

MIGRATION SERIES BY TRANSNATIONAL PRESS LONDON

Anthropological Perspectives on Transnational Encounters in Turkey: War, Migration and Experiences of Coexistence
Edited by Meryem Bulut and Kadriye Şahin

This book includes studies conducted on the basis of field research by academics specialised in social anthropology in various universities in Turkey. Anthropological studies on migration date back a long way. Leaving their desk in the office, anthropologists have taken to the field, placing participatory observations and in-depth interviews at the centre of their research. The story of this book emerged from the thoughts of anthropologists studying migration, coming together at a symposium and discussing how to write about such a topic. The works included here refer to fieldresearch in Ankara, Istanbul, Burdur, Van, Ardahan, Sivas and Hatay. The focal groups had been displaced and/or had witnessed war. This book is composed of eleven chapters. The majority of the studies were conducted with the participation of Syrian immigrants. The wave of compulsory emigration from Syria due to the continuing conflict in the country has affected Turkey deeply. Syrians under temporary protection have been living in almost every Turkish city since the early years of the war. The book also includes papers on groups who have come from Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia to Turkey.

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON TRANSNATIONAL ENCOUNTERS
IN TURKEY: WAR, MIGRATION AND EXPERIENCES OF COEXISTENCE

Meryem Bulut and Kadriye Şahin (Eds.)



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CHAPTER 5

CONTRIBUTION OF NGOS TO THE INTEGRATION OF SYRIAN IMMIGRANTS IN MARDIN

Süleyman Şanlı

Introduction

People who fled their countries of home voluntarily or forced have been described as refugee, migrant, and person with temporary protection in the countries hosting them. The challenges faced by these uprooted people seeking security have forced many countries to develop and formulate new migration, asylum, and refugee policies.

In general, governments are responsible for protecting immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. However, often, governmental efforts to address the needs of migrants and refugees are inadequate. In such situations, non-governmental organisations appear as institutions to provide the necessary support. NGOs play important roles in addressing the problems of migrants and mediate and help them to access the support and rights offered by governments. When the cultural differences between the home and host countries, further challenges may emerge for immigrants. Some recent studies argue that exchanges between people of different cultural backgrounds who are mixed as a result of forced migration can lead to cultural integration problems (Demir, 2008; Sayın et al., 2016:5; Günel-Yılmaz and Ertürk, 2017:202; Sakız, 2015:155). The forced nature of migration also creates problems in the destination areas. Since the habitus of origin and destination and the conflict differ greatly (Yücedağ, 2016:116-118). Residents of immigrant-receiving areas are affected by integration problems psychologically and emotionally. This may

result in disintegration, discrimination or reluctant acceptance (Sakız, 2016:66).

This study particularly focuses on how NGOs based in the city centre of Mardin offer services and their role in Syrian refugees, migrants integration. It is important that how immigrants absorb the changes and challenges faced in the destination and how embedded these after their settlement as an expression of integration. This study collected data through in-depth interviews with seven NGOs (4 foreign and 3 local) based in Mardin. Alongside the fieldwork, some documents including news items, internet portals, and reports, are used to support the study. Due to ethical practice codes, names of the respondents and their organisations are not revealed. Pseudonyms are used to refer to respondents.

In the times of migration, refugee or asylum crises, many international, national and local NGOs, despite some government support, often try to help immigrants by their own resources. The political and historic context in Turkey has not allowed a conducive environment for NGOs development in the country. This has gradually changed from the early 1990s onwards. The Iraq-Iran War, Bosnia and Kosovo crises and tragic the 1999 Marmara Earthquake have resulted in the emergence of many NGOs and proliferation of an understanding that these organisations are useful and necessary. Alongside strengthened relations between Turkey and the European Union, activities of NGOs have grown. There is a need to address various problems of immigrants and refugees in social, economic, cultural, and legal realms. NGOs contribute particularly to the support of human rights and freedoms relevant to asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants.

Turkey has admitted over 4 million Syrians who were forced to leave their homes under humanitarian protection terms (for 2017 figures see AFAD, 2017). Some of these Syrian immigrants settled in Mardin province. They face the challenges of integration in terms of culture, social environment, language, ethnicity in this city. NGOs in Mardin play an important role in the process of residents' acceptance of the presence of Syrians, in their speedy integration, as well as in the delivery of social services. Syrian immigrants face difficulties in Mardin as they do in other parts of the country. However, NGOs offer support in alleviating these difficulties and helping their integration in the city regarding social, cultural and economic services. This study examined the services offered by NGOs in Mardin from the perspective of NGO representatives in the field. These foreign and local NGOs are specialised in the delivery of services to those in need, and this facilitates the integration of immigrants in the city.

NGOs and Immigration in Mardin

Right to form association is an important pillar of contemporary democracies. NGOs are particularly important actors distinguishing democratic systems from others as they represent the expression of differences freely. NGOs bring together individuals gathered around a specific interest to lobby over the government as a pressure group in a democratic environment (Doğan,

2018:976); thus NGOs play an important role in society to protect and support migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Circumstances immigrants and refugees live around the world today are the concern of all countries and force all actors to act alongside humanitarian principles. Humanitarian principles, impartiality, objectivity and independence help and guide NGOs in such difficult fields (Harvey, 2013:164). NGOs role in effective defence of human rights is indispensable (Kuçuradi, 1996:170). NGOs tendency to help immigrants can also be seen as an indicator of a society's commitment to human rights and human values. NGOs play an important role in helping immigrants, supporting them and working towards ensuring a life with dignity.

When governments are not adequate in addressing migration challenges, NGOs step in and offer support. This can be interpreted in two ways. First, governments are dependent on services offered by NGOs in certain specialist areas (Kerwin, 2009:313; cited by Çınar, 2017:20). Secondly, NGOs are forced to keep the balance when governments cannot address certain problems, and NGOs need to step in to defend democratic and social change (Ivedt, 2009:216; cited by Çınar, 2017:20). Similar to governments having different migration policies, NGOs working in the field also do have different activities and functions. Changes in government policies affect the operations and priorities of the NGOs. There are many NGOs carrying out different activities in the humanitarian aid field in Mardin, similar to the NGOs around the country.

Increasing wars, political pressures, internal conflicts and the desire for a better life in recent years lead to an increase in immigration. In this sense, Mardin can be shown as one of the provinces where Syrian immigrants concentrated. In the context of international migration, we can say that Mardin has experienced migration waves. After the Gulf War, about 450,000 Iraqi Kurds have come to the border with Turkey (Beter, 2006: 22; Sirkeci 2005:197-214) and a share of these immigrants sought refuge in Mardin province. Finally, one of the first groups of Syrian refugees who escaped from the turmoil and war in Syria had arrived in Mardin, a border city neighbouring Syria. Kızıltepe is where the Syrians have been most densely settled. Kızıltepe is followed by Nusaybin, Midyat and other districts. There is also a temporary accommodation centre in Midyat district.

NGOs in Mardin and Their Role in Integration

About 1.5 million Syrians who arrived in Turkey have settled in the border cities of Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa and Mardin. The number of Syrians in Turkey corresponds to 4.41 per cent of the total population. However, their numbers have exceeded the number of residents in Kilis province while they represent 26.56 per cent in Hatay 21,37 per cent in Şanlıurfa, 21.58 per cent in Gaziantep and 10.52 per cent in Mardin. There were 11 temporary shelters in 8 provinces in Turkey by mid-2019. As of July 2019, about 3,526,996 Syrians were

living outside camps, and 104,026 were in camps, representing a total Syrian population of 3,631,022 in Turkey.¹ There was also a temporary accommodation centre in Midyat district of Mardin accommodating 2,919 Syrians but this centre was shut down on 31 August 2018. Residents of this centre was offered accommodation options in other places of their choice. The number of Syrians living outside the temporary accommodation centre and within the boundaries of Mardin was 89,285 (AFAD 2017). Syrians living in temporary accommodation centres can benefit from health, education services, food and social activities. However, if they are not registered, they will be left with limited access.

The most important reasons for Syrians to move to Turkey is geographical proximity and the perception that there are plenty of job opportunities. The ratio of those who come for economic reasons seems to be quite high (Özkarlı, 2014: 25; Apak, 2014: 56-63). In our interviews with representatives of non-governmental organisations in Mardin, a border city, the representatives stated that these immigrants were referring to common features such as historic relations between Syria and Turkey over trade, family ties and language. As a matter of fact, other studies conducted in Mardin support these arguments (Özkarlı, 2014: 25; Apak, 2014: 56-63). For example, "I have relatives and acquaintances in here" is among the most common responses when asked for migration reasons among Syrians (Özkarlı, 2014: 25; Apak, 2014: 56-63). Such findings show how important social ties are in Syrian immigration in Mardin. Besides, geographical proximity, economic opportunities and favourable living conditions are among the reasons why Mardin has been popular among Syrians.

NGOs, particularly foreign NGOs in Mardin, operate along the lines of funding opportunities and based on projects. This means when the project ended or the funding for the project ended, the offices are closed. In this section, we discuss the experiences of integration through the material collected in the interviews from NGO representatives. This will cover areas ranging from services for accommodation, access to education and health, employment rights, legal aid, psychological support and socio-cultural integration support offered to Syrians in Mardin.

The Mardin-Syria Solidarity Platform, which is supported by approximately 50 foundations, associations, unions and chambers operating in Mardin, is one of the major organisations providing a great deal of support to Syrians. Recently established few civil society organisations which we covered in our field research are included in this platform. The design and timing of humanitarian aid organised by civil and local dynamics can be both better, more practical and speedier with the help of this platform. Here are some examples of the profiles of non-governmental organisations included in our research:

NGO-1, an international non-governmental organisation in Mardin, is a psycho-social support organisation for migrants fleeing the conflict areas in

¹ https://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713, accessed date,16.07.2019

Syria in Mardin. They offer psychological counselling, primary health care and legal and social counselling for Syrian migrants.

Moreover, this NGO brings together local people and immigrants through social activities and organizes activities aimed at facilitating integration and living together in peace. Also, they offer Turkish language courses which help immigrants in solving their problems and help meet basic needs and access to rights and entitlements available. They also organise activities, workshops, and training to educate children (e.g. language courses, music, painting, etc.) to facilitate their socio-cultural integration. Expert teams are employed by this non-governmental organisation. Among those, social workers, psychologists, sociologists, experts in disability support, integration experts, interpreters and trainers are included (interview with NGO-1, 27.10.2018, Mardin).

NGO-2 is another international organisation with a focus on emergency aid for migrants in need by fighting hunger and poverty. Hence they aim to improve the living conditions of the Syrian migrants in Mardin. This organisation, which has been active in Mardin since 2013, provides food and life support, hygiene kits and winter aid to immigrants to improve their lives and well-being. It also organises various social-economic and sports activities for the immigrants to adapt to the city they live in. Within the scope of the social cohesion project, Syrian migrants and local football lovers who settled in Kızıltepe organised a football tournament aimed at reinforcing the feelings of fraternity between the two groups (interview with NGO-2, 13.10.2018, Mardin).

Another international organisation which interviewed NGO-3, which commenced operations in Turkey since 2013 across Turkey and their focus is to offer protection and educational services to Syrian refugees. This NGO describes one of its main objectives as to offer protection by educating and empowering vulnerable people, particularly the youth in conflict zones. Besides, it focuses on alleviating gender-based violence, offering language courses, enabling access to vocational training, and other services to protect Syrian youth in the post-migration crisis period, while at the same time encouraging the acceptance and hospitality by the host community towards immigrants. Within the scope of integration activities; facilitating communication between locals and the Syrian immigrants, they offer certified Turkish language classes to Syrians to enable them to join the formal education system. The NGO-3 also collaborates with local Women's Culture Centers to organise activities to reduce the risk of sexual and gender-based violence involving Syrian migrants and the local community. To this end, it conducts life-saving support activities for those exposed to violence in coordination with local centres (interview with NGO-3, 08.09.2018, Mardin).

NGO-4 is one of the international organisations we have interviewed. They carry out various adaptation activities for Syrian migrants in Mardin. Our respondent stated that they mostly provide integration services through case work, and they also conducted project-based social integration activities. They deal with cases related to education or health brought to this organisation. Then

they try to find a solution for that case specifically. This NGO aims to provide the necessary assistance for the survival and protection of Syrian migrant children and families who have settled in Mardin in the post-migration period following their unhealthy and difficult growing up circumstances. Besides, they offer training in dental and bodily hygiene to Syrian migrants, provide psycho-social support through group games, support their newborn children through parenting sessions (interview with NGO-4, 18.09.2018, Mardin).

NGO-5 is one of the national non-governmental organisations we interviewed. They assist people in need in many regions of the world, although it is a national organisation. NGO-5, since the start of the Syrian crisis in 2011, offer support services in sheltering, food, nutrition, and health care. Also, they have managed the aid such as clothes, textile products, shoes, blankets, household goods, water and medicine reached to the Syrian migrants in Mardin. In addition, they established a prefabricated school building for the education of Syrian migrant children in the camp /temporary shelter in Mardin (interview with NGO-5, 27.09.2018, Mardin).

NGO-6 is another national non-governmental organisation known for its work for women particularly. It conducts awareness-raising activities, especially for women's human rights. In this respect, they provide support for those women and children who suffered from violence and settled in Mardin after the Syrian crisis. They provide psychological and legal support. Their efforts focus on creating awareness groups to enable people to exercise their rights. Furthermore, they organise educational seminars and home visits to help humanitarian aid, reaching those in need (interview with NGO-6, 06.11.2018, Mardin).

The last national NGO included in our study (NGO-7) provide the necessary information to the Syrian refugees in Mardin, especially those under temporary protection, to enable them access to basic services to ensure a comfortable life in the city. Our respondent stated that Syrians had difficulties in accessing public institutions, reaching related government offices, municipalities and benefiting from various services. Therefore, the main purpose of this NGO is to provide one-to-one support to enable access for Syrians where they struggle. They accompany migrants who need assistance in accessing health, education, and legal services. Besides, they offer transportation support and interpreting services while also directing individuals to the relevant public institutions and non-governmental organisations for services. They also monitor the process of access to services (Interview with NGO-7, 14.12.2018, Mardin).

Integration Roles Targeting Immigrants

It is important for migrants to adapt to the places of destination. Researchers have offered various definitions for the concept of integration. Tathioğlu (2012: 76) describes integration as the ability of individuals to establish good relations with themselves and their environment and to maintain these

relationships. According to a definition with a focus on the micro level, integration is “the individuals behaving along with the customs and social values of the society in which they live and adapt to changes around” (Kızılçelik & Erjem, 1994: 432). In this study, integration in the city refers to the integration of different groups mutually rather than forced assimilation or change of one party. Therefore, it means a process in which the immigrants are moving to Mardin integrating without the need for abolishing all their social, cultural, and behavioral forms and values completely but contributing to the host community.

Today, integration in the city means a multifaceted political process that covers the fields of work, housing, health and education, language problems, political participation, inter-ethnic or inter-religious affairs, gender, age and ethnic discrimination. Integration policy and practices from such perspective were implemented in Sweden in the 1970s and the Netherlands in the 1980s, but in most other European countries, these were implemented in the late 1990s (Penninx et al., 2008: 5; cited in Karasu, 2016: 998)

The integration process includes three different dimensions. The first is the legal dimension. It means immigrants enjoying the same legal rights as the citizens of the host country. The second is the economic dimension. The immigrant should be able to have a job that will provide a comfortable and sustainable life for himself and his family by the living standards of the host country. The final one is the socio-cultural dimension. The immigrant should be able to establish social and cultural ties with the host society and express themselves to contribute to the existing cultural and social structure without the fear of discrimination (Fielden, 2008: 3; cited in Karasu, 2016: 998-990).

The European Union has issued a document containing basic principles to guide the member states of the Union on integration (EU, 2004). Accordingly, the EU's basic principles for immigrant integration suggest (EU, 2004:19-24):

- 1 - Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.
- 2 - Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.
- 3 - Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.
- 4 - Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.
- 5 - Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.

6 - Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way, is a critical foundation for better integration.

7 - Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.

8 - The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.

9 - The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, support their integration.

10 - Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.

11 - Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.

In immigrant integration, the attitudes of the local people against immigrants are also very important. Local people's discrimination against migrants may adversely affect their integration in the city. Syrians immigrants integration to Mardin can be measured as their ability to establish and maintain a balanced relationship with their new environment. This depends on a positive integration process and adapting to the new environment to survive. One of the objectives of this research is to find out how non-governmental organisations in Mardin are involved in or contributing to the adaptation process of Syrian immigrants.

Legal Aid, Right to Work and Employment

NGOs in Mardin offer Syrian immigrants free legal assistance in accessing basic entitlements and services in Turkey, personal legal counselling, support and advice on creating awareness on refugee-immigrant rights. In short, they provide legal services related to possible problems faced by immigrants (NGO-1, NGO-2 and NGO-3 interview notes).

As of 2016, the Prime Minister's Circular has granted Syrian migrants the right to work. This circular imposes financial obligations on the employer and permits them to employ immigrants, provided that they do not exceed 10% of the workforce. However, in order for the refugees and asylum seekers to work

legally, they must obtain a work permit under Law No. 4817 on Work Permits of Foreigners. This situation imposes a significant financial burden on employers wishing to obtain a work permit for an immigrant in Mardin because the law imposes significant restrictions on the employment of foreigners. Therefore, many immigrants in Mardin are not able to work legally, as is the case elsewhere in Turkey (NGO-1, NGO-2; NGO-3, NGO-4, interview notes). This causes economic difficulties for immigrants. The fact that both unregistered immigrants cannot benefit from the law and the registered immigrants cannot work legally due to the limitations imposed by the law make their situation vulnerable and open to abuse. As a matter of fact, according to a study conducted in Mardin in 2014, it is stated that Mardin is a city where informal work is common in the labour market and informal work is convenient for Syrians (Özkarlı, 2014: 30).

According to our interviews with NGOs, the Syrian migrants living in Mardin have to work to survive. It is clear that the ability of Syrians to find work here is one of the factors alleviating problems of integration. Since Mardin has a multilingual and multicultural city structure, Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic and Syriac languages are spoken by local people in their daily conduct. It is also clear that those coming from Syria do not have any linguistic difficulties when communicating with the local community, and it facilitates their employment. The fact that the majority of Syrians in Mardin speak Arabic and Kurdish help them not to have language problems, especially in finding jobs in (NGO Interview Notes, Mardin).

A non-governmental organisation operating in Mardin included in our research initiated a project in collaboration with a government agency to increase the employment opportunities of Syrian refugees in Mardin to ensure that Syrian migrants have access to more job opportunities. This NGO's representative stated that they aim to provide women with training to help to improve their livelihoods and to strengthen them socially. Thus, they also aim to contribute to social integration by accommodating both Turks and Syrians in these training together (NGO-7).

All the NGOs interviewed in Mardin stated that the immigrants they have assisted who are generally members of the lower socio-economic classes. They stated that people with a high economic level live on their own means and they prefer the provinces in the west of the country. Syrian migrants are often able to obtain information about the working environment and job opportunities from their acquaintances who had migrated before and worked in Turkey. Agriculture, textile, construction and domestic cleaning are among the main employment areas. Low wages, working with no social security and insurance, difficult working conditions and unpaid overtime are some of the main problems Syrians face in the labour market (NGO Interview Notes).

Economic and Social Support

Many NGOs in Mardin provided financial support to Syrian immigrants.

For example, NGO-2 provided cash support to Syrian immigrant families. This NGO carried out mean testing to identify the families in most need by looking at the number of children they have, whether there are breastfeeding women, statuses of spouses, or whether the family has disabled children. During their fieldwork, they received assistance from the Governorate of Mardin, other NGOs, and Syrian Relief Platform and the muhtars (local administrators at the neighbourhood level), they reached 1,900 Syrian families in one project (interview with NGO-2, 13.10.2018, Mardin).

The NGO-1 provided financial support to Syrians living in Mardin with special needs for one-time only; they provided 600 TL- 900 TL for six months to cover the expenses for purchasing basic things such as blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene sets, winter clothes and boots. In this context, the special needs assessment of Syrian migrants was made by NGO-1, and the persons who were entitled to receive the cards were identified by UNHCR, and the cards were delivered to the users by PTT (Turkish postal service) (interview with NGO-1, 27.10.2018, Mardin).

NGO-7 provided winter aid to 14,000 Syrians in Mardin since they began their operations in the city (NGO-7 interview, 14.12.2018, Mardin).

Education Support and Integration of Children

NGO representatives stated that the level of education among Syrians in Mardin is not high in general, and only a few of them have graduated from a higher education institution or university. They stated that the level of education of Syrians in Mardin is generally low, but those with high socio-economic status have better education (NGO interview notes).

Another area of integration support is education. The NGO-2 provided cash assistance to Syrian students and their teachers through an educational aid scheme. Also, each child was given a bag with a significant amount of books and learning material. Teachers were also given training sets as a gift (interview with NGO-2, 13.10.2018, Mardin).

NGO-4 is a non-governmental organisation that deals with children of different ages. This non-governmental organisation launched a Child-Friendly Areas project in Mardin, aiming at the protection of children. This project aims to support children and provide a safe and healthy place for them to play, learn and develop psychosocially (interview with NGO-4, 18.09.2018, Mardin).

Health and Accommodation Support

The registered Syrian migrants can benefit from health services with their ID cards showing their ID numbers. NGO-3 in Mardin conducted regular health checks, including height-weight measurements of children under five. Visits were carried out by child development and nutrition experts to determine their nutritional deficiencies. Also, children with acute malnutrition were treated by specialist staff in the multifunctional Support Centers. Pregnant and breastfeeding Syrian women were advised on breastfeeding, nutrition and health issues, and activities were organised for children to play together and

develop their skills (interview with NGO-1, 27.10.2018, Mardin). In Mardin, NGO-1 and NGO-2 stand out as NGOs offering hospital services and psychosocial support.

The representatives of the NGOs we interviewed stated that almost all of the Syrians they provided support were living in rented accommodation and some, only in the very early days of arrival, had preferred to stay with their relatives. However, they also moved out of relatives' homes once they found a job and rented privately. The high proportion of people living in rented accommodation can be seen as an indication of the high level of working population (NGO Interview notes).

Conclusion

Access to education, health, housing and employment is one of the permanent solutions. As anywhere else in Turkey, in Mardin, NGOs step in where the government fails to help Syrian immigrants or can not offer adequate support. It is clear that as long as the crisis in Syria continues, Syrian immigrants will remain in Turkey. Therefore, there is no other option but the integration of Syrians in Turkey. Therefore, the government or the state have to develop permanent solutions for the integration of Syrians.

In this study, it is shown that non-governmental organisations operating in Mardin city centre focus on the most urgent problems such as health, legal, housing services, food and clothing needs. They are also concerned in providing support for the psychological problems of migrants and support for women, the elderly, the disabled and children, but these support efforts seem to be inadequate. NGOs working in Mardin are often unaware of other NGOs activities, and there seems to be issues with information sharing.

One of the important activities that non-governmental organizations operating in Mardin can focus on is to facilitate the registration of Syrian migrants who are residing in the city but not registered. Since unregistered Syrian migrants do not receive state support and may also face legal difficulties, besides, these NGOs can contribute to the home economy by providing more support for education and training of women. Similarly, further support can be offered to Syrian migrant children for their education. NGOs can also help to offer more employment opportunities for Syrian migrants in the public and private sectors.

NGOs in Mardin offer constructive contribution in areas of social and cultural integration. Common languages and vocabulary are one of the main factors facilitating the social and cultural integration of Syrian immigrants in Mardin. Syrians ability to speak one of the languages spoken in Mardin, such as Kurdish and Arabic has helped improved communication between immigrants and the local community. It is clear that NGOs in Mardin offer support to Syrian immigrants in language education. Also, religious similarities and minuscule differences in food culture are other factors that facilitate social and cultural integration.

Unfortunately, there was no comprehensive academic research on NGOs providing support to Syrian immigrants in Mardin. There was no inventory of who they support, their capacities, their projects, sources of funding, difficulties and needs. This study aims at providing an initial inventory in this regard and hopes to be of help to further studies in this area.

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