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Syrian Refugees in Turkey and Integration Problem Ahead

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Abstract

In this study, the Syrian refugees' integration problems are examined, and the main challenges such as learning the tongue, finding jobs, housing, education, and vulnerability to abuse are analyzed. Moreover, some measures for social integration were proposed. Because of the civil war that broke out in Syria in 2011, many Syrians had to leave their homes and find shelter in neighboring countries. Turkey applied an open door policy from the beginning and received an influx of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers. Turkey is now de facto home to over 3.5 million registered Syrians, along with non-registered ones. Refugee influx has initially been regarded as temporary and Syrian refugees are seen as "guests." Especially after the influx in 2014–2015, however, the positive emotions began gradually fading and some started to pronounce refugees as "overstaying guests." Eventually, perspectives have shifted from short-term protection and humanitarian assistance to longer-term social and economic integration of Syrian refugees. Long-term integration and settlement of the refugees necessitate a comprehensive, unified, and rigorous approach. It also requires greater cooperation between policymakers, practitioners, and civil society organizations in different areas such as employment, education, and health. In addition, it calls robust international cooperation and support.

Keywords Syrian refugees · Integration · Turkey

JEL Classification F22 · H53 · J15

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Introduction

Fight for human rights, which began with the Arab Spring, turned into a civil war in Syria in 2011. The conflict that still continues has caused many Syrians to lose their lives and forced others to seek a shelter in nearby countries. Since the international community failed to response this human tragedy swiftly, just a few countries found themselves to cope with a huge number of refugees. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5,628,303 of Syrians have migrated to neighboring countries like Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt as of 24 October 2018.

The vast majority of these refugees preferred migrating Turkey both because it is the closest border country to Syria and applied an open door policy. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, more than three and half million registered Syrian refugees[1] and asylum seekers have been taken refuge. Turkey has provided the needs of these refugees largely alone. Public services such as health and education have been overstretched by the refugee influx, and this negatively affected the quality of life in the country.

Refugee influx has initially been assumed as a temporary phenomenon, and Syrian refugees are seen as "guests" and warmly welcome in Turkey. Especially after the influx in 2014–2015, however, the positive emotions began gradually fading, and some started to pronounce refugees as "overstaying guests." Eventually, it became increasingly clear that Syrian refugees are not going home anytime soon. Hence, perspectives have shifted from short-term protection and humanitarian assistance to longer-term social and economic integration of the refugees. The strain associated with such a massive flight has aggravated socio-economic and political tensions in the country.

There are few studies in the literature related to the integration of Syrian refugees in the neighboring countries. This paper aims to fill this gap. The remainder of the paper examines first the current situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Then, it takes the integration issue and specifies its different dimensions. The following sections examine education, health, employment, and citizenship issues in detail. Next, social integration problems of Syrian refugees are discussed. The final section provides concluding remarks.

Current Situation of Syrian Refugees in Turkey

After Syria slid into chaos by the spiraling conflicts that followed by the Syrian civil war, millions of displaced Syrians found a shelter in Turkey. On 30 March 2012, the Turkish Ministry of Interior issued a directive on the admission and placement of the Syrians, who seek asylum in Turkey. Later, the Temporary Protection Regulation was issued by the Council of Ministers on 13 October 2014. Temporary protection refers to the protection offered to foreigners who were forced to leave their country and arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey on a massive scale to find urgent and temporary protection. The provisional protection regime provides protection and assistance to

[1] In addition to registered Syrians, it is estimated that there have been 300,000–400,000 unregistered Syrians as of December 2017 (ICG 2018a, b: 1).

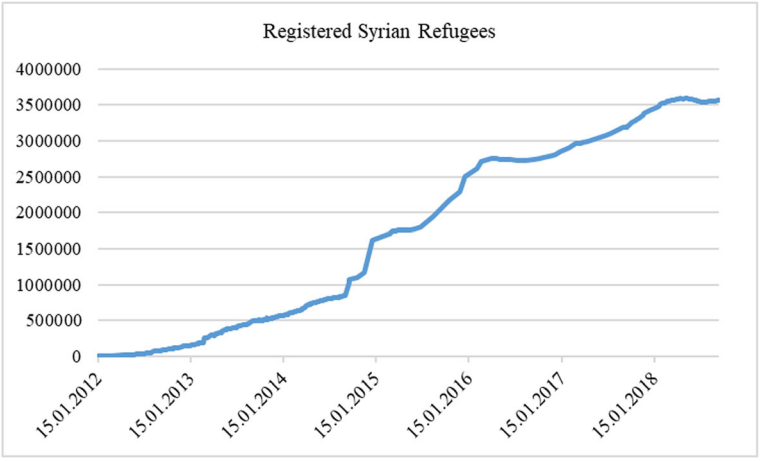

Fig. 1 Registered Syrian refugees in Turkey. Source: UNCHR (2018, October 18)

Syrian refugees for an unlimited stay, protection against forcible return, and access to acceptance arrangements responding to urgent needs (Orhan and Gündoğar 2015: 7). The law provided a comprehensive framework for the prevention and encouragement of all asylum seekers and refugees (UNHCR 2016: 1).

Particularly in the past 2 years, there has been a large influx of Syrians as the Assad regime recaptured parts of northern Syria held by the rebels, drawing more Syrians from the border provinces into western cities in search of employment opportunities (ICG 2018a, February 15). Currently, Turkey has the largest refugee population in the world. The overwhelming majority of the refugees in Turkey are Syrians. As of 24 October 2018, the Syrian refugee population in Turkey reached 3,587,930. This is 63.7% of all the migrating Syrian refugees since the Syrian civil war that started in 2011 (UNHCR 2018 October 24). Figure 1 shows the change of the registered Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Figure 2 shows the number of Syrian refugees in and out of the temporary protection centers in Turkey. There have been currently 19 temporary protection centers that have been founded in ten cities nearby the border.[2] One hundred seventy-one thousand six hundred forty refugees live in those centers. The remainder—about 95% of the refugee population—lives in urban and peri-urban areas with limited access to basic services. According to Sari et al. (2017), almost all the humanitarian needs of Syrian refugees in the temporary protection centers are provided by the Emergency Management Authority of Turkey (AFAD).

Table 1 reflects the UNICEF response to the Syria crisis. In this table, the registered refugees, education, child protection, health, and social policy in host countries are displaced. As seen in the table, the largest education expenditures after Turkey took place in Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, respectively. There is no information available for Egypt in this respect. Interestingly, Jordan and Egypt provided more child protection services than Turkey despite its much larger refugee population. Since healthcare service data is not available for Turkey, Lebanon appears as the largest provider of

[2] They are Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Kilis, Mardin, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye, Adıyaman, Adana, and Malatya.

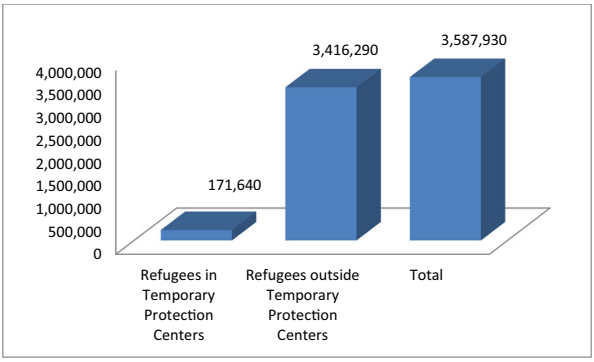

Fig. 2 The number of Syrian refugees in and out of temporary protection centers in Turkey. Source: DGMM (2018, October 5)

healthcare services to the refugees among the five countries, and Egypt follows Lebanon. After Turkey, Lebanon has been the highest provider of technical training for vulnerable youth and unemployed to find jobs. Such an effort was very low in Jordan. For Egypt and Iraq, on the other hand, such data is not available.

Integration and Its Different Dimensions

The prolonged civil war in Syria and the resulting influx of refugees affected Turkey deeply. As İçduygu and Şimşek (2016: 59) highlight, "dealing with refugees in Turkey at present is not a question of halting the influx of refugees and reversing their movement but requires practical measures aimed at providing them with better settlement and integration opportunities." Refugees who have been granted asylum and settled in a third country are likely to face serious problems with local integration. Most refugees are hampered by language skills, cultural shocks, and a low level of education. Moreover, they face various problems when it comes to finding a job and a new home (Wijaya 2016).

Table 1 UNICEF response to the Syrian crisis, 2018

Country	Registered refugees	Education[a]	Child protection[b]	Health[c]	Social policy[d]
Turkey	3,583,434	608,702	25,039	–	56,809
Lebanon	986,942	162,597	8357	13,667	48,224
Jordan	666,113	130,668	52,075	4346	1476
Iraq	250,708	971	5419	3223	–
Egypt	128,956	–	35,963	10,838	–

[a] Children (5 to 17 years old) who are enrolled in an educational institution. [b] Children participating in structured and sustainable child protection or psychosocial support programs. [c] Children under 5 years who are fully covered with routine vaccination. [d] Vulnerable unemployed and youth received technical training to find jobs

Source: UNICEF (2018, May)

Integration is a term that defines the process by which people from different racial or ethnic groups participate in the society. It is a significant and dynamic mechanism that aimed at ensuring the protection of refugee rights within the host country, the assimilation of local cultures, and the creation of a safe environment for refugees (Ceccarelli 2016: 3). According to Kuhlman (1990), "integration carries the connotation that the separate parts while being incorporated into a larger whole, do not there to losing their individuality."

Two parties are involved in the integration processes: immigrants with their characteristics and the host society in dealing with the newcomers and their institutions. The direction and end result of the integration process depend on the interaction between these two parties. However, these two are unequal partners (Pennix 2003). It is crucial that both the immigrants and the host society are committed to pursuing a strong integration policy. Policy formulation largely depends on conditions at all levels, from prefectures to capitals. These two actors of the integration process should be linked by a solid integration policy. Policy formulation depends to a large extent on the conditions at all levels, from the municipalities to the capitals.

Figure 3 shows the refugee integration model of Kuhlman (1990) for developing countries. In the upper part of the model, the independent variables are listed, which are grouped according to the characteristics of the flight before the flight, the flight factors,

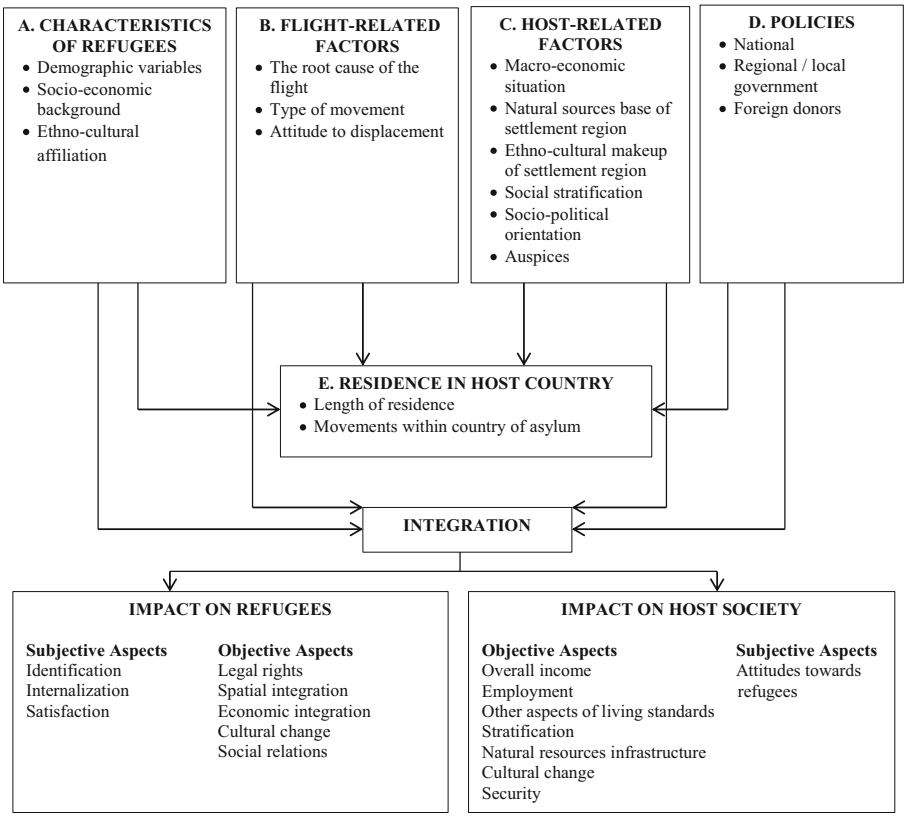

Fig. 3 A comprehensive model of refugee integration. Source: Kuhlman (1990)

the characteristics of the settlement area, and the refugee policy. The lower part shows the dependent variable: integration. First, it is divided into (a) integration, as it affects the refugees themselves and (b) their impact on the host country; in each of these areas, a distinction can be made between objective and subjective dimensions. The dimensions themselves are summarized in these four categories. An intermediate category is E, which summarizes flight events, which are influenced by the same factors that influence integration. In reality, of course, the different dimensions of integration also influence each other. As Bertossi (2011) suggests, "identity, equality, and inclusion are developed by a wide range of social agents in each national context."

There are two general types of institutions that determine integration. The first concerns public institutions of host societies, such as the education system or institutional provisions in the labor market. Laws, regulations, and executive organizations, as well as unwritten rules and practices, are part of these institutions. The second type of institution belongs to certain types of migrant groups, such as religious or cultural institutions. Institutions and organizations together create the structure of opportunities and/or limitations for individuals. Therefore, the functioning of these institutions and organizations is of the utmost importance for successful integration (Pennix 2003).

It is important to promote equal access to integration services for humanitarian migrants across the country (Crawford 2016, 27 May). A key element of integration policy is the transparency of reception of immigrants. Any expectation that immigrants will live on the island over the long term must be accompanied by the effort to give them adequate legal status to function in the society and provide sustainable access to public facilities. Long waiting periods of residence may limit the chances of refugees being able to integrate (Pennix 2003). Therefore, countries should reduce the time needed to review asylum applications and provide early support to asylum seekers who are most likely to be allowed to stay (OECD 2016).

According to Tunç (2015), the universal refugee rights like to be treated in humanitarian standards, be able to travel, and access to health services are provided Syrian refugees in Turkey as a most likely possibility but not as a right. Syrian can travel and reside within the country without any limitation. In addition, temporary protection status provides protection against forcible return. Although education is limited to camps, works are being carried out to improve opportunities. A partial regulation on work permit from other important refugee rights has been introduced. Social security and citizenship are not available. Each of these areas requires long-term solutions. Now, let us look at the integration policies implemented by the Turkish government for the Syrian refugees.

Housing and Health Problems of Syrian Refugees

With regard to the refugees in the camps, both housing and health services are largely provided. The situation outside camps, on the other hand, is quite different. Those refugees have great difficulty in meeting their health and housing needs. Most Syrian refugees live outside camps to preserve their freedom. Currently, there are no public housing options outside the refugee camps. The increasing demand for rental housing has led to a rise in rents in cities and settlements of refugees (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016:

60). In addition, many refugees who do not have adequate resources must find shelter in abandoned buildings or worse, in make-shift shelters (Kirişçi 2014: 28).

The need to tackle refugee housing issues is grave given the current lack of public policies focused on settling refugees in urban areas. Local governments and some NGOs have attempted to meet these needs, but demand exceeds available resources. This problem is aggravated by the fact that not all urban refugees have been registered, and information about their needs has not been systematically collected. Given the lack of public policies focused on housing refugees in urban areas, there is an urgent need to address housing issues. The poor living conditions are paving the way for new diseases to emergency and have a negative impact on the healing process of existing diseases.

The Temporary Protection Regulation of 2014 ensures that Syrians who are temporarily protected are entitled to healthcare. Health services are provided by the Ministry of Health in coordination with the Turkish Presidency of Disaster and Crisis Management (AFAD). Refugees who live in the protection centers are provided accommodation and basic nutrition, and they can access to medical remedies free of charge. In 2013, the refugees who are living outside the centers were offered the opportunity to use the health centers free of charge. In the event that refugees who are living outside the centers apply health institutions, the costs of preventive and curative health services are covered by AFAD all over Turkey (Yavuz 2015: 268).

Malnutrition, language problems, low education attainment, economic insecurity, and lack of social security have a negative impact on health in areas where refugees or asylum seekers are concentrated. Poor health negatively affects migrants' ability to find a job, learn the local language, interact with public institutions, and perform well in school. All this is essential for successful integration (Crawford 2016, May 27).

The language barrier among health professionals is a big problem for refugees. However, from the beginning of 2016, Syrian medical staff was granted the Ministry of Health's permission to serve Syrian refugees, mainly in health centers (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016: 67–68). Syrian refugees living in local communities are vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases. Also, the care and monitoring of pregnancy, postnatal and neonatal care, screening for illnesses, family planning, care for babies, and children services are problematic in the camps. Outside the camps, these services are largely paralyzed (Dedeoğlu 2016, 11). Therefore, the provision of primary and chronic health services is particularly important.

Refugees have very different diseases of their own like Leishmania and there is not much knowledge about these diseases (Aygün et al. 2016: 7). Communicable diseases are cause for concern. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), polio cases have been recorded among the Syrian refugee children. In February 2017, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in conducting a nationwide vaccination campaign for the refugee children under 5 years old (UNICEF 2017, February 28).

Another important health issue for refugees is mental health problems. Syrian refugees may have been exposed to a number of wartime stressors. Not only are Syrian refugees experiencing large losses and traumatic experiences in their country of origin but they also suffer from distress in host countries such as mistrust (Sijbrandic et al. 2017). The risk of psychological problems is high for refugees. According to Acartürk et al. (2015), the most common mental health problems of refugees are depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Most refugees have no access to mental health services to solve these problems due to numerous obstacles. Lack of enough mental health

professionals is the main problem. There is a need for a higher number of psychologists and child and adolescent psychiatrists as well as social workers and counselors.

In addition to the refugees, the Turkish health workers also face various problems. These include long-term and very intensive services, problems with language, and disagreement with patients due to cultural differences and violence. It is not clear how long the staff will be staying on temporary duty. Furthermore, none of them is trained to serve on these conditions (Turkish Medical Association 2016: 14).

Education Problems of Syrian Refugees

One of the main factors of integration is the provision of education services to the refugees. Local language, local history, and the fundamental knowledge of the host country culture are very important for integration. Policies and reforms that enable education to be conducted at various levels prepare refugees to play a more active role in the host country society (Ceccarelli, 2016: 9).

Education is an investment with high dividends for both refugees and the host country. The benefits of education are immense and far-reaching. It provides refugees with an intellectual tool and great potential to not only shape their future but also to make a significant contribution to the host community. There is strong evidence that education improves employment prospects, self-esteem, and self-confidence. It empowers people with self-reliance, critical thinking, and teamwork. The education of children reduces child marriage, child labor, exploitative and dangerous work, and pregnancy of adolescents. The lack of education for school-age refugees would mean missed opportunities for peaceful and fruitful integration (Erdoğdu and Akar 2018: 33).

Education is available to all as a right in Turkey, including foreigners. However, there are several obstacles for Syrian refugees who include their children in the public school system. This is mainly due to unclear regulation. There are also some practical limitations such as language barriers and lack of space in the classrooms (İçduygu and Şimşek 2016: 66). While some refugees have difficulty accessing education, others do not consider it necessary (Yavuz and Mızrak 2016: 180). Other issues that prevent Syrian children from leaving school are the lack of appropriate documents, high education costs, school distance, safety issues, or language barriers (Berti 2015: 45–46).

Another option for the Syrian children is to enroll in Temporary Education Centers (TEC). In addition to some refugee camps, TECs are also available in urban areas. The main drawback is that some TECs are not approved by the Turkish government because of the poor quality of education. Traveling to these centers seems to be another problem for urban refugees. The end result is that many refugee children do not go to school. Instead, they work in the informal sector or beg on the streets to support their families (Kaya and Kıraç 2016: 27).

Moreover, there is a displacement trauma for these children, as they generally have not been to school for more than 2 years. To solve these problems would require considerable resources, which would put significant pressure on the budget of the Turkish government (Kirişçi 2014: 26). Additionally, there is the problem of educational infrastructure. Enlarging classrooms to accommodate Syrian refugee children would likely to aggravate existing performance problems of the Turkish education system.

Turkey has enacted a number of laws for Syrian refugees to receive both vocational and basic education. Syrian students are also admitted to universities with a special student status. Those who have a document are allowed to be transferred as undergraduate student status. In 2012, the MoNE accepted to apply Arabic curriculum for the education of Syrian refugees. The aim is that the Syrians will live without any problems when they return. The curriculum which is applied in temporary protection centers is the Syrian curriculum. However, these centers were opened only in the areas where the Syrian population was intense (Emin 2016: 21).

The school enrollment rate of Syrian children has increased significantly from 30% (2017/16) to 62% (2017/16) (ICG 2018b: 18). The remaining 38% does not go to school and should serve as a wake-up call for lost generations and delinquency. This situation is likely to lead adverse outcomes in the long term.

Employment Problems of Syrian Refugees

If they are well educated in their home country, refugees increase the number of talents in the host economy. The skills and capabilities that refugees bring with them can be excellent resources for labor markets (Shah 2008, May 26). Assisting refugees to associate in the labor market and use their ability and capacities is a difficult mission, but a faster integration process of the labor market in the host country would significantly benefit both the refugees and the host country. The delay in the integration of refugees into the labor market may cause host countries to miss the potential economic benefits offered by the refugees. This may blow poverty and separation among refugees and raise societal costs (Ott 2013, November; Bevelander 2016: 8).

De Vroome and van Tubergen (2010) find that specific training of the host country, work experience, language skills, and contacts with the local population are positively linked to job opportunities and job opportunities. The integration of Syrians into the formal labor market is undoubtedly the biggest challenge. As ORSAM (2016: 7) highlights, since it was not legal for refugees to work until today, the only alternative for them was to work illegally at low wages and without any social benefits or rights. In addition to being a problem in itself, the increase in the illegal workforce can also cause disputes between the two communities.

Those who stay in Turkey instead of moving to Europe are generally uneducated and poorly qualified. Most cannot speak Turkish. An estimated 750,000 to 950,000 Syrians are currently working in the informal sector. Also, a third of the Turkish workforce is employed in this sector. So far, only about 15,000 Syrians have received the necessary formal employment permits. Syrian refugees will need language courses and help learn other basic skills to be employed (ICG 2018a, b, January 29).

The participation of refugees in the local labor force plays an important role in the integration process (Shah 2008, May 26). Inter-group relations tend to improve in times of low unemployment but deteriorate in times of economic recession. Higher unemployment is associated with an increase in burglaries, thefts, and drug-related crimes. Bell and Blanchflower (2011: 260) suggest that unemployment is often part of the cycle in which involvement in crime reduces future job prospects and thus increases the likelihood of involvement in a crime. The

integration of refugees into the labor market in several OECD countries[3] shows that refugees start slower than other immigrant categories, but then "catch up" with other non-economic entry categories. However, refugees do not reach the same level of integration into the labor market as immigrants and indigenous people (Bevelander 2016: 8).

Syrian refugees who want to work independently have problems getting permission to work and register. For Syrian refugees to work freely, it is required that they should be a resident in Turkey for at least 5 years. But this does not look like a possible condition to be implemented in practice. Because the right to stay provided by temporary protection identity document does not replace the residence (Kaya 2016: 42). The fact that Syrian refugees cannot get work permits easily is one of the biggest obstacles in front of social integration in Turkey. The policies which are implemented so far that does not ensure sufficient aid to the refugees to integrate into Turkey's labor market.

The number of decent jobs for Syrians is still very limited. There are currently 8000 to 10,000 registered Syrian companies in Turkey. The number of legally employed Syrians in Turkey could only reach nearly 20,000 very recently (ICG 2018b: 17). Almost a million Syrians are employed in the informal sector with a minimum wage and no social security. Refugees are generally employed in precarious and poorly paid conditions (Taşar 2018). According to Çetin (2016: 1007), almost all of Syrian informal workers are employed in the textile industry.[4] The Syrian refugees are also likely to work as salaried workers in some other sectors like wood-frame, restaurants, and food markets.

A fieldwork carried out by Kaya and Kıraç (2016) in Istanbul, where the largest population of Syrian refugees live, reveals that majority of Syrians work for a fraction of the salary that Turkish citizens earn with the same jobs. One reason for this appears that both Syrian refugees and employers seem to prefer unregistered employment due to bureaucratic difficulties such as obtaining work permits, high costs, wages, and insurance premiums. As a result, they are working on conditions that can be exposed to all kinds of injustice.

A positive development is that the Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection is applied to the Syrian refugees. According to regulations, the number of employees under temporary protection in the workplace should not exceed 10% of Turkish citizens working in the same workplace. However, in establishments where there are no Turkish citizen employees or the total number of employees is less than ten, the maximum number of temporary protection for one foreigner can be granted. Syrian refugees working in seasonal agriculture and animal husbandry are not required to have the work permit (Özdemir 2016: 285).

The current situation is that Turkey has an economy with high unemployment and underemployment. As a result, the Turkish citizens feel that Syrians threaten their access to the job market (ICG 2018b: 1). One of the fears is the threat of job security and downward pressure on wages, which are understandable concerns. Moreover,

[3] For instance, Lundborg (2013) documents that refugees' employment lags that of natives basically for their whole lifetime in Sweden.

[4] This is mainly because a large portion of these people came mostly from Aleppo, where textile production was widespread in the pre-war period.

Girgin and Cebeci (2017) assert that the self-employed local individuals have seen unfair government implementation such as tax exemption for Syrian businesses that favors Syrians at the expense of locals. As a result, Syrian businesses can offer the same goods at lower prices leading to unfair competition.

Citizenship Problems of Syrian Refugees

The purpose of granting citizenship to refugees is to integrate them with the host society. In many situations, obtaining citizenship is the pinnacle of this process. Rights and citizenship shape the public debate about the integration of refugees. This process should provide a basis for use with variables such as citizenship concepts, the level of education and healthcare, and normative expectations of social integration in communities (Ager and Strang 2008: 185). A recent finding from 14 Western democracies shows that citizenship is related to increasing the membership of a host nation in countries where the host population attaches great importance to nationality (Simonsen 2017).

Erdoğan (2015) analyzed the public opinion survey conducted on 18 provinces[5] in Turkey. The citizens who are living in these provinces were asked whether or not "Refugees should be conferred Turkish citizenship". 45.9% of citizens answered this question strongly disagree, and 38.6% of them answered disagree. So, it can be said that the biggest objection of the Turkish society is to give citizenship to the Syrians.

As ORSAM (2016: 6) points out, Syrian refugees in Turkey are experiencing growing frustration due to the uncertainty about their legal status and hence their future in Turkey. In the current legal framework, Syrian refugees are temporarily protected by a provisional identification card, which provides them access to health, education, and social and judicial assistance. However, this temporary status does not give them refugee status in international terms and provides citizenship rights. As Simsek and Koser Akcapar (2018: 179) indicate, Syrians are currently are under "temporary" protection and not legally accepted as refugees. Therefore, acquiring Turkish citizenship would mean for Syrians first to achieve a secure legal status.

Syrian refugees in Turkey tend not to see the end of the war in their homeland and see no clear path to long-term legal status in Turkey. In addition, the host society is hostile to the Syrian society, especially because it has lowered wages in local factories and increased incomes, but in general, relationships seem to be positive, especially in neighborhoods where ethnic and family ties coincide that of the host community (Kaya and Kıraç 2016: 3–4).

Social and Cultural Adaptation Problems of Syrian Refugees

The difference of the Syrian refugees in language, culture, and lifestyle makes social adjustment difficult. They have also an impact on the demographic structure, such as fertility rate and population growth rate (Orhan and Gündoğar 2015).

[5] These provinces are İzmir, Ankara, Kayseri, Adana, Antalya, Konya, Balıkesir, Malatya, Bursa, Mardin, Erzurum, Samsun, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, Trabzon, İstanbul, and Van.

Refugees are often considered as the classical "other" that does not belong to. This "other" may be based on physical appearance or racial, cultural and religious differences, class characteristics, or a combination of all. It is critical that in the integration process, the refugees and the community are linked together by a strong integration policy. The creation of appropriate politics depends heavily on the conditions at all levels. A long-term approach that takes into account the concerns of both sides can be successful. A short-sighted policy, on the other hand, may lead to a loss on both sides (Pennix 2003: 1).

Syrian refugees are increasingly perceived by the local population as overcrowded guests. Syrian refugees face daily challenges such as discrimination on a daily basis, lack of empathy among locals for their struggles, clichés and prejudices of residents, lack of social and political recognition, perspectives on the country in which they live, and most importantly, the lack of a complete and stable legal status. As suggested by Kaya and Kıraç (2016), it is precisely these problems that cause some refugees to leave Turkey to risk their lives on the borders of Europe. The recent amendment to the Law on Turkish Citizenship marked a turning point in the legal status of Syrian refugees. Simsek and Koser Akcapar (2018: 176) make the point that the option of citizenship is used in this law as a reward for qualified migrants and as an instrument for integrating other Syrians.

Refugees are having problems with the local people, and in certain respects, they are negatively affecting the social welfare in the country. Some of the public services have been overstretched by the refugee influx. Local people have increasingly expressed their discomfort with the Syrians who have flocked in the last 7 years. Locals complain about long lines at hospitals, crowded classrooms, skyrocketing rents, packed buses, and piled-up trash. The stress on public services overlaps with labor market competition and identity-related demographic concerns. The sense that the Syrian influx has worsened, the quality of life is sowing resentment among hosts, irrespective of political affiliation. Compassion and solidarity are curdling into hostility (ICG 2018a, February 15).

The tension in the flow of everyday life causes damage to the trust between the two communities. Feeling that refugees seem to have more benefits than locals can increase the tension and hostility between the two communities and turn immigration into a social/political issue where racism is used to exploit feelings of the local population. Host community hostility toward Syrian refugees is on the rise in Turkey's metropolitan areas. The risk of violent clashes between hosts and refugees is higher in places where the stress on public services overlaps with labor market competition and identity-related demographic concerns. Inter-communal violence between Syrian hosts and refugee communities tripled in the second half of 2017 compared to a year earlier. At least 35 people died in these incidents in 2017, and 24 of them were Syrians (ICG 2018a, 29 January). These incidents are fueling ethnic rivalries and urban violence.

Turkey started to be largely perceived as a transit country with high level of refugee inflows and outflows. This also raised concerns about the safety of citizens. The fact that refugee influx to Turkey was massive and that they are biometrically recorded in line with their statements have delayed the establishment of a healthy database created a security issue for Turkey (Korkmaz 2016: 85). The rising number of terrorist attacks that happened all over the world can develop a sense of paranoia in the country for refugees. Therefore, as Wijaya (2016, December 22) suggests, the authorities need a

stricter selection process to determine the status of refugees to ensure the safety of the local community, and the process of local integration of the refugees can be applied smoothly.

Discriminative terms and discourses may cause the host society and the refugee community to move away from each other. For this reason, a sensitive language should be used. So, both communities do not offend, and non-discriminatory media language can help raise awareness of this social integration. Communication campaigns can be organized to ensure social integration between Syrian refugees and local citizens and to manage possible tensions between communities. Moreover, the voluntary work carried out by both Turkish and Syrian citizens should also be encouraged (Kaya and Kıraç 2016: 36).

It is seen that the transition period has not yet been completed in a healthy way and that the expectations of the refugees are concentrated in certain areas. It is observed that especially in the expectation of the Syrian refugees, "integration into working life" and "education of children" are the priority issues (Tunç 2015: 41). Local actors of all political persuasions need to open channels of dialog, share information, and pool capacities to address local grievances and stop trouble before it starts (ICG 2018a, February 15).

Concluding Remarks

Turkey has adopted a humanist approach and applied an open door policy for the refugees all the way through the humanitarian crisis in Syria and has shown remarkable resilience in the past 7 years when it welcomed more than 3.5 million Syrians. The initial refugee influx has been assumed as a temporary phenomenon, and Syrian refugees are seen as "guests." Especially after the influx in 2014–2015, however, the Turkish society started to realize that a significant share of these refugees here to stay. Hence, perspectives have shifted from short-term protection and humanitarian assistance to longer-term social and economic integration of Syrian refugees.

An alternative for those who cannot return home is integration into the host community. Integration is a complex two-way process involving multi-faceted processes aimed at composing a safe and enriching environment for both host country citizens and refugees. Integration requires comprehensive policies. Non-governmental partners can play an important role in reducing exclusion, discrimination, and xenophobia. It is important to recognize that when the two actors, the immigrants and the host society, establish a bond in between and integrate, it becomes possible to create synergy.

It is significant that refugees should be an active part of the host country and have complete access to all goods and services, local institutions, and organizations. Moreover, the frequent interaction between host society and refugees is important for the success of integration. The active interaction between the immigrants and the local community should be the highest priority. Local integration is often a complex and progressive process with legal, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. It places considerable demands on both the individual and the host society.

One of the main factors of integration is the provision of education services to the refugees. Fundamental knowledge about the host country language, the culture, and the history is extremely important for integration. Policies and reforms that enable

education to be conducted at various levels prepare refugees to play a more active role in the host country society. Education gives the refugees an intellectual tool and a large potential not only to shape their future but also to make a significant contribution to the host community that provided them with a shelter. Under the provision of education for school-age refugees would mean missed opportunities for peaceful and fruitful integration. The current education and health service provision to the refugees are less than perfect. This is mainly related to staff and infrastructure constraints. Additional effort to increase primary and chronic disease healthcare service is particularly important to avoid vaccine-preventable diseases.

Labor market integration deserves a special attention since the participation of refugees in the local labor force plays a critical role in the integration process. Less effective adaptation of the refugees to the labor market increases both individual and societal costs. The best way for the refugees to contribute to the Turkish economy is to improve labor market integration. Although many people tend to see refugees as a burden, this is unlikely the case. With access to education and livelihoods, refugees can provide a larger talent pool for the host economy and be able to make an active contribution to the host community. Refugees would enrich cultural diversity by bringing different perspectives and insights.

While there is important progress toward access to education and health services, it is difficult to say this in relation to labor markets. More attention should be given to health expenditures for physical and psychological services of women and children since they are the most affected from the war. The crucial question now is how to ensure the sustainable integration of Syrians, while at the same time pre-emptively addressing and managing host community grievances so that both communities will live in harmony and create synergy. Future studies could collect data that reflect the status of refugees as longer series and develop the scale for refugee integration model.

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