.3 Adult Education

Most adult Syrians in Turkey have low educational qualifications and high rates of illiteracy (AIDA 2019, p. 139). They also do not know Turkish when they arrive (except for a small number), though some can get by with Arabic or Kurdish in some regions. Access to education and specifically language training is one of the primary needs of women migrants. According to recent study conducted by UN Women (2018), which included structured and in-depth interviews with 1291 Syrian women and girls in seven cities, inability to speak Turkish is one of the top 3 challenges identified by Syrian women in addition to access to housing and employment. They found that Syrian women want to learn Turkish and that "70% of Syrian women do not speak any Turkish" (2018, p. 6). Lack of language ability makes women more dependent on their husbands and sometimes even children, who pick up the language quickly and become translators. Furthermore, it negatively impacts employment opportunities, access to services and women's ability to interact with the host community.

### Language Education

There are many opportunities to learn Turkish, but they are not sufficient. Courses for adults (who are not specifically university-bound) are offered under the Ministry of Education's lifelong learning umbrella. They take place in the Ministry's Public Education Centers or at municipality centers for vocational training, such as the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality's *Sanat ve Meslek Eğitimi Kursları* (İSMEK) in the case of Istanbul. In all centers, classes are free of charge (Nimer and Oruc 2019, p. 3). In the absence of a national policy requiring Turkish mastery, participation in these courses is optional. Migrants are generally very eager to learn Turkish. For example, many interviewees echoed the sentiments of this woman in Istanbul who said, "Here the most difficult thing is the language. When I enter any market they don't make it easy for us. They feel annoyed because we don't know how to speak like them. Of course the children in schools can learn, but what about the ones that are not in school? How can we learn?!" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_2).

There is not enough capacity in the available language courses.

> In Public Education Centers all over Turkey, between 2014 and 2018 around 155,000 Syrians took A1 level courses. Additionally, between 2015 and 2018 approximately 34,000 Syrians took A2 level courses, and 3,000 took B1 level courses. In İSMEK, since 2013, a total of 9,000 Syrian students have registered in levels A1 to C1 (Nimer and Oruc 2019, p. 4).

There are not enough teachers or classrooms. One interviewee's story exemplifies the difficulties some migrants have to go through to find a class they can take:

> There was a Turkish course in a school, and I attended the first level. It was free. After that, I went to apply for the second level to ISMEK, and they told me to apply in August. Actually, we (my friend and I) first tried to enter one branch of ISMEK, and the policeman who was standing at the door didn't let us come in. Then, we tried another branch. And, they welcomed us a lot and told us to come back in August to register. I went once to the 'Muhtar' to register my daughter, and he told me about a Turkish course and gave me a number to call. Then, I found that it is the same branch that we went to before (the good branch) (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_11).

She received a lot of helpful information, but ended up having to check multiple places and wait a long time just to enrol in the second level of her course.

Teachers in the centers are often not trained to teach Turkish as a second language, rather they need only a degree in Turkish language or Turkish literature to become instructors. Students who are different levels in terms of age and ability are sometimes grouped together.

Since participation is optional, more highly educated and literate migrants are more likely to stick with the classes and show improvement (Nimer and Oruc 2019, p. 4). The adult education system seems to have mixed results in our sample, with many people attending a course here or there, but it remains hard to see the impact, and many migrants complain about lack of access or lack of learning.

One reason for lack of access to courses for some is due to the need to work and the fact that most classes are offered during the day. Many men shared that this was the main reason they could not attend courses. As this man in Istanbul related, "Now here, the problem is I can say Turkish language courses…. You can't do them if you are working. For example, I calculated it a lot. If I wanted to take Turkish language courses, it would have to be during the day. And, during the day, I am working so I won't be able to take the course" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

Women also face barriers to access. Among those who could speak Turkish in the UN Women study (29.8%), only 19.2% "said that they have attended a Turkish language course; 80.8% noted that they have learned Turkish while communicating in their environment" (2018, p. 40). The primary reason for not attending a language course in the UN Women study was a lack of child care services. Other reasons included not finding the courses useful, being unaware of courses, being unsure about what to do and not having time. 6.2% stated that their spouse did not allow them to attend (2018, p. 40). UN women recommends free of charge childcare, women's only classes and making the courses "compulsory to avoid gender-related obstacles" (p. 4). Our research confirms many of the findings of the UN Women's study. For example, women often informed us that childcare is a main reason for not being able to attend courses. One woman in Istanbul related, "I am not doing anything for myself. I didn't learn the language or complete my studies, because I always say 'my children are the priority now.' Maybe after they become older I will turn to myself" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_11). In Izmir, three women who were interviewed praised the fact that Turkish language classes for parents were offered at their children's public school, which was very accessible for them considering the easy transportation and the coordination of timing the class when their children were at school. These types of solutions could be more widely implemented throughout the country to increase the enrollment of women. Some women said that they were not aware of courses or do not have the time to attend them due to family responsibilities, which suggests the need for more publicity about course offerings as well as other forms of family support.

## University Education

People with TPS are allowed to attend Turkish universities, but must pass a foreign student exam and Turkish language competence exam. The cost of the exams and the necessity of knowing Turkish are a barrier for many (Erdoğan et al. 2017). Yet, compared to an average of 3% worldwide, Turkey has reached 6% enrolment of refugees in higher education (UNHCR 2019). The state offers language education for young adults (Syrians and non-Syrians) who want to pursue higher education through the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). Forced migrants are also eligible for scholarships for university education, including one year of language education. After the number of Syrians in Turkey increased, in 2013, the YTB implemented a special number of scholarships only for Syrians so that they do not have to compete against all foreign students wishing to pursue higher education in Turkey (Nimer and Oruc 2019, p. 3). "Since the beginning of the Syria crisis, YTB has provided 5,341 scholarships to Syrian university students, while a further 2,284 have received scholarships from humanitarian partners" (UNHCR 2019).

The number of Syrians in universities in Turkey is rising. "According to statistics of the Council of Higher Education, the number of enrolled Syrian students in Turkish higher education institutions rose from 14,747 during the 2016-2017 academic year to 20,701 in the 2017-2018 academic year, and is currently 27,606" (AIDA 2019, p.141). Despite gradually rising numbers, university attendance is still low compared to the total number of refugees.

For adults who are educated or partially educated, it is difficult to continue their education because the process of getting documents and prior coursework recognized is time

consuming and occasionally impossible (Erdoğan et al 2017). For example, one woman with whom we spoke related that her education was interrupted by war, and she struggled to have her documents recognized in Turkey.

> I was studying civil engineering, but I finished 3 years only. Then, I came to Turkey. I am trying to complete my studies here, but I need a lot of documents from Syria, and many steps (signatures, stamps, etc….) I have been working on that for 2 years. Also, they require an English test and a Turkish test, a lot of papers. It is very difficult, because a lot of preparation (studying) is needed for exams. Also, I have finished 3 years of university in Syria, but here they may make me start from the first year, or the second year or they just remove a few of the courses from the list of credited courses for me (they do not accept some the courses that I already finished in Syria) (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_1).

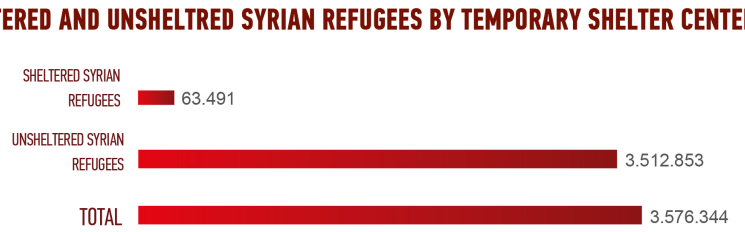
Eventually, after many struggles, she was able to complete the process of having her documents recognized and continued her education at Istanbul University. Some migrants simply give up without attempting the process. For example, this young woman in Şanlıurfa said, “If you were accepted to university [in Syria], they say bring proof. But, how can I bring proof? I lost everything. How can I bring? I only have something like an ID card from my university, that’s all” (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_21).

In sum, migrant adults are eager to learn Turkish and to continue their studies, especially women. If policies address barriers to access and provide more incentives to attend, there is no reason that more adults will not learn Turkish and attend universities in the future, thus improving their social integration.

# 6. Housing and Spatial Integration

The LFIP does not specify any provisions or obligations regarding state provision of housing, meaning that migrants are largely on their own to secure shelter in Turkey. Article 95 of the LFIP states that "as a rule, international protection applicants and status holders shall secure their own accommodation by their own means." However, Article Art 95-2 did authorize the DGMM to set up "Reception and Accommodation Centres". The majority of Syrians are living in their own houses in cities, rather than state shelters. When the first Turkey country report was published in 2018 as a part of the RESPOND Project, the population living in TACs (camps) was 224,334 (Cetin et.al., 2018, p. 74). As of October 2019, there are only 7 centres in 5 cities (Adana, Kilis, Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, and Osmaniye). In total, just 63,491 migrants stay in these shelters today. The below table (Table 3) shows the different number of Syrians in each type of accommodation.

**Table 3: Sheltered and Unsheltered Syrian Refugees by Temporary Shelter Centres**




**Source:** DGMM. 2020. "International Protection", available at: https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27 [Accessed 4 February 2020].

Insecure housing can be seen as leading to a general feeling of insecurity for migrants. "The average size of a Syrian refugee family is just above 5 people, with an average of 2 families in each household. Housing and living costs are higher for Syrian refugees due to abuse by landlords, and are generally higher in Istanbul than other parts of the country, resulting in multiple families living under the same roof" (Kaya 2020a, p. 50). Migrants often expressed that they felt insecure. As one woman in Istanbul, explained, "Here, I am staying in a rented house, so at any time the owner can tell me to leave. Then, how can I find another house to stay in?! But in Syria we were staying in our own houses. Nobody could tell us to leave. So, it is different" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_5).

Throughout micro-level interviews, we found that a "majority of our interlocutors have tremendous difficulties in finding private housing. Higher rents, stereotypes, discrimination, racism, and difficult housing conditions were repeatedly expressed by the interlocutors" (Kaya 2020a, p. 51). A 23-year-old married man with a new born baby in Istanbul related,

> We went around for many houses and they did not give us any. We kept looking around and nobody gave us any house for rent. They'd tell us, Syrians are "pis, pis, pis" [filthy, filthy, filthy], and thank God, finally we found a paper written here outside [saying for rent], even the rent is 700 liras [meaning cheap, around 120 Euro]. We even told him we are only 4 persons, and that we are wise, and we have relatives. He said there was another family that lived here before us, and they used to have a lot of relatives and guests and people. If we had guests coming to visit us, should we kick them out? They come for an hour or two, he said no it can't be possible. We told him, ok it won't work then. But we needed the house to stay, we were not going to stay on the street, we used to live in a flat down in the basement, and it had mold and rot, it wouldn't work out for the children, we needed to leave that house. We came here, and thank God, they gave us the flat. Every now and then he would come home and inspect it, sees

> the cleanliness of the house and leaves. If there's any dirtiness or something. Thank God… (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_18).

Unfortunately, such stories of difficulty finding adequate housing are very common among migrants, and reflect the overall growing animosity towards them in the broader society.

## 6.1 "Home"- Making

Despite difficulties in accessing quality housing, migrants still find ways to make themselves at home. Several interviewees mentioned the purchase of furniture as a turning point in feeling settled or deciding to stay in Turkey. For example, one woman explained, "Slowly – because we were thinking of going to Sweden in the beginning—we bought simple furniture. Then, when we decided to stay here, we completed the purchase of furniture" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_12). One woman explained how she changed her home decoration to make herself feel more at home. She gave an example during Christmas time in which she hung pictures of herself and her husband at parks and gardens in Turkey. However, she said that she only feels that it is her home until the rent is due. When the landlord comes to collect the rent, he makes comments about the home's cleanliness, and this results in her not feeling at home (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_3).

When asked, about decor changes that have been made, one migrant responded, "Well many things, for example, all of the home's furniture is new, that is the first thing. The second thing, the dining table that I have is completely different, and the kitchen, because I love the kitchen as well. These simple things that I could bring to the kitchen, those are the things that would bring me happiness and create a new atmosphere in the home" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_8). Having new furniture may symbolically signal that one is at home, as many migrants are quite poor and had to rely on furniture donations of second-hand furniture in their first few weeks.

Many migrants enthusiastically told us about charity they received from locals in terms of furniture. "We came without anything," one woman explained. "The people around us helped us, the Turkish people; they brought us clothes, furniture, fridges, washing machines… I didn't buy anything" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_8). This early charity from Turks is remembered very fondly. One woman related how helpful she found her neighbours.

> The Turkish people around my house helped us with the furniture. The owner also was helping us with goods. He kept helping us with stuff for one year…. Even though my house is so old, I won't leave it because the people are so good. The owners are so good. They don't help with money nowadays, but they treat us so good. Whenever they hear my kids crying, they come and ask us, 'do you want anything?' Or if they are ill or something, they don't feel disturbed by us, they only try to help us (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_12).

In contrast to discussions of tensions and discrimination that have been noted in this report, these positive comments about charity are noteworthy.

Some migrants had to wait for their employment situation to improve before they could buy appropriate furniture. One woman explained,

> The house was readied for us by my husband. It was this house. It wasn't full of furniture, because my husband's salary was low, so we decided to live simply for a while. Then, the work became better, thanks Allah. At his previous workplace, his employer wasn't giving him his salary. He was working a month or two but didn't get anything. When that happened, it was hard for us, because we don't have any other source of income. We are living from his salary. After that, thanks Allah, things became

> better. My husband changed his workplace 15 times until he found a person that gave him his salary! (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_4).

As discussed above, salaries are often paid to migrants irregularly. This has effects beyond the individual to their entire families who may have to go without basic necessities, not to mention furniture, in such situations. Again, for this woman as for other migrants, the purchase of furniture signals the symbolic comfort of being at home.

In sum, one major issue for migrants is their sense of instability due to the necessity of living in rented housing, difficulty finding new apartments and dirty and substandard housing. On the other hand, some migrants feel that they have settled in nicely, made a real home through the purchase of furniture and decorations and even positively benefited from local community charity. In order to understand migrants' feelings about housing in more detail, the next section looks beyond the physical house to how people perceive the broader spaces of in/exclusion in their neighbourhoods.

## 6.2 Spatial Settlement and Movement

Turkey's Syrians are mostly settled in Turkey's major cities or the Southeast. The below table (Table 4) shows the spatial distribution of Turkey's Syrians and population changes between 2014-2019.

**Table 4: Turkish Cities and Population Growth of Syrians**

| City | November 2014 | 21 July 2017 | 2 August 2019 | City | November 2014 | 21 July 2017 | 1 August 2019 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **İstanbul** | 330.000 | 495.027 | 547.943 | **Batman** | 20.000 | 20.181 | 22.392 |
| **Gaziantep** | 220.000 | 336.929 | 445.748 | **Şırnak** | 19.000 | 15.080 | 15.019 |
| **Hatay** | 190.000 | 397.047 | 432.436 | **Kocaeli** | 15.000 | 34.957 | 57.745 |
| **Şanlıurfa** | 170.000 | 433.856 | 429.735 | **İzmir** | 13.000 | 113.460 | 145.123 |
| **Mardin** | 70.000 | 96.062 | 87.507 | **Osmaniye** | 12.000 | 46.157 | 50.295 |
| **Adana** | 50.000 | 165.818 | 240.376 | **Antalya** | 10.000 | 458 | 1.786 |
| **Kilis** | 49.000 | 127.175 | 116.317 | **Kayseri** | 9.500 | 62.645 | 79.161 |
| **Mersin** | 45.000 | 153.976 | 201.887 | **Diyarbakır** | 5.000 | 30.405 | 33.245 |
| **Konya** | 45.000 | 79.139 | 108.419 | **Adıyaman** | 2.500 | 27.084 | 25.549 |
| **Kahramanmaraş** | 44.000 | 93.408 | 90.073 | **Samsun** | 1.230 | 4.540 | 5.852 |
| **Ankara** | 30.000 | 80.279 | 93.120 | **Niğde** | 1.100 | 3.848 | 4.674 |
| **Bursa** | 20.000 | 114.498 | 174.865 | **Aydın** | 1.000 | 8.806 | 7.922 |

**Source: Changing Number of Syrian refugees in major cities between November 2014, 21 July 2017 and 12 August 2019.[50] Reprinted from Kaya (2020a, p.20).**

We can point to a few realities of life in Istanbul, Izmir and Şanlıurfa for migrants based on our interviews that also explain migrants' settlement decisions. Family relations and employment

[50] Source: Ministry of Interior, Directorate General of Migration Management, http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik. For a detailed account of the number of the Syrian refugees in Turkey see the website of the UNHCR, http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=224 . According to the figures of 21 November 2015, the total number of the registered Syrian refugees in Turkey was 2,181,293. The number of those living in the 22 refugee camps around the Turkish-Syrian border is more than 220.000 people. Today, according to the same UNHCR sources, the total number of registered Syrian refugees is 3,079,914.

opportunities are two major factors affecting residence decisions. As one migrant in Istanbul explained, “I didn't know another neighbourhood, and my relatives are living here, so it might be easy for me to go and visit them, but if I'm in another neighbourhood, it might be hard for me to go and visit them” (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_17). Visiting family is a major activity for most migrants. Ozden (2013) reports, “The existence of relatives and business partners across the border on the Turkish side motivated many Syrians to flee to Turkey. Initially many were welcomed by their relatives” (p. 3).

One person from Şanlıurfa explained the importance of ethnic ties. “In cities, there is every type of person. I cannot stay in cities. Around here are Kurds like me. The neighbours treat me well and I am free. The neighbours are always coming and going. They ask how I am. If a doctor is needed whomever I call, takes me. In cities, you cannot find this. I couldn’t live there” (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_12). Although Şanlıurfa is being discussed here, similar statements might apply to a Kurdish person living in a Kurdish neighbourhood of Izmir or Istanbul. It has been found that,

> Kurdish IDPs open up their solidarity networks to the Syrian Kurdish refugees arriving in İstanbul by referring to their shared identity, shared language, and shared stories of forced migration. In the predominantly Kurdish neighbourhoods, existing networks, along with the creation of new networks, aids the survival ability of both groups in the immediate period after their arrival (Kilicarslan 2016, p. 79).

Sometimes, rather than ethnic bonds, physical landscape may bring a sense of comfort. One young man described the similarities he observed between Syria and Şanlıurfa as follows:

> The east of Syria (Cezire) looks like Şanlıurfa (in terms of geography and weather). Because of that, here, psychologically—hot weather, rain—there are no differences between my origin city and here. Şanlıurfa is the most comfortable city for us in terms of our psychology, because it looks like Dayrzour in every sense, in terms of hot weather, people, rain…. It is the same as Dayrzour. It is like an apple divided into two. We do not feel like foreigners here (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_2).

Given geographical proximity, it is no surprise that Şanlıurfa’s landscape is similar to Syria’s and perceived as such by migrants.

In general, migrants know something about Istanbul from TV shows and films or advertisements they saw before migration. Some even have a romanticized idea of the city. One man explained,

> We chose Istanbul because it is the biggest city which has Islamic rituals. It was the capital city of Islamic countries, so it still has an Islamic spiritual side, and it is part of our spiritual identity. If you go to a Fatih street, you can find a lot of Syrians, you feel as if you are in Syria. But if you go to another city -Izmir, Bursa- you can’t feel that. In Istanbul, because it was ruled by the Ottomans, it gives you an Islamic and oriental spirit more than other cities (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_14).

Fatih, a neighbourhood with a high concentration of Syrians in Istanbul, is known to be a place where many migrants from Aleppo have engaged in chain migration. Migrants are also located where there is work that suits them. One woman living in Sancaktepe (Istanbul) explained her family’s choice to live there was, “Because of my husband’s work, it is close to here. Here is an industrial region. In Fatih, there is no furniture industry (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_7).

Several migrants in our sample claim to love Izmir, a city with temperate weather along the sea on Turkey’s Western coast. One man said, “I love it. However much I love Turkey in this world, I love Izmir. I can visit other cities, but I want to live in Izmir” (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_14). Another man related, “I’d never want to live anywhere but Izmir. Even if I go to

Europe now, I think I will miss Izmir a lot" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_16). As mentioned, there seems to be slightly more local tensions in Izmir than in the other cities we studied, but this does not prevent many migrants from making positive statements about the city of Izmir itself.

In general, we did not find strong regional variations in barriers and opportunities regarding integration into the labour market, education, housing, access to health care and social services as well as the sense of belonging. In each place there are positives and negatives that are also differentially relevant depending on migrants' personal situations, occupation and the presence or absence of relatives. For example, employment opportunities differ in the three cities with higher rates of unemployment in Şanlıurfa, but the employment field of the migrant and his or her social network is a key factor determining whether this is a problem. While migrants have a lot of family and business ties in Şanlıurfa, Istanbul offers more employment opportunities overall. When asked directly, almost no one in our sample said that he or she wished to move permanently to another city in Turkey from the one in which they were currently living. Many people in Istanbul had already moved from living in a different part of Turkey, usually the South East of the country.

Although migrants have chosen their place of residence voluntarily, one issue that comes up repeatedly in interviews is the difficulty migrants face traveling between cities in Turkey, which is a real need as many families are spread out across different cities. Sometimes migrants arrived in one city, registered there and then looked for work elsewhere without changing his or her registration location. In recent years, registration in Istanbul has been stopped, meaning that migrants who wish to register there are unable to do so,[51] even if they have been living and working in Istanbul for some time. An ECHO report from December 2019 estimates there are around 500,000 unregistered people in Istanbul.[52] If they wish to travel to another city, migrants must obtain a travel permit by applying to the PDMM in their province. If a person travels without a permit, he or she may be stopped, detained, and, in recent months, there are reports that migrants have been deported back to Syria for violating registration requirements.[53]

The difficulties migrants face from not being able to travel freely both within Turkey and beyond is a subject that arose repeatedly in interviews, and I also discussed this in a RESPOND blog post (2018). Migrants' feelings of upheaval and loss are magnified as they remain separated from family members in other countries and other cities in Turkey. They are faced with difficult choices: not traveling and being unable to connect with their loved ones, traveling and risking the loss of any rights and protections they may have gained, or resorting to illegal means such as misleading officials or using smugglers.

Spatially, our project did not include a conclusive survey of Syrians' placement within the cities we studied, but other studies have suggested that they are relegating themselves to particular areas of their cities. One recent report discusses the beginning formation of ghettos in Istanbul:

> The areas covered within the research where Syrians have formed ghettos were the neighbourhoods of Akşemsettin and Ali Kuşçu in Fatih and İsmetpaşa and Zübeydehanım in Sultangazi. To begin with, the findings from these neighbourhoods showed that Syrians in the two districts had limited access to local services, effectively indicating social exclusion. Moreover, and in both districts, there was not a direct service area produced within the scope of social cohesion / integration for Syrians. Instead, the services prioritized offering solutions to the complaints of Turkish citizens toward Syrians.

[51] AIDA (2019) reports that registrations were stopped beginning in 2018. For more information, see: https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/registration-under-temporary-protection

[52] Formore information, see: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/evaluation_final_report_echo_-_turkey_17.12.19.pdf

[53] For more information on possible deportations, see these news reports: https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/08/08/turkeys-deportation-policy-is-killing-syrian-refugees-assad-erdoganErdoğan-akp-chp/ and https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/oct/25/turkey-accused-of-using-threats-and-deception-to-deport-syrian-refugees

> Moreover, the results revealed that the majority of the workplaces operating in the covered neighbourhoods of the two districts were operated by Syrians. This combined with population density triggered an economic homogenous relation as Syrians' day-to-day buying habits were largely restricted between themselves. Furthermore, the results indicated that Syrians do not communicate with the Turks, preferred to speak Arabic, and reflected cultural differences by the clothing they wore and reflected own traditions in the places where they worked and lived (TEPAV 2019).

Some migrants have decided to live in specific areas of the city due to discrimination elsewhere. Naturally, the formation of ghettos can have negative consequences, but migrants also speak very positively in our interviews about neighbourhoods where many migrants are living. One migrant explained, "Fatih became like our country, Syria. We can't live outside of it" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_12). Another migrant described his neighbourhood as follows,

> I felt it is a popular [Sha'biyya; this word could describe a neighbourhood that is lower-class, crowded and could have a positive connotation of familiarity and neighbourliness or a negative connotation of lower-class, slum or disorganization]. I felt myself in Syria because there are many Syrians, Syrians you find them in the street wherever you go. Syrians or Arabs, you find them and feel that you are in Syria. You go to another neighbourhood that is all Turks you feel that you are a stranger. Like those who travel to Germany, and they go there for example and they feel themselves are in a different country, in a different area. Here, thankfully, we feel ourselves in our own country, we don't feel estranged. Even the Turks, when you are buying something he would start to understand you, 'Khamse' [five] he would say it in Arabic, five or ten. In the markets the same thing, you go to the bazaar and ask him 'how much is that?' He would tell you in Arabic five or ten. Because of that we are comfortable with life here, in this neighbourhood (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_18).

As this loving description of his neighbourhood shows, migrants are making comfortable homes in Turkey, despite insecurity and less than ideal housing conditions. Despite all hardships, many migrants feel a sense of comfort in Turkey (Kaya 2016; 2017; Rottmann and Kaya 2020).

# 7. Health and the Psychosocial Role of Religion

Health services are the Turkish government service provision area that migrants speak about most positively in our micro-level interviews. For example, we were often given examples like the following: “In terms of hospitals: once my mother fell down and broke her leg. They did the operation for her, and they cared for her so well, and it was all free. Thank God!” (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_18).

The RESPOND WP4 report explains the laws governing provision of healthcare for refugees in detail, noting that migrants who do not have any health insurance coverage and who do not have the financial means to pay for healthcare services will be be covered by the General Health Insurance scheme under Turkey’s public social security scheme (Kaya 2020a: 44).

> According to the Temporary Protection Regulation, [Syrians’] access to health care services is only possible in the province where they are registered. Emergency medical services are also provided to nonregistered persons. Syrians have the right to access free of charge health care services provided by public health institutions, for both primary and secondary care. As subsidy of 80 per cent applies to medication costs, which used to be previously covered by AFAD, and now by DGMM since March 2018. Other than primary health care services and public hospitals, Syrians can also approach one of many Migrant Health Centres, located in the provinces with high refugee population density. These centres are staffed by both Syrian doctors and nurses, as well as bilingual (Turkish-Arabic) Turkish medical staff. As of May 2018, 1.515 medical staff (75 per cent being Syrian refugees, 16 per cent Turkish citizen Syrians) are delivering primary health care services in 169 Migrant health centres supported by the project. Syrians under temporary protection can also benefit from mental health services provided by public health care institutions. In most health care facilities interpreters are not available, rendering communication with health care providers very difficult since the beginning of the mass migration (Batalla and Tolay, 2018). Some NGOs, including the Turkish Red Crescent (KIZILAY) and ASAM are trying to cover this gap (Kaya 2020a, p. 58-59).

## 7.1. Access to Health Care

Despite migrants’ laudable legal access to treatment, our interviews indicate that they still face difficulties accessing services in practice. For example, one issue is when a migrants’ identity card is registered in another province from the one where the person is living, as can easily happen when a person moves for employment reasons (see also, Cloeters and Osseran 2019, p. 14). One elderly man related,

> May they be blessed! The Turks didn't come up short, but we had the issue of the ID cards, which was a bit troubling. It was our problem here…. they produced for us ID cards that are registered in Şanlıurfa …but when we came to Istanbul, we suffered a lot from this issue... Now, I have my wife who got sick or when my daughter got sick or my son, or if we need any medical treatment… we go to the hospital. My brother, they tell us that your ID is registered in Şanlıurfa, *we only receive emergency cases that are critical.* I have to take medication so I go to the Syrian clinics, and we pay money in order to get the treatment (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_14).

As this interlocutor mentioned, in addition to state hospitals there are a number of Syrian clinics that employ Arabic speaking doctors and offer treatment for a small fee and without

asking about legal status.[54] They are not able to undertake big and complicated procedures **"**and focus only on outpatient, maternal and child health, health education, and vaccination" (Icduygu and Simsek 2016, p. 67-68).

A small number of migrants also do not have any identity card at all in any city, and thus no access to the free government health care. As one migrant explained, "I tried to go to the hospital but they wouldn't accept me. Without the ID card they wouldn't accept us" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_20). Another young man explained his fears:

> I have a blood pressure issue, but I have all my medication with me, so it is not a problem. But, once I got sick, and I was really feeling bad…. I was afraid that if I got worse, I couldn't go to any hospital because I don't have an ID. So, I got really bad from that thinking, but I didn't go to a hospital. My friend brought the medicine for me, and I got better then (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_19).

As this latter example shows, one of the major stresses from not having legal status is fear about what might happen in medical emergencies.

Some migrants claim that they do not receive proper attention and treatment at hospitals. One woman related,

> My son is sick. I went to public hospitals, to Sultan Suleyman, but they kept transferring us without giving us medication, no treatment. And, they don't even do any proper examination. I went to Bakirkoy hospital. They gave him medication and said that he is cured and that there is nothing wrong with him anymore. So I went to a private hospital since he didn't improve. There is no attention paid to us. I understand Turkish, but they don't help us at hospitals. They say we should call 189 and take an appointment after 1 and a half months, and it is all useless (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_20).

This woman seems to see her treatment at least partly due to discrimination. She may be right, but studies have found that differences in patient culture may also lead refugee patients to "complain that they were unable to understand the diagnosis properly or do not trust the diagnosis" (Cloeters and Osseran 2019: 16). In some cases, rushed or too cursory treatment may be because medical professionals are pressed for time in overcrowded state hospitals. In meso-level interviews busy-ness and long lines were often mentioned as problems in state hospitals. But, doctor's quick treatment of Syrian patients may also result from a lack of translators and doctors' (sometimes correct) assumptions that Syrian migrants will not understand their instructions. One elderly woman in Izmir related, "There is no problem in hospitals. They are good, but doctors treat us very quickly. They are in a rush in identifying problems and writing a prescription. They do not explain what is the problem or why we should use this medicine" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_4).

Lack of Turkish language ability and translators is one major problem, causing some migrants with means to seek treatment at private hospitals or Syrian health centres, which charge fees. One woman explained,

> Hospitals are free. Also if the hospital writes medicines for us, we take them for free from the pharmacy. But, because we don't know Turkish, we go to the Syrian hospitals, and there we have to pay. For the government hospitals we should take a translator with us. We take our neighbour, and he doesn't take fees from us. But, in general if there are translators at the hospital, they are not free (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_4).

[54] For more information on the Syrian Migrant Health Centres, see https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/tr/gocsagligi-anasayfa

Migrants must often try to find translators that can accompany them if they insist on going to state hospitals. Some IO and I/NGOS are also working on this issue (AIDA 2019, p. 145-146) and "a project with World Health Organization (WHO) for in-service retraining for Syrian health professionals enabled over 1,500 Syrians to qualify to practise in Turkey" in order to provide Arabic services, culturally sensitive treatment and appropriate employment for qualified people.[55]

In sum, refugees' access to the Turkish health system is generally good. Aside from ID card issues, language problems and the treatment of some staff they are generally pleased. Further, there do not seem to be any major issues of differential access or more or less discrimination towards Syrians between Istanbul, Izmir and Şanlıurfa in the healthcare system. Gender in relation to health was not specifically asked, but one issue that emerges is lack of pre-natal care. Also, a few women indicated that they preferred female doctors, which were not always available. Additional issues that deserve mention are the absence of financial support for fertility treatment (which is also not available free of charge to Turkish citizens) and prosthetics (which are often needed by war victims). Some NGOs are providing prosthetics, but according to at least some interviewees with whom we spoke, not all who need prosthetics are receiving them.

With regards to the type of medical complaints that migrants face, they run the gamut from migraines, diabetes and high blood pressure to epilepsy, kidney failure, heart disease and traumatic injury (Cloeters and Osseran 2019; Mardin 2017). Not every interviewee was asked to provide details about when his or her medical complaint started, but among those who do provide information about onset, emergence in Syria or after arriving Turkey are equally likely. A more in-depth study could examine the psychological impacts of these illnesses, as well as potential psychological causes for some of them, but some general observations are possible.

For example, one migrant discussed the variety of ailments he and his wife are facing as well as the stress of caring for their daughter and grandson, showing the interplay between refugeeness, ill health, poverty and psychological stress:

> I have my wife, she's also sick. I am also sick; I have a disk [injury] in my back. I have diabetes. I have high blood pressure. I have allergies. The same goes for my wife. She's also like that. I have a daughter. Her husband was killed in Damascus. She is with me here. She has a son whom she's raising with me at home. I am spending money on her, but from where? Should I throw my daughter out in the street?! Of course not. You understand me right? (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_6).

Some migrants even note the psychological source of some physical ailments themselves. One woman said, "Yes, I was having a health issue in my neck from Syria and still until now. Maybe it is because of the house work, or psychological effects. I went to the hospital and had it checked. They said that I am good, but they gave me an appointment to check again. So, I will see later. (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_5). A woman in Izmir related, "My husband died. He died while imprisoned in Syria. In the same month, my mother died. My sadness caused a blood infection and because of that, I cannot work. My daughter works in the textile industry for 40TL per day (250 TL per week). That's our only income" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_13). Each of these migrants would benefit from greater access to mental health treatment.

The next section goes into greater detail about the mental health of Syrians and other refugees in Turkey and examines their access to services.

[55] This information is found in an EU and UNHCR authored report, which may be accessed here: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/evaluation_final_report_echo_-_turkey_17.12.19.pdf

## 7.2 Mental Health Conditions and Treatment Access

Statistics about mental health are notoriously difficult to come by, but most researchers agree there is a clear link between mental health and healthy integration. According to one study, "55% of refugees are in need of psychological services, and close to half of the Syrian refugees think they or their family members need psychological support.[56]" (Biehl et al. 2018, p. 93). Access to mental health services is free of charge in public hospitals, but without access to translators many migrants cannot access the services (AIDA 2019, p. 72). Several IO and I/NGOs are working in this area and most people interviewed who work for such organizations mentioned that psychosocial services are an important need. A representative of an IO provided this information about their mental health services:

> On the operational side we have the psychosocial mobile teams, and they are mainly visiting houses that are in rural areas trying to provide legal counseling, information sharing, but also to do focus groups with vulnerable people, including women and children, integration activities and referral for mental health cases to the state institutions when they are identified. And, we do a lot of psychosocial activities in the community centers (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_5).

There is also a national NGO called Maya Foundation that offers psychological support for school-aged children and training in trauma awareness for teachers and municipal workers.[57]

In our micro-level interviews, when asked directly about psychological health or depression, many migrants say they are experiencing no problems. For instance, when asked, "until now have you felt depression or regret?" one man responded, "No I swear, Thanks Allah. I am happy here" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_15). A woman responded, "Of course there are difficulties, but we didn't need help from anyone, thanks Allah" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_4). They also claim that there is nowhere to go for treatment of psychological distress, indicating that increasing awareness about mental health symptoms and available services is much needed. For instance, one woman explained, "Sometimes I feel depressed, but what can I do? I don't talk to anyone, and my mother is sick in Syria. We didn't have the feeling of Ramadan here. There is no social life. I feel sad." (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_5). Despite acute need, many feel that there is no possibility of reaching out for psychological assistance.

Some migrants lack the words to express psychological distress, although this is in fact what they are likely facing. One woman related,

> I feel very sad and can't do anything. I know that I can work as a hairdresser again, but I should first have my certificate translated. But, I feel that I don't have the energy to do so. Even though I am smiling now and laughing, on the inside, I am really sad…especially after my daughter got married. In the beginning, I said, 'I don't want her to get married,' but then, I thought: no, it is her life. I don't want to stop her (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_8).

Many of her comments seem to signify depression though only a professional evaluation could say for sure. Another example of someone in distress is this woman from Izmir, who explained, "My life was turned upside down. I'm living, but I feel dead inside" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_13). Sometimes researchers' observations point to psychological distress that is not verbalized directly. When a woman reported she was 60 years old, our researcher noted, "She looks like she is 70-80 years old. She is not able to walk properly; she is clearly in depression and trauma" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_4). Another interviewer reported about learning that

[56] Fuat Oktay, Syrian Refugees in Turkey, 2013 Field Survey Results, (Ankara: AFAD), 2013, <https://www.afad.gov.tr/upload/Node/2376/files/61-2013123015505-syrian-refugees-in-turkey-2013_print_12_11_2013_eng.pdf>; Fuat Oktay, Halil Afşarata, Mehmet Balcılar, Hakan Benli, Ebru Sarper Pekdemir, Imge Baysal, Özüm Dinçer, Aslı Ayaroz Aksöy, Asiye Bekraca Şen, Özlem Sıla Talay and Sezin Tuna, Syrian Women in Turkey, (Ankara: AFAD), 2014, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/54512>; Goleen Samari, "Syrian Refugee Women's Health in Lebanon,

[57] For more information about Maya foundation, see: https://www.mayavakfi.org/en/

a Sudanese interviewee had lost a child. “When she spoke about her child’s death… I didn’t ask any questions. It was clear from her entire manner that she was sad. She experienced a lot of pain…” (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_19).

The migration situation is as stressful for couples as it is for individuals. One woman in Izmir expressed these difficulties as follows: “We encountered many problems in family life, as life pressed us from a financial point of view. My husband and I were always concerned about monetary issues. We were getting angry easily. We were always at home as a couple. We had tension” (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_5).

Some migrants are receiving psychological treatment. One example is a man who responded to the question, “How do you describe yourself today and before the war?” as follows,

> Ummm [pause] I am currently working, self-dependent, helping my family a bit. I discovered lots of things about myself. I have a psychotherapist -I don't know what to call it in Arabic. I talk to her every week. I am better able to deal with my problems that happen to me every day. The pressure, I am better able to deal with pressure. I am still affected by pressure, but I am better capable at dealing with it after a long suffering. In Syria, I never knew about those things. In Syria, I was a university student, studying. I worked a bit. I mean, I was a pubescent youth in some way. Now, here, I started to work. I'm doing something, I'm taking care of myself. Not only am I working and developing myself, but also I'm taking better care of myself. I'm taking better care of my mental health. Because I later discovered that in order to work and be productive you have to take better care of your mental health a lot, not only a bit (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

He was then asked, what kind of problems he discusses with his therapist.

> Umm.. Now I am diagnosed with PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder). They diagnosed me with that given that I was in prison, and I had experienced many issues. And I tried to go through smuggling to Europe, and we were going to drown. And work pressure and life pressure, and responsibilities, and many issues that lead me to this state. I talk to her, and daily I think about this pressure. I'd be better able to understand the pressure that is happening to me in terms of my reactions to my feeling and emotions. I tie things together to be able to better understand them and accept them and surpass them, rather than having them accumulate so that I'd explode in an instance. And, it happened to me from before. That I wouldn't care or know about things related to mental health, my problems would keep accumulating until I reach a point where I'd explode in an instance. Now this improved (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

A woman receiving psychiatric treatment explained her symptoms and the help she has received:

> For quite a while, I have been feeling bad about myself—like someone will come up from behind me and do something bad, or I will receive some bad news. I am scared in this house. Cats come into it, and I am scared of cats. They make a sound like children, and it scares me. But, I went to the hospital and now I feel a little better. I was shaking and I would talk nervously… Now, I am better. I went to the hospital, and they gave me 4-5 psychiatric drugs (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_12).

Luckily, assistance is available for some people.

One important question is the extent to which psychological distress emerged prior to migration, is caused by war and upheaval or is an effect of living in a new society. All of these temporal onsets are possible. It is not uncommon for migrants to claim that they were more comfortable in Syria than Turkey. For instance, one man explained, “Actually, when we were

in Syria we were feeling safer. Here, if you need something (help), on whom will you depend? There is nobody to depend on. In Syria, there are family, relatives, society and people that can help. Here, if I am in need of money for a loan, I will not find anyone who can help me, so people have big worries all the time." (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_18). Unlike this man who claims to have not felt psychological distress in Syria, many other migrants express a feeling of greater comfort and ease after migration because they are now safe. One man noted,

> Well here, at least we got mentally relaxed from the stress of war and stuff. There it was too…. It was too depressing there. And, you can no longer go out. By the end, only those who [can afford] are able to leave. If I didn't have [money], if I hadn't sold my home, I wouldn't have been able to leave, to come here. It was too hard. And here, at least, there is this mental comfort. But, there is the pressure of work…" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_14).

Conversely, some migrants find life in Turkey to be very stressful, and having a negative impact on their psychological well-being. For instance, when asked if life in Turkey causes more stress or pressure, one man from Damascus now living in Istanbul responded, "Yes a lot. The problem is time. Time is always stressful. Your work, there's no time at all. You have 8 hours of work. You don't have time. Your psychological wellbeing of course is affected, there are many issues that changed" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_17). One man in Şanlıurfa explained,

> Due to the financial problems and lack of a proper job fitting with my qualifications, we are under stress here. My wife and I are fighting a lot. Although we married for love, we are just living…. If there was no psychological and financial pressure, it would be better. Compared to other Arab countries, our conditions are still better. Also, compared to within Syria conditions, we are doing better (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_6).

This comment provides good insight into the relationship between psychological stress, poverty and marital trouble. Our interviews indicate that most migrants would certainly agree with this man that their situation is better in Turkey, than it would be in other Arab countries, but feelings about Europe are more mixed, with some viewing onward travel positively and others feeling more permanently settled.

Some migrants claim to be psychologically stressed due to how they are being treated by Turkish neighbours. A woman from Damascus living in Istanbul today related,

> When I first arrived, the neighbourhood in Antalya didn't have Syrians. Now, of course, they increased. And, we stayed for a period in [Ortakoy] nearby Besiktas and stuff. It was a society of a high class people maybe, and it was a very touristic area. I felt difficulty. I am not able to deal with such a society that was there. Their look towards me because I am Syrian said: 'What are you doing here in such a place?' That was the difficulty that I have faced. I always felt tight and suffocated so much that I wanted to go back to my country, that's it. I didn't want to stay here. This really affected my psychology, even though I loved it here. Maybe because of the series and movies, which helped me to adapt and love this society and the language. This was the main motivation for me wanting to learn (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_8).

One point that emerges often in our interviews is that language learning has been therapeutic and a great aid to forming social relations with Turks, which eases psychological stress. For instance, when asked if he felt any depression, one youth explained, "Yes of course. I felt that especially when I was living here alone, before my family came. I was in a students' dormitory, and I was the only Arabic speaker. I didn't know Turkish at all. I was feeling very lonely. Then, when I started to learn Turkish, it was better. I started communicating

with people. Nowadays, there is no time to think about depression (laughing)" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_20).

In sum, greater awareness of psychological ailments and treatment opportunities is clearly needed. At the same time, if migrants find stable work, continue their education (and especially learn Turkish), have close family ties and feel welcomed by local communities, they also express better psychological well-being.

# 7.3 Coping Strategies and Existential Meaning Systems

## Self-Reliance and Family Ties

Overall, Syrian families are under tremendous financial and social pressure. When asked about their coping strategies, many people mention having no strategies or no one who supports them. For example, one woman said, "I have no one. I depend on Allah. I read the Qur'an. My mother is over there and sick, and she is always on my mind. Since my husband's family thinks that I will ask them for money, they don't speak with me" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_13). One man related, "Well the issue with help from relatives is that we're all the same, having the same problems. The financial situation is weak. No one can help anyone else" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_11). As these examples show, financial pressures can be one reason for relationship breakdowns. Also, entire families were affected by the situation in Syria leaving some people with no family members who could be relied upon in emergencies.

While many are experiencing loneliness and fear, due to lack of strong family relationships, some people talk about inner strength and resources that they found in their difficult situations. One man explained, "For one year, I didn't leave my house. I did nothing. I thought nothing. I looked and said, 'nothing is worth living for.' I thought everything was bad. But, then I slowly started, started new… I realized that sitting at home thinking about nothing means I will have nothing. I decided to start a new life for myself" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_21). One young entrepreneur in Istanbul explained, "I am self-motivated (laughing). The problems give me the motivation. When you see a lot of problems in life, you feel that you should do something. This is the motivation." When asked to describe his future, he explained,

> I don't know. It is really a complex discussion between me and my close friend, he is a black-hat person; who looks into the future in a negative way, like we will die (laughing). I am really a positive man. Actually, that is what keeps me moving. I see the future in a positive way. I think I will have a good useful life in the future, I will fulfil my purpose. That is the most important thing for me, and I will be able to pay my rent and have good and nice family, hopefully. I hate refugees who are asking for help, they shouldn't do that. It is their life, their circumstances, and they should go through it. There is a beautiful saying in the Quran, which is, 'Allah does not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear.' So any challenge you face in your life, you can handle it… (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_19).

As this example shows, even when self-reliance is being mentioned, religious beliefs can also be seen as important sources of strength.

Some migrants have only tenuous relationships with their families due to distance and, as discussed above, even travel within Turkey may be challenging due to legal restrictions. One young man explained, "I miss my family and relatives. My brother is in Sudan, and some of my relatives are in Syria, and some in Egypt. And they can't come because of the need for a visa. I also can't go to Syria because I would have to do my military service" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_3). Others face broken relationships for a variety of reasons specific to their situation. One young man who co-owned a store with his brother seemed bitter about his family relationships after migration, "I learned that people are not for each other (not helpful to each other). Even my brother is not for me. Everyone changes. When my brother got married,

he changed. I will keep that in my heart (and don't want to talk any more about this)" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_17). Below, I discuss family pressures that may exacerbate relationship breakdowns.

Though stories of loss, separation and disappointment are common, an equal number of people talk about their very strong family ties. For example, when responding to a question about sources of support, one man listed his family and friends prominently,

> The most supportive is my family. The people here as well, the friends I got to know here are something very positive in my life, very.... They stood by me in many stages. They were…the first people I knew here and they helped me in all aspects. Especially in terms of the period before, I didn't have friends at all in Syria, so... So yeah, I'm always in contact with them, I keep trying to be with them here. My family I always keep trying to talk to them (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_2).

One woman explained, "My kids and husband for example, they're the most important, in my life, thank God, if there's nothing wrong with them. I would do anything for them." (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_7).

Some people directly mention receiving psychological support from friends and family. One young mother in Istanbul claimed to be in general good psychological health, but she has a strong support system as well. "Always I am trying to be optimistic. It was just when my mother died that it was hard on me. But also, I didn't pass through a depression situation, my friend stood by me, and my sister was beside me too. So it was easier on me" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_10). One woman described how her husband supports her psychologically when she feels sad. "I love my husband. He loves me. When he sees that I'm sad he comes right away and cares. I support him the same way. I never needed psychological support" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_16). For many people, their children are an immense source of support. One father related, "At night when I go to my house, if they are awake, my daughters welcome me and do good things for me. So I forget all the tired moments, and I forget my worries." (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_16). While family and gender roles are sometimes perceived to be changing negatively due to migration pressures, families also provide very important positive supportive resources.

## Religious and Other Systems of Meaning

For almost all of our interviewees, religious and cultural resources for coping are very much based in Islam. When asked how he identified himself, one man said, "No power and no will [a Muslim religious saying]. We thank God, whatever he sends we thank him for it" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_10). Another explained the important role of prayer saying, "I felt psychologically distressed. I'm not used to leaving my family, my country and all of my relatives in Syria. I came here for the first time I went out like that. We all weren't expecting to go out like that, for example to Turkey or to Istanbul." The interviewer asked him: "what did you do when you had such feeling? Did you go to someone?" He responded, "I go to the mosque and pray. I pray to my God" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_16). A woman related, "My religion gives me support, believing in God and going to the mosque and attending religious services. I have been going to that mosque in Şişli for 4 months now. It is satisfying" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_4).

Migration can strengthen religious belief and practice. One woman described becoming more religious in Turkey.

> Some of my beliefs have changed, after I came here. I felt that I have more religious commitment. Before, I was just following the religious rules that I learned from the community. Nowadays, I feel that I understand the rules more and can apply them with understanding. The community is helpful in that. For example, wherever you go, you find a mosque. (I didn't find that in my country, even though it is an Islamic country!).

> Also, the people, for example, when they want to drink water, they sit down because they say it is from Prophet Muhammed (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_9).

Even those who haven't become more religious often described a feeling of closeness with Turks due to being Muslim and living with Muslim neighbours like this young woman in Şanlıurfa. "Since there are a lot of Arabs and maybe also Muslims, in Şanlıurfa it is always said that, 'we are all Muslims and need to help one another'" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_8).

A minority of migrants in our sample were not religious. One example is a man in Istanbul. When he was asked, "Do you have everything you need in your neighbourhood, including religious services for example or specifically [laugh]?" The person responded, "What would I do with the religious services? [laugh] no problem. There's a huge mosque but I don't really care for it. Now umm... There are the Syrian restaurants there" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

When migrants do refer to an existential system without mentioning religion directly, they most often refer to beauty or humanistic kindness, as in this example of an Istanbul man who explained his life motivation as follows,

> All of my life I am optimistic, I don't have any problems, if I didn't have hope I wouldn't have left Syria. I would have taken a weapon and lived off killing and murder. But I am a person. I would go back and tell you the artist loves beauty, kindness and love, that's my nature. There is no difference between religions or sects. A human is a human, you treat me with respect, I treat you with respect as well. I don't care what is your religion or what do you think, but if you are a respectful person and a human with every meaning of the word, and I am a human with you as well. If you're not a human, I don't change. I just avoid you. I stay the way I am (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_14).

One woman in Istanbul referred to humanism as her religion. "Humanism. Religion is humanism. People shouldn't be racist or discriminating of any sort, and people should deal with one another according to their essence (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_3).

Hope was among the most common themes coming up in many interviews, as in this case: "I have hope. I have hope, and I'm living by it. Because I told you what can we do? It's reality, and we have to live with it" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_15). One migrant in Şanlıurfa talked about the universal need for hope. "Even if, I was not a Syrian, like every person who concentrated on success in his work… If you ask me: "what is the driver of success?" I will say to you: 'hope' in family life, work life. The tie which relates with life is hope" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_2).

Scholars are recently becoming more interested in hope as a soothing resource and object of empirical study (Lambek 2010; Parla 2019), and our research shows that it is clearly a very important concept for Syrians. In general, migrants are drawing strongly on inner resources, family, friends and Islam to cope with their difficulties. Unquestionably, they would benefit from more access to psychosocial support. Yet, even without any professional support we can see that migrants are resilient.

# 8. Citizenship, Belonging and Gender

Forced migrants in Turkey, like migrants throughout Europe studied by RESPOND (Pannia et al. 2019), experience precarity, uncertainty and instability with regard to formal citizenship, legal status and rights. As with all of the factors of integration that this report has reviewed, refugee citizenship in Turkey can also be characterized by differential inclusion. Differential inclusion is produced by legal precarity, meaning both lack of access to citizenship and partial societal acceptance and also a tenuous ability to exercise rights. Yet, this report shows that migrants still participate in Turkish society and develop feelings of affiliation and belonging. In the sections that follow, several different dimensions of citizenship—from formal to affective and social—are reviewed in terms of the extent to which Syrians or other forced migrants have access to citizenship and how they experience in-/exclusion.

## 8.1 Access to Citizenship

Cetin et al. (2018) describe the process for obtaining Turkish citizenship in detail. In general, citizenship acquisition is governed by the Citizenship Law (CL), which includes provisions for acquisition by kinship or place of birth. It is also possible to receive citizenship through the decision of a competent authority, through adoption or by right of choice.

> The Law states that an alien who has resided in Turkey for at least five years, shown an intent to remain in the country, familiarity with the Turkish language, has adequate means of self-support, good moral character and has no illness that may pose a threat to the public may obtain Turkish citizenship (Article 11, 12). This rule is mainly related to regular migration (p. 43-44).

Syrians can obtain citizenship according to the procedures described above, but they also have access to citizenship through a policy implemented by the DGMM and announced for the first time in 2016. The announcement was seen as an "important step in the Turkish government's recognition that the settlement of Syrians in Turkey could turn into a long-term and/or permanent settlement" (Icduygu and Simsek 2016, p. 62). Though lauded by most academic commentators, the granting of citizenship to Syrians has been controversial in local communities. Kaya (2020a) provides additional detail about the controversy this announcement generated, writing,

> This statement brought about a big commotion in Turkey making the Turkish citizens conclude that all the Syrians will be granted citizenship immediately. Due to the disturbance of the public in general, Deputy PM Kurtulmuş had to announce that the Ministry of Interior was working on a proposal, implicitly meaning that the government considers granting citizenship to those with cultural and economic capital (p. 37-38).

A new law was passed in December 2016 that introduced "exceptional citizenship acquisition" criteria based on financial investment in Turkey or made available to "those who stay in the country legally and have already contributed and/or have the potential to contribute to the Turkish society in the fields of science, economy, social life, sports, culture and arts" (Akcapar and Simsek 2018, p. 180). This seems to be the primary way that Turkey's Syrians can obtain citizenship. But, the procedures and requirements are still not clear.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that those Syrians with economic and cultural capital are more likely to be granted citizenship than those precarious ones, who seem to be instrumentalized by the ongoing neoliberal forms of governance for the establishment of a model of precarious work for non-citizen workers (Canefe, 2016; and Baban et al, 2016). As of 8 March 2019, the total number of Syrians who have been granted Turkish citizenship was

79,894 persons.[58] This number became 92,280 on 2 August 2019[59] (Kaya 2020a, p. 38). It is notable that neither migrants nor researchers know for sure the exact process or requirements for Syrians to obtain Turkish citizenship.

In our interviews, a desire for citizenship was often mentioned by migrants. For instance, one man explained, "If they gave me citizenship, I would be honoured to have Turkish citizenship" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_15). He tried to explain his good qualities to the interviewer and to request his assistance with securing citizenship: "I respect myself and my neighbours. I love them, and they love me. I have been settled in my home for 4 years. Now, if there is an opportunity for you to do us a favour and do my family a favour: Could you reach my voice to the responsible organizations and request citizenship for me and my children?" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_15). One young man explained in an interview that others who have received citizenship had no trouble traveling to Syria, so there is no reason not to get citizenship if possible: "I hope to get Turkish citizenship. My uncle got it, and he kept his Syrian citizenship. He can travel to Syria, no problem (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_20). Surely, some migrants would be worried about becoming dual citizens or losing their Syrian citizenship as Chatty (2017a) suggests, but in our sample a majority claimed that they would be comfortable as Turkish citizens.

Many Syrians view Turkish citizenship as "pragmatic citizenship" (Brettell 2006) or "additive citizenship" (Coutin 2003) whereby they want to become citizens to solve practical problems, such as easing travel or employment opportunities. For example, pragmatic citizenship seems to be an important goal for this man from Şanlıurfa who responded to a question about his wish for citizenship by saying he wanted more mobility,

> Yes, if I can get citizenship, I can work here. For my job it is better. For example, right now, when I need something, I cannot go Adana, Istanbul or to the border to view our goods or to talk with customers etc. But, if I get citizenship, I can travel freely…. If I can have nationality, I can work freely. I can talk with people in the government, and I will not have problems (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_2).

National belonging is an important way in which people gain security and comfort (Kannabrien, Vieten and Yuval-Davis 2006). Most Syrians do not feel national belonging to Turkey. Statements that Syrians make about cultural similarities do not necessarily translate to feeling "Turkish" and to an affective belonging to the nation. A recent study of citizenship found that belonging to Turkey is the least expressed reason for wanting citizenship. The authors explain, "The social integration of Syrians into Turkish society is not currently a functioning and durable process and…the interviewees do not want Turkish citizenship as a form of cultural identity and belonging" (Multeci-der 2016, p.1-2).

Akcapar and Simsek (2018) also find that citizenship for Turkey's Syrians is not so much related to national belonging as it is to a feeling of safety, access to rights and social acceptance in the host society. Our research supports this finding. Most migrants feel comparatively safe in Turkey despite their precarious legal and social status, yet citizenship would confer an added feeling of security as it would mean being able to stay indefinitely. As one migrant in Izmir related, "We do not have citizenship here and no residency permit. What will my kids do in the future? I am concerned about this. Maybe an order will come to force us to return to Syria. Who knows? We are not able to make any plan. There is no stability. We do not know anything about the future… about the future of our kids" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_2). Another Syrian woman similarly related the acquisition of citizenship to security and societal acceptance. "If it is up to us, we want to return to Syria, but it is difficult. What about Turkish citizenship? If we could have it, we'd say 'yes.' Then, when anyone said anything to us, we'd say 'We are one of you'" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_5).

[58] See https://multeciler.org.tr/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi/ access date 6 May 2019.
[59] See https://t24.com.tr/haber/suleyman-soylu-vatandaslik-verilen-suriyelilerin-sayisini-acikladi,833262 access date 10 August 2019.

Most migrants in our sample do not have a detailed understanding of their rights (or lack thereof), but in general, they do not perceive that their current legal status (TPS) grants them sufficient rights, despite improvements in comparison to the initial period. One woman in Izmir explained, "Initally, we did not have any rights here. When the numbers [of Syrians] rose, the situation got better in terms of hospitals and the Migration Bureau [DGMM]. Now, I want to be a citizen, and things will be even better for me" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_7). A woman in Şanlıurfa said, "We don't see a future for ourselves, because there is no law recognizing us. There is no law specifying our rights" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_15). A recent Multeci-der (2016) study, similarly found that most migrants wanted to have Turkish citizenship to have greater rights to work, education and health. Actually, they already have these rights through their Temporary Protection Status, but they do not feel equally treated and able to access their rights at all times. Particularly, women "expressed that they will have more rights and freedoms as citizens" (Multeci-der 2016, p. 1-2). Scholars researching in other contexts have found that there may be a positive uncoupling of rights from citizenship (Baubock 2006, p. 23-27) or that migrants may experience a 'right to the city' even without national citizenship (Bauder and Gonzalez 2018; Penninx 2009). The sentiments of Syrians in Turkey who have many rights, but still want citizenship shows that this uncoupling is not always viewed positively, because not being a citizen prevents the full exercise of rights and a feeling of security in the case of Turkey.

There are numerous Syrian organizations operating in Turkey working for the needs of Syrians in Turkey (Sunata and Tosun 2018), and a few Turkish NGOs that support refugee rights, such as Refugee Rights Turkey.[60] However, in general "the organizations with the greatest capacity and freedom to operate inside Turkey are those that assist with the immediate and humanitarian needs of Syrians," while rights-based organizations lack resources and support (Mannix, 2018, p. 17; see also Danis and Nazli 2019). Therefore, most NGOs do not actively lobby for political rights for refugees, although some do attempt to educate refugees about their rights. One representative of a Syrian humanitarian aid organization related,

> Only 5% of Syrians know their rights. There is a need for awareness raising like organizing courses about it. I personally read about refugee rights from Arabic sources, which were translated from original, English sources. As an institution, we need to learn about these rights. In this regard, Turkey did not demonstrate a successful performance in terms of legal rights awareness. European NGOs are more active in this regard (Interview, Şanlıurfa, SRIIMeso_14).

Migrants generally believe that their situation would improve if they have Turkish citizenship. However, this is not always the case as this example of a Syrian woman in Izmir shows:

> I am citizen. I know that I have equal rights to Turks. One time when asking for a bus ticket, I gave my Turkish identity card. When they saw my name was foreign they asked, 'What are you really?' When I said, 'I am Syrian,' he said, 'We don't give tickets to Syrians.' Then, he asked someone else if he could sell the ticket. I said, 'I don't have any other document I can show you. I am a Turkish citizen.' And, he gave me the ticket (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_17).

Even with citizenship, migrants may still be judged according to their ethnic backgrounds, which points to the importance of strengthening social integration broadly. But, surely migrants would also have more rights, and they could access the rights they do have more easily as citizens than with TPS.

[60] This is the website for Refugee Rights Turkey: https://www.mhd.org.tr/en

## 8.2 Civic Participation and Active Citizenship

Civic participation and active citizenship refers to the way citizens work agentively as part of democratic society. According to the European Economic and Social Committee (2012),

> A catalogue of the activities that could qualify as active citizenship would be wide-ranging and extensive, and together they build a healthy, participative democracy. They cover voting and standing for election, teaching and learning, donating to good causes, recycling and caring for the environment, campaigning and volunteering. They may take place in a professional, political or personal context. They can be on an international scale, or simply target the neighbour next door (p. 6).

In Turkey, active citizenship is limited by a strong state (Bee and Chrona 2017; Yegen 2004), however "the refugee crisis facilitated the opportunities both for active citizenship as a demand and for new mobilization to manage the humanitarian and integration assistance towards the Syrians" (Sunata and Tosun 2018, p. 17). Civic and political participation of migrants themselves in Turkey is quite limited, but not absent, with many migrants actively following the news and expressing a wish for more participation. Some are also getting involved in Syrian organizations or non-political Turkish migrant assistance associations, which reflect active citizenship aspirations.

### Political Engagement in Syria

It was not easy to ask questions about politics to people who have fled war. Memories of political activism may be painful and traumatic to recount either because they have not led to a positive outcome or because they bring one's own jail time or the deaths of relatives friends to mind. Migrants also may fear that information about their past or current political activities could put them in danger. When asked about political participation in Syria, one woman in Istanbul seemed uncomfortable, sharing,

> No, not at all. I didn't engage. Even in terms of voting; also, we didn't vote. It was hard to vote there, because the people who were against the regime would be angry at you if they saw you voting to support the regime. So it is better to stay neutral. Also, on the internet, we don't write any political things, and in life we don't engage in any political activities. We don't need any more problems. We want to stay safe (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_20).

Many migrants have friends or relatives still in Syria who might be endangered by information about prior activities becoming public. One example of a statement about unwillingness to engage in politics for this reason is this man who explained,

> As a human, I have reached the point where anything called politics, I do not get involved in it. Anything that is involved with matters of the world, I don't get involved because the world has a God who is managing it. I am concerned about my father, my family and my siblings in Syria. On the second level, I am concerned about my family (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_15).

One Syrian woman in Izmir related that relatives in Syria refuse to speak about politics with her. "In my region, the regime is in power. When we call and discuss politics, they hang up right away. We can only say, 'how are you? Are you good? What's up?' Even on Facebook we don't speak about anything political" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_17).

Although it was not possible in all cases to ask about migrants' political activities, when describing their reasons for migrating to Turkey, many migrants do relate that it was due to an arrest for political reasons or the requirement to serve in the military. For instance, one man related, "In Syria, I was arrested by the regime, and when they freed me, the next day,

immediately, I travelled to Lebanon, then from an airport to here" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_16). Another man spoke openly about his political activism,

> Yes, I protested a lot in Syria, even though I was arrested the first time I was in a protest. There was a peaceful event, and then it turned into a protest, which wasn't planned to be a protest. And, I was among the organizers, but with the protection team, whose job was to inform the people to run and escape if there was any security interception to the protest. Anyways, I received a call to evacuate, that the security had come somewhere, but it turned out that the whole thing was a trap (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

This person is clearly comfortable describing these events, but many more may have been afraid to admit to their activities.

Another way of understanding political participation is through engagement with the news and following current events. Respondents were nearly equally divided between those who claimed to follow the news in Syria or Turkey or to not have time or interest at all. Most migrants can't follow Turkish news directly due to limited language ability, but they have ways of getting information about developments in Turkey through Arabic language sources and social media. For example, one migrant from Istanbul explained, he is following news, "through the phone and political news here and there. Any event in Turkey is important for us. And, any event in Aleppo is important for us, any event in Syria" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_12).

Others answered questions about the news with short negative statements, like this: "No, I'm not interested" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_16). One woman in Istanbul explained that it makes her feel sad to follow the news too much, "I sometimes watch the Turkish news and try to understand it. Mostly. I read news on Facebook, but not that much. I can't bear bad news. I have a lot of problems and can't bear listening to news. I cry a lot when I hear anything or see any pictures" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_8). It is not surprising that news about Syria, developments in Turkey or Turkey's actions in Syria can be source of anxiety for some migrants.

For many, following the news in Syria is a way of keeping track of family members' well-being as much as political developments, and many related that they get most of their news from family members, rather than official media sources. One woman in Istanbul explained, "I am not watching any news now. I just call my parents and ask about their situation every now and then. That is enough for me" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_9). Another man in Izmir related, "My two siblings are in Aleppo. I speak with them. Since we only have Turkish television, I cannot follow events there. When I talk with my siblings, they tell me about life there and continuously say there is no water, electricity or work" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_25). We found that migrants are generally aware, engaged and interested in the news, at least to the extent that it affects them and their family.

## Political Participation and Organization

Non-citizens are not allowed to vote or to officially politically organize, according to Turkish law (Mannix, 2018), and all migrants in our sample said that they did not participate in Turkish politics. One woman said the reason for her not to participate in either Turkey or Syria is that she does not have the "right to vote in Turkish elections or to participate in politics in Syria" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_3). Another explanation for not following Turkish news is being due to fear about what locals might say if Syrians became more politically active. When asked about following the Turkish news, one man related,

> No, there is no benefit. For example, the election news, I didn't follow that, because I can't do anything about it. If we did anything, the bad people from Turkey will speak about that, and speak against the Turkish government. If Syrians just go to the sea for a rest, they say, 'see these Syrians feeling happy in our country.' We shouldn't be

> happy! And they write about that immediately. Why don't they write about the Syrians who are working hard 12 hours per day in the factories and taking half the salary of a Turkish person?" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_14).

This man is not wrong in suggesting that some people would not be comfortable with Syrians' participation in Turkish politics. One representative of a national NGO explained that there was large outcry when it was suggested that a Syrian candidate could run for upcoming parliamentary elections. "There was a huge reaction. I saw it. I witnessed it. Actually, there should be some representation in parliament of the 4 million people here. It's not right that they do not even have one representative" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_2).

Some migrants express a wish to participate in Turkish politics, if it was allowed, as in this person who expressed a wish to vote, "Of course I would like to, why wouldn't I like to give my opinion? It is important, to prove your existence in the social and political life, and the culture, to prove your existence, but if one doesn't participate he gets isolated" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_10). Many Syrians view Turkey positively in terms of political structures as compared to structures in Syria, as in this man from Izmir who explained, "There is freedom here. There is democracy here" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_16). Despite their precarity and lack of access to many basic rights, many Syrians feel lucky to be in Turkey.

Some migrants said that they were politically active regarding Syrian politics while in Turkey.

> At the beginning, when I came here... I joined a Syrian community in Istanbul, in order to do revolutionary meetings and so on. At the beginning, I was still... excited that our problem would be lasting months or days, and we would return to our country and so on… I was thinking I have to be an active person in that. But then I discovered that everyone is lying to one another. So I stayed home (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_13).

We interviewed a leader of a Syrian opposition association in Şanlıurfa. He said, "We are hopeful. We are making a call to our nation not to lose their hope. We are saying that hope is here. We can reconstruct our homeland, our cities. We are first doing cultural activities, and publishing a magazine. We are trying to raise awareness for creating a resistant society" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018_SRIIMeso_16).

Some Syrian organizations could be considered part of local political networks. For example, Sunata and Tosun (2018) write that the Syrian Nour Association undertook activities "together with Fatih municipality and it has also strong ties with IHH [Humanitarian Relief Foundation—a national NGO] ...on account of the efforts of Doctor Mehdi Davut, one of the founders of the association, who previously worked for IHH" (13).

Refugees are also actively involved in supporting the activities of Turkish NGOs that work on integration and other topics. However, observations point to their being mostly relegated to translation or assistance rather than actively managing activities and generating project ideas. For example, one of the major national Turkish NGOs that works on psychosocial health related that refugees are involved in their work as volunteers, but not as trained psychologists (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_6).

Overall, no major differences among political activities in Istanbul, Izmir and Şanlıurfa were observed in RESPOND research. However, one exceptional model of refugee political inclusion is the Sultanbeyli Municipality in Istanbul, which has created refugee councils through their linked migrant association. This appears to be a well-functioning model that other municipalities could adopt. A representative related in an interview that "Various councils such as Women's Council, Men's Council and Youth Council were set up for the purpose of finding solutions to the problems faced by the Syrian refugees living in Sultanbeyli district" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_7).[61]

[61] For more information about their activities, see: https://multeciler.org.tr/ Refugees Association Welcome pptx. (2018).

This report's findings—that Syrians would like citizenship, greater rights and the ability to participate in Turkish politics—is supported by other studies (Akcapar and Simsek 2018; Mannix, 2018) and demonstrates that TPS is viewed as an insufficient legal status. The rights that migrants have as part of TPS are limited as compared to the rights they would have as citizens, and, further, migrants do not feel that they are able to fully exercise their current rights. While increased education about rights for both migrants and host communities might improve this situation, the best solution would be to create a clear path to long-term residence or citizenship with well-publicized criteria for people with TPS. Migrants are willing and able to take political action and to work with NGOs to create better opportunities for themselves, but such steps are not openly encouraged in today's Turkey. Models of political inclusion through councils like that in Sultanbeyli should be replicated in other cities.

## 8.3 Belonging

Belonging may be defined as "identifying with and feeling attachment to a social group" (Simonsen 2018, p. 120). Unlike identity, which tends to be more limited to self-categorization, belonging refers to community embeddedness. Belonging is clearly an important topic for migrants because to a greater or lesser extent they experience social ruptures and need to re-establish community belonging abroad and transnationally (Rottmann 2019a). As noted at several points, Syrians and Turks are not confronting each other for the first time, and Syrians often describe a cultural intimacy in Turkey, especially in the border provinces (Kaya 2016; 2017; Rottmann and Kaya 2020). For instance, it is not uncommon to hear statements like this one from a Syrian businessman in Şanlıurfa,

> Culturally and in terms of customs, we have many similarities. Because of that, we chose to come to Şanlıurfa. On the weekends, I go on picnics with my family. We are socializing with local families who know Arabic…We live on the 8th floor of an apartment building. In this apartment building, my wife visits the neighbours. They are also coming to visit her. We are adopted into the social life in the apartment (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_4).

In this sense, a number of migrants feel a comfort in Turkey due to perceived cultural similarities.

However, for many, community belonging is much more fraught. Only a few migrants claim to have had mostly or only positive interactions with neighbours that confer a feeling of belonging. For example, one middle-aged man told us how much people had helped him:

> When we first came, we only brought what we could carry. The locals here, the Turks, helped us. They brought us a refrigerator, washing machine and rugs. Before, our rent was expensive, and the landlord helped us. He gave us a house for 250 liras. Our neighbours brought us food and anything we needed. Putting everything aside, I am so grateful to the Turkish people. This is one of the main reasons that I wanted to come to Şanlıurfa. A major factor was that there are Arabs, and I heard that they spoke Arabic…. (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_16).

Shared language and a shared basis for affiliation in terms of ethnicity is clearly helpful as in the two above quotes from migrants in Şanlıurfa. Many more migrants can provide 1-2 examples of a person who greatly helped them, such as a teacher, landlord, muhtar (local political official) or doctor. For example, one Syrian woman said, "The teachers of my daughter would come to my home. They'd stay with me. If there was anything wrong, they'd come. When my son was in the hospital, they didn't leave me. Those are the Turks" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_7). These individuals clearly felt welcomed, even warmly embraced by some Turks. Yet, a more common experience is not feeling accepted by locals.

## Fraught Social Belonging

For many migrants, a feeling of social belonging appears to be impossible, despite any shared cultural and religious practices, due to social tensions and experiences of lack of social acceptance on the part of the host population. One woman related, "I don't like where I live. The women who are our neighbours are crazy. They keep harassing me and saying bad things about us, but my son's work is nearby. And, it is not easy to find somewhere else for us all" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_4). Another explained how Syrians seem to be targeted by neighbours: "If the neighbour doesn't like Syrians, he would get annoyed with you for anything. Many of our relatives lived in houses, but they left after 5 days. What's the reason? The neighbours complained about them, and they kicked them out" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_12).

Some migrants articulate that their negative experiences with local communities is due to jealousy because of Syrians' perceived special treatment by state institutions. For example, a woman in Izmir related, "When we first came, Turks didn't want us. It's as if we took what is rightfully theirs. For example, the Kizilay Card[62], they act like all Syrians have one, as if we took that card from them. "Why isn't it given to Turks?" They ask" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_8). Another migrant had a similar experience in relation to coal aid: "I was here for 5 years. It is the second time I received coal aid today, but the neighbours are saying, 'The Syrians are lucky. The state does not give us any aid, any coal.' They ask us how many bags of coal we get" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_2). Even local officials and NGO workers complained in interviews that Syrians have been given handouts rather than made self-sufficient, relating the popular saying that "they have been given fish, but not taught how to fish for themselves" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_13; Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzUMeso_4).

As these sentiments show, migrants are perceived as getting more from the government than Turkish citizens. Actually, the amount of direct aid Syrians receive is much lower than is reported in social media rumours and comes via EU funding, not from the Turkish government. Turkish citizens are also eligible for social service support (*Sosyal Yardımlaşma*), but receive the support through different channels.[63] However, the perception that Syrians are treated better than locals due to such programmes is a source of tension with local communities (see also Sozer 2019), suggesting that new policies or new communications surrounding policies are warranted.

Migrants also relate specific incidents of discrimination in daily life. For example, one young woman in Izmir explained,

> Yesterday, I was waiting in the bus station in the queue to go to the hospital. There were two Syrians in the queue. A Turkish woman came and ordered us to get out of the queue as we are Syrian. She said, 'first Turks will get on the bus, then Syrians will get on.' She was not a bus driver. She was another passenger. She did not allow us to sit down and looked at us strangely (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_11).

Several studies assert that social relationships are smoother in the South Eastern cities like Şanlıurfa due to social ties (Corbatir 2016: 15), but they are not totally without tensions. We often came across positive statements asserting social harmony among migrants and officials in Şanlıurfa. For example, a representative from the Metropolitan Municipality Migration Center in Şanlıurfa claimed, "There is a brotherhood feeling in the city. Religion also influences it." (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_18). There is a slight trend in our data showing that discrimination is worse in Izmir than in Istanbul or Şanlıurfa. But, even in Şanlıurfa, people can experience discrimination for being Syrian. One person related, "It's very difficult. Everyone is asking if you are Syrian as if it's a swear word. Yes, in this way, they otherize you"

[62] This is the card that migrants receive to access financial support from the EU. For more information, see RESPOND WP4 report (Kaya 2020a).
[63] For more information about social support for Syrians, see Kaya (2020a); for more information about social support in Turkey, see: https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/sygm

(Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_13). Arabic speakers are not immune from discrimination in Şanlıurfa, even though there are non-Syrian Arabic speakers there. When asked about negative experiences in daily life, this person explained, "When I'm speaking Arabic with my niece, they ask: 'Are you Syrian?' Then, they say, 'what are you doing here? Go back to your own city…'" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRII_14).

As mentioned, tensions have grown over time between 2011-2019, and many migrants have noticed this themselves.

> When we first arrived here, they got upset about our situation, but then they started to get bored with us. They say, 'you are Syrians. You are here for 7 years. When will you go back?' They say, 'the war ended. We see that from the news. You should go to your country.' People hate us, they are very angry with us beginning in the last two years. In the beginning, they did not treat us like that" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_2).

A minority of migrants believe that the situation is improving over time as they get to know neighbours. For example, one woman in Izmir explained, "In the first years, our neighbours did not visit us, but right now in the festival times they visit us. We go to them to say get well soon (geçmiş olsuna gidiyoruz). They got used to us. They like us a little, in the past, they did not even receive our greetings, right now slowly they got used to us" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_2). While there are a few individual positive stories like this one, the more common narrative is that as more Syrians have arrived and negative rumours and misinformation have been spread in the media, tensions with neighbours have grown, making social integration more difficult.

Our data clearly show that social tensions are high. The efforts of political elites to assert a shared cultural and religious identity as "Muslim brothers" have not totally succeeded. As Simonsen (2016) found when studying belonging in 19 countries, "belonging is more a matter of informal and subtle boundary drawing performed in everyday interactions between immigrants and majority members rather than being a matter of elite-formulated definitions of 'us' and 'them'" (1166). To some extent, discrimination towards and jealousy of Syrians reflect insecurities about the economy. It is well-known that societal tensions are impacted by economic and social struggles, and even if some insecurities are due to misinformation, it is understandable that people in lower classes are worried about their own precarious futures. One-sided humanitarian relief policies need to be modified to benefit host communities. Additional policies addressing economic need and social assistance perceptions (and thereby reducing tensions) are urgently needed.

At a basic level, more communication about policies from the state would go a long way to reducing tensions. In the absence of information coming from official sources, the public has turned to social media for information, which is not always accurate. Further, true integration is only possible when local deliberation between the two or more communities is enabled.[64] Unfortunately, most research focuses on the newcomers' attitudes and adjustment, but it is clearly important to understand how host communities understand migration developments that affect them. Research on both host and newcomer communities could lay the groundwork for programmes that encourage local-level debates about community and a shared future.

Lack of language ability is an important factor inhibiting relationships, and migrants who have learned Turkish generally claim to have more positive relationships with neighbours. But, language mastery does not solve all problems that migrants face establishing relationships with members of the host community. Other factors that affect whether or not migrants express positive belonging and community acceptance is the presence or absence of strong social network ties that are more common for people in Şanlıurfa mentioned earlier or people having a high level of education, travel experience and financial capital. Having an

[64] See for example, this European Commission Conference Report, *Understanding and Tackling the Migration Challenge: The Role of Research*, which recommends focusing on host communities and migrant communities together to address integration challenges. Available here: https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/other_pubs/migration_conference_report_2016.pdf

adaptable and outgoing personality is also useful. For example, a middle-aged man in Istanbul described his integration experience very positively:

> I don't have any problems with integrating. I am ready to integrate in any society; I am very fast in integrating. On the contrary, when I first arrived here, I went, I started to ask on my own where is this or where is someone who could speak English, we went and I got to know someone called Shannon, she works in an Australian organization here in Capa, Small projects. And I worked there for 4 months for free, as a volunteer, and I taught painting for children. Just to get to know people and I came to see, because I didn't want to just stay at school with the Syrians, I wanted to know. And I started to meet many Turks who speak English, and we started to meet. And, I was for a year and a half a member of a French group. I played with them. There are Turks and French, but every two or three months there is a concert at the French school called Saint Pulcherie between Cihangir and Taksim. Stuff like that. And my English language has always helped me. Until today I have a friend I got to know when I first came to Istanbul. He is Spanish. He even helped me a lot (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_14).

This young man seems to clearly possess a high volume of social and cultural capital, which in turn eased his adjustment to Istanbul and introduction to people from many ethnic and national backgrounds. He is not the norm among migrants in Turkey or in our research sample.

## Gender and Social Belonging

Women are particularly affected by these social tensions or at least are more likely to express it, indicating an important gender dimension to social belonging. They were often moved to tears by their difficulty during our interviews. As I have written in a Respond blog post (Rottmann 2019c), women feel the rejection of hospitality particularly strongly, because they are seen as responsible for cultivating neighbourly relations in both Syria and Turkey (Salamandra 2004; White 2004). As one young woman explained, “Nobody visits me, and when I try to invite them, they don’t accept, but the owner of the house is a good one. But the neighbours are not that much friendly; when I say hello to them (salam alaikum), they don’t answer…. Sometimes I invite them over, but they say ‘we are not free’... They find excuses, so I don’t repeat my invitations” (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_1).

On the one hand, since they spend less time in public than men and often do not work, women are more isolated from the local community. On the other hand, women may be targeted publicly for their different style of dress from Turks meaning that Syrian women face an added struggle to fit into Turkish society. One strategy that we came across often is to blend in as Turkish by changing one’s style of dress or head covering. One woman explained, “A lot of things changed. Clothing is different from how it is Syria. I have to dress like Turkish people in order for them to not recognise me as a Syrian and treat me badly (as less than them). However, they recognise us even though we dress differently. But, we will change more in order not to make them know us” (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_2).

While most interviewees claim to want to change their style of dress of their own volition in order to “fit in,” one woman claimed she was told to change the style of head scarf by her employer:

> When I applied at the beginning, she didn't have a problem with the *hijab* because the majority who came [clients] were Arab. We agreed on a salary and everything. Of course I'm like that, I won't change. She told me after we agreed, to just – wear the *hijab*, in a different way; try to put it that way, to make a ring, that surrounds the neck here (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_8).

Overall, many women claim to feel unwelcomed, which affected some to the point where they had to change their appearance.

While links with the host community are strained, most rely heavily on close bonds with the Syrian community – which nevertheless have sometimes changed after migration. Most migrants speak positively about neighbourly relations with Syrians before the war and about their relationships with other Syrians in Turkey. For example, one woman described relations in Syria before the war as, "So good, couldn't be better! We were meeting a lot. I miss those days. I hope to go back" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_5).

On the other hand, there are also complaints about broken ties in the Syrian community, possibly attributable to migration stresses. One man said,

> [Relations between Syrians] changed a lot. Most of the relationships here in Turkey are for need (business, or transactional). It is rare that you would find someone who is a friend—not supporting you because of his needs but as a friend. It became rare, from all directions, a very small percentage that you would make a friend (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_19).

Migrants can also feel uncomfortable around Syrians because of their different political affiliations and not being sure if someone is an informant who can report about what they say to Syrian government officials.

In sum, despite cultural similarities that are felt with Turks, a feeling of national belonging is cut off for most migrants because they lack equal legal status as citizens, and this is one reason that they wish to receive citizenship. Second, a feeling of social, community-based belonging is also not possible for most. Although many Turks treat Syrians well, tensions have risen starkly as Syrians have stayed in the country longer than initially expected by either group, meaning that many migrants have experienced racism and discrimination. Difficulties establishing neighbourly ties are particularly strongly felt by women who carry heavy community expectations of cultivating and strengthening social networks and who are readily seen as "other" due to their appearance. Finally, relations within the Syrian community are generally a positive aspect of community life, providing comfort amidst rejection in the larger society. Yet, there are some cases of exploitative within-in groups relations that have not been fully evoked here.

The next section explores gender dynamics in detail, highlighting that integration needs to be considered as a process which affects people differently depending on their social location, and especially their gender.

## 8.4 Gender: Migrant Men and Women in Society

Gender is an organizing principle of social life, intersecting with social structures of family, community and workplace and affecting social status and inequality. This report has dealt with gender at several points, but in this section, gender roles and family dynamics are examined in more depth. There is a vast literature on gender and migration that is impossible to fully summarize here (see Freedman 2016; Freedman et al. 2017, Lutz 2010, Yeoh and Ramdas 2014 for overviews). In brief, it can be said that cultural meanings of family and gender roles migrate with individuals, but also change depending on the host country context. Some studies show that women's position improves as they gain access to resources (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999; Kibria 1993), while others rather stress that immigration compounds inequality in households and the labor market (Parreñas 2001).

Around half of Syrian migrants in Turkey are women. Our findings show both an improvement in women's position in families and vis a vis husbands, but also variable negative developments, including increased stress for women and men and rising domestic violence, depending on individual circumstances. While taking a close look at women's experiences, it is vitally important to examine men's experiences as well, since this impacts not only themselves, but also their wives and children. Women and men can in turn be subsumed into families, which need attention in their own right as the smallest social units of societies where

people interact and raise the next generation. The following sections explore changing positions for men and women in families and communities, gender role changes and anxieties and pressures.

Research in other contexts suggests that the migration situation--isolation from kin ties and dual earning of husband and wife—can positively impact women's autonomy and add balance to gender relations in marriages, creating more companionate marriages (Rottmann 2019a), and this may be the case for some Syrians. Some Syrian women describe increased freedom and an ability to assert their wishes for the first time in their families since migrating. For instance, one woman explained,

> Now in Syria, the woman was very discriminated against, compared to now. Now you can see the role of women became profoundly influential. In Syria the woman didn't have an opinion, nor were they able to make decisions. Now, even in my family, my mum and dad for example, when we were in Syria, my dad wasn't very attentive to my mum's opinion, for example, in critical matters of our lives. For example, even in Damascus, we had two homes. We would move from one to the other sometimes. My dad wouldn't ask for our opinion, he wouldn't ask for my mum's opinion or our opinion, whether it is suitable for us or not, it would happen either way. But now in Turkey, my dad wouldn't be able to take such a decision by himself, he wouldn't. For example, if he wants to go and live in another home, or if he wants to do a certain job, he wouldn't do it without asking for everyone's opinion. He would especially ask for my mum's opinion. Her opinion became very important, you know. Now that's on my family's level, for other families, most of the cases the first and foremost decisions are made by the woman, not the man, not anymore because men have been disgraced [انتشرشح] [to be exposed and humiliated publicly] [Laughs] (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

It is not clear from the answer given why power dynamics have changed or why men are perceived as disgraced. This would be fascinating to follow-up with further research. One reason could be that migration-related poverty reduces men's status, in their own and family member's eyes, leading to more democratic decision-making in some families. It could be that men do not feel empowered to make decisions unilaterality in a foreign environment.

One key reason for changing roles is women entering the labor market due to necessity in Turkey (though the numbers are relatively small). One woman explained, "I work here to support my husband in this store. I do not get money from my husband. If we were in Aleppo, I would not be working. We were not in need in Syria. I do not have to work, but here it is different. The salary of husbands here is not adequate to cover expenses of a family unlike Syria" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_3). As this interlocuter states, women did not need to work outside the home in Syria due to economic conditions. Turkey is more expensive for most migrants than Syria, leading many women to try to find jobs. An NGO worker described women's entry into the labor market in Turkey as a revolution. He related,

> Everything changed, we were thinking that we were making a revolution against the regime, but we discovered that we did a revolution on ourselves. Because, all of our customs and traditions have changed, everything we've lived in Damascus and Syria, we came here and everything changed, or wherever you go it has changed. Now, where I used to work last…We used to help Syrian women to be able to work. And, most of the cases that we've seen at the center, knowing that we had at the center something like 60 women, many cases were of the wife responsible for the home burdens, that she's the one financially responsible for the household, as her husband would've been martyred, or dead or too old and unable to work. Or, for example, he's capable and able, but cannot find work. So, the wife is the one who started to work and raise the children. Our role in this organization was to afford job opportunities for

> women. At the same time, we'd help them in childcare, because of course if she's working and raising children, it would be too difficult. So we'd help them with childcare.... (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

Working leads to a re-organization of gender roles in the family and can also generate new ideas about male-female interaction broadly. One woman explained that workplaces are a source of gender "mixing." When asked to explain more, she related,

> We used to have a family, a conservative society, that women are alone and men alone, but recently it became that a job is important…so it wasn't a problem, that you're my colleague and you're mine at work, it was ok. We didn't have openness that we would sit and talk and go out to drink a cup of coffee. Now, here, I noticed that this is normal, there isn't any ulterior motives behind it. If we went you and I [male interviewer] to drink a cup of coffee in a work context, there, no we didn't have such a thing, because it was too, we were still conservative. And, there was more suppression. Gossip [rumours] and what not was an important factor. But here, no…. Here, I can go out and go whenever I like. My role became equal to his role. It's normal. We're one, both of us. There's no difference between us. I came to the house before him, or he came before me. There's no problem in that (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_8).

Women generally feel more freedom to move about in the public sphere in Turkey than in Syria. For some women, their sense of emancipation is due to the fact that they are not accompanied by male relatives in Turkey for whatever reason. For example, when asked "What has changed in your life (positively and/or negatively) after starting a life here?" one woman in Izmir responded, **"**I feel more independent as my husband is not here. I am freely able to go out. In Syria, for 3 years, I did not see the street. I did not go out at all" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_11). Some migrants credit observations of Turkish society for leading to more freedom for women in the public sphere. One woman related,

> Now in Syria, we had a bit more strictness…. For example, a woman wouldn't stay with a strange man. A woman wouldn't be able to go out on her own to the street. Her husband has to be with her. A woman is only specified to the home and that's it. Here, no that's it, like they say [cheering tone] it's a bit more freedom. We go out on our own or go inside normally. Nobody says anything. It was a bit stricter in Syria from this perspective the entrance and exit, or maybe it used to be fear a bit (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_7).

Another woman explained her different status via explicit reference to Turkish gender norms of equality. "Turkey supported women's lives, since Turks developed a scientific way of raising children to be helpful for the society. They raised their kids such that there are no differences between men and women and raised them on equality" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_3). While many observers would surely take issue with these characterizations of Turkish society as gender equal, it is notable that some Syrian women perceive it that way or at least as significantly improved from Syria where they felt that their public roles were more limited.

## Families Under Pressure

The changes in gender roles, as described above, are mostly perceived favourably, but some women felt burdened by their new roles and the accompanying double-shift they take on as childcare worker and house cleaner by night and wage earner by day. One woman shared her feelings of stress with us: "To be honest, there are many problems that happen because of work, and stress. [My husband is] working outside, and I'm working at home, so that we would

just be able to afford the home and the kid's living needs. Yes, there's a lot of stress, trouble [hardship]. It wasn't like that in Syria, our position" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_7).

Some men also push back against norm changes, saying that women are losing their propriety or honour by adapting to Turkish norms. For instance, one man explained, "I'm not with the idea of integration. They're Western, and we're Eastern." When asked what he meant by this statement, he responded, "For example women, look at their women here, the way they dress, the way they go out, we don't let our women do that, it's against our customs." The interviewer asked him if his wife works and he replied, "No, my wife doesn't work, that's our customs." (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_5). While we might not want to go along with characterizations of gender in Turkey or Syria as "Western" or "Eastern," it is interesting that this interviewee views it this way.

As in other situations of forced migration and war, numerous studies report that Syrian women in Turkey are subject to intimate partner and domestic violence, forced or child marriage, sexual harassment and rape (cf. AFAD 2014; Center for Transnational Development and Collaboration 2015; Freedman et al. 2017; Herwig 2017; Mazlumder 2014; The Economist 2014; UN Women 2018).[65] The exact rate of occurrence of gender-based violence is notoriously difficult to research due to individuals' unwillingness to report experiences. In Turkey, past and present trauma is compounded by a lack of access to psycho-social services and "the lack and inadequacy of women's shelter services" (UN Women 2018, p. 26). It is important to note that men may also experience violence in workplaces and communities as well as pressures to join militant and other groups.

Violence against women existed in Syria before the war (as it does in every country), but some researchers suggest it may be increasing due to protracted conflict (Cloeters and Osseran 2019, p. 10). One interviewee explained some causes for increased gender violence. Although anecdotal, her thoughts give us some idea of the dynamics:

> There are cases of violence, because after we came out of Syria, the woman started to demand her rights. Many cases of divorce, many [emphasis], you can't imagine how many cases of divorce I've seen, and the cases of [domestic] violence I remember. After we came out of Syria, now the general atmosphere in Syria was conservative, where most of the girls wore the Hijab [head scarf]. So in many cases, I've seen girls after leaving Syria, that they would simply take off their Hijab, and they would speak freely of their opinions. For example, many of my female friends, after they left Syria, not only did they take off their Hijab, they also said that we're simply atheists [laughs]. We… don't believe that there is Allah [God]. And this caused a lot of violence, but eventually, the violence was not this extreme. It was only a reaction, just a reaction. Men no longer have the same role, nor the same dominance, so it might be just a reaction…. All those I know who took off their Hijab or changed their religion, left their beliefs. Their families or husbands no longer have a say in that matter. For example, one who's the sister of my friend in Germany, her husband didn't agree that she'd take off her headscarf, so she took it off then left her husband, then they got back together, because he discovered for himself that it's impossible for him to control her. The best he could do is to accept her. That's it (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_1).

This interviewee begins by mentioning conflict and violence due to changing roles, but ends with a positive story of changing ideas and a happy ending showing that outcomes between couples are not pre-determined. Both trends are possible.

Yet, increased pressure on families certainly makes negative outcomes (violence) more likely, and this issue was often mentioned during our meso-level interviews. A representative of an association affiliated with an Istanbul Municipality, explained, "Harassment, rape is a huge problem. When there is rape, they do not want us to start legal proceedings. We have worked a lot on this. There are many women who are beaten by their husbands. We follow these

[65] Polygamous marriage has also been reported among the Syrian community in Turkey (Markovsky 2019: 37; ICG 2019)

cases with a women's organization. Separate programmes are needed for women" (Interview, Istanbul, BilgiMeso_3).

We confronted many individuals in difficult situations during our research. For instance, one woman we interviewed had married at a very early age, divorced 8 years later and married again to a physically abusive man. They lived together in an abandoned garden, and she gave birth to her second child in that garden. When some workers noticed that the family was living in these conditions, they gathered funds and found them a rented apartment and basic furniture. Eventually, she decided to separate from her husband after her second child was beaten by him. She began living on the street until taken in by an NGO active in Izmir (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_10). This story demonstrates the precarious situation, which many women face, as poverty and gender violence sometimes co-occur.

In meso-level interviews with IO and I/NGO workers, it was also explained to us that child marriage was on the rise and resulted from fears in the new society and economic deprivation. A representative of an international organization in Şanlıurfa related,

> I worked with young girls. When we asked them about early marriages, they explained it with two reasons. The first reason is for protection. As they started to live in a new society, they want to avoid honour related rumors. The second reason is economy related. They expect that if a girl gets married to a Turkish citizen or someone with more income, he can take care of the family as well (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_7).

Often, the practice of early marriage or polygamy are attributed to cultural beliefs. Yet, while some cultures may sanction certain practices that others do not, it is also important to look beyond culture to other causes of social practices. "More than cultural factors, economic factors are important in decisions for early marriages. If they see it as an economic opportunity, they marry even in early age" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_7). Thus, policies addressing labor market integration and direct financial support may be as effective as other measures for preventing early marriage.

Exact figures are unavailable, but divorce is often said to be on the rise among Turkey's Syrians. One woman described in detail the events leading to her divorce in Turkey, involving domestic violence and conflict over finances: "Actually there were a lot of problems. He hit me. This is the reason: when I came here, to Turkey, he asked me to work. I said "no I don't want to work, I worked a lot in Syria…" They argued about money and about her asking for money from their sons in Germany. Then she explained,

> Our voices became louder, then he hit me many times. I started shouting. The neighbours heard our voices. The police came. He [my husband] started crying and saying to me, 'Please don't tell them that I hit you. Please tell them that I am your brother, not your husband.' I told them that 'There is nothing wrong, everything is fine with me. He didn't hit me.' After the police left, I kept away from him (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_8).

When asked how migrating to Turkey might have affected her decision to get divorced, she related that migration created stresses that prompted their divorce, which might not have happened in Syria. But, on the other hand, she also felt more free in Turkey to take the step of getting divorced.

In a meso-level interview with a representative of a national NGO who works on psychosocial health, we were told that gender role changes (women working) and war trauma are big factors affecting the divorce rate for Syrians.

> Syrian women did not use to work outside of home. When they migrated here, their culture changed. It is a pschologically difficult process. For women, sometimes finding a job is easier than it is for men. Qualified men are not able to find jobs because their

> educational qualifications are not recognized in Turkey. This causes problems in the family in terms of gender relations…. When women and children are working, the wives do not think that they need their husbands anymore. Women get their economic freedom in some sense, and do not want to be burdened by husbands. This is often a reason for getting divorced. Also, the root cause of depression and changes in gender relations is the war itself, the trauma of war… Because the family also has a lot of expectations from men, these all make the husbands depressed (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_19).

Furthermore, prostitution is also a growing issue. One man complained about increasing prostitution among Syrians in Turkey in an interview in Istanbul. "I have seen the worst Syrians," he said.

> Some of them are hiring women for bad things. Let the stories stay hidden. That is why I feel ashamed to be Syrian. I saw a shop specialising in clothes for 'night women', and most of the customers are Syrian girls. Also, imagine that men are coming to buy these clothes for them, and sometimes it is their husbands! They buy for them and send them to work. Unfortunately! (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, OzU_17).

He appeared very sad and ashamed. Of course it is impossible to know if he was merely observing consensual behaviours or violent exploitation. It is also not possible to know exactly how many women have been subject to sex trafficking, but we can safely assume that this is a growing problem. In a meso level interview, we were told that prostitution involving children is also on the rise. A representative of a national NGO based in Izmir explained, "Many children are victims. When Syrians first came, it was not like this. We saw a big increase in these practices" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRIIMeso_4). Presumably, increasing financial precarity plays a major role in increases.

Scholars have strongly criticized the portrayal of Syrian women as "vulnerable," since this obscures their independence, strategizing and the broader structures of violence stemming from capitalism and colonialism that they face. Further, it reinforces "the Orientalist portrayals of Middle Eastern women as sexually and religiously oppressed by patriarchal, homophobic, and violent—if not terrorist—Muslim men" (Dagtas 2018: 51). Ultimately, the deployment of vulnerability in humanitarian discourse denies the human empathy owed to all forced migrants in favour of the special status granted to particular vulnerable migrants (Sozer 2019). Nevertheless, from both an academic and a policy perspective, it is necessary to take gender into account as an effect on experience and to recognize that women are more often the victims of violence because of their position in patriarchies. We must understand women's needs as both similar to and unique from men's needs and also intersecting with class and ethnicity. As I have argued before (Rottmann 2019a), migration can have diverse effects, opening up and foreclosing opportunities and ideas as people struggle through diverse situations.

One of the most important observed gender dynamics in our research is Syrian men's loss of status. Men face many psychological burdens, including a feeling of loss of control over their wives and children, and stark pressure to work and provide for their families in difficult conditions. As noted above, men, especially middle aged men, face many employment challenges and barriers. We confronted several cases where sons were supporting their parents and siblings through manual labor. One father related, "My children never worked in Syria. Now they are all working. The situation is hard. Even when I go into town and spend 1TL for water, I think, 'my daughter has earned this money.' I cannot drink that water. Working is my responsibility, not my daughter's" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_16).

Other studies have shown that labor market pressure on men can contribute to domestic violence (Erez et al. 2009). Unfortunately, men are also least like to receive mental health treatment. A representative of an international organization in Istanbul told us,

> In 2012, we issued a booklet on psychosocial support to men affected by the crisis, because we found that men are not enough targeted, and they are not participating in the activities. So, we issued a small booklet to help them in terms of psychosocial support, and we tried to run some of the sessions dedicated to men (Interview, Istanbul, OzUMeso_5).

Another representative of an international organization in Şanlıurfa also explained how difficult it can be to reach men.

> Many organizations have difficulty accessing men, because they say they do not need anything. Their only complaint is that their employer does not pay their salary, but they do not mention their personal-familial problems…Men do not share private situations within a group. They share only after all the others have left. They do not talk about their problems in their communities either. This is related to their cultural codes. They are suspicious about each other. They do not want to reveal their weaknesses within their group. This is more common among men than women (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_7).

In sum, it is important to focus on men and women as gendered to understand how forces affecting each impact them individually and in relation to one another. It is also important to look at family dynamics, age, life stage and gender as effects on integration, as I do in the next section.

## Changing Roles: Age-, Life Stage- and Gender-based Integration

It is essential to disaggregate when considering integration dynamics in families. Adjustment to the new society may be relatively quick for youth, but difficult for older men and women. As men and women's roles change, children may need to take on roles that are not customary, for example as providers or translators. Parents may feel out of control. For example, one father related that he felt that he could no longer monitor his children,

> In Syria, umm... We had constant surveillance on our kids. We knew who they befriended, where they're going and where they're coming from and so on. Now, because of the weakness of our language for example... The children's language became good, even if we want to go to the school, to see and monitor the situation, or see how our son is fairing, we don't have a good enough of a language in order to understand. The translator between us and the teacher, is the child himself. And the child, if there's anything about him, he will not... speak. So… it affected [us] a lot (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_13).

Migration and generational changes are observed in most migration contexts and are not unusual (Portes and Ruben 2001). But, this doesn't mean we should not consider implications and possible policy measures, such as providing more access to translators in schools so that parents feel better able to monitor their children's situation.

Young and middle-aged women are very concerned about continuing or completing their studies, learning Turkish and securing their families a place in the middle class. One woman in Izmir related, "I hate that I was not able to continue my education" (Interview, Izmir, 2018, SRII_10). Middle-aged women complain about having lost status. For example, one woman began crying during the interview when saying that she and her husband started to have lots of needs, which caused them to feel depressed. She said "nobody believes" that they used to be well-off and well-educated (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_3).

We found that men in their 20s-30s were generally more able to seize the opportunities of Istanbul for entrepreneurship and social adjustment. For example, one 24-year old man related, "It wasn't so hard to find a house, even though Turks don't give apartments to Syrians

easily, because people know that I am working and have a shop. They accepted me" (Interview, Istanbul, OzU_17). Meanwhile, men in their 50s-60s can be divided into entrepreneurs or the many who cannot find jobs, which reduces their status significantly. As one sad father related, "I feel like I am a burden. I feel that I am a burden on my kids, on their future, their comfort and everything. I used to provide everything, now I am living on their shoulders. My wife and I…" (Interview, Istanbul, 2018, Bilgi_10). Supporting this point, a representative of an international organization in Şanlıurfa related, "There are problems for the elderly. While they were heads or leaders of their families in Syria, right now they became a burden on their families, because the younger family members are dealing with the survival of the family. Also, families are fragmented, making the elderly feel that they are a burden" (Interview, Şanlıurfa, 2018, SRIIMeso_7).

In sum, women face more pressure than men to manage appearances to fit in socially, but both genders, men and women, are under pressure in Turkey. Women may take on new roles in their families and in the public sphere leading to a positive feeling of emancipation or sometimes stress. Some men are not happy about women's changing roles, and they are dealing with their own difficulties maintaining a positive sense of themselves as productive and as good providers of their families. In some cases, the pressure of migration is leading to violence and divorce. In other cases, making a family in Turkey leads to increased closeness among married partners. More broad-based long-term research could determine which trends are most prominent, but based on this research, we can say that both are present depending on the individual couple and their context. Also, the research clearly shows that we need to study integration in a disaggregated manner, attending to gender, age, personal experiences, social locations and other variable factors.

# 9. Conclusions & Recommendations

## 9.1 Making Sense of Integration in Turkey

Today's Turkey is a country through which hundreds of thousands of people circulate as domestic labourers, tourists and business people. Turkey is not simply a "sending" or "receiving" state, but rather a hub of movements, and if further proof is needed of this fact, one needs only to explore its cultural and social richness. Thus, today's Syrian migrants, though representing a large group, are not an anomaly for Turkey, nor are they arriving to a homogenous and untouched or even unfamiliar country. As Franck Duvell (2016) writes,

> Turkey has a long history of immigration, has always been integrated and indeed been the main gravity centre of the regional migration system. Migration is thus nothing new or exceptional. Further to this, large-scale migration as well as the sudden influx of migrants or refugees is not actually exceptional to Turkey, but has been experienced by many other countries before. Turkey is rather becoming a normal affluent, stable and thus attractive industrial country integrated with the rest of the world.

And yet, this report shows that Turkey is facing challenges in the area of integration. One of the most urgent challenges stems from the lack of a coherent, clear integration policy on the national level, which in turn contributes to rising social tensions on local levels. Lack of coordination among municipalities and within the IO and I/NGO sector further adds to confusion about what is being done or lacking, working well or failing. While there are many actors at all levels working on integration, there is a lack of communication and a lack of consensus about best practices. Within each integration area identified by the EU and scholars (labor market, education, housing and space, health and citizenship) there are issues to address. Access is key in each of the areas. Despite legal rights to work, education and healthcare, access is blocked due to lack of enforcement of policies, language barriers and sometimes lack of clear guidelines. Additional resources are urgently needed, including direct financial assistance to municipalities and more classrooms, hospital rooms and medical equipment. More training of Turkish and Syrian teachers and medical professionals is needed. Clear procedures for accessing citizenship and long-term residence should be developed and publicized. Although the global pandemic, COVID-19, emerged after the research for this report was completed, it is very clear that the virus will have severe negative impacts on migrants' economic situations, their health statuses and possibly even their societal acceptance.

This report has reviewed the narratives that are prominent for characterizing migrant inclusion in Turkey in official discourses, including "guest," "charity," "hospitality" and "social harmony." Each of these terms has its own advantages and disadvantages in terms of fostering societal acceptance in local communities, but none has fully been able to promote meaningful inclusion. We should keep in mind that these are not the only available terms. More research is needed to find other cultural scripts of integration that are working on local levels in Turkey and elsewhere, such as neighbourliness or friendship. This includes research among Syrians and Turks about what they are giving and receiving within their communities, and feeling and thinking about the future. Culture is multifaceted and complex, and there are many different repertoires that we can draw from to think about any topic. We should seek to go beyond official narratives and well-worn scholarly ideas. We need concepts that work on multiple levels, universal, centralized and local and diffuse.

We also need to address integration as something differentiated and dynamic. Migrants within different regions of Turkey studied by RESPOND (Istanbul, Şanlıurfa and Izmir) experience different social milieus that affect local inclusion. Further, social class, education, gender and age are highly relevant factors meaning that some are experiencing a much smoother integration than others.

Finally, integration does not only have to do with mechanical measures (i.e. employment, education, housing and healthcare) although these are also important. Integration has to do with how we live together. Thus, if we really want to understand migrant lives, it is essential to look at religiosity, community relations and family dynamics as this report has done. Policies are certainly needed to address such important institutions as schools and hospitals and to ensure employment. But, it is also essential to address policies to the many other important parts of people's lives: to their beliefs about the world and their most central relationships. We need more in-depth, longitudinal studies examining community interaction in specific terms. More research is needed on how Syrian and Turkish people enact and perceive integration and the broader web of social, gender and labor relations in which integration is embedded.

## 9.2 Policy Recommendations

This section offers policy recommendations for each of the areas that have been covered by the report, based on RESPOND's interview findings and organized topically.

**General Recommendations**

- The state should develop a comprehensive national integration plan that is also open for local, public debate so that host communities can grow to accept and appreciate the indefinite presence of Syrians.
- Measures to increase coordination and communication between IO and I/NGOs, public officials and government actors should be developed.
- Best practices and successful social cohesion programmes in municipalities and elsewhere should be identified, publicized and implemented across the country.

**Labor Market**

- The state should adopt strategies to enhance migrants' participation in the formal labor market, such as assisting with job searches, making procedures for obtaining work permits easier and providing other incentives to businesses that hire migrants formally.
- The state should simplify and standardize the process of ensuring recognition of qualifications and university degrees earned in Syria.
- Links between vocational and other educational training and job market integration should be strengthened.

**Education**

- The state should ensure that every migrant child is enrolled in Turkish schools (and stays enrolled), including combatting child labor by ensuring parental employment.
- Teacher training opportunities should be increased and teaching of heritage languages in schools should be encouraged.
- The state should increase childcare access and language course opportunities and incentives so that adults are better able to attend language courses.
- The state, IOs and I/NGOs should create more opportunities for migrants to obtain higher education training.

**Housing and Space**

- The state should develop programmes of quality control to ensure that all refugee housing meets minimum quality and safety standards.
- The government of Turkey should allow migrants to move freely between Turkish cities without the need for travel permission.

**Psychosocial Health**

- Arabic translators should be available at all state hospitals and government offices, and hospital staff should be trained regarding refugee needs.
- The state, IOs and I/NGOs should increase awareness about psychosocial health services among refugees, and provide greater access to services.
- Gender should be taken into account when designing all psychosocial health programmes.

**Citizenship, Belonging and Gender**

- The state should ensure a clear path to long-term residence and citizenship, with openly publicized procedures and requirements.
- Organizations should educate migrants and local communities about the rights conferred by TPS and other legal statuses.
- Municipalities should create councils of migrants to advise officials about the needs of forced migrants in Turkey.
- A variety of organizations at meso-levels should create programmes in local communities to improve social cohesion and contribute to the belonging of migrants, including social, informational and educational events, based on solid science about effective practices.
- The state and EU should support families through provision of low-cost childcare, additional financial resources and family counselling.
- Academics should conduct more gender-sensitive research in Turkey to inform policy development.
- The state should increase the number of women's shelters and provide training to police, DGMM and other government staff on the topic of gender-related violence.

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# Appendix: Micro-Level Coding Guidelines for WP5

**INTEGRATION (WP5)**

**Labour market**

- Access to labour market after decision
  - Preparatory measures for labour market inclusion (e.g. Specific language classes, internships etc.)
- Employment (Work of refugees/irregular migrants after decision)
  - Employment experience[66]
  - The way how the job was found
  - Legal status of work and reason
  - Satisfaction of work,
  - Job plans for future
  - Change of employment
- Qualifications
  - Prior experience
  - Qualifications
  - Over-qualifications, over-skills
  - Increase of skills and qualifications
- Facilitators
  - Local (source country) community
  - Special programmes
  - Other people
  - Role of governmental initiatives
  - Role of non-governmental initiatives or programme
- Challenges and barriers
  - Language
  - Culture
  - Exploitation
  - Discrimination
  - Exclusion
  - Gender

**Education**

- Access to education (options and problems in accessing education or during education)
  - For adults
  - For children
- Recognition of educational qualifications
- Attitude toward education
  - Recognition of educational qualifications
  - Willingness to continue education
  - Willingness to register for studies/ a vocational school
  - Willingness to attend vocational courses (also courses of language other than the host country language)
- Host country language learning
  - Host country language knowledge before arriving
  - Host country language knowledge level

[66] This includes all gained experience at work - in source country and destination country

  - Willingness to learn/to continue learning host country language
  - Incentives to learn host country language
  - Funding (funded by the government, funded by NGO, funded by religious institution, own funding)
- Good practices in education
  - In adults' education
  - In children education
- Educational challenges
  - In adults' education
  - In children education

**Place of residence (PoR)**

- Preferences PoR
- Choice PoR
- Dis/advantages PoR

**Housing**

- Living situation (alone, with spouse, family, relatives, friends, strangers …?)
- Housing arrangement (Owner of house/apartment, Public/private land lord)
- Stability of housing situation – (First contract, temporary contract, Shelter/hostel, Black market…?)
- Satisfaction with existing housing
  - Positive remarks
  - Negative remarks
  - In relation to previous housing/facility?
  - Fears
- Problems in housing (too small, too expensive, worn down, short contracts, unsafe …?)
- Feeling at home
  - Bought my own furniture
  - Decorated to remind me of my home in home-country
  - Considered redecorating but lacks fund

**Public psychosocial health[67]**

- Psychosocial health condition
  - Current somatic health (positive/negative)
  - Earlier (retrospectively) somatic health (positive/negative)
  - Current mental health (positive/negative)
  - Earlier (retrospectively) mental health (positive/negative)
- Access to medical health
  - Access to health care
  - Language barriers and ways to overcome it
  - Discrimination in access to health care
  - Good practices in access to health care
- Religious and cultural resources[68]
  - Positive
  - Negative
- Existential system that provides meaning and hope[69]

67 In this theme, we are interested in two separate dimensions: pre-migration, transit, destination; as well as positive/constructive and negative/destructive.

[68] See if religious and cultural resources provided are described as positive or negative. These resources can be prayer, fasting, rituals or other in church/mosque/other religious places.

[69] The existential meaning system can be any important integrated system in life, such as religion, ideology or worldview that gives purpose, goal, motivation, structure to life; e.g. religious faith, political ideology, hope, children. Note: there can be parts of

  - Description of religious or other existential meaning system now (destination country) – constructive/destructive
  - Changes of meaning-system from pre-migration (home country) – constructive/destructive
  - Changes of meaning-system during transit experience – constructive/destructive
- Examples of coping strategies[70]
  - Self – constructive/destructive
  - Spouse/partner – constructive/destructive
  - Children – constructive/destructive
  - Others in neighbourhood – constructive/destructive
  - With Swedish (national context) healthcare situations – constructive/destructive
  - Other national authorities – constructive/destructive
- Experiences of family and significant others in daily living[71]
  - Family/significant other roles in pre-migration
  - Family/significant other roles in transit
  - Family/significant other roles in current situation

**Citizenship**

- Political participation
  - Source country
  - Destination country
- Following the news
  - In host country
  - In home country
- Citizenship
  - Status
  - Knowledge
  - Desire
- Community involvement[72]
- Neighbours
  - Ties[73]
  - Treatment
- Integration understanding[74]
- Visiting the home country
- Return wishes/plans, concerns (micro and meso)

**Gender**

- Opportunities and Access (to services, education, labour market, …, etc.)
- Social Relations
- Social Change
  - Marriage, divorce, early marriage, forced marriage
  - Family duties

the system that are constructive/functioning and other parts destructive/non-functioning: e.g., obsessive rituals, extreme punishing of self, other, children, or absence of a system that formerly gave meaning and hope that can cause apathy or despair/depression.

[70] Coping strategies can be linked to several dimensions, and they can be either constructive (supporting, handling) or destructive (self-destructive behaviours, extreme punishments, flight from reality, apathy, changes in daily routines, hopelessness).

[71] This can be linked to family members or other close and important persons that are a source of strength or a source of confusion/lack of support.

[72] Involvement in local level community gatherings; opportunities to engage with the wider community.

[73] Characterizations of neighbourly relations as close or distant.

[74] Descriptions of migrants' perceptions of integration and the meaning of good integration for them. How do they relate to this? What are the challenges that they see?

  - Children
  - Sexuality
  - Religion
  - Politics
- Pressures, stresses, difficulties[75]
- Empowerment, women-related activities, networking

[75] Information about the major difficulties for women or men.