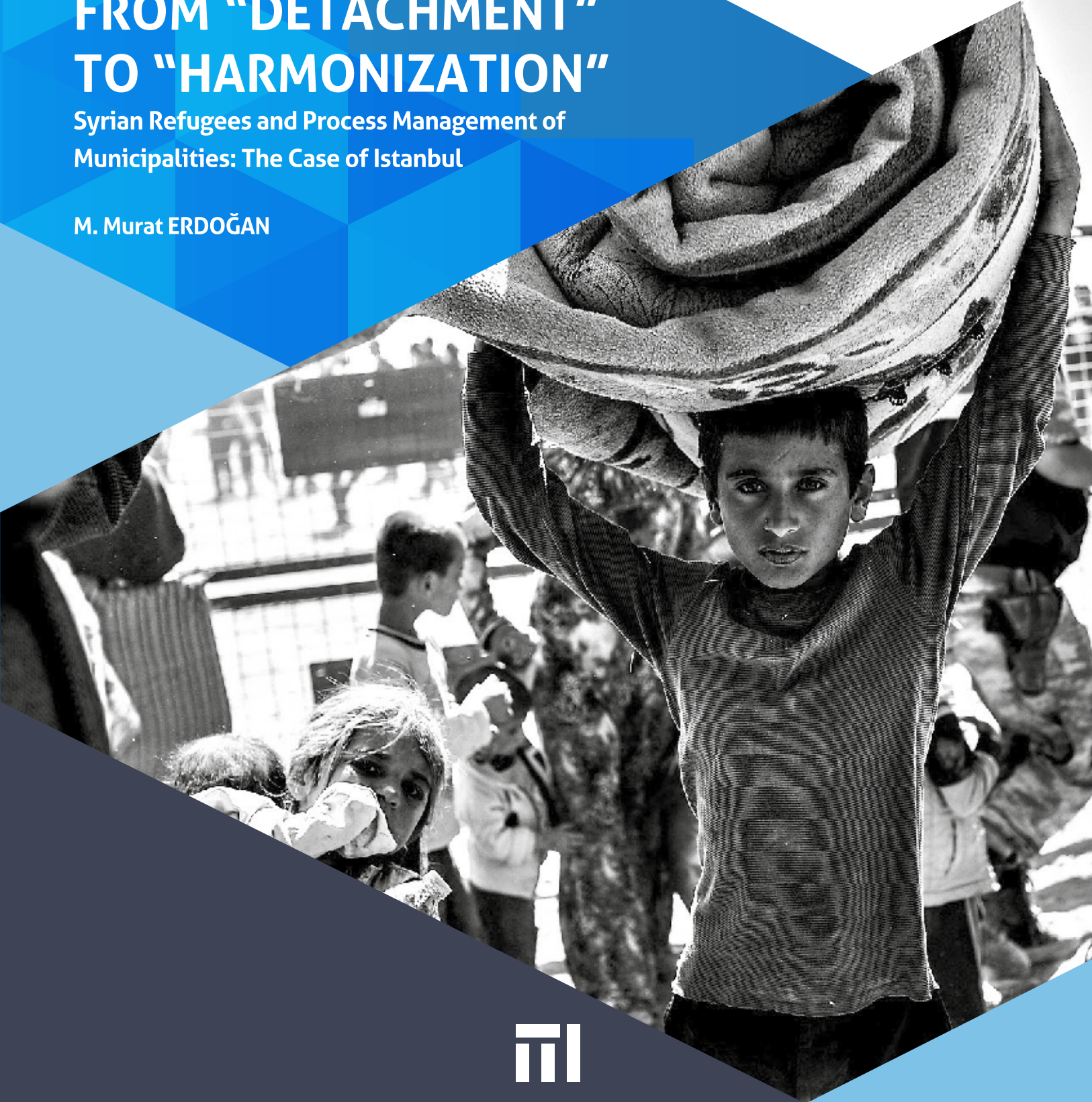


URBAN REFUGEES FROM "DETACHMENT" TO "HARMONIZATION"

Syrian Refugees and Process Management of
Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul

M. Murat ERDOĞAN



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JANUARY 2017

 **MARMARA**
BELEDİYELER BİRLİĐİ
KÜLTÜR YAYINLARI



Photo: Şahin Avcı

MARMARA
BELEDİYELER BİRLİĞİ
KÜLTÜR YAYINLARI

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operating within
Marmara Municipalities Union's Center for Urban Policies
and led by **Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĐAN.**

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PRESENTATION

“Our mighty nation proved its uniqueness, greatness and its exceptional position among the world’s nations once again by welcoming suffering refugees.”

Migration means parting from one’s homeland, being devoid of a home, and becoming lonely. One of the biggest sorrows in the history of humanity is the suffer that comes along with migration. Unfortunately, even in modern times, no solution has yet been found for migration, which mingled with many painful stories in the great history of humanity. Humankind found a way to walk on the moon and yet could not find a relieving solution to this tragedy.

War leaves wrecks behind. It sweeps and demolishes cities, hopes, dreams, memories and all kind of experiences. Through the darkness of this cruelty, any kind of help or any kind of welcome brings hope and faith into the hearts in exile. The tragedy that took place in Syria is among the most important agenda topics both in the world and in Turkey.

Our mighty nation proved its exceptional position among world’s nations as usual by welcoming many suffering refugees, most particularly the ones that escaped from Syrian Civil War, which is one of the greatest shames of humanity in the recent years and has led many people to part from their homeland. By offering such a help, our nation proved its uniqueness and greatness

once again. Especially in the recent years, Marmara Municipalities Union has been not only excessively working on issues as migration, asylum, humanitarian aid and social adaptation, but also leading relevant activities on the level of local governments. I would like to mention some of these relevant activities;

As a leading example for local governments, “Migration Commission” has been founded within the body of General Assembly of Marmara Municipalities Union and it started to function immediately.

In 2015, Migration Policy Workshop (MAGA) has been founded within the body of Marmara Municipalities Union’s Center for Urban Policies. The aim of MAGA is to conduct scientific studies on migration, set ground for share of knowledge and experience, administer the coordination between our member municipalities, and help municipalities run projects in cooperation with the central government, NGOs and international organizations.

In November 2015, a workshop on “The Role of Municipalities in Service to Urban Refugees” was organized in Istanbul in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

A total of 21 municipalities, with more than 5,000 Syrian refugees within their borders, attended the workshop, in which the current status of the refugees and migration, with priority to Syrian refugees, was evaluated, experience and activities related to this issue were shared and joint solution proposals were developed. Municipal activities and the challenges that municipalities face in the field were discussed in the workshop. While the municipalities conducting activities on Syrian refugees shared their effective practices, solution proposals and the activities that are planned to be or possible to be conducted in the future were also discussed. Suggestions, requests and plans for resolving these difficulties experienced by the municipalities were determined in the same way and turned into a report, and this report was delivered to the relevant actors, first and foremost, to Ministry of the Interior.

Besides, in the 2nd International Children's City Congress, organized by our Center for Urban Policies in April 2016, the relationship of "Immigrant Child and City" was addressed. On April 19, 2016, local government workshops and a children's festival were held in Balıkesir Children's Village; the congress held afterwards in Istanbul on April 30, 2016 was organized together with international participants such as UNICEF and UNHCR. At the World Humanitarian Summit, which was held for the first time in history and

took place in Istanbul on May 23-24, 2016, Marmara Municipalities Union, in cooperation with the

Columbia Global Centers Istanbul and the Helsinki Citizens Assembly, organized an event on "Multilateral Perspectives on the Refugee Issue: Dynamics in and around Turkey."

This field study, which was created with months of intense work coordinated by esteemed Assoc. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan, offers a very important picture of the approach of local actors relevant to the issue and the situation in the field of migration and refugees. Our task is to rely on accurate and analyzed data while dealing with the resolution of problems every day. Sometimes it hurts to look at the whole picture, but unfortunately, there is no other way to get the right results.

I would like to thank esteemed Assoc. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan for putting such a great effort into creating this study.

Creating this report would not be possible if it were not for dear General Assembly Members, Advisory Board Members, Migration Commission Members and hardworking staff of Marmara Municipalities Union. I would like to thank each and every one of them.

I would like this report to be beneficial for all actors involved in the issue as local governments, NGOs, and most of all, to our government. I hope this work could lead to new and more extensive works and increase hope.

Recep ALTEPE

President of Marmara Municipalities Union

PREFACE

“The way this research is designed is convenient to develop general findings and suggestions for the process management of the municipalities in Turkey.”

This study, titled “Urban Refugees from ‘Detachment’ to ‘Harmonization’ Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul”, was led by Marmara Municipalities Union Migration Policy Workshop (MAGA) and conducted by a team under the direction of Assoc. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan from March to November 2016. Turkey has faced the largest mass migration in its history with a number exceeding 3,5 million since April 2011, and this research aims to offer an understanding of how local governments, especially municipalities, managed this process and offer some policy solutions for a better process management after determining the needs on this issue. This research, which is the most comprehensive work on local governments and refugees to date, was conducted in Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and 39 district municipalities of Istanbul, which has become the province with the largest number of refugees in Turkey with more than 540,000 refugees. In the research, primarily, the basic data are evaluated; besides, interviews through a semi-structured questionnaire were conducted with the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality authorities and authorities of the 27 district municipalities, where

approximately 96% of the Syrian refugees in Istanbul lives. These interviews were conducted with the relevant vice president of the municipality, the director of the relevant department of the municipality, and those who are recommended by the municipality to the research team on the subject of process management on refugee issues and also those who can institutionally represent the municipality. The evaluations of the 12 district municipalities in which a total of 18,207 refugees live, which corresponded to only 3.7% of the total number of refugees in Istanbul, were carried out on the basis of data received from the relevant municipalities and other sources. According to the official data of December 2016, Istanbul has the largest number of refugees in Turkey, which is almost 3.5 million in total and of which 3.1 million are Syrian; it has a population of between 17% and 25% of the total number of refugees alone. Although the area of study in this framework is the district municipalities in Istanbul, the scope of the research is determined as the whole of Turkey. The processes by which the municipalities cope with the problems, their authorities, their capacities and their approaches to the issue in this process are similar in all of Turkey. In this

context, with both field work and extensive supportive work, the way this research is designed is convenient to develop general findings and suggestions for the process management of the municipalities in Turkey. The decision to undertake a comprehensive study on refugees in Turkey, which has reached 5% of the population since 2011 and which has turned into an issue to be managed urgently for local governments, is undoubtedly a product of the visionary perspectives of Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU) administrators. We are grateful to the President of Marmara Municipalities Union and Mayor of Bursa Metropolitan Municipality Mr. Recep ALTEPE, who supports this idea with an unyielding manner and puts it into practice with his leadership, and Advisory Board Members of MMU; Mayor of Balıkesir Metropolitan Municipality Mr. Ahmet Edip UĞUR, Mayor of Bilecik Municipality Mr. Selim YAĞCI, Mayor of Bağırcılar Municipality Mr. Lokman ÇAĞIRICI, Mayor of Büyükçekmece Municipality Mr. Dr. Hasan AKGÜN, Mayor of Darıca Municipality Mr. Şükrü KARABACAK, Mayor of Orhangazi Municipality Mr. Neşet ÇAĞLAYAN and Mayor of Lüleburgaz Municipality Mr. Emin HALEBAK. Also, Mr. Dr. M. Cemil ARSLAN, The Secretary General of MMU, pioneered both the establishment of a department under the name of "Migration Politics Workshop - MAGA" in the MMU and this comprehensive research decision. The sincere support he constantly provided for this issue is crucial

for the process of planning, implementint and reporting the work and no word could express how much we appreciate his work. My special thanks go to MMU International Cooperation Coordinator Ms. Burcuhan ŞENER, who is always with us in good faith and superhuman effort and who has made great contribution in all stages of this study, from the first day until the last. We would also like to thank MMU Urban Planning Coordinator Ms. Ezgi KÜÇÜK and Corporate Communications Coordinator Ms. Hatice ERKAN as well as Ms. Serap Merve SUNGUR, Mr. Emrehan Furkan DÜZGİDEN, Mr. Samet KESKİN and all of the MMU staff for contributing to the study at various stages and for their sincere support. We are grateful to our researchers Ms. Elif SİPAHİOĞLU, Ms. Yudum KAVUKÇUER and Ms. Dr. Esin YILMAZ-BAŞÇERİ for their contributions.

Those who also has deserved a great gratitude are the self-sacrificing staff of the municipalities who made this work; each one of them is a "hero". We would like to express our endless gratitude to the municipal employees for their contributions, and thank each and every one of them individually. We undoubtedly feel the most grateful to the beautiful people of this country who have welcomed more than 3.5 million refugees in 5.5 years and still been striving to support them.

Yours sincerely,

Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĞAN

Director of Hacettepe University Migration and Politics
Research Center (HUGO)

AIM AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

After the political turmoil in Syria soon turned into a civil war, one of the biggest humanitarian crises in history since World War II began in April 2011. In this crisis, more than half of the population in Syria, which is 22 million in total, had to leave their homes within their country, while more than 5.5 million Syrians had to leave their country. It is difficult to predict when this war will end and when peace and stability will come to Syria, but the presence of the Syrians who have fled their country and been trying to survive in neighboring countries, especially Turkey, stands as a fact that should not be ignored. Around 3.2 million of more than 5.5 million refugees¹ who had to escape from Syria live in Turkey now, which means that Turkey has more than half of them. This number also shows us that the number of Syrian refugees has reached 4% of the population in Turkey. Although the refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan mostly remain in the background because Syrian refugees are numerically the majority refugee group in Turkey, it should not be forgotten that the number of non-Syrian refugees is also over 300,000. If we consider that the total number of refugees in Turkey was below 100,000 before 2011, we can better understand such a massive immigration we have been facing in the last five years. It is also known that more than 1 million people, who went to Europe through Turkey in 2014 and especially in 2015, and about half of whom are Syrians and the other half non-Syrians, also used Turkey as a "transit" country.

¹ In this study, the concept of "refugee" is used for the Syrians in Turkey independently of the legal-administrative context. Although we are in the knowledge that they are not legally "refugees", this term is preferred, since it reflects the situation sociologically better. The legal framework in Turkey and the motives of this choice are covered in detail in the section titled "Legal and Administrative Regulations on Refugees in Turkey".

When refugees begin mass entry into a country, governments usually try to keep these masses in the rapidly established camps and in the border regions of the country they have arrived. The mass migrations into Turkey in the previous periods had also been controlled in this way; and when the situation in their home countries turned back to normal, the refugees would go back to their homelands. However, the situation with Syrians coming to Turkey since April 2011 has been different. Despite the establishment of 26 camps with a capacity of around 270 thousand, due to the largeness of number of refugees, they have begun to disperse into Turkey from the border regions. As of December 2016, only 8% of the Syrian population in Turkey live in the camps located near the border area, which corresponds to 257,566 of 3.1-3.2 million refugees. On the other hand, around 2.8-3 million Syrians live in the cities of Turkey as urban refugees. The total number of Syrians (in the camps and city centers) covered by Temporary Protection (TP) in the 10 provinces where the refugee camps are located (Adana, Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Malatya, Mardin, Osmaniye ve Şanlıurfa) is 1.6 million. This means that while half of the Syrians live in the cities close to the border region, the other half lives in a scattered way all around in Turkey, especially in Istanbul. The number of Syrians covered by TP and living in Istanbul, Bursa, Mersin, İzmir, Konya and Ankara, which are the first 6 provinces with the largest number of refugees outside the region, is around 1 million.

Starting from the middle of 2012, because Syrian refugees began to live not in the camps but in the city centers, first in the ones that are close to the border, then in every single city all around Turkey, an unusual issue has emerged:

"urban refugees." Urban refugees have affected local governments primarily, and due to this issue, local governments had to start dealing with problems and needs of refugees. Local governments, especially municipalities, had to provide emergency support to refugees, but as the period of refugees' stay in the cities extended, municipalities have had to provide services to the refugees in some areas that they have never planned before and that might be considered controversial in the sense of their legitimate power. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), which was launched in December 2014 under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and in which the main element is determined as increasing the "resistance" in the neighboring countries where refugees live (due to the extension of permanence period), also played a role in giving local governments a special place in this process. As it is known, the 3RP² is the first worldwide action of the United Nations (UN) with its scope and vision in terms of intervention in crises. This plan has developed the philosophy of supporting not only the country in which the crisis is experienced, but also the countries in which the refugees that escaped from this country has been intensively populating, and it also determines the ways how the institutions and organizations that will support this issue could be helped. 3RP adopts an approach that puts "development" as well as "help" among its goals and aims to improve the "resistance" of the countries that have to carry the burden of refugees. Because, it is known that approaches like "first aid, then develop" can not provide solutions in the long-term crises like the Syrian crisis. Refugees, host communities and internally displaced Syrians need a source of livelihood. These people need basic services such as health, education, water, sanitation, electricity and garbage collection, and more importantly, hope for a better future. Based on this, the 3RP aims to establish a better link between human-

itarian aid and development, with support for host societies and a special focus on multi-actor partnerships. Particularly in its recent reports, the UN has begun to include specific regulations for local governments, especially municipalities, in terms of process management. Thus, from 2014 onwards, the municipality's presence in internationally funded projects has begun to be felt more and more, although it is still small in scale. While municipalities were not mentioned in the "Turkey" section of Syrian Regional Intervention Plan between 2012 and 2014, in the third Syrian Regional Intervention Plan in 2014 and in the subsequent Turkey Refugee and Resistance Plan (including the latest plan published in 2016-2017), the municipalities took their place as actors to be supported for providing services to both the Syrians and hosting Turkish people and to improve their livelihoods. It is also known that even though municipalities too are actually influenced by the crisis and that they are active in the provision of services, they are not able to gain much visibility in the humanitarian and development aid systems. The presence of the municipalities in the 3RP in this framework indicates the acknowledgment of both the Turkish and the UN organizations for that the municipalities should be supported.³

This research, titled "Urban Refugees from 'Detachment' to 'Harmonization' Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul", is trying to reveal the services of the municipalities, particularly in Istanbul and generally all around in Turkey, on the issue of refugees, process management, the problems encountered, the limitations arising from the legislation and suggestions for solution. Although the field study part of this research was carried out in Istanbul, it is believed that the problems faced by the municipalities are very similar and the proposals for solutions are necessary and valid for all municipalities.

2 2 UN Development Program (UNDP), 3RP, Regional Refugee and Resistance Plan, Turkey, 2016-2017 http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Turkey-2016-Regional-Refugee-Resilience-Plan_Turkish.pdf (Access: 10.12.2016)

3 For the 3RP reviews, the sources that are used here are 3RP Turkey: 2016-2018 (http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Turkey-2016-Regional-Refugee-Resilience-Plan_Turkish.pdf) and the UNDP-Turkey website. (<http://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/tr/home/presscenter/news-from-new-horizons/2015/04/the-regional-refugee-andresilience-plan--3rp--launched-in-ankar.html>)



3.2 million
Syrians in
Turkey

2.8 million
Syrians Under
Temporary
Protection

300,000
Pre-registered
Syrians

5 million
Asylum seekers
that have entered
Turkey

since April 2011

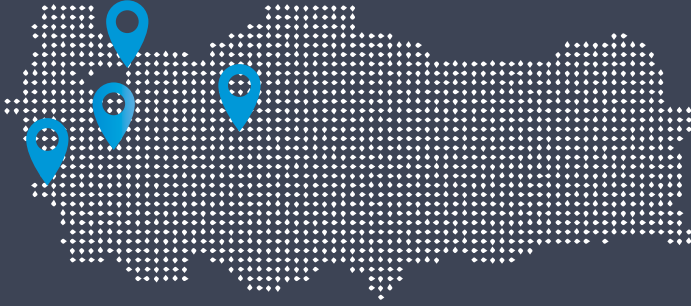
258,000
Syrians in the
Camps



92%
Ratio of Urban
Refugees

I.

SYRIANS AND OTHER REFUGEES IN TURKEY



ISTANBUL

Registered 418.653

Ratio to Provincial Population 2.86%

ANKARA

Registered 64.613

Ratio to Provincial Population 1.23%

IZMIR

Registered 97.453

Ratio to Provincial Population 2.34%

BURSA

Registered 102.017

Ratio to Provincial Population 3.59%

Detailed information on the other provinces is shown on Chart 1.

As one of the most important crossroads of human history, Anatolian lands have hosted many human mobilities in history. In this respect, immigration history of Turkey can also be read as history of very important social and political developments. Prof. Dr. Kemal H. Karpat, who is one of the most important connoisseurs in the fields of history and migration, says in the preface of a book called "Türkiye'nin Göç Tarihi: 14. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Türkiye'ye Göçler"¹ (Migration History of Turkey: Migration to Turkey from 14th Century to 21st Century) that "Turkey, in brief, was established, has been changed and is a national state now thanks to migration." It is also stated in this very book that immigrant-refugee traffic for the Anatolian lands continued intensively throughout the history of the Republic. It is estimated that the number of immigrants and refugees coming to Turkey from the year 1923 to the time of the great migration which started with Syrians today is between 1.8 and 2 million.² It is also known that those who came to Turkey were chosen from Turkish nobility as a means of the Republican "nation state" policy.³ These immigrants and refugees from Balkans, Central Asia, Caucasus and Middle East, who were Ottoman remnants and mostly Turkish nobles, have become one of the most serious decisions of the new Republic of Turkey, not only socially, but also politically and strategically. Turkish society has become diversified and strengthened with these immigrants. Immigration was quite successfully managed via Population and Settlement Laws and turned into a contribution to the society in those years.

1 M. M. Erdoğan - A. Kaya (2015) Türkiye'nin Göç Tarihi: 14. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Türkiye'ye Göçler, İstanbul Bilgi University Press, İstanbul.

2 K. Kirişçi - S. Karaca (2015) Hoşgörü ve Çelişkiler: 1989, 1991 ve 2011'de Türkiye'ye Yönelen Kitleli Mülteci Akınları, Türkiye'nin Göç Tarihi: 14. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Türkiye'ye Göçler, İstanbul Bilgi University Press, İstanbul, pg. 295-313.

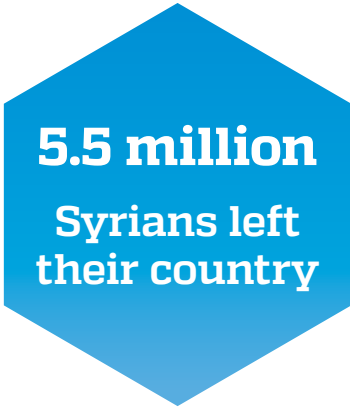
3 A. İçduygu - K. Kirişçi (2009) Land of Diverse Migrations: Challenges of Emigration and Immigration in Turkey. İstanbul Bilgi University Press: İstanbul.

Chart 1: Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Turkey by Provinces (8.12.2016)

Source: Directorate General of Migration Management
[http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik] (Access: 12.12.2016)

| # | PROVINCES | REGISTERED | POPULATION | RATIO TO PROVINCIAL POPULATION |
|----|--------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| | TOTAL | 2.790.767 | 78.741.053 | %3.54 |
| 1 | Adana | 149.074 | 2.183.167 | %6.83 |
| 2 | Adiyaman | 24.423 | 602.774 | %4.05 |
| 3 | Afyon | 4.081 | 709.015 | % 0.58 |
| 4 | Ağrı | 849 | 547.210 | % 0.16 |
| 5 | Aksaray | 1.138 | 386.514 | %0.29 |
| 6 | Amasya | 210 | 322.167 | %0.07 |
| 7 | Ankara | 64.613 | 5.270.575 | %1.23 |
| 8 | Antalya | 328 | 2.288.456 | %0.01 |
| 9 | Ardahan | 71 | 99.265 | %0.07 |
| 10 | Artvin | 40 | 168.370 | %0.02 |
| 11 | Aydın | 7.091 | 1.053.506 | %0.67 |
| 12 | Balıkesir | 1839 | 1.186.688 | %0.15 |
| 13 | Bartın | 31 | 190.708 | %0.02 |
| 14 | Batman | 19.281 | 566.633 | %3.40 |
| 15 | Bayburt | 39 | 78.550 | %0.05 |
| 16 | Bilecik | 509 | 212.361 | %0.24 |
| 17 | Bingöl | 731 | 267.184 | %0.27 |
| 18 | Bitlis | 655 | 340.449 | %0.19 |
| 19 | Bolu | 988 | 291.095 | %0.34 |
| 20 | Burdur | 7.775 | 258.339 | %3.01 |
| 21 | Bursa | 102.017 | 2.842.547 | %3.59 |
| 22 | Çanakkale | 3.405 | 513.341 | %0.66 |
| 23 | Çankırı | 311 | 180.945 | %0.17 |
| 24 | Çorum | 1.446 | 525.180 | %0.28 |
| 25 | Denizli | 7.057 | 993.442 | %0.71 |
| 26 | Diyarbakır | 28.931 | 1.654.196 | %1.75 |
| 27 | Düzce | 562 | 360.388 | %0.16 |
| 28 | Edirne | 6.486 | 402.537 | %1.61 |
| 29 | Elazığ | 5.017 | 574.304 | %0.87 |
| 30 | Erzincan | 170 | 222.918 | %0.08 |
| 31 | Erzurum | 504 | 762.312 | %0.07 |
| 32 | Eskişehir | 2.018 | 826.716 | %0.24 |
| 33 | Gaziantep | 318.748 | 1.931.839 | %16.50 |
| 34 | Giresun | 146 | 426.686 | %0.03 |
| 35 | Gümüşhane | 65 | 151.449 | %0.04 |
| 36 | Hakkâri | 878 | 278.775 | %0.31 |
| 37 | Hatay | 377.198 | 1.533.507 | %24.60 |

| # | PROVINCES | REGISTERED | POPULATION | RATIO TO PROVINCIAL POPULATION |
|----|---------------|------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| 38 | Iğdır | 79 | 192.435 | %0.04 |
| 39 | Isparta | 6.129 | 421.766 | %1.45 |
| 40 | Istanbul | 418.653 | 14.657.434 | %2.86 |
| 41 | Izmir | 97.453 | 4.168.415 | %2.34 |
| 42 | Kahramanmaraş | 86.347 | 1.096.610 | %7.87 |
| 43 | Karabük | 357 | 236.978 | %0.15 |
| 44 | Karaman | 508 | 242.196 | %0.21 |
| 45 | Kars | 143 | 292.660 | %0.05 |
| 46 | Kastamonu | 719 | 372.633 | %0.19 |
| 47 | Kayseri | 54.464 | 1.341.056 | %4.06 |
| 48 | Kırıkkale | 682 | 270.271 | %0.25 |
| 49 | Kırklareli | 2.075 | 346.973 | %0.60 |
| 50 | Kırşehir | 662 | 225.562 | %0.29 |
| 51 | Kilis | 121.940 | 130.655 | %93.33 |
| 52 | Kocaeli | 26.227 | 1.780.055 | %1.47 |
| 53 | Konya | 69.830 | 2.130.544 | %3.28 |
| 54 | Kütahya | 347 | 571.463 | %0.06 |
| 55 | Malatya | 19.841 | 772.904 | %2.57 |
| 56 | Manisa | 5.872 | 1.380.366 | %0.43 |
| 57 | Mardin | 93.333 | 796.591 | %11.72 |
| 58 | Mersin | 137.292 | 1.745.221 | %7.87 |
| 59 | Muğla | 8.325 | 908.877 | %0.92 |
| 60 | Muş | 813 | 408.728 | %0.20 |
| 61 | Nevşehir | 5.520 | 286.767 | %1.92 |
| 62 | Niğde | 3.159 | 346.114 | %0.91 |
| 63 | Ordu | 621 | 728.949 | %0.09 |
| 64 | Osmaniye | 40.823 | 512.873 | %7.96 |
| 65 | Rize | 612 | 328.979 | %0.19 |
| 66 | Sakarya | 6.744 | 953.181 | %0.71 |
| 67 | Samsun | 3.888 | 1.279.884 | %0.30 |
| 68 | Siirt | 3.126 | 320.351 | %0.98 |
| 69 | Sinop | 69 | 204.133 | %0.03 |
| 70 | Sivas | 2.116 | 618.617 | %0.34 |
| 71 | Şanlıurfa | 401.711 | 1.892.320 | %21.23 |
| 72 | Şırnak | 14.315 | 490.184 | %2.92 |
| 73 | Tekirdağ | 5.739 | 937.910 | %0.61 |
| 74 | Tokat | 779 | 593.990 | %0.13 |
| 75 | Trabzon | 1.998 | 768.417 | %0.26 |
| 76 | Tunceli | 88 | 86.076 | %0.10 |
| 77 | Uşak | 1.200 | 353.048 | %0.34 |
| 78 | Van | 1.597 | 1.096.397 | %0.15 |
| 79 | Yalova | 2.623 | 233.009 | %1.13 |
| 80 | Yozgat | 2.921 | 419.440 | %0.70 |
| 81 | Zonguldak | 302 | 595.907 | %0.05 |



**5.5 million
Syrians left
their country**

In the 87 years prior to the start of Syrian refugees' coming in 2011, around a total of 1.8-2 million immigrants-refugees, most of whom were Turkish nobles, provide us with some important clues for assessing the numerical quantity of Syrian refugees and coming up with policies about them. The political turmoil in Syria and the subsequent refugee floods that began in April 2011 with civil war has been continuing for over 5.5 years. The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey reached 3.1-3.2 million by December 2016. The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey reached 3.1-3.2 million by December 2016. 2,783,617 of them are under Temporary Protection (TP) and 300,000 of them are currently pre-registered (PR) and, due to security controls, waiting to be approved to TP status. In addition to Syrians, Turkey has accepted 850-900 thousand refugees from various countries, especially Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan since 2011. Approximately 500 thousand of them have moved to Europe in 2014 and 2015, while 300-350 thousand of them have stayed in Turkey. In other words, the number of refugees in Turkey reached 3.4-3.5 million by December 2016. Turkey received 1.8 million refugees in 87 years, most of whom are Turkish nobles, and had them settled since the very beginning; on the other hand, since 2011 Turkey has received as many as twice the number of refugees it had received in almost 87 years, but has not arranged any placement since the arrivals are "temporary". More than 92% of the refugees in Turkey are scattered all over Turkey with their own will and wishes, and in this way they have become "urban refugees." This shows that despite Turkey is familiar with migrant issues, since 2011 it has been facing a gigantic trend that could not even be compared with the previous ones in any way.

I-A. Legal and Administrative Regulations on Refugees in Turkey

Turkey has made a number of arrangements on refugees and foreigners who are not citizens but in other status in accordance with international law and also with the aim of getting closer to EU legislation.⁴ The latest regulations, especially in 2013 and 2014, are of importance both in general and in particular for the local governments.

International Law

"Refugee" is a legal status. This status was developed in the international context mostly with the humanitarian plight of people in World War II, which caused almost 20 million people to leave their homes and countries. In 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 14/1) it is stated that "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

When the reason why a person who has escaped from his country and is seeking asylum in another country is justified, the person has the status of "refugee." The

⁴ For a general idea on refugee issues and legal regulations on refugees in Turkey: Nuray Ekşi (2014) *Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Hukuku*, İstanbul: Beta.

UN defines the refugee as "someone who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." The legal status of refugees has been determined internationally in 1951 Geneva Convention and in "1967 Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Legal Status of Refugees." Parties to the validity of the contract have been given two important matters of exception, one related to history (two options as 'excluding the cases before 1951' or 'including all cases in all times') and the other related to geographical area.

The legal status of refugees has been determined internationally in the 1951 Geneva Convention and in the 1967 "Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Legal Status of Refugees".

Turkey's international obligations with regard to asylum seekers and refugees have also been laid down within the framework of the "1951 Geneva Convention" and the "1967 Protocol on the Legal Status of Refugees". Turkey, one of the first countries to be a party to the Geneva Convention, announced on 29 August 1961 that it would uphold the exception on "geographical restriction" in the convention, which means that whatever the reason, it would not consider those from outside Europe as "refugees". Many parties to the 1951 agreement had used this exception for a while and then gave up on it considering that it is the "situation" rather than the "place where one comes from" that should determine the decision. Today, there are no countries that are still upholding this geographical restriction other than Congo, Madagascar, Monaco and Turkey.

National Legislation

Turkey once again adopted the principle of geographical restriction with the "Foreigners and International Protection Law", which was enacted in 2013 and which constitutes the legal infrastructure for immigration and refugees, and with the secondary legislation, especially "Temporary Protection Regulation", which was enacted in the following year. In other words, although international law defines them as "refugees", Turkey does not officially consider those coming from outside of Europe to Turkey as "refugees" regardless of their condition. The new legislation describes those who come to Turkey from other countries with the following statuses: "refugees" (only from Europe), "conditional refugees", "international protection" and "temporary protection". The legal status of the Syrians in Turkey is "temporary protection" in the framework of the most recent "Temporary Protection Regulation".

Turkey introduced the Foreigners and International Protection Law in April 2013 for the first time in the framework of the studies initiated with also EU's influence since 1999 and, by establishing Directorate General of Migration Management of the Ministry of Interior (DGMM) in the frame of this law, turned to a new policy where humans and their rights are the basis, civil initiative is the forerunner, and security approach is partly abandoned. This law was also structured in consideration of the fact that Turkey is gradually becoming a "target" country in terms of irregular and mass migration.

Turkey, one of the first countries to be a party to the Geneva Convention, announced on 29 August 1961 that it would uphold the exception on “geographical restriction” in the convention, which means that whatever the reason, it would not consider those from outside Europe as “refugees”.

However, it is a “misfortune” that the establishment and structuring of the DGMM coincided with this time of crisis, which is very rare even in world history and which is not even comparable to any case in Turkey’s history in terms of greatness. DGMM was institutionalized only in April 2014, and it was only after that the authorities were taken over by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior. In this period, even the recruitment of refugees was adversely affected by this new formation process and the central registration process for the off-camp refugees began only in 2014 through the system called GÖÇ-NET.⁵

As could be expected, the “Temporary Protection Regulation”, which was published on 22 October 2014 in Turkey, who had to face one of the world’s most serious humanitarian crises after April 2011, was also framed by the Syrian crisis. For the first time, the concept of “conditional refugee” in addition to “refugee” has been included in the new regulations, in which the geographical reservation set out by Turkey in the Geneva Convention is retained with its logic. The regulations did not set a time limit for “temporary protection”, but defined the framework of the services to be provided to “conditional refugees”, and also prepared for the long-term dimension of the issue by referring to “harmonization” as well. However, it should be noted that the main idea of these regulations is not based on “rights” of refugees and the “obligation” imposed on the state in this sense, but rather on the “well-intentioned support of the host to the guests - within the bounds of possibility-”. Although both the law and the regulation draw a general framework, it is understood that these regulations have been made in a way that allows special arrangements for the Syrians. Provisional Article 1 of the Temporary Protection Regulation clarifies the status issue by making a special regulation for the Syrians:

“The citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic, stateless persons and refugees who have arrived at or crossed our borders coming from Syrian Arab Republic as part of a mass influx or individually for temporary protection purposes due to the events that have taken place in Syrian Arab Republic since 28 April 2011 shall be covered under temporary protection, even if they have filed an application for international protection. Individual applications for international protection shall not be processed during the implementation of temporary protection.” (Temporary Protection Regulation, Provisional Article 1)

Process Management

Syrian originated mass humanitarian mobility, which started in April 29, 2011 and continued ceaselessly within the “open door policy” framework until 2016, is one of the biggest crises in the history of the world as well as the history of Turkey. The political crisis in Syria, contrary to anticipation, did not end in a short time but deepened, got out of control and eventually led a huge chaos in the region.

⁵ The “POL-NET” system that was previously used for transactions on the issue of foreigners in Turkey was transferred to GÖÇ-NET, which is on the initiative of the DGMM, after the Foreigners and International Protection Act.

As the authority in Syria and -partially- Iraq stopped functioning, the human escape to Turkey and other neighboring countries has not only been limited to Syria. More than 4.5-5 million people have entered Turkey since April 2011, 3.5 million of whom are Syrians and about 1 million are from other countries. This number, equivalent to an average of 2350 people per day, reached 100,000 people in a single day in some periods (eg Kobani case). About 1-1.5 million of those who came to Turkey went to Europe especially in 2014 and 2015, so 3.5 million refugees stayed in Turkey. However, because of its nature, it is not possible for a massive influx of this intensity, wherever in the world it takes place, to be controlled easily. Public institutions, local governments and especially social support and acceptance at extraordinary levels in Turkey have led to a miraculous success in the management of this process. It would be right to say that this process could have led to enormous problems, especially if it were not for the extraordinary effort by every single public institution and staff serving in the region. They should be given credit for it.⁶

Regulations on who would have authority for the issues on foreigners and refugees in Turkey were legitimized on April 11, 2013, at a time when the number of Syrians in Turkey reached 700,000. These regulations were made in accordance with universal principles, and, with the exception of the protection of the geographical reservation, in a highly "liberal" way. DGMM, the subject-related institution, was able to start its activities in April 2014, one year after the enactment of the law. This also caused a complication in process management in Turkey.

Although according to the law in Turkey the responsible institution for immigration and refugees in Turkey was designated as DGMM, the dimensions and progress of the crisis have also brought the Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) to the forefront. Currently, AFAD is still working with DGMM as one of the two most important institutions in the process. Undoubtedly, the fact that AFAD is an institution affiliated to the Prime Ministry and it has special/flexible authorities on spending made great contribution to its involvement in the process. AFAD has been extremely successful especially in providing the first support for those who crossed the border and establishing and managing the 26 camps with a capacity of 270 thousand in 10 provinces. AFAD is still working on the refugees in camps.⁷ From September 2015 to May 2016, in order to ensure coordination between public institutions, Prime Ministry Immigration and Humanitarian Assistance Chief Advisory was established under the responsibility of Mr. Dr. Murtaza Yetiş, the Chief Advisor to the Prime Minister. This establishment has undertaken many important works, including the thematic working group meetings and the need analysis study, prepared for EU negotiations as a document of the Ministry of Development. In May 2016, with the decision of the Cabinet, this Chief Advisory was assigned to work on other matters and the coordination task

It should be noted that the main idea of these regulations is not based on "rights" of refugees and the "obligation" imposed on the state in this sense, but rather on the "well-intentioned support of the host to the guests -within the bounds of possibility-."

⁶ See M.Murat Erdoğan (2015) Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler: Toplumsal Kabul ve Uyum, Bilgi University Press, İstanbul.

⁷ The AFAD, which operates under the responsibility of Deputy Prime Minister, previously worked under the leadership of Mr. Beşir Atalay, Mr. Numan Kurtulmuş and Mr. Yalçın Akdoğan. Since May 24, 2016, Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Veysi Kaynak has undertaken this task.

Because of its nature, it is not possible for a massive influx of this intensity, wherever in the world it takes place, to be controlled easily. Public institutions, local governments and especially social support and acceptance at extraordinary levels in Turkey have led to a miraculous success in the management of this process.

was given to AFAD, who was working under Deputy Prime Minister of that time, Yalçın Akdoğan. In addition to AFAD's actual intervention in the process, the definition of the task has also been clarified with a regulation established by the Cabinet. According to the decision of the Cabinet, as of April 2016, the coordination task for the refugee issues was given to AFAD, which operates under the Deputy Prime Ministry. Thus, AFAD has become the most important actor in the process management, especially in terms of coordination. AFAD expresses its position on the issue of Syrians as "All the needs of our Syrian guests are being fulfilled under the coordination of AFAD with the joint work of the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Health, National Education, Food and Agriculture and Livestock, Transport and Finance; General Staff; Presidency of Religious Affairs; Undersecretariat of Customs; and Red Crescent."⁸

The coordination task given by the Council of Ministers to AFAD is being discussed because of its content and because AFAD is an institution structured for "emergency management". Since the issue of refugees in Turkey has evolved from "emergency management" to persistence and the ratio of urban refugees has exceeded 90%, a need for a new institution to carry out harmonization programs in a coordinated way is now emphasized. As it is known, the institution which has the initiative about the refugees in Turkey, including the Syrians, under the current legal and administrative regulations, is the Directorate General of Migration Management affiliated to the Ministry of Interior. However, due to the size and urgency of the crisis, AFAD, which is under the Prime Ministry, also played an important role in the process. It is clear that this situation developed especially between 2011-2014 in the frame of the dynamic structure of the subject, the "temporary" sense and the need for "emergency management", which has developed in parallel with the former one. In addition to DGMM and AFAD, there are other ministries and institutions that has played an extremely important role in the process. These are local governments, in particular municipalities, and non- governmental organizations, Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Development, Presidency of Religious Affairs and Red Crescent. The existence of more than 3.5 million refugees reaching 4.5-5% of the Turkish population reveals the need for new legal, institutional and administrative regulations. In this kind of restructuring, the initiatives of local governments, especially municipalities, should be increased. There is a need for the establishment of a presidency/undersecretariat or a ministry affiliated to the Prime Ministry specifically with regard to migration and refugee issues.⁹

⁸ AFAD: <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tr/2373/Giris> (Access: 10.12.2016)

⁹ As an example of the proposal for the establishment of a presidency/undersecretariat or a ministry affiliated to the Prime Ministry, as well as to give more authority and resources to the local governments: M. Murat Erdoğan- Can Ünver (2015) Türk İş Dünyasının Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler Konusundaki Görüş, Düşünce ve Önerileri, TİSK, Ankara, page 26. Erdoğan and Ünver suggest that the Ministry of Family and Social Policies should be restructured as two separate ministries called "Ministry of Women and Family" and "Ministry of Social Policies and Orientation" in order to make the process healthier.

I-B. Refugees in Turkey

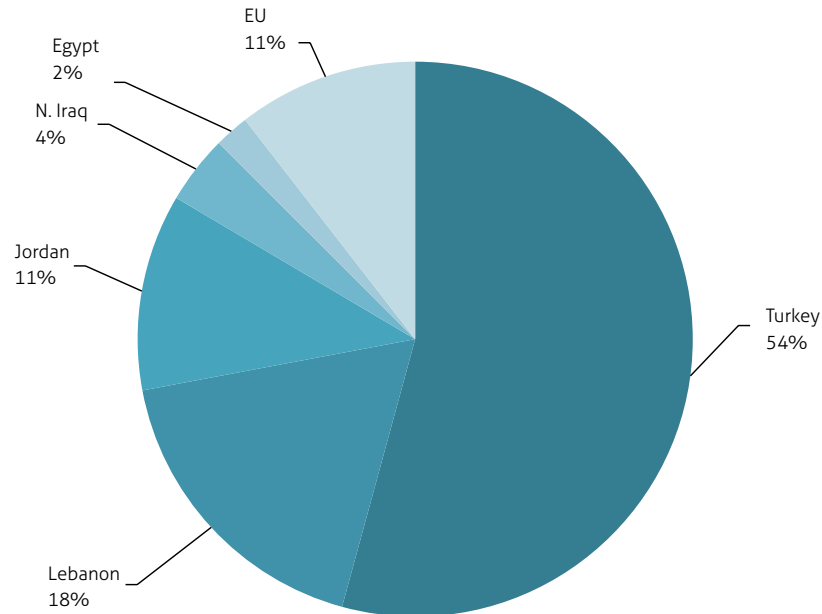
One of the most serious human tragedies in the history of the world has been going on in Syria since 2011. The anti-regime demonstrations in Syria, which began on 15 March 2011, soon turned into a serious conflict and subsequently a civil war, and then began a great and dramatic human escape towards the neighboring countries with serious conflicts and subsequent civil war. The tragedy that Syrians have been experiencing, which has reached a dimension that has rarely been encountered in the history of the world, is described by UNHCR as "the greatest wave of migration in the recent history". In Syria, which had a population of 22.4 million in 2011, at least 250 thousand people lost their lives after April 2011, hundreds of thousands were injured, and 6 to 9 million people had to leave their homes. According to UNHCR data, as of September 2016, at least 4.8 million Syrian went to neighboring countries and about 700,000 Syrians went to Europe, the United States or Canada. The number of Syrians fleeing the country in this framework has exceeded 5.5 million. In fact, the existence of millions of refugee candidates who are watching for an opportunity from the fighting forces to escape from their country is another reality.

Syrian crisis affected primarily Syrians and then the neighboring countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Syria's first collective population movement to Turkey, which shares a border of 911 kilometers with Syria, started with a group of 252 people from the Cilvegözü border crossing in Yayladağı district of Hatay province on 29 April 2011 and then continued uninterrupted for the last 5 years. The policy of the Turkish government as "The borders for these guests who escaped from persecution and war are open and will be so, their basic needs in Turkey will be met and that no one will be forcibly returned" and its "open door policy", which is fully compatible with international protection principles that also support the former policy, have been maintained since the beginning of the process even though some trouble out of safety concerns was experienced from time to time. According to the information given by DGMM, the number of Syrian refugees registered in Turkey and granted their TP status by 1 December 2016 reached 2,783,617. In addition to this number, there are about 300 thousand Syrians who are pre-registered and being investigated for the grant of TP in Turkey. In other words, at least 3.1 million, 3.2 million if realistic, Syrians lives in Turkey now. It is known that more than 300 thousand refugees from different countries as Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Pakistan has entered Turkey after Syrians "opened the door" in April 2011. As a result, Turkey has as many refugees as 5% of its population. This has led Turkey to become the country with the biggest refugee population in the world since 2014.

In Syria, which had a population of 22.4 million in 2011, at least 250 thousand people lost their lives after April 2011, hundreds of thousands were injured, and 6 to 9 million people had to leave their homes. According to UNHCR data, as of September 2016, at least 4.8 million Syrian went to neighboring countries and about 700,000 Syrians went to Europe, the United States or Canada. The number of Syrians fleeing the country in this framework has exceeded 5.5 million.

Graphic 1: Distribution of Syrian Refugees in Different Countries (December 2016 / 5.7 million)

Source: Directorate General of Migration Management & UNHCR
(According to the data of UNHCR, the number of Syrian refugees registered in the countries of the region is 4.8 million, but this number does not include the 600-700 thousand Syrians in Europe and Syrians who are "pre-registered" and waiting for their TP approval in Turkey. With these numbers, it is estimated that the number of Syrians living outside their country is over 5.7 million.)

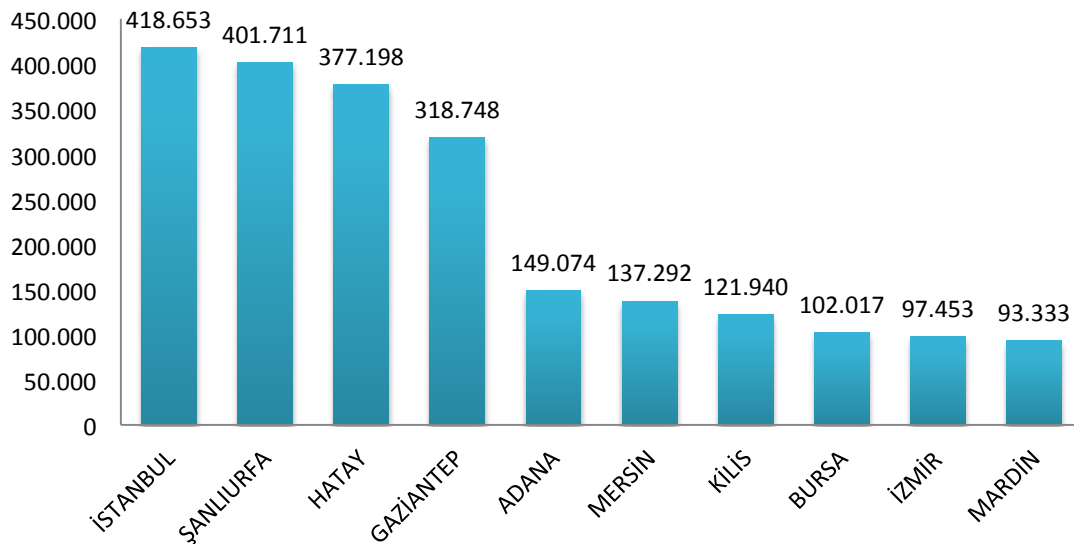


As of December 2016, Turkey alone has been hosting 54% of the approximately 5.5-5.7 million Syrians who left their country. Turkey is followed by Lebanon (1 million 17 thousand), Jordan (655 thousand), Northern Iraq (228 thousand) and Egypt (115 thousand). After 2014, especially in 2015, a total of 1.3-1.5 million refugees arrived in EU countries, which have had to face a serious migration wave from both Syria and other countries. However, only half of these refugees, that is, approximately 600-700 thousand of them, are Syrians; the other half are non-Syrians.

Turkey has as many refugees as 5% of its population.

Graphic 2: Top 10 Provinces in Turkey Where Syrians Under Temporary Protection Live

Source: Directorate General of Migration Management
[http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik] (Access: 08.12.2016)

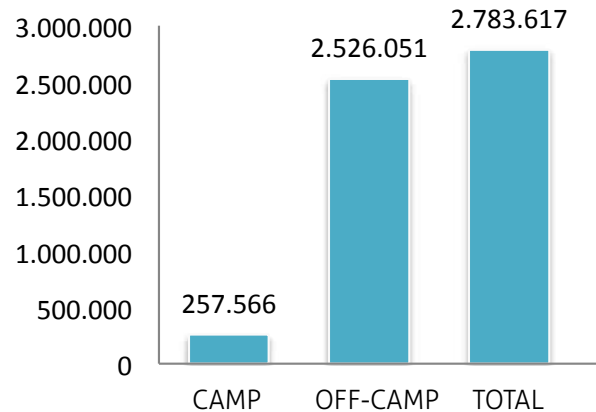


Although the first part of the Syrians who came to Turkey was placed in rapidly built camps, as the influx and increase in number continued ceaselessly, many Syrians started to live outside of the camps, not only in the border region, but in every region of Turkey and eventually the number of them exceeded the number of Syrians who live in the camps. The number of Syrians living in 26 refugee camps located in 10 provinces of Turkey is 257,566 as of December 2016. This number is only 8% of the total number of Syrian refugees in Turkey. The remaining 92% live in Turkey as "urban refugees" distributed in 81 provinces. The registration problems experienced in the beginning due to excessive intensity are also getting corrected every passing day. Currently, registrations are being renewed in cooperation with DGMM and UNHCR.

This has led Turkey to become the country with the biggest refugee population in the world since 2014.

Graphic 3: Numbers of Camp and Off-camp Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Turkey ¹⁰

Source: Directorate General of Migration Management
[http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik] (Access: 09.12.2016)



The number of Syrians living in 26 refugee camps located in 10 provinces of Turkey is 257,566 as of December 2016. This number is only 8% of the total number of Syrian refugees in Turkey. The remaining 92% live in Turkey as “urban refugees” distributed in 81 provinces.

As of December 1, 2016, the demographic characteristics of more than 2.7 million Syrians under TP in Turkey show that the number of Syrians who are between the 0-4 age group is more than 393 thousand. This does not include those not under TP.¹⁰ Considering that the Syrians in Turkey have been in Turkey for an average of 3 years, it can be said that more than 230 thousand of these 393 thousand Syrian babies were born in Turkey.¹¹ This is an important issue that must be taken into consideration in future projections.

It is seen that 44% of the Syrians in Turkey are children and teenagers under the age of 18 and more than 75% of the Syrians are children and women in need of special protection. It should be taken into consideration that education and “family reunification” of children and teenagers will be important agenda items, especially in the process of “permanence”. The young population also demonstrates the need for education. The number of school-age (5-17) Syrian children in Turkey is more than 850 thousand. Only 36% of these children, that is 311 thousand of them, still have the opportunity to go to school. However, only 62 thousand of them go to Turkish public schools and have the chance to receive Turkish education. The rest of the 255 thousand children, whether in or out of the camps, go to the schools called Temporary Training Center, which have Arabic education in accordance with the Syrian curriculum. Unfortunately, these schools have serious problems about the quality of education. But the most tragic fact is that at least 550 thousand of these children can not receive any education at all. It is clear that this is one of the most serious problems for both Syrian refugees and Turkey in the medium and long term. But the need is extraordinarily great and costly. At

¹⁰ These numbers do not include pre-registered Syrians.

¹¹ In this regard, the official number based on hospital records is 158 thousand as of March 2016. However, even the number given only for 2015 means 70 thousand births, that is, 191 births a day. In this framework, to be more realistic, it is clear that more than 200,000 of the 393 thousand babies aged between 0 and 4 were born in Turkey.

least 40 thousand new teachers and 30 thousand classrooms are needed for 80% of Syrian children to be integrated into the Turkish education system. This also reveals a huge financial statement. Only the annual cost of teachers would be more than € 700 million.¹² In addition, every day it is getting more and more difficult for the Syrian children who are forced to earn money by working and who are also experiencing motivation problems due to trauma, to be taken to schools. The effect of situation could clearly be seen in the numbers of Syrian children in the schools. While there is a relatively high rate of participation in primary school, it appears that this rate considerably decreases in middle school and high school. Special efforts must be made to ensure that there would be no more "lost generations."¹³

At least 40 thousand new teachers and 30 thousand classrooms are needed for 80% of Syrian children to be integrated into the Turkish education system.

12 The gross salary of teachers in public schools in Turkey is estimated as approximately 4,000 TL, ie 1,250 €.

13 The details are given in the "ERG-Education Monitoring Report-2015-2016". The final part of this report was written by M. Murat Erdoğan with the title "Education of Syrian Refugee Children". <http://www.egitimreformugirisimi.org/sites/www.egitimreformugirisimi.org/files/EIR2015-16.17.11.16.web.pdf> (Access: 12.12.2016).

Chart 2: Age and Sex Rates of Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Turkey

Source: Directorate General of Migration Management [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik] (Access: 09.12.2016)

| AGE GROUP | | NUMBER (THOUSAND) |
|---------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 0-4 | NEWBORN | 393 |
| 5-17 | SCHOOL-AGE | 867 |
| 15-65 | WORKING-AGE | 1.657 |
| 66+ | | 48 |
| TOTAL* | | 2.783 |

| SEX | MEN | WOMEN |
|--------|--------|--------|
| NUMBER | 1.482 | 1.301 |
| RATIO | 53,3 % | 46,7 % |

* "TOTAL" number of TP is 2,783,617. However, since the 15-17 age group is included in both the "school-age" and the "working-age" groups, there is an extra of 184 thousand people in the numbers.

| AGE | MEN | WOMEN | TOTAL |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| TOTAL | 1.482.591 | 1.301.026 | 2.783.617 |
| 0-4 | 203.677 | 189.814 | 393.491 |
| 5-9 | 201.182 | 190.029 | 391.211 |
| 10-14 | 152.809 | 139.464 | 292.273 |
| 15-18 | 133.262 | 111.950 | 245.212 |
| 19-24 | 221.973 | 175.598 | 397.571 |
| 25-29 | 148.774 | 115.540 | 264.314 |
| 30-34 | 121.077 | 96.674 | 217.751 |
| 35-39 | 86.690 | 73.872 | 160.562 |
| 40-44 | 59.619 | 56.256 | 115.875 |
| 45-49 | 48.193 | 44.317 | 92.510 |
| 50-54 | 37.552 | 36.260 | 73.812 |
| 55-59 | 25.349 | 25.426 | 50.775 |
| 60-64 | 17.643 | 18.074 | 35.717 |
| 65-69 | 11.353 | 11.726 | 23.079 |
| 70-74 | 6.159 | 7.129 | 13.288 |
| 75-79 | 3.718 | 4.525 | 8.306 |
| 80-84 | 1.983 | 2.538 | 4.521 |
| 85-89 | 1.075 | 1.250 | 2.325 |
| 90+ | 440 | 584 | 1.024 |



II.

IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND DEVELOPMENT IN ISTANBUL¹

II-A. Dynamics of Internal Migration in Istanbul

Istanbul is the center of attraction for people seeking jobs not only in Turkey but also in the region. The human migration to Istanbul, which is symbolized with the metaphor "where land is gold", is very unique in the world. When the population change is examined, it is seen that the population of Istanbul which was 1,166,477 in 1950, increased by 13 times to 14,657,434 in 2015. In 1950, the share of Istanbul's population in Turkey was 5.6% in total population; however, it rose to 10.6% in 1980 and to 18.1% in 2015 as a result of the rapid increases that followed. In other words, at the beginning of the 1950s, every twenty of the people who lived in Turkey lived in Istanbul, while in 1980 this number reached one in ten, and today it is one in five.² With a decrease in the number of net migrations in recent years, Istanbul has received between 339 thousand and 439 thousand annual "internal" migration between the years 2008 and 2014. The number of immigrants who arrived and settled in Istanbul only in 2014 is 438,998. In other words, an average of 1.202 people came to Istanbul each day in that year. In 2014, 424,662 people left Istanbul, so the net migration in 2014 was 14.336. Though the number of net migrations is low, extraordinarily great human mobility is noteworthy. This fact, which is determined within the framework of the Address Based Population Registration System (ABPRS), points to a very difficult situation to be managed in Turkey, especially in terms of local governments.

¹ The data used in this section is mainly based on the "Measurement of the Quality of Urban Life in Istanbul, 2014" prepared by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) Directorate of Urban Planning (supported by İSTKA). In this study, the documents created by getting analyzed and compiled from various sources under the titles of "Social Structure Presentation" and "Quality of Life" have been prepared as parts of the study called "Revision of 1/100000 Scaled Istanbul Environmental Plan", which continues to work and has not yet reached the final stage. We would like to thank the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Directorate of Urban Planning who shared their work with us to be used in this report.

² IMM Directorate of Urban Planning, Revision of 1/100000 Scaled Istanbul Environment Plan - Quality of Urban Life Index.

The human migration to Istanbul, which is symbolized with the metaphor “where land is gold”, is very unique in the world.

As stated in Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM) Directorate of Urban Planning’s work, Quality of Life, migration is the main reason of the increase in Istanbul’s urban population in the last seventy years. It should be emphasized that the “migration-immigrant” expressions mentioned here do not include the refugees in Istanbul, whose number has extremely increased especially in the last five years. When we look closely at the dynamics of migration flows to Istanbul, Istanbul’s central location in the main migration flows in Turkey becomes even more evident. Between 1980 and 1990, Istanbul received 9% of the migrants in Turkey while it received 17% between 2010 and 2015. As of 2015, 45% of the population residing in Istanbul was born in Istanbul while 55% was born outside Istanbul. Another proof that migration is highly influential in the population growth of Istanbul is that population growth in Istanbul has been continuing despite the declining trend of birth rates.³

³ IMM Directorate of Urban Planning, Revision of 1/100000 Scaled Istanbul Environment Plan - Quality of Urban Life Index.

Chart 3: Population of Istanbul - Immigration / Emigration / Population Growth Rate

Source: TÜİK & www.nufusu.com



| Year | Population | Population Growth Rate (%) | Immigration | Emigration | Net Migration Difference |
|------|------------|----------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 2015 | 14.657.434 | 1.95 | 453.407 | 402.864 | 50.543 |
| 2014 | 14.377.018 | 1.53 | 438.998 | 424.662 | 14.336 |
| 2013 | 14.160.467 | 2.21 | 437.922 | 371.601 | 66.321 |
| 2012 | 13.854.740 | 1.69 | 384.535 | 354.074 | 30.461 |
| 2011 | 13.624.240 | 2.78 | 450.445 | 328.663 | 121.782 |
| 2010 | 13.255.685 | 2.64 | 439.515 | 336.932 | 102.583 |
| 2009 | 12.915.158 | 1.72 | 388.467 | 348.986 | 39.481 |
| 2008 | 12.697.164 | 0.98 | 374.868 | 348.193 | 26.675 |



Photo: Ozan Köse/AFP/Getty

II-B. International Migration and Refugee Influx into Istanbul

The great attraction of Istanbul is of high importance to international immigrants and especially to refugees. 33% of the foreigners who have a residence permit in Turkey reside in Istanbul. It should not be forgotten that this is not the actual percentage but the "minimum" possible, because it is known that many refugees live in Istanbul even though they are registered in other provinces. Although the numbers are not known precisely, there is information that the number of non-Turkish citizens living in Istanbul by 2016 is around 1 million. At least 540 thousand of more than 3.1 million Syrian refugees in Turkey, ie between 17% and 20% of them, live in Istanbul. These immigrants are mainly concentrated in Esenyurt, Başakşehir, Sultan-gazi, Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar, Zeytinburnu and Fatih districts.⁴

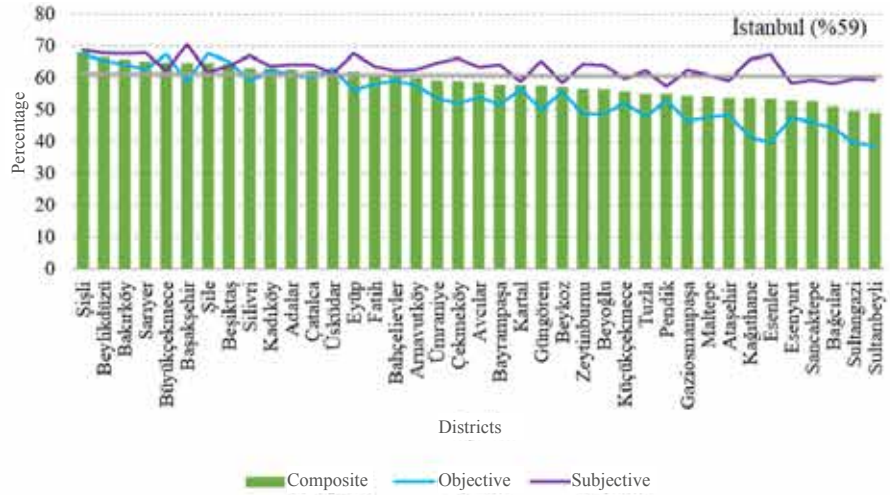
When we look at the analysis of "quality of life through objective and subjective criteria", which was conducted by IMM Directorate of Urban Planning, we could not help but noticing the remarkable fact that there is an inverse correlation between the preferences of the refugees and the services provided by the local governments to the refugees.

When the population change is examined, it is seen that the population of Istanbul which was 1,166,477 in 1950, increased by 13 times to 14,657,434 in 2015.

⁴ IMM Directorate of Urban Planning, Revision of 1/100000 Scaled Istanbul Environment Plan - Quality of Urban Life Index.

Graphic 4: Result Values for Quality of Life in Istanbul Districts and Proportional Distribution of Objective-Subjective Data That Constitute This Value, 2016 (%)

Source: IMM Directorate of Urban Planning, Revision of 1/100000 Scaled Istanbul Environment Plan - Quality of Urban Life Index



As of 2015, 45% of the population residing in Istanbul was born in Istanbul while 55% was born outside Istanbul.

Although there are some exceptions, it could be seen that poverty is widespread, conservatism-religiosity is significant, solidarity is dominant in social environment and life is relatively cheaper in the places where refugees prefer/settle in the most. According to the results obtained from all the indexes formed in the work of the IMM, the districts that have the highest quality of life value in Istanbul are the districts of Şişli, Beylikdüzü and Beşiktaş. The first three districts that are pleased with life are Gaziosmanpaşa (80,78%), Çatalca (79,67%) and Adalar (79,65%).⁵

According to the results values for "quality of life" study, which was carried out in 39 provinces of Istanbul and determined on a total of 50 objective and subjective criteria under 12 index headings, the number of refugees are higher in the districts that are generally seen as disadvantaged in terms of quality of life. In this study, where the Istanbul average is determined as 59 points, it is seen that the 6 districts that have the lowest quality of life in Istanbul are Sultanbeyli, Sultangazi, Bağcılar, Esenler, Esenyurt and Sancaktepe. However, it is noteworthy that all of these districts have a higher ratio of refugees, in proportion to their population, than the Istanbul average of 3.26%. In other words, refugees prefer regions that are relatively poorer and, naturally, have less resources, and people in these regions approach refugees more positively. This can be interpreted both as a sign of emotional solidarity and as that refugees can adapt to these regions more easily

⁵ IMM Directorate of Urban Planning, Revision of 1/100000 Scaled Istanbul Environment Plan - Quality of Urban Life Index.

Photo: Bülent Kılıç/AFP



due to cheaper life conditions and conservative structure of the society.⁶ Some international comparative studies on satisfaction in refugee camps have already revealed that there is no serious relationship between life satisfaction in a refugee camp and the technical and logistical infrastructure of the camp. Refugees' "highly emotional state" reveals that they are more affected by the solidarity codes and the society they live with than the opportunities that fine tents or containers in which they live offer them.

⁶ In a study carried out in five countries where Syrian asylum-seekers live, it was determined that there was no direct relationship between the standards of the camps and the "satisfaction" of asylum seekers. See: ORSAM, Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies Report (April 2014) Syrians on the Edge: The Status of Refugees in Neighboring Countries, <http://www.orsam.org.tr/en/showReport.aspx?ID=2638> (Access: 10.12.2016).

When we look at the analysis of "quality of life through objective and subjective criteria", which was conducted by IMM Directorate of Urban Planning, we could not help but noticing the remarkable fact that there is an inverse correlation between the preferences of the refugees and the services provided by the local governments to the refugees. Although there are some exceptions, it could be seen that poverty is widespread, conservatism-religiosity is significant, solidarity is dominant in social environment and life is relatively cheaper in the places where refugees prefer/settle in the most.



540,000

**Syrians in
Istanbul**

61,000

**Pre-registered
Syrians in
Istanbul**

479,000

**Syrians Under
Temporary
Protection in
Istanbul**



3.67%

**Ratio of Refugees to
Population of
Istanbul**



III.

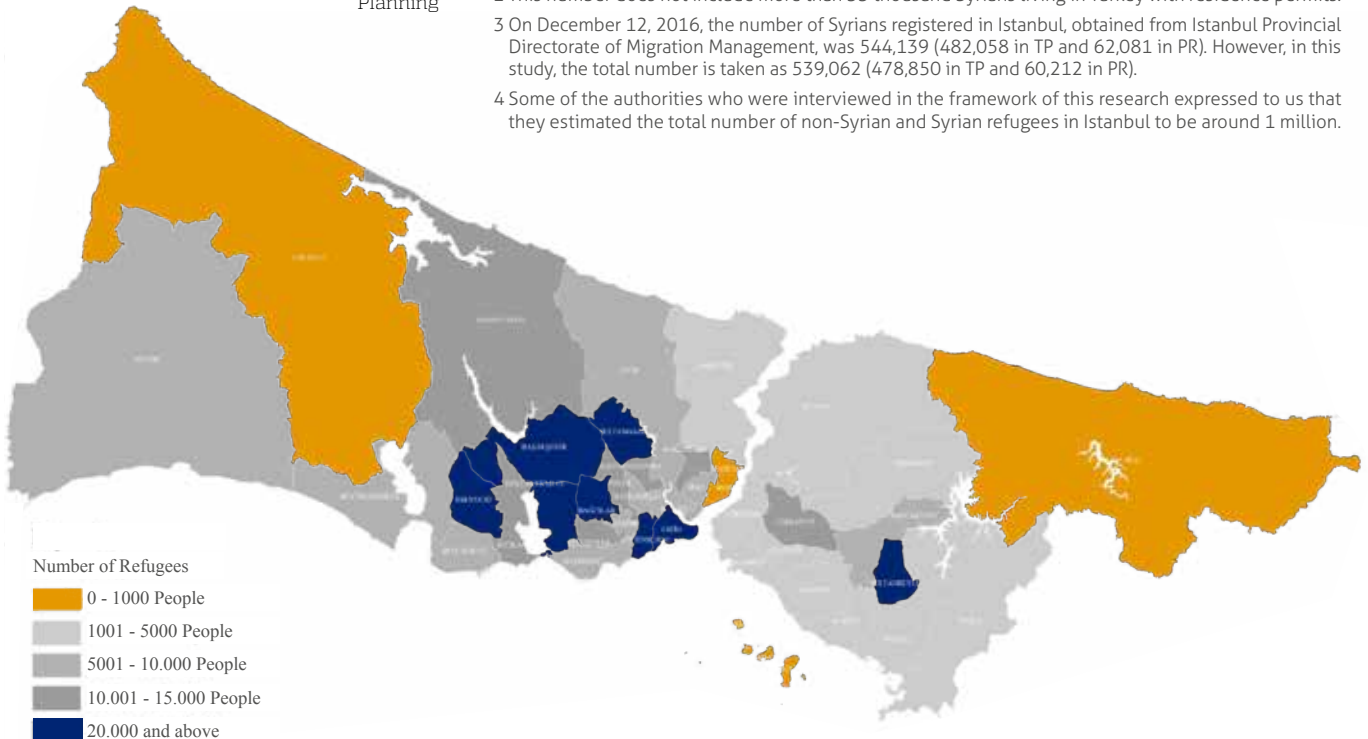
SYRIAN REFUGEES IN ISTANBUL

Determining the numbers of refugees in Istanbul, the most important attraction center for refugees, is more difficult than in other places. For this reason, different numbers could be obtained from different institutions at the same time, and numbers could change by increasing incredibly in this extremely dynamic process. There are two important problems that have been experienced in determining the numbers in Istanbul. The first of these problems arises from the continuation of the registration and updating of the data and also from the policy of granting TP status to Syrians only after security investigation which began in March 2016. Because of this situation, a number of Syrians (about 300 thousand as of December 2016) could not be included in official statistics although they have been registered by DGMM.¹ Therefore, the numbers that DGMM shares with the public as weekly updates include only those who are under TP status. This causes a confusion about what the actual general and province-district based numbers of the Syrian people are. While the number that DGMM revealed as the Syrians in Turkey on December 1, 2016 was 2,783,617, at that time there were also more than 300 thousand Syrians who had pre-registered themselves and been waiting for the results of security investigations to get the TP. The second important problem is specific to Istanbul. Although their TP or PR location is another province, many Syrian refugees come to Istanbul with their own will, without any permission. It is almost impossible to know their exact number.

¹ When it was revealed that the person who carried out the terrorist act in Ankara on February 17, 2016 had a TP identity card, the practice of security investigation started before TP statuses were given, in consideration of the risk of using TP identity documents given to the Syrians in similar terrorist acts. DGMM gives TP status to those who have positive results in security investigation. This has led to the emergence of a new category for Syrian refugees under the name of "pre-registered" (PR).

Graphic 5: Map of Syrian Refugees Population Density in Districts of Istanbul (2016)

Source: IMM Directorate of Urban Planning



As of December 2016, the number of Syrians in TP and PR statuses in Turkey has reached to 3.1 million, respectively 2,790 thousand and 300 thousand.² Also, according to Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, as of November 2016 the number of Syrian refugees in Istanbul is 539,062 in total, 478,850 in TP and 60,212 in PR.³ It should not be forgotten that this number might be higher, but not lower; that is, it is actually the “minimum” number of the refugees. At present, approximately 700 TP transactions per day are made in Istanbul. However, with those who could not be reached and registered officially (although their number considerably lowered when many of them has got appointment for registration), the number of Syrians in Istanbul is estimated to be more than 600 thousand.⁴

In this study titled “Urban Refugees from ‘Detachment’ to ‘Harmonization’ Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul”, the official district based numbers in the table below show 478,850 Syrians covered by TP in Istanbul. Since there is no information on how the total of 60,212 Syrians are distributed in the districts, the numbers in the tables are given only as TP numbers. Taking into consideration that the number of Syrians registered in Istanbul is at least 539,062, which is 13% more than the number of those in TP, it is possible to find the actual number by adding 10-15% more to the district based Syrian refugee numbers in the tables.

2 This number does not include more than 33 thousand Syrians living in Turkey with residence permits.
 3 On December 12, 2016, the number of Syrians registered in Istanbul, obtained from Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, was 544,139 (482,058 in TP and 62,081 in PR). However, in this study, the total number is taken as 539,062 (478,850 in TP and 60,212 in PR).
 4 Some of the authorities who were interviewed in the framework of this research expressed to us that they estimated the total number of non-Syrian and Syrian refugees in Istanbul to be around 1 million.

Photo: Bülent Kılıç/AFP



There are Syrian refugees under temporary protection in each of 39 districts in Istanbul, although the number and population density of them differ in each district. Syrian refugees are highly concentrated in the European side of Istanbul. According to the data of November 2016, 86% of 478,850 Syrians under TP in Istanbul (411,318) live in the European side while 14% of them (67,532) live in the Anatolian side.

Determining the numbers of refugees in Istanbul, the most important attraction center for refugees, is more difficult than in other places.

Istanbul is administratively divided into 39 districts, 25 of which are in the European side and 14 in the Anatolian side. 9,162,919 people, constituting 62.7% of the total population of 14.6 million in Istanbul, live in the European side and 4,997,548 people, 33.5% of the total population, live in the Anatolian side.⁵ According to the distribution of refugees in the districts, the first three districts with the largest number of Syrian refugees in both the European side and Istanbul are Küçükçekmece (38,278), Bağcılar (37,643) and Sultangazi (31,426) while the first three districts with the highest ratio of Syrian refugees to their total population are Zeytinburnu (8,63%), Arnavutköy (7,55%) and Başakşehir (7,48), which are again in the European side.

The district with the most Syrian refugees in the Anatolian side is Sultanbeyli with 20,192 people. With the number of these refugees reaching 6.57% of its own population, Sultanbeyli ranks 9th among 39 districts in terms of the number of refugees, and 5th in terms of the ratio of refugees to its population. The number of Syrian refugees in 11 districts of the Anatolian side, other than Sultanbeyli, Ümraniye (14,858) and Sancaktepe (12,072), is below 5 thousand.

⁵ The geographical size of the European side corresponds to approximately 65% of the total of Istanbul, and the Anatolian side corresponds to 35%.

Chart 4: The Number of Syrian Refugees in Districts of Istanbul (Listed by Numbers and Rates)

Total: 478,850 / European Side (86%) / Anatolian side (14%)

| DISTRICT | POPULATION OF DISTRICT | NUMBER OF SYRIANS (TP) | NUMERICAL RANK | RATIO OF SYRIANS (TP) TO POPULATION (%) | RANK BY RATIO |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---|---------------|
| KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE | 761.064 | 38.278 | 1 | 5,02 | 8 |
| BAĞCILAR | 757.162 | 37.643 | 2 | 4,97 | 9 |
| SULTANGAZİ | 521.524 | 31.426 | 3 | 6,02 | 6 |
| FATİH | 419.345 | 30.747 | 4 | 7,33 | 4 |
| ESENYURT | 742.810 | 29.177 | 5 | 3,92 | 15 |
| BAŞAKŞEHİR | 353.311 | 26.424 | 6 | 7,48 | 3 |
| ZEYTİNBURNU | 289.685 | 25.000 | 7 | 8,63 | 1 |
| ESENLER | 459.983 | 22.678 | 8 | 4,93 | 10 |
| SULTANBEYLİ* | 321.730 | 20.192 | 9 | 6,27 | 5 |
| AVCILAR | 425.228 | 19.554 | 10 | 4,59 | 12 |
| ARNAVUTKÖY | 236.222 | 17.838 | 11 | 7,55 | 2 |
| BAHÇELİEVLER | 602.040 | 17.710 | 12 | 2,94 | 19 |
| GAZİOSMANPAŞA | 501.546 | 17.709 | 13 | 3,53 | 16 |
| ŞİŞLİ | 274.017 | 15.269 | 14 | 5,57 | 7 |
| ÜMRANİYE* | 688.347 | 14.858 | 15 | 2,15 | 23 |
| KAĞITHANE | 437.942 | 14.216 | 16 | 3,24 | 18 |
| GÜNGÖREN | 302.066 | 12.727 | 17 | 4,21 | 13 |
| SANCAKTEPE* | 354.882 | 12.072 | 18 | 3,41 | 17 |
| BEYOĞLU | 242.250 | 11.841 | 19 | 4,88 | 11 |
| BAYRAMPAŞA | 272.374 | 11.004 | 20 | 4,04 | 14 |
| EYÜP | 375.409 | 10.779 | 21 | 2,87 | 20 |

*Anatolian Side

According to the distribution of refugees in the districts, the first three districts with the largest number of Syrian refugees in both Europe and Istanbul are Küçükçekmece (38,278), Bağcılar (37,643) and Sultangazi (31,426) while the first three districts with the highest ratio of Syrian refugees to their total population are Zeytinburnu (8,63%), Arnavutköy (7,55%) and Başakşehir (7,48), which are again in the European side.

| DISTRICT | POPULATION OF DISTRICT | NUMBER OF SYRIANS (TP) | NUMERICAL RANK | RATIO OF SYRIANS (TP) TO POPULATION (%) | RANK BY RATIO |
|----------------------|------------------------|---|----------------|---|---------------|
| BEYLİKDÜZÜ | 279.999 | 6.728 | 22 | 2,40 | 21 |
| BÜYÜKÇEKMECE | 231.064 | 5.555 | 23 | 2,40 | 21 |
| PENDİK* | 681.736 | 4.951 | 24 | 0,72 | 30 |
| TUZLA* | 234.372 | 2.794 | 25 | 1,19 | 25 |
| SİLİVRİ | 165.084 | 2.375 | 26 | 1,43 | 23 |
| ÇEKMEKÖY* | 231.818 | 2.309 | 27 | 0,99 | 27 |
| MALTEPE* | 487.337 | 2.230 | 28 | 0,45 | 34 |
| BAKIRKÖY | 223.248 | 2.191 | 29 | 0,98 | 28 |
| ÜSKÜDAR* | 540.617 | 1.987 | 30 | 0,36 | 35 |
| BEYKOZ* | 249.727 | 1.947 | 31 | 0,77 | 29 |
| KARTAL* | 457.552 | 1.773 | 32 | 0,38 | 36 |
| SARIYER | 344.159 | 1.754 | 33 | 0,50 | 32 |
| ATAŞEHİR* | 419.368 | 1.436 | 34 | 0,03 | 39 |
| KADIKÖY* | 465.954 | 650 | 35 | 0,13 | 37 |
| ÇATALCA | 67.329 | 428 | 36 | 0,63 | 31 |
| BEŞİKTAŞ | 190.033 | 277 | 37 | 0,14 | 38 |
| ADALAR* | 15.623 | 167 | 38 | 1,06 | 26 |
| ŞİLE* | 33.477 | 166 | 39 | 0,49 | 33 |
| TOTAL (TP) | 14.657.434 | 478.850 | | 3,26 | |
| TOTAL (TP+PR) | 14.657.434 | 478.850+60.812 539.062 | | 3,67 | |

*Anatolian Side



IV.

MUNICIPALITIES AND REFUGEES IN TURKEY: LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STATUS

The Municipal Law No. 5393 is basically based on the services to be given to the “citizens”. The concept that includes non-citizens here is “fellow-citizenship”.

However, there may be serious differences in the interpretation of the “law related to the fellow-citizenship”, which leaves an open door for municipalities to carry out some activities for non-citizens.

It is known that the academic reports on Syrian refugees and especially municipalities in Turkey are very limited, except for the works of some municipalities created for their own needs and activities. It is possible to mention two works that helped this report with their data. The first of these is the report of the workshop named as “The Role of Municipalities in Service to Urban Refugees”, which was held on 25-26 November 2015 in cooperation with MMU and UNHCR, and received the authorities and experts of 21 municipalities under the directorate of MMU, Governorship of Istanbul and Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Migration Management as well as academicians.¹ Likewise, the second report also emerged as a workshop product. This report, which compiles the views expressed in the workshop conducted in Istanbul on April 16, 2014 and which was prepared in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Directorate General of Migration Management’s Department of Harmonization and Communication, under Ministry of Interior, provides important clues.

In Turkey, it is generally acknowledged that there is a serious uncertainty as to which bases local governments in general, municipalities in particular, should operate and serve on refugee issues. The main legal sources in this regard are known to be the Law on Municipalities No. 5393 and the Law on Foreigners and International Protection No. 6458. In addition to these, structures such as city councils and voluntary services also address foreigner issues from time to time.

The Municipal Law No. 5393 is basically based on the services to be given to the “citizens”. The concept that includes non-citizens here is “fellow-citizenship”. However, there may be serious differences in the interpretation of the “law related to the fellow-citizenship”, which leaves an open door for municipalities to carry out some activities for non-citizens. In the last five years, there has been a very serious difference between approaches and actions in terms of policies towards Syrian refugees, even among the district municipalities of Istanbul. This alone reveals the complexity of this issue strikingly. Law No. 5393 leaves an “open door” for the services to be provided to refugees, but does not assign a mandatory duty on this issue.

In Turkey, the Municipal Law and other relevant legal regulations include these matters on “refugee” issues:

LAW RELATED TO THE FELLOW-CITIZENSHIP: Article 13 of the Municipal Law No. 5393 is regulated as follows:

5393-Article 13: “Everyone is a fellow-citizen of the county which he lives in. The fellow-citizens shall be entitled to participate in the decisions and services of the municipality, to acquire knowledge about the municipal activities and to benefit from the aids of the municipal

¹ Marmara Municipalities Union (November 2015) Report of the Workshop “The Role of Municipalities in Service to Urban Refugees”, Istanbul http://marmara.gov.tr/UserFiles/Attachments/Publication/Publication_465_Kent-MultecileriRaporu.pdf (Access: 08.12.2016).

administration. ...The municipality shall perform necessary activities to improve the social and cultural relations between the fellow-citizens and to preserve cultural values."

From this section, it could be said that the provisions of "Law Related to the Fellow-Citizenship" have created an opportunity and obligation for municipalities to serve the refugees. However, it should be noted that "residence" is the basis for the approach here. On the other hand, Article 14 of the same law also makes a regulation as that "citizenship" is the basis for services. Article 14 is as follows:

5393-Article 14: "The municipal services shall be rendered in the most appropriate manner at the places nearest to the citizens. It is a basic principle to adopt a procedure most suitable for the disabled and old people as well as for those in destitute and with limited income."

These two provisions of Municipal Law, which appear to be contradictory in the context of municipal services, also affect the activities of the municipalities. Because municipalities are concerned that spending on non-citizens, especially those requiring funding from the municipal budget, may be considered as "irregularity" by the Court of Accounts.

POOR PEOPLE AND THOSE WHO ARE IN DESTITUTE: Article 14 of the Municipal Law No. 5393, which regulates the "duties and responsibilities of municipalities", includes the sentence "It is a basic principle to adopt a procedure most suitable for the disabled and old people as well as for those in destitute and with limited income." Although the previous sentence emphasizes "citizen", it could be argued that it is possible for refugees to be included in municipal services. It is seen in Article 38/n of the same law that "the mayor has the power to use the appropriations reserved in the budget for the poor people and those who are in destitute; to carry out the services in favor of the disabled and to construct houses for disabled."

However, it is also a fact that municipal authorities are acting hesitantly, since the law does not explicitly mention non-citizens. In the field study, it is often stated that, under the supervision of the Court of Accounts, the likelihood of problems occurring in such expenditures is very high.² This state of hesitancy is pointed out in the report of the MMU Workshop as "The open legal framework created by changing relevant legislation to remove the hesitations and ambiguities of municipal assistance, services and employment for refugees is making it difficult for municipalities to decide on the assistance and services for refugees."³

² Concerns on this issue have also been expressed frequently in the workshop organized by MMU. It is stated in the report as "Due to uncertainties in the legal, administrative and financial context, municipalities are concerned about helping and working with refugees. The lack of clear provisions for refugees and a clear legal framework puts municipalities in a difficult position while making decisions about helping and working with refugees." MMU (November 2015) The Role of Municipalities in Service to Urban Refugees Workshop Report, p. 7.

³ MMU (November 2015) The Role of Municipalities in Service to Urban Refugees Workshop Report, p. 15.

It could be said that the provisions of "Law Related to the Fellow-Citizenship" have created an opportunity and obligation for municipalities to serve the refugees.

One of the important institutions that have been established in recent years for the participation of non-citizens in the management process as active fellow-citizens in Turkey is “city councils.”

The Law on Foreigners and International Protection no. 6458 issued in 2013, on the grounds that the municipalities have a role in the issue of refugees and/or provide service to refugees, is far from sufficient.

In Article 96 of Law No. 6458, in which the issue of “Harmonization of Refugees” is regulated, it is seen that local governments are very poorly linked to the issue. This link is established only as “benefiting from their suggestions and contributions” and works only through DGMM’s initiative:

“The Directorate General may, to the extent that Turkey’s economic and financial capacity deems possible, plan for harmonization activities in order to facilitate mutual harmonization between foreigners, applicants and international protection beneficiaries and the society as well as to equip them with the knowledge and skills to be independently active in all areas of social life without the assistance of third persons in Turkey or in the country to which they are resettled or in their own country. For these purposes, the Directorate General may seek the suggestions and contributions of public institutions and agencies, local governments, non-governmental organisations, universities and international organisations.”

As many of the subject experts and international institutions have accepted, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection No. 6458, which is innovative in many respects, gives a very limited role to local governments. That is to say, the only things expected from local governments are “proposals and contributions” for DGMM’s harmonization activities. Furthermore, among the actors to be cooperated in the provision of social and cultural services to foreigners, local governments are not included while “public institutions and non-governmental organizations” are explicitly mentioned. (Article 96/3)

It is known that many developed countries, where democracy is important especially at the local level, have been working on some efficient mechanisms to include non-citizens in the management processes. Some countries even give foreigners the opportunity to have local political rights. “Foreigners Committee” is a common practice in this respect. One of the important institutions that have been established in recent years for the participation of non-citizens in the management process as active fellow-citizens in Turkey is “city councils”. Although the City Councils Regulation dated 2006 aims to “have various social segments contribute to urban management and take active part in the management of a fine and livable city” (Article 4)⁴, it could not be said that city councils established in Turkey have been actively involving in the urban management processes yet. But it is also a fact that city councils have potential to gain more authority through good examples. “Alanya Foreigners Committee”⁵, which was established in 2004 and is one

4 Official Gazette dated 08.10.2006, issue 26313, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2006/10/20061008-5.htm> (Access 15.12.2016).

5 Alanya Foreigners Committee: <http://alanyayabancilarmeclisi.com/P/11/Hakkimizda> (Access: 12.12.2016).



Photo:AFP

of the leading institutions in this field in Turkey, the "Bursa City Council Foreigners Working Group",⁶ which was established in 2011 as one of the 30 working groups, and "Foreigners Committee", which was established in 2014 under the directorate of City Council of Konyaaltı Municipality in Antalya province, are some leading examples. However, it is known that even city councils, through which a great deal of symbolic and voluntary services are expected, could not provide an infrastructure that would cover non-citizens, except for a limited number of structures. It is one of the important values of common life that people who are not citizens of a country ("foreigners") also have a voice in decision making processes, administrative mechanisms and practices of that country, especially at the local level.

Almost in everywhere in the world, local governments, especially when they begin to host a considerable number of refugees, have initiative on refugee issues. One of the most important reasons for this is that, in this case, local governments would have to deal with some issues such as social inclusion, local harmonization processes, encounter with the local society, and urgent provisions for basic needs. However, it would be right to say that related regulations in Turkey do not include local governments in these processes as much as it is needed to be. Especially while the number of refugees is over 3 million, it is clear that local governments should play a serious role in ensuring social inclusion and local harmonization. The fact that the central government has the initiative in the process of refugees' entry into the country, their registration and determining their status in the context of national and international law is a practice observed almost everywhere in the world and it is fairly legitimate. However, the life of refugees/foreigners is not limited to registration and obtaining a legal status. At this point, local governments should take charge of this situation. Since Turkey is not a typical "migration country" such as the USA, Canada, New Zealand or Australia, it was not foreseen that local governments would be required to provide duties and authorizations for interim processes. However, in a case like this, where more than 90% of the refugees in a country have become urban refugees and cities have to host as many refugees as (sometimes even more than) 100% of their population, local governments should be given related duties, authorities and resources, especially for the works on "harmonization" and "participation".

Almost in everywhere in the world, local governments, especially when they begin to host a considerable number of refugees, have initiative on refugee issues. One of the most important reasons for this is that, in this case, local governments would have to deal with some issues such as social inclusion, local harmonization processes, encounter with the local society, and urgent provisions for basic needs. However, it would be right to say that related regulations in Turkey do not include local governments in these processes as much as it is needed to be.



V.
**THE RESEARCH:
URBAN REFUGEES
FROM “DETACHMENT”
TO “HARMONIZATION”
SYRIAN REFUGEES AND PROCESS
MANAGEMENT OF MUNICIPALITIES:
THE CASE OF ISTANBUL**



When it comes to Syrian refugees, people might first think of the provinces near the border with Syria; however, it is known that Istanbul is the city where most Syrians have settled as of December 2016.

When it comes to Syrian refugees, people might first think of the provinces near the border with Syria; however, it is known that Istanbul is the city where most Syrians have settled as of December 2016. In addition to 540 thousand Syrians registered in Istanbul, it is necessary to include more than 200 thousand refugees from other nations. Another characteristic of Istanbul is that it also hosts many refugees who are registered in other provinces. Looking at the data of Istanbul, it could be seen that only the number of registered Syrian refugees is more than 20 thousand per 10 of its districts. It is easier to understand how high the numbers are, given that 23 out of 28 nations within the EU have no more refugees than in one district of Istanbul, ie 20 thousand.

Urban refugees are becoming a serious problem that primarily concerns municipalities. In general, if the number of these refugees, who are in need and at risk at the same time, reaches more than 1% of the locals living within the borders of a municipality, that relevant municipality should provide services to the refugees while taking into account the possible reactions of the local people. However, the extent to which the primary and secondary legislation for municipalities allow this is another matter of debate. Regardless of the municipal legislation, which will be examined in the relevant part of this study, and the framework of the works on refugee issues in this context, municipalities should find solutions to this problem that they cannot ignore. This study, with the title "Urban Refugees from 'Detachment' to 'Harmonization' Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul", seeks to establish measures that are considered necessary for municipalities to conduct effective and reasonable services, taking into account both the existing legal and administrative framework and the practices that have been carried out over the last 5 years. In this context, the interviews with the relevant people in Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and in 27 district municipalities of Istanbul, 24 of which have more than 2500 registered refugees and 3 of which have less than this number, provide an invaluable source of information. For 3 of 15 districts where the number of refugees remained at minimum levels (Ataşehir, Bakırköy, Kadıköy), municipalities were interviewed, while for the other 12, the existing information and data were provided and analyzed.

In the 27 districts that were interviewed within the scope of this research, the ratio of Syrians under TP to all the Syrians in Istanbul exceeds 96,22%. Total number of Syrian refugees in the other 12 districts is 18,207, which is 3,78% of all Syrians in Istanbul (considering the total of 478,850 Syrians under TP). In this sense, there is no doubt in the academic sense that this field study is comprehensive enough. 21 of the 27 municipalities interviewed in the survey are located in the European side and 6 in the Anatolian side. In 20 of the municipalities interviewed in the survey, the ratio of Syrians under TP to total population is above the Istanbul average (3,26%), and in 7 of them it is below the average.

The research team used the same interview form for all interviews, especially for the 27 district municipalities and IMM (Appendix: Semi-Structured Questionnaire). In the interview form mainly composed of semi-structured questions, there are the following main sections that contain 52 questions in total:

- ▶ Basic Data on Municipalities (11 questions)
- ▶ Information and Policies on Syrian Refugees (8 questions)
- ▶ Activities and Cooperation Areas (13 questions)
- ▶ Services (5 questions)
- ▶ Perception and Expectations (8 questions)
- ▶ Harmonization/Integration (7 questions)

For interviews with Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and the 27 district municipalities in Istanbul, we tried to interview those who could speak on behalf of the municipality, but who are also relevant to the subject. The department dealing with this subject differs from municipality to municipality. While there are no relevant departments in some municipalities, some municipalities have multiple departments working on this issue. Taking this into account, we reached the most relevant department of each municipality. Some municipalities, in addition to face-to-face interviews, have also responded these forms in writing and presented them to the research team. In the interviews, there are many questions including "Do you think". The aim here is to learn about personal views and expectations of those who manage these departments as well as institutional opinions of municipalities. After the field study of the research had been completed, the data collected from the 27 district municipalities and IMM were placed in a single table and the analyzes were made through this table. The Director of Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Migration Management and the Deputy Governor of Istanbul, Mr. Nuri Gezici, was also interviewed within the scope of this research.

It is easier to understand how high the numbers are, given that 23 out of 28 nations within the EU have no more refugees than in one district of Istanbul, ie 20 thousand.

In the analysis of the study, the data obtained from the field and other information and documents related to the subject were evaluated together. Although personal effort and interest play a major role in the performance of the municipality on this issue, we attempted to make institutional evaluations as much as possible, rather than making assessments on individuals or even a specific municipality. During the reporting of this study, the reports published previously¹ and the studies "Istanbul Competitiveness Index" and "Social Structure Presentation" prepared for the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Directorate of City Planning were also utilized. Considering the relationship between the central government and local administrations in Turkey, interviews were held with many public institutions and organizations, including relevant Deputy Governorship and Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, in order to ensure the validity of the study.

¹ Marmara Municipalities Union (November 2015) Report of the Workshop "The Role of Municipalities in Service to Urban Refugees" and IOM-DGMM Workshop Report.



Chart 5: "Number and Ratio of the Refugees in Municipalities Interviewed within the Scope of "Urban Refugees from 'Detachment' to 'Harmonization' Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul"²

| DISTRICT | NUMBER OF SYRIANS UNDER TP | RATIO TO POPULATION (%) |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Küçükçekmece | 38.278 | 5,02 |
| Bağcılar | 37.643 | 4,97 |
| Sultangazi | 31.426 | 6,02 |
| Fatih | 30.747 | 7,33 |
| Esenyurt | 29.177 | 3,92 |
| Başakşehir | 26.424 | 7,48 |
| Zeytinburnu | 25.000 | 8,63 |
| Esenler | 22.678 | 4,93 |
| Sultanbeyli* | 20.192 | 6,27 |
| Avcılar | 19.554 | 4,59 |
| Arnavutköy | 17.838 | 7,55 |
| Bahçelievler | 17.710 | 2,94 |
| Gaziosmanpaşa | 17.709 | 3,53 |
| Şişli | 15.269 | 5,57 |
| Ümraniye* | 14.858 | 2,15 |
| Kâğıthane | 14.216 | 3,24 |
| Güngören | 12.727 | 4,21 |
| Sancaktepe* | 12.072 | 3,41 |
| Beyoğlu | 11.841 | 4,88 |
| Bayrampaşa | 11.004 | 4,04 |
| Eyüp | 10.779 | 2,87 |
| Beylikdüzü | 6.728 | 2,40 |
| Büyükkçekmece | 5.555 | 2,40 |
| Pendik* | 4.951 | 0,72 |
| Bakırköy | 2.191 | 0,98 |
| Ataşehir* | 1.436 | 0,03 |
| Kadıköy* | 650 | 0,13 |
| Istanbul (TP) | 478.850 | 3,26 |
| Istanbul (TP+PR) | 478.50+60.212 | 3,67 |

² 60,212 pre-registered Syrian residents in Istanbul as of December 2016 were not reflected in this table due to lack of information on their distribution in districts. If this number (60,212) is to be distributed in according with the ratios and supposing that the existing numbers are fixed, the numbers would be like this: For Küçükçekmece, the number would be around 47 thousand, the ratio would be around 6,1%; for Sultanbeyli, it would be 25 thousand and 7,78%; for Eyüp 12,500 and 3,33%.



VI.

GENERAL FRAME OF THE RESEARCH

The registration process is continuing and also registration renewals are still being carried out.

This study, titled "Urban Refugees from 'Detachment' to 'Harmonization' Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul", shows that Istanbul is the province which refugees in Turkey, Syrian or non-Syrian (Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar (Burma), Pakistan, Iran etc.), prefer the most. According to estimates, as of the end of 2016, about 1 million people who are not citizens of Turkish Republic (and who are referred to as "asylum seeker" or "refugee") live in Istanbul. However, in the case of official numbers, the situation seems a bit complicated. There are three different categories for Syrians, one for TP, one for PR and the other for residence.¹ The emergence of this situation is evident both in terms of the enormous dimensions of the crisis and the general reasons rising from the nature of immigration, as well as the reasons specific to Istanbul. First, it is necessary to emphasize that the registration process is continuing and also registration renewals are still being carried out. However, it could be said that the reasons why the clarification of the numbers in Istanbul is a little more difficult than the other provinces are mainly the great size of the scale and refugees' high tendency to relocation (mobility). Legal and administrative regulations state that refugees could leave the provinces in which they are registered only if they have the permission granted for reasonable excuses and these are exceptional cases. However, the fact is that refugees are frequently relocating. In principle, it is not possible for refugees who leave the province in which they are registered to benefit from some state-provided facilities, especially health services. And yet, there are still many refugees who have taken this risk and come to Istanbul for many reasons, and these refugees do not appear as registered in Istanbul because they are registered in other provinces.

Chart 6: Number of Syrians in Turkey and in Istanbul According to Their Statuses (December 1, 2016)

Source: TUIK / DGMM / Governorship of Istanbul, Provincial Directorate of Migration Management

| | TURKEY | ISTANBUL ² | RATIO OF ISTANBUL TO TURKEY (%) |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| POPULATION (2015) | 78,741.053 | 14.657.4342 | 18,1 |
| TEMPORARY PROTECTION | 2,783.617 | 478.850 | 17,1 |
| PRE-REGISTRATION | 300.000 ³ | 60.212 | 20,0 |
| TOTAL | 3.083.617 | 539.062 | 17,5 |
| 18.1% of the total population in Turkey and 17.5% of total Syrian refugees live in Istanbul. | | | |

1 Although more than 97% of Syrians are under the statuses of Temporary Protection or Pre-Registration, about 70 thousand Syrians, some of whose came to Turkey before 2011, live in Turkey with residence permission. According to the information given by DGMM, the number of Syrians who were granted residence in 2015 is 32.578. However, since this study was conducted on refugees, resident holders are excluded. DGMM: http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/ikamet-izinleri_363_378_4709 (Access: 11.12.2016)

2 The numbers in this section are the numbers of November 2016. These were provided in December 2016 by Governorship of Istanbul, Provincial Directorate of Migration Management.

3 Information on the total number of PR was provided by Governorship of Istanbul, Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. However, the total number of PR Syrians in Turkey is the number expressed in talks with the officials on the Syrian issue. The details are unknown.

Photo: Nikolay Doychinov/AFP/Getty Images



In Turkey, there are 10 provinces that have more refugees than 4% of their population, based on only the Syrians under TP. These are Kilis (100% +), Hatay (24,6%), Şanlıurfa (21,23%), Gaziantep (16,5%), Mardin (11,7%), Kahramanmaraş (7,87%), Mersin (7,87%), Adana (6,83%), Adıyaman (4,05%) and Kayseri (4,06%). Considering that the average of Turkey is around 4%, it is seen that Istanbul is very compatible with this average.

Considering the population of Istanbul is 14,657,434, if the number of Syrians in Istanbul is 416 thousand, then the ratio of Syrians to population is 2,84%; if it is 539 thousand, then the ratio is 3,54%; if it is 600 thousand, which is the correct number in the frame of estimations, then the ratio is 4%.



According to the data Provincial Directorate of Migration Management of Governorship of Istanbul provided, as of 2016, the number of Syrians in Istanbul is 539,062. 478,850 of them are in TP and 60,212 of them are in PR.⁴ When the records are completed and sorted out, it is estimated that the number of Syrians in Istanbul would be around 600 thousand. There is no doubt that these numbers also make a difference in terms of finding out the population density of Syrians. Considering the population of Istanbul is 14,657,434, if the number of Syrians in Istanbul is 416 thousand, then the ratio of Syrians to population is 2,84%; if it is 539 thousand, then the ratio is 3,54%; if it is 600 thousand, which is the correct number in the frame of estimations, then the ratio is 4%. With a similar calculation, if TP is taken into consideration, the ratio of 416 thousand Syrians in Istanbul to the total of 2,783 thousand Syrians in Turkey is 14,9%. When TP + PR is taken into consideration, the ratio of 539 thousand Syrians in Istanbul to the total of 3,083,617 Syrians in Turkey is 17,4%. This situation is also very striking in terms of the speed of increase in Istanbul. Unless the refugee mobility between the provinces is controlled and stabilized, it would not be a surprise when more than 25% of all Syrian refugees in Turkey gather in Istanbul in the near future.

In Turkey, there are 10 provinces that have more refugees than 4% of their population, based on only the Syrians under TP. These are Kilis (100% +), Hatay (24,6%), Şanlıurfa (21,23%), Gaziantep (16,5%), Mardin (11,7%), Kahramanmaraş (7,87%), Mersin (7,87%), Adana (6,83%), Adıyaman (4,05%) and Kayseri (4,06%). Considering that the average of Turkey is around 4%, it is seen that Istanbul is very compatible with this average.

The Syrian refugee population, which is about 4% of Istanbul's population, leads to different population density rates in 39 provinces. Numerically, there are more than 10 thousand refugees in 21 districts of Istanbul and more than 15 thousand refugees in 14 of them. The number of district municipalities that hold more refugees than the Istanbul average of 3.67% is 16. Among these, Zeytinburnu has the highest ratio with 8.63%. Other provinces that are in the foreground in regard of the ratio to their population are Arnavutköy, Başakşehir, Fatih and Sultanbeyli.

⁴ DGMM's website provides the information that as of 1 December 2016, the total number of TP in Turkey is 2,783,617 and the number of TP in Istanbul is 416,690. This study is based on the number of 539 thousand, which is the sum of TP and PR. This number is obtained from Governorship of Istanbul, Provincial Directorate of Migration Management.

Chart 7: 14 Districts of Istanbul with More Than 15,000 Syrians under TP

| DISTRICT | POPULATION | NUMBER OF SYRIANS (TP) | RATIO TO POPULATION (%) | RANK |
|---------------|------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------|
| KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE | 761.064 | 38.278 | 5,02 | 8 |
| BAĞCILAR | 757.162 | 37.643 | 4,97 | 9 |
| SULTANGAZİ | 521.524 | 31.426 | 6,02 | 6 |
| FATİH | 419.345 | 30.747 | 7,33 | 4 |
| ESENYURT | 742.810 | 29.177 | 3,92 | 15 |
| BAŞAKŞEHİR | 353.311 | 26.424 | 7,48 | 3 |
| ZEYTİNBURNU | 289.685 | 25.000 | 8,63 | 1 |
| ESENLER | 459.983 | 22.678 | 4,93 | 10 |
| SULTANBEYLİ* | 321.730 | 20.192 | 6,27 | 5 |
| AVCILAR | 425.228 | 19.554 | 4,59 | 12 |
| ARNAVUTKÖY | 236.222 | 17.838 | 7,55 | 2 |
| BAHÇELİEVLER | 602.040 | 17.710 | 2,94 | 19 |
| GAZİOSMANPAŞA | 501.546 | 17.709 | 3,53 | 16 |
| ŞİŞLİ | 274.017 | 15.269 | 5,57 | 7 |



Photo: Ibrahim Khader / Bron: Middle East Eye

VII.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Based on the semi-structured questionnaire used within the frame of this research, answers from 27 district municipalities and IMM are given in the following headings:

| | |
|---|----|
| “Numerical Quantity” The Foundation of Process Management by Istanbul District Municipalities | 1 |
| Database Based on District Municipalities and the Need for a Common Database | 2 |
| Are Municipalities Legally and Administratively Obligated to Take Care of Refugees? | 3 |
| Are Legal and Administrative Changes Necessary? | 4 |
| Which Municipal Departments Are Related to Refugee Issues? | 5 |
| Staff Recruitment for Refugees | 6 |
| Information on Numbers and Characteristics of the Refugees | 7 |
| Municipal Income and Refugees | 8 |
| Municipal Services for Refugees | 9 |
| How Many of the Syrian Refugees Benefit from Municipal Services? | 10 |
| Employment Status and Business Operations of Syrians | 11 |
| Begging and Municipalities | 12 |
| Which Institutions Are Cooperating on Refugee Issues? | 13 |
| Cooperation with International Institutions | 14 |
| Harmonization Programs and Municipalities | 15 |
| Multi-Purpose Community Centers | 16 |
| Which Persons and Institutions Lead These Activities? | 17 |
| How is the Financing of the Services for Refugees Provided? | 18 |
| How Should the Funds for These Activities Be Regulated? | 19 |
| How Much Have Refugees Increased the Workload and the Financial Burden of Municipalities? | 20 |
| Where Do Syrian Refugees Get Provided with These Services? | 21 |
| Do Syrian Refugees Get Help for Their Health and Education Problems? | 22 |
| Future Plans of Syrians: Will They Stay or Will They Leave? | 23 |
| Possibility of Tension Between Syrians and Local Communities | 24 |
| Involving Refugees in Decision Making Process | 25 |
| Other Issues/Problems | 26 |



The main criterion that determines the process management of 39 district municipalities in Istanbul on refugee issues is numerical quantity.

1. "NUMERICAL QUANTITY" THE FOUNDATION OF PROCESS MANAGEMENT BY ISTANBUL DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES

The main criterion that determines the process management of 39 district municipalities in Istanbul, with 166 to 38,278 refugees within their borders, on refugee issues is naturally numerical quantity. The number of Syrian refugees in each of Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar, Sultangazi, Fatih and Esenyurt provinces is over 30 thousand. The number of refugees is between 20-30 thousand in Başakşehir, Zeytinburnu, Esenler, Sultanbeyli and Avcılar; it is between 10-20 thousand in Arnavutköy, Bahçelievler, Gaziosmanpaşa, Şişli, Ümraniye, Kağıthane, Güngören, Sancaktepe, Beyoğlu, Bayrampaşa and Eyüp; and it is between 5-10 thousand in Beylikdüzü, Büyükçekmece and Pendik. The number of refugees in 10 of Istanbul's district municipalities is between 1000 and 3000, and in 5 district municipalities it is below 1000.

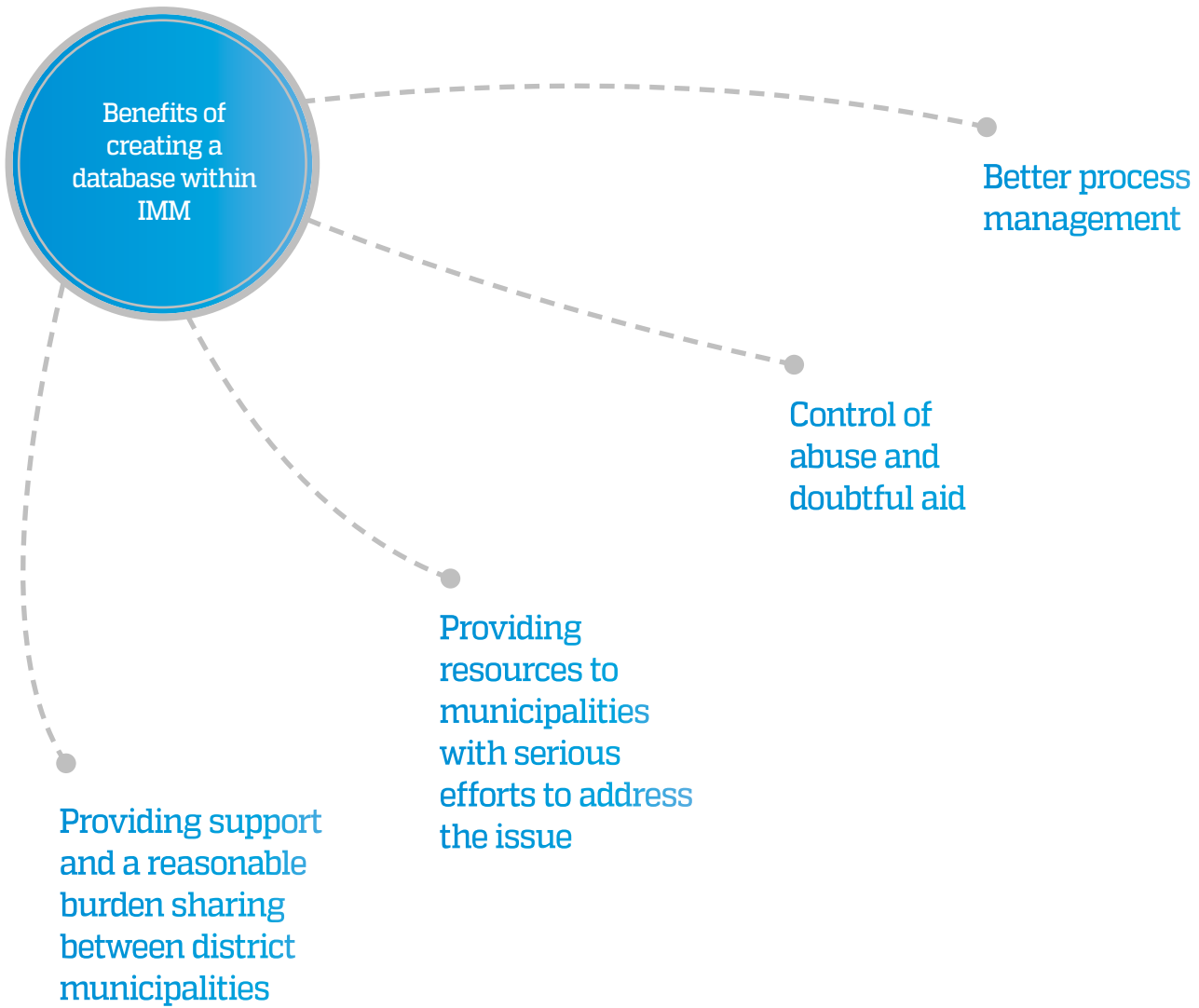


In process management, it is of the utmost importance that local governments have valid data.

2. DATABASE BASED ON DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES AND THE NEED FOR A COMMON DATABASE

In process management, it is of the utmost importance that local governments have valid data. However, because municipalities could not get enough valid and detailed information from the central government on this issue, they have been trying to fulfil this need through the systems of their own creation. A group of municipalities, including the Municipalities of Bağcılar, Büyükçekmece, Gaziosmanpaşa, Pendik, Sultanbeyli and Ümraniye, have created their own database of refugee populations within their boundaries. These databases are created through refugees' application to municipalities or family visits directly by municipal teams. One of the most successful examples of this is Sultanbeyli. These works, which were initially started to organize the distribution of aid, now offer a considerable contribution to a harmonization-oriented process management. Since municipalities generally prefer to receive household-based records, this makes it more convenient to determine all areas of need like quality of the houses that refugees live in, school-age children at home, disabled people, rents and cost of electricity and water.¹ The municipalities that conduct such services usually keep records directly through home visits. Although some authority and content problems in the context of privacy principle for personal data have been experienced while collecting some data, it is almost impossible for municipalities to manage this process in another way.

¹ The database that Municipality of Sultanbeyli has created for the works it conducted via "Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association", some highly detailed data were collected, even shoe size of the children in refugee families.



And yet, another demand specific to Istanbul is a database to be created within IMM. Creating such a database within IMM is important for a better process management, control of abuse and doubtful aid, providing resources to municipalities with serious efforts to address this issue and providing support and a reasonable burden sharing between district municipalities.

Almost every municipal authority suggests that the "Social Assistance Information System" (SOYBİS),² by Ministry of Family and Social Policies, should be used on the issue of refugees. Here, what municipalities especially complain about is the lack of determination of victimization and prevention of abuse.

² Social Assistance Information System (SOYBİS) is an e-government practice developed by General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity of the Prime Ministry and has been conducted by General Directorate of Social Assistance of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy since 2011. It was developed in order to obtain / identify the needs and personal data of our citizens who applied for social assistance from the central databases and to provide online data sharing between institutions for prevention of doubtful aid. In the SOYBİS system, there are İŞKUR, ŞHÇEK, General Directorate of Foundations, SYDGM, Revenue Administration, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, General Directorate of Land Registry Cadastre, Ministry of Health, Loan Dormitory Institution, Ministry of Interior and Provincial Administration. SOYBİS is used by 3,215 active users in a total of 973 SYDVs in all around the country, led by governors in 81 provinces and led by district governors in 892 districts. See the official website of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies: <http://sosyalyardimlar.aile.gov.tr/uygulamalar/soybis> (Access: 15.12.2016).

In this context, the expectation that SOYBİS will make work easier, provide effective aid distribution and prevent abuse is often expressed. Within this frame, it could be said that what is expected from SOYBİS is not directly related to harmonization policies; instead, the priority is to provide urgent support to people in need. In fact, the demands that emerged in this issue were often expressed also before the refugees came to Turkey in great numbers. The Union of Municipalities of Turkey (TBB) has even made an official application to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in 2012.³ In the relevant article, it could be seen that municipalities requested from TBB to have access to the data system used by Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation because it takes a great deal of time for them to do research on the needs of poor and those who are in destitute and because it is not possible to conduct a countrywide examination otherwise. In their article dated 17.01.2012, TBB asked "the question of whether the data system used in Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation, which allows countrywide examination, can not be shared with the requested municipalities ... for providing (quickly and in a manner that is beneficial to human dignity) aid and social services which are listed among the duties and responsibilities of the municipalities in the Article 14 of the Municipal Law No. 5393, while preventing the use of resources based on misleading statements and incomplete investigations." On the date of 27.03.2012, as an answer to this request, Ministry of Family and Social Policies General Directorate of Social Assistance stated that SOYBİS would create a serious cost and it could not be made accessible to municipalities due to the personal information it contains, however they were working on the development of a structure that would include local governments to the system via Integrated Social Assistance Information System.

Another demand specific to Istanbul is a database to be created within Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

³ Union of Municipalities of Turkey: http://www.tbb.gov.tr/storage/userfiles/hukuki_destek/SOYBIS_Belediyelere_Acilmasi_Talebi.pdf (Access: 12.12.2016).





“We have a humanitarian and a conscientious obligation; we cannot ignore so many desperate, needy and poor people.”

3. ARE MUNICIPALITIES LEGALLY AND ADMINISTRATIVELY OBLIGED TO TAKE CARE OF REFUGEES?

There were quite different responses to the question "Are municipalities legally and administratively obliged to take care of refugees?" directed at municipal officials working as authorities on refugee issues. Although most of them replied as "The Municipal Law No. 5393 does not state this clearly enough," they also expressed their opinion as "We have a humanitarian and a conscientious obligation; we cannot ignore so many desperate, needy and poor people," and referred to "Law Related to the Fellow-Citizenship" to explain this. Many municipal officials stated that this issue is important to them also for the peace of district locals, but that they have serious concerns about the audit of the Court of Accounts. The municipal authorities express that "asylum" is possible and reasonable according to the Article 13 of Law No. 5393, but on the other hand, the "citizenship" emphasis in Article 14 could not be ignored. In this context, the need for new legal and administrative regulations on refugee issues, which have become an extremely important issue and a financial and administrative burden for municipalities, was expressed in almost every interview. Some authorities also pointed out the security aspect of the matter and stated that the institutions that should be the main authority for refugee issues are metropolitan municipalities. This opinion was especially expressed in municipalities which have taken refugees in high numbers and which are relatively underdeveloped in terms of economy and capacity. It was also frequently expressed in this context that the city councils should be made more functional and serve as a bridge between the refugees and the municipalities.



It is proposed that special financial support should be provided from the central budget to municipalities based on the number of refugees to be used on refugee issues.

4. ARE LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES NECESSARY?

Almost in every interview with district municipalities in Istanbul, municipal authorities expressed that some legal and administrative changes on refugee issues should be made in order to provide better services. These changes are, in fact, a reflection of all the expectations on the subject:

- ▶ Opening the way to serve people who are not citizens of Turkish Republic by making changes in Municipal Law;
- ▶ Providing special financial support from the central budget to municipalities based on the number of refugees to be used on refugee issues;
- ▶ Creating employment opportunities for specialists and language-speaking staff;
- ▶ Coordination among local governments, and between local governments and central institutions in a common data system and in practice;
- ▶ Establishment of a coordinating body capable of addressing all aspects of the refugee issue;
- ▶ Determination of the strategic decision of the state concerning the issue and transformation of this strategy into policies;
- ▶ Construction of policies on short, medium and long term based on a comprehensive analysis of needs are requested.



The current legislation in Turkey does not make a clear definition of the municipal departments that should deal with refugee issues.

5. WHICH MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS ARE RELATED TO REFUGEE ISSUES?

In the study conducted with district municipalities in Istanbul, first we questioned the departments, capacity and authority with which municipalities approach this issue. Because the current legislation in Turkey does not make a clear definition of these issues, it is observed that municipalities differ in the way they have found solutions to this and in the choice of departments they have authorised. However, it could be seen that the related departments are generally the ones that deal with social aid in municipalities. Some municipalities have established special departments of migration to deal with refugees; however, it is not a very common practice. Although there are some exceptions, the municipal department related to this issue is mostly the Directorate of Social Assistance. In some municipalities, the directorates such as Directorate of Culture and Social Affairs, Directorate of Press and Public Relations and Directorate of Strategy Development have been determined to deal with refugee issues. On the other hand, multiple departments are working on refugee issues in some municipalities. The municipalities tend not to perceive the situation as an urgent problem, because on the one hand there are legal obstacles and on the other hand the population of refugees is still less than 10% of municipal population. For municipalities, this is perceived as a poverty issue and they are trying to fulfil the needs of the refugees in the ways they do it for the poor in local community. Another method frequently used here is to develop projects through relevant NGOs.⁴

⁴ One of the most successful works in this regard is the "Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association" working in cooperation with Municipality of Sultanbeyli.



Almost all of the municipalities working on managing this process express their need for language-speaking staff.

6. STAFF RECRUITMENT FOR REFUGEES

In the interviews held in district municipalities, it was observed that recruitment of additional staff who would work on refugee related issues, especially with foreign language knowledge, had not been conducted in any municipality except for a few (Sancaktepe, Kağıthane, Beylikdüzü, etc.). Almost all of the municipalities working on managing this process express their need for language-speaking staff. Currently, they are making shifts in staff when needed.



It is observed that the municipalities do not have valid and up-to-date information on the number of refugees.

7. INFORMATION ON NUMBERS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REFUGEES

In the interviews held in district municipalities, it was observed that municipalities do not have valid and up-to-date information on the number of refugees except for some numbers they obtain from Provincial Directorate of Migration Management and District Directorate of Police Department. It is very important for Provincial Directorate of Migration Management to regularly provide more information flow to municipalities in a process where the permanence is now on the foreground. In almost all of the municipalities, municipal authorities stated that the actual numbers of refugees are between 10% and 100% higher than the numbers provided by Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. In fact, it is clearly a general problem. The suspicion on validity of the official numbers and the perception created about refugee issues frequently lead to an exaggeration of these numbers. However, DGMM officials also state that there are differences between formal numbers and actual numbers because of different types of statuses, continuance of registrations and practice of pre-registration. For example, the number given for refugees in Istanbul on the website of DGMM based on December 1, 2016 shows only the number of TP and it is 416,690. However, according to the information obtained from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management of Governorship of Istanbul, the number in Istanbul is 539,062 in total; 478,850 TP and 60,212 PR. Adding Syrians who have not been registered yet and Syrians who are living in Istanbul although they are registered in some other province, it could be said that the number of Syrian refugees in Istanbul is around 600 thousand. This shows that municipalities are not exaggerating by stating that the actual numbers are 25% higher than the official numbers.



The distribution of the shares from the general budget tax revenues is predominantly based on the population criterion, and the variable population is not considered in this distribution.

8. MUNICIPAL INCOME AND REFUGEES

Istanbul has received a large number of refugees in the last five years and the burdens and financial needs arising from these refugees in the districts are evident. As it is known, other than borrowing, there are two sources of income of the municipalities, classified as: 1. Self-Income, 2. Transfers from General Budget Tax Revenues. In our country, municipalities do not have efficient sources of self-income. In addition, municipalities do not have the authority to determine the tariffs of self-taxes and fees and therefore do not have the ability to tailor their own sources of income to their needs. Transfers from general budget tax revenues are an important source of funding for municipalities in our country. The shares from general budget tax revenues constitute approximately 52% of the total income of municipalities. This rate is 65% for metropolitan municipalities.⁵

Transfers from the general budget to the municipalities are regulated by the Law No 5779 on Apportionments from General Budget Tax Revenues to Special Provincial Administrations and Municipalities. According to this, 1.50% of the total of general budget tax revenues are allocated to municipalities other than those in metropolitan areas, 4.50% to metropolitan district municipalities and 0.5% to provincial special administrations. Metropolitan municipalities receive 6% of the general budget tax revenues within the provincial borders.⁶ In a survey conducted for 30 metropolitan municipalities after Law No. 6360 (for April 2014-March 2015 period), it is seen that the shares of the metropolitan municipalities per capita from general budget tax revenues change between 51 TL and 79 TL.⁷

The distribution of the shares from the general budget tax revenues is predominantly based on the population criterion, and the variable population is not considered in this distribution.⁸ Therefore, the population that have come with the migration is not considered in the distribution of these shares. Apart from the existing resources, there is no separate resource for the refugees foreseen in the legislation. This creates an extremely important resource problem for local governments, especially those with more refugees than 3% of their population. It is clear that especially the regions with refugees in excess of 10% and 100% of their population will have difficulty in managing the process.⁹

In Europe, it is observed that for refugees settled in particular areas, central administrations address the issue by transferring a certain amount of resources per refugee. In fact, this resource is calculated as more than the resource allocated for Turkish citizens due to the urgency of the situation and the additional costs. At first, such a resource transfer could make a significant contribution to fulfilment of immediate needs and process management.

5 Ülkü Ankoğa (2016) "Türkiye'de Belediyelerin Gelir Yapısı: Sorunlar ve Çözüm Önerileri", Mustafa Kemal University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, 2016, Volume 13, Issue 33, 287-288.

6 Law No. 5779 "Law on Apportionments from General Budget Tax Revenues to Special Provincial Administrations and Municipalities" Official Gazette dated 15.07.2008 and numbered 26937.

7 Ülkü Ankoğa (2015) "Türkiye'de Büyükşehir Belediyesi Transfer Sistemi ve 6360 Sayılı Kanun'un Etkileri", Marmara University Journal of İ.İ.B, 2015, Volume XXXVIII Issue 2, s.23-25.

8 In municipalities other than metropolitan municipalities, 80% of the shares are distributed according to population index, 20% according to development index. In metropolitan district municipalities, 90% is distributed according to population, 10% according to the area. In metropolitan municipalities, 60% of the share allocated in provincial borders is distributed directly, 70% of the 40% is distributed according to population and 30% according to the area.

9 At the UCLG-MEWA meeting held in Şanlıurfa on November 7, 2016, Mayor of Şanlıurfa Nihat Çiftçi stated that although the number was shown as 400 thousand in DGMM records, there were actually more than 480 thousand Syrians in their province. The Syrians in Şanlıurfa, reaching a population exceeding 25% of the total population of 1.9 million, can also cause serious disruption in municipal services. Mayor Çiftçi expressed that, according to the TURKSTAT data of Provincial Bank, for the municipal population is 1.9 million in official numbers, the fund given by central government is 82.2 million TL in total, with an average of 43.37 TL per capita. Mr. Çiftçi states that if 43.37 TL is provided per capita also for the additional population of 480 thousand Syrians, then it means the municipality would receive 20 million TL additional fund per year. He pointed out that an additional of 480,000 refugees in Şanlıurfa are causing various disruptions in public services, and also that the infrastructure, water, sewerage, transportation and social services planned for 1.9 million people are being used by 2.5 million people. For example, the annual water consumption of 60 million m³ in 2011 increased to 80 million m³ in 2016, the energy expenditures increased from 60 million to 90 million TL and the urban transportation of 35 million in 2011 reached 52 million in 2016. These numbers are striking.



It has been observed that the vast majority of the municipalities are providing extremely important services for refugees in the context of “emergency management” and especially “support for the poor and needy”.

9. MUNICIPAL SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

Although some municipalities have developed longer-term and harmonization-oriented projects, the district municipalities in Istanbul are generally providing assistance to refugees within the frame of "neediness" and "poverty". However, it has been observed that 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. 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. However, it has been observed that the vast majority of the municipalities are providing extremely important services for refugees in the context of "emergency management" and especially "support for the poor and needy". While some of these services are conducted directly with the means, capacity and staff of the municipality, many services are carried out in cooperation with NGOs - some established by the initiative of the municipality itself. It is known that municipalities have been experiencing serious problems with the assistance and services to be provided to the refugees who are "not registered"; it was a serious case especially in 2014-2015. In order to ensure that all refugees are registered, and in this context, to encourage registration and better manage the process, municipalities has urged central government not to provide services, by official or informal means, to persons who are not registered.

District municipalities provide their assistance either through on-demand or through determining urgent cases via home visits. Almost all municipalities conduct on-the-spot registrations at home visits for needs analysis in their services. They also follow up the cases by entering the information on the questionnaire to the system. In this frame, neighborhood headmen have a special place. Neighborhood headmen share the needs and the most micro-urban mobilities of refugees with municipalities, and from time to time organize the distribution of aid.

The lack of sufficient Arabic-speaking service providers is a major problem. Also, it is not easy for municipalities to recruit staff who could speak Arabic.

Refugees come to municipalities mostly for housing, household goods, food, medical services and employment. The most primary and urgent problem of urban refugees is housing. As experienced in almost all immigration and refugee cases, in the last five years, the presence of acquaintances, relatives or kinfolk living in that area has played an important role in Syrian refugees' choice of the area they would settle in Turkey. Despite short and very limited opportunities for acquaintances and new arrivals, people who are provided with housing start searching for a new space where they can continue their lives on the basis of necessary facilities and support. The basic need that municipalities have to face on the issue of newly arrived refugees is also housing. Refugees are very poor, mostly with many children, and they do not have more than a few pieces of belongings. Thus, especially in the beginning, when they arrive in the cities, the places they live in are very problematic. Even today, many of the refugees still have to live in garages, warehouses, storehouses and basements of the shops. Refugees do not have the opportunity to live in better housing, not only because they are poor, but also because of housing shortages and sometimes because locals do not rent their houses to refugees. Since municipalities do not have housing that can be used by refugees and other poor people and since they do not have the capacity to build new housing, often it is only possible for them to support refugees in the process of renting inexpensive housing. Municipalities also have a special role in providing basic necessities to these persons, who come to this country only with a few pieces of belongings and mostly without any money. Municipalities directly or indirectly contribute significantly to the provision of basic necessities, supplies, carpets, cleaning materials, sofas, cookers, foodstuffs, white goods, stoves, beds, blankets, etc. While some municipalities said that they are providing these services within the framework of "fellow-citizenship law" and that these services are in the domain of municipal rights and responsibilities, some municipalities said that there are certain legal restrictions on this issue and that any aid provided to refugees would create a risk for them in financial audit.

The services provided by some municipalities have become very diversified and comprehensive. Psycho-social support services have also been provided to refugees. Services for disadvantaged groups such as unaccompanied children, elders, school-aged children, chronic patients, lonely women, victims of violence and disabled people are becoming more and more systematic every day. However, the language problem, which is one of the main problems related to refugees, comes out here. The lack of sufficient Arabic-speaking service providers is a major problem. Also, it is not easy for municipalities to recruit staff who could speak Arabic. In this context, it is stated that the psycho-social support and translation services provided by municipalities are not common enough and obviously must be strengthened.

Municipalities generally direct the need for cash or commodity from refugees to Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations. However, some

municipalities are striving to create resources to meet the urgent needs of refugees, such as electricity, water, telephone and school transport. Expenditures in this regard are generally made possible by the contributions of businessmen and philanthropic citizens. It is not possible for municipalities to provide direct financial support to refugees. Some municipalities have started some practices or preparations to include refugees in the systems already established for the poor and needy in their own districts. However, the most common form of support provided by municipalities is the provision of hot meals in emergencies, followed by the support of "food parcels" - generally provided by IMM. Besides these, practices such as "Social Market" and "Food Bank" are also provided to Syrians. At this point, the biggest problem experienced here is the support given to unregistered refugees. Sometimes even people with the "Personel Numbers" starting with "98" could suffer from this issue. However, many municipalities take initiative and continue their support in such cases, because they have designed these practices as "support for needy and poor". A district municipal official expressed that they do their activities within the framework of Law No. 5393 and they also help those who do not have a "Foreigner's ID Number" starting with "99". He also stated that there is an additional clause in the regulations on social assistance allowing them to help non-Turkish citizens in need, so that people are not victimized. The official expressed that the municipality gives a monthly card to those in need and they can buy food and cleaning products from contracted stores. Donations made by citizens are also very important for direct or indirect expenses of municipalities.

Practices such as "Social Market" and "Food Bank" are provided to Syrians.

The aid cards that many municipalities put into practice under different names are distributed to refugees in some districts of Istanbul. These cards are provided for daily basic needs such as bread, water, milk and detergent, in accordance with necessary conditions, to the citizens registered in a municipality's directorate of social assistance. Money deposited in these cards cannot be used for cash or for products that are considered to be of luxury consumption. With these cards, the daily necessities determined by municipalities, especially food products, could be obtained from the grocery stores/markets which are also contracted with the municipality. Every month, card holders get provided with a certain amount of credit according to their need. Some municipalities cancel the weekly credit of the card if it is not used for a week.¹⁰ It is clear that this practice is extremely valuable for an honorable life. Also, use of these cards considerably contribute to local economy and local harmonization process. This practice is also highly valuable because small grocery stores, where these cards are valid, now have the chance of overcoming social risks and resource limitations due to refugees.

¹⁰ For example, "Atakart" ("Atakart Food Spending Electronic Card"), which has been produced by Atasehir Municipality and distributed to 9 thousand citizens of Turkey, is now planned to be distributed to the refugees.



Some municipalities stated that they had reached almost all the Syrians, while some gave numbers as 60%, 40%, 10% and so on.

10. HOW MANY OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEES BENEFIT FROM MUNICIPAL SERVICES?

In the research, important clues about the extent to which the district municipalities in Istanbul have reached the Syrian refugees living within their borders were obtained. Some municipalities stated that they had reached almost all the Syrians, while some gave numbers as 60%, 40%, 10% and so on. Many municipalities stated that they could not give such a number because they do not have a healthy inventory on this subject.



The areas in which Syrians mostly work are textile, construction, manufacturing, recycling (paper collection), hairdressing and teaching Syrians.

11. EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS OF SYRIANS

It was not possible to obtain healthy information about the working conditions of the Syrians from Istanbul district municipalities. However, in almost all interviews, it was stated that Syrians are mostly working in unqualified jobs - often as informal and cheap workers - and some have opened their own small businesses. The areas in which Syrians mostly work are textile, construction, manufacturing, recycling (paper collection), hairdressing and teaching Syrians. The municipal authorities expressed that although employment of Syrians had created an uneasiness in the local community in the first place, the complaints decreased afterwards. The municipal authorities attribute this situation to the fact that the jobs Syrians have taken are not commonly preferred by Turkish people due to poor wages, working conditions and places.

The municipal authorities also stated that entrepreneur Syrians with opportunities usually open small business establishments where 1-2 people work and they mostly serve other Syrians. The Syrians especially open small cafes, small restaurants, confectioners, hookah cafes, car wash, hairdressers for men and women, small workshops, jewelers or stores for clothes, spices, snacks, kebab etc. From time to time, local people find it hard to tell when the refugees are indifferent or uninsured, or that they are out of competition. It was stated that from time to time, local people report refugees to police because they are unregistered and uninsured in their jobs and such cases are against competition. It is understood that the municipalities take into account the complaints made about the enterprises established by the Syrians, but generally they do not interfere with the activities of such enterprises unless the complaints are filed.

It was expressed that the most frequently reported complaints to municipalities on the subject of Syrian enterprises and employees is about child labor and informal businesses. It was pointed out that the complaints about Syrians made to Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality "Alo 153", where the demands, complaints and evaluations of the citizens of Istanbul are reported, are mostly related to economic activities after security and begging issues. According to the information obtained from IMM, the complaints directed to district municipalities are mostly related to unauthorized stores that are insanitary and also unlicensed stores. Similarly, on removing "occupations", the areas occupied by Syrian-owned businesses and suffering already experienced or to be experienced due to the use of these areas by the citizens are mentioned.¹¹

¹¹ Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality "Alo 153" (2016) Project Management Office (PYO) Analysis Report for Syrian Citizens.



Most of the complaints are about “Syrian beggars”, which are mostly the children waiting in traffic lights.

12. BEGGING AND MUNICIPALITIES

There is no doubt that a vast majority of the complaints on the issue of Syrian refugees, who have been living in urban areas for the last five years, are about "Syrian beggars", which are mostly the children waiting in traffic lights. In the interviews with municipalities, it was stated that everyone including municipality officials is disturbed by this situation, but there are serious problems in fighting against this situation. One of the points of particular attention here is that most of these beggars are people who were doing similar works in Syria and the other is that the beggar "mafias" in Turkey are using these people. It is observed that municipalities have different approaches in this regard. Some municipalities expressed that it would be wrong, even negligent to leave this case to Directorate of Security instead of municipal police. Instead, they suggested that it would be more appropriate to impose severe sanctions and give sanction power and responsibility to relevant departments. On the other hand, some other municipalities stated that municipal police would be ineffective on this issue due to lack of power and capacity; thus, Directorate of Security must be put into effect. Among the calls made to the line Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality "Alo 153" for complaints about Syrians, the subject of beggars is among the top three complaint subjects. Also, issues such as "deterioration of social order" or "security", which are closely related to begging are at the top of that complaint list.¹² The municipalities have to manage the reaction from the local people while also helping these people who have nothing remained to themselves in the middle of this sudden humanitarian crisis.

12 Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality "Alo 153" (2016) Project Management Office (PYO) Analysis Report for Syrian Citizens.



The cooperation of district municipalities with each other on the issue of refugees remains extremely limited.

13. WHICH INSTITUTIONS ARE COOPERATING ON REFUGEE ISSUES?

Which institutions the district municipalities cooperate with is very important in terms of process management. In this context, it is observed that municipalities frequently meet and consult with the institutions such as Governorship, District Governorship, Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, IMM, Provincial Security Directorate, Provincial Directorate of National Education, Provincial Health Directorate, AFAD and Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Also, we learned that municipalities have been in project-based cooperation with NGOs including institutions such as UNHCR, ASAM, HRDF, Kuwait Qatar Businessmen Foundation, IHH, Syrian Nur Foundation, Palestinian Arab Association, Aziz Mahmud Hudavi Foundation, Gönülde, Mimar Sinan Education and Culture Foundation and Bashir Association.

The cooperation of district municipalities with each other on the issue of refugees remains extremely limited. There is an even greater need in regard to the relations with IMM. Lack of a special department related to this issue in IMM creates serious problems in terms of both data sharing and healthy process management. Nearly all district municipalities expressed the view that a department for process management on refugee issues should be established within the body of IMM.



Some district municipalities feel discomfort and suspicion towards international institutions.

14. COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

It is observed that district municipalities, which have extensive refugee populations and are open to international cooperation, are also conducting projects with some international institutions. In particular, the biggest obstacle for municipalities that are cooperating with German, American and UK based charities or NGOs is the problems in the capacity of authority and project development. Nevertheless, there are some district municipalities which have carried out their services with some very successful collaborations. Among the institutions that have collaborated with district municipalities, there are UN institutions, especially UNHCR, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP; Welthungerhilfe, American Bar Association, German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ) which was established under the roof of the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ), Maya Foundation, Doctors Without Borders, International Medical Corps, Taiwan Foundation, Tzu-Chi International Medical Association, Amnesty International, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and EBRD. In cooperation with Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, Municipality of Sultanbeyli and Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association, a coordination center has been established. This center has gathered all institutions working on refugee issues under one roof and is a model in this regard. The German "Welthunger Hilfe" institution provides partial financial support for this center. This center also plays an important role in the coordination of the Anatolian side of Istanbul. It is possible to develop such a "model" cooperation in other regions. In the interviews we conducted, it was stated that the second "coordination center" is planned to be established in Fatih district, which houses a very high number of refugees.

Some district municipalities we interviewed feel discomfort and suspicion towards international institutions. On the other hand, a group of municipalities that are prone to cooperation stated that there are some obstacles for it; these are mainly lack of a competent project team, a suitable project and suitable partners. This problem is also frequently expressed in the MMU workshop report.¹³

¹³ "Municipalities should be trained in project writing and finding funds from national and international sources. They should be encouraged to apply for project-based funds as well." MMU (November 2015) Role of Municipalities in Service to Urban Refugees Workshop Report, p. 14.



Municipalities
underlined that
refugees should
be supported
as economically
integrated
individuals.

15. HARMONIZATION PROGRAMS AND MUNICIPALITIES

The concept of harmonization has entered Turkish originally from the concept of "integration" ("entegrasyon" as in Turkish). For the first time, this concept was brought about by Turkish-originated people living in Europe. However, especially in terms of mass migrations, the concept itself has problems and is criticized. The way in which the concept evokes "assimilation" is often expressed in these criticisms. For this reason, instead of integration, sometimes concepts such as "adaptation" and "orientation" are used. It is known that Turkish official institutions prefer the concept of "harmonization" instead of "integration." Also in this study, the concept of "harmonization" is preferred. However, this preference is not considered to create a significant difference in the meaning of content. It is known that the concept of "integration" is also commonly preferred, especially in translations. In fact, there is a hesitation about what is meant by the concept, rather than the concept itself here, for justifiable reasons. Because the concepts of integration-harmonization evoke the meanings of "not being a guest anymore" or "permanence."

While some officials said that harmonization is not a one-sided process and that Turkish society should prepare for it and make efforts, some others were seriously worried and drew attention to the possibility of deterioration in social peace in the future, linking the issue entirely with security issues.



It is now generally accepted that every day Syrians living in Turkey are getting more and more inclined towards staying permanently. Naturally, this situation indicates the necessity for the featuring of harmonization programs. Harmonization programs are of utmost importance at the local level. "Local harmonization" ensures that Syrians live a harmonious and dignified life in Turkey, and it plays a special role in transformation of all these into a contribution to Turkey.

The survey tried to compile municipal authorities' views on harmonization of refugees with the question of "In your opinion, what is harmonization/integration?", "What do you think should be done about the harmonization of the refugees in your district?", "How are you (as the municipality) working on harmonization of refugees?"

It is observed that there is a serious connection between harmonization programs and children's education. A small number of municipalities expressed their concerns on the possibility that Syrians would like to stay here permanently if harmonization programs are carried out successfully and for



that reason, they do not want to carry out such programs. However, the vast majority of municipalities drew attention to importance of harmonization programs. The officials of Istanbul district municipalities expressed that these harmonization programs should be supported by social harmonization and cultural education, first and foremost, language education. They also underlined that refugees should be supported not as consumers dependent on aid, but as economically integrated individuals. Some officials said that "They are already integrated; they work, they read, they live with us," while many of them were observed to have serious doubts on this regard. The officials stressed out that without harmonization programs, in particular education of children and young people, serious security and social-cultural problems would be experienced in the future. They also emphasized that women should be informed about participation in social life, maternal-child health and contraception. Some officials said that harmonization is not a one-sided process and that Turkish society should prepare for it and make efforts. On the other hand, some officials were seriously worried and drew attention to the possibility of deterioration in social peace in the future, linking the issue entirely with security issues.

"Local harmonization" ensures that Syrians live a harmonious and dignified life in Turkey, and it plays a special role in transformation of all these into a contribution to Turkey.



Around 60 community centers in Turkey are working on refugee issues and conducting harmonization centered programs.

16. MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTERS

Ministry of Family and Social Policies, municipalities, Red Crescent or NGOs establish community centers in the regions where refugees are highly populated to inform urban refugees, provide training and courses for refugees, deal with their problems and conduct harmonization-oriented programs. It is foreseen that these centers, which are currently around 60 in all of Turkey, would work under the directorate of the Red Crescent in the future. The number of such centers established at the initiative of the district municipalities in Istanbul has been rather limited. Many programs on language, education, health, informing, working life (finding a job and opening a place), occupation and also hobby courses are currently being carried out in Multi-Purpose Community Centers which have been established by Municipalities of Şişli, Esenler and Sultanbeyli in Istanbul. Especially women refugees are highly interested in these centers and participate in many activities with their children.



While some municipalities are cooperating with NGOs, some are abstaining from cooperation due to ideological disputes.

17. WHICH PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS LEAD THESE ACTIVITIES?

Generally, district municipalities are making efforts to establish their own systems regarding the issue. IMM, the Governorship or Provincial Directorate of Migration Management has not established any structure to gather municipalities under one roof. It is stated that because of the nature of this issue, many of the works related to this issue are carried out in the form of emergency management and unofficial relations rather than through official channels. Some municipal officials stated that even some meetings and workshops that MMU organize regarding this issue are extremely important to them because in such events, they get informed about the services and systems of other municipalities.

The municipal authorities have stated that they have conducted a great number of services for refugees in cooperation with NGOs. On the other hand, some municipalities expressed that they purposely stay away from the activities of international NGOs. Some municipal authorities expressed concern that there are gaps in the supervision of NGOs' activities and that the way NGOs collect aid and also content of this aid might be problematic. These authorities stated that they allow NGOs' activities, but do not cooperate with them. Another problem with NGOs is that some NGOs do not agree with some municipalities in terms of ideological viewpoint and therefore do not cooperate with them.



Expenditures of district municipalities on the issue of refugees are majorly funded by donations and by municipalities' own resources.

Photo:AFP

18. HOW ARE THE SERVICES FOR REFUGEES FINANCED?

Expenditures of district municipalities on the issue of refugees are majorly funded by donations and by municipalities' own funds. It is observed that NGOs cooperating with municipalities play an important role in collecting commodity or cash donations and distributing it to people in need. However, NGOs mainly focus on "charity" activities to meet basic necessities. Regarding their capacity and vision, few NGOs can show interest in harmonization programs such as education, language, professions, integration courses and activities for young people or women. In the research, we could not obtain any valid data on the amount municipalities have spent on refugee issues. The most important reason for this is the hesitation of municipalities about the legal basis of activities for non-citizens. This situation causes many services for refugees not to be explicitly included among the budget items. The second largest spending item of municipalities is donations, but municipalities do not keep the records of donations extensively, either. For all these reasons, it is not possible to determine what the financial burdens of refugees are for municipalities.



Municipal authorities pointed out the necessity of transferring additional funds depending on the number of refugees.

19. HOW SHOULD THE FUNDS FOR THESE ACTIVITIES BE REGULATED?

It is clear that district municipalities do not have any funds to be used on refugee issues other than donations and municipal funds, indirectly used from the budget. During this study, almost all municipalities expressed their need for additional funds to be used on this issue. The municipal authorities referred to the section "b) Apportionments from general budget tax revenues" regulated in Article 59 of Municipal Law No. 5393 and pointed out the necessity of transferring additional funds depending on the number of refugees.



For many municipalities, refugees are perceived as an additional group of poor-needy people living in their regions.

20. HOW MUCH HAVE REFUGEES INCREASED THE WORKLOAD AND THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF MUNICIPALITIES?

The ratio of refugee population to the total population in Istanbul is approximately 3.67%. This ratio could be up to 10% in the districts. The number of municipalities that host a population above the Istanbul average is 17. In 9 of these 17 municipalities, (Zeytinburnu, Arnavutköy, Başakşehir, Fatih, Sultanbeyli, Sultangazi, Şişli, Küçükçekmece and Bağcılar) the number of refugees is more than 5% of district population. The financial and administrative capacity constraints of municipalities are naturally correlated to the density of refugee population. As it could be seen in this research, the municipalities with refugees more than 5% of their population are those who are experiencing significant capacity and resource constraints the most. However, although the number of refugees they have been hosting is more than the number of refugees in any EU country except for 5 (Germany, Sweden, Austria, Italy and Greece), these municipalities are dealing with this issue in a very mature and calm way. It would be self-evident how valuable this approach is if it is taken into account that there are 8 districts in Istanbul with more than 25 thousand refugees.¹⁴ For many municipalities, refugees are perceived as an additional group of poor-needy people living in their regions. Moreover, many refugees are working and they meet their needs themselves. Besides, there is a high level of social acceptance towards refugees. Consequently, psychological and political pressure on municipalities does not exceed a certain level in this case.

¹⁴ According to the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management of Governorship of Istanbul, there are 8 municipalities with more than 25 thousand refugees. However, it is not clear in which municipalities 60 thousand Syrians in PR are living. If Syrians in PR are distributed in a balanced manner with the existing numbers, the estimated result would point to more than 10 municipalities.



Municipalities provide services to Syrian refugees in the places they live in as well as municipal cultural centers, soup kitchens and social markets.

21. WHERE DO SYRIAN REFUGEES GET PROVIDED WITH THESE SERVICES?

Municipalities are primarily trying to provide services to Syrian refugees in the places they live in. In addition, municipal cultural centers, soup kitchens, municipal buildings (especially "Beyaz Masa"), social markets and neighborhood municipalities are among the places municipalities provide support to refugees. Some municipalities offer mobile support/support services to refugees as well. Some municipalities also serve refugees in facilities of social assistance directorates. However, municipalities are hesitant to provide services to people who do not have ID numbers starting with 99. Municipalities frequently serve through NGOs and NGOs' venues as a method to overcome legal and administrative problems. Some municipalities provide support to refugees for finding housing and, from time to time, for basic needs such as rent, electricity, water, natural gas and fuel. However, municipal funds and authorities are not involved in such cases; instead, donations and personal relations are used for financing.

Coordination of the services provided to refugees is one of the most important problems. The center established by Municipality of Sultanbeyli through an NGO, which has been supported by external sources, is a successful example in this respect. The new 6-storey building of the Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association has the opportunity to provide almost all public services (registration, education, healthcare, vocational courses, job search needs and general knowledge) needed by refugees in one place. In this "model" structure established by Governorship of Istanbul and Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, there are Governorship as well as Municipality of Sultanbeyli and also Presidency of Religious Affairs. In addition, with these developments, all relevant institutions (Ministries of Interior, Education, Health and Labor and Social Security) on the issue of refugees have the opportunity to work together under the same roof now. Also, domestic and foreign NGOs actively participated in these activities. It is extremely valuable for municipalities to have external support on their projects. Handicap International, Maya Foundation, Hudayi Foundation, Bashir Association and Mimar Sinan Construction, Culture and Education Foundation, besides German Welhungerhilfe, also contributed to the establishment of Coordination Center. The priority activities of the Sultanbeyli Coordination Center of the Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association are on the issues of marriage, health, education and employment. In Coordination Center, services are provided in the fields of accommodation, health and education in addition to the services provided in multi-purpose community center. In terms of housing, the staff is working on both permanent and temporary solutions (guest houses). There are also Female Guest Houses in Sultanbeyli where lonely and socio-economically disadvantaged refugee women can stay temporarily. In these houses, the victimized women are taken under protection and they are offered the opportunity of permanent sheltering with their children.¹⁵

¹⁵ Established by Municipality of Sultanbeyli, which has succeeded in creating an important system for the services provided to the refugees, Coordination Center of Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants has become one of the most diversified and effective implementations in terms of fields of activity.



District municipalities are providing special services for health and education needs of refugees.

22. DO SYRIAN REFUGEES GET HELP FOR THEIR HEALTH AND EDUCATION PROBLEMS?

District municipalities are providing special services for health and education needs of refugees. Health and education also have a special place in harmonization programs of some municipalities which have traditionally sensitive attitude towards harmonization of immigrants.¹⁶ However, relevant institutions and their responsibilities on the issue of Syrian refugees have not been clearly defined yet. For this reason, municipalities, who are already experiencing financial and administrative problems in delivery of usual everyday services, are able to work on refugee issues only in exceptional cases and as emergency management.

¹⁶ The AKDEM (Family Support and Disability Center) unit, which has been working successfully on "harmonization in the city" with Zeytinburnu Municipality since 2009, is one of the examples that have succeeded in developing a considerable capacity in approach to the refugees.



Up to almost 90% of the respondents expressed that they think Syrians will stay permanently, rather than temporarily.

23. FUTURE PLANS OF SYRIANS: WILL THEY STAY OR WILL THEY LEAVE?

In the interviews, when we asked district municipalities of Istanbul about the future of Syrians and whether they were here temporarily or permanently, up to almost 90% of the respondents expressed that they think Syrians will stay permanently, rather than temporarily.



According to the municipal authorities, the three most important problems concerning refugees arise on the subjects of language differences, unemployment and housing.

24. POSSIBILITY OF TENSION BETWEEN SYRIANS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

When municipal authorities were asked about their opinion on social acceptance and their impressions of social tension, they stated that despite the existence of some concerns in local community, these anxieties and worries have not turned into conflicts, and that both local people and Syrians are very careful in this respect. The main complaints from local people about Syrians are increase in rents, aid provided to Syrians, begging, noise, differentiation of working cultures, unregistered businesses and losing/potential for losing their jobs due to this, some obstacles that they think are caused by Syrian refugees in public services, "deterioration of social order" and high birth rates.

According to the municipal authorities, the three most important problems concerning refugees arise on the subjects of language differences, unemployment and housing. The main problems that Syrians create for local people were expressed as security concerns, rent increases and incompatibility.

The municipal authorities rank the priority problems that affect refugees as education, language, ghettoization, rent increase, begging, staying unregistered, barriers to accessing health services, economic problems and security.



It is very important for refugees to be included in the process in terms of both the better detection of their needs and expectations and the development of a sense of belonging through participation.

25. INVOLVING REFUGEES IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Municipal officials working on refugee issues in district municipalities of Istanbul stated that harmonization programs for Syrian refugees should continue and municipalities should take serious initiative on this issue while including refugees in this process. However, there is a serious language barrier that prevents their involvement. Two practices are considered to be effective on this problem in a short time: Language education for adults and educating school-age Syrian children in Turkish public schools. It is very important for refugees to be included in the process in terms of both the better detection of their needs and expectations and the development of a sense of belonging through participation. It could be said that expression of this need by municipal authorities is also highly valuable in this regard.



The sense of injustice that social services are only provided for the Syrian population is one of the main problems expressed by locals.

26. OTHER ISSUES/PROBLEMS

Both in this research and in other relevant studies, it could be seen that the following problems are often expressed in the district municipalities of Istanbul where Syrian population has exceeded 5% of the district population: increased workload and cost in basic municipal services such as water, electricity, waste management, pressures on social service infrastructures, problems arising from the increase in housing market prices (especially the victimization of local community and rising rents), social tension with local community, the sense of injustice that social services are only provided for the Syrian population (expressed by locals), the competition in labor market and the difficulties in providing psycho-social services adapted to the current situation.



VIII.

OVERVIEW

This study, with the title “Urban Refugees from ‘Detachment’ to ‘Harmonization’ Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul”, was conducted by interviewing the 39 district municipalities in Istanbul and the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality authorities in order to assess the situation of urban refugees and local governments’ services in this area and to formulate policy recommendations for the future. Istanbul, where 17-20% of the 3.1 million Syrian refugees in Turkey live as of December 2016, is the province that hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees in Turkey, with more than 540 thousand registered Syrian refugees. The ratio of Syrian refugees in Istanbul to the total population of Istanbul is 3.67%. This ratio is 8% in some districts while 0.01% in some others. Within this context, it is observed that there are different perception and process management models in Istanbul. In this respect, this study, which is the most comprehensive research on local governments and process management related to the issue of refugees, is structured with an understanding that would cover not only Istanbul but also all provinces where refugees are concentrated in Turkey. Certainly, there may be some cases specific to Istanbul, sometimes even specific to a district; however, the problems experienced, the effort made for solution, the difficulties in coordination, and especially the legal and administrative limitations on local governments are similar in everywhere.





Photo:Bülent Kılıç/AFP/Getty Images

Istanbul, where 17-20% of the 3.1 million Syrian refugees in Turkey live as of December 2016, is the province that hosts the largest number of Syrian refugees in Turkey, with more than 540 thousand registered Syrian refugees. The ratio of Syrian refugees in Istanbul to the total population of Istanbul is 3.67%. This ratio is 8% in some districts while 0.01% in some others.

Research findings and policy proposals in this regard could be listed as follows:

- ▶ The research reflects the position of all local governments on refugee issues, although it was conducted only in Istanbul.
- ▶ More than 92% of refugees live in urban centers as “urban refugees”. This situation arises directly as a problem area for municipalities to deal with. Regardless of the purpose, method and priorities of the central government (that is, in general regardless of its policy), the institutions directly dealing with refugees are municipalities.
- ▶ Until now, municipalities have managed the process very successfully despite authority problems and lack of resources. It should not be forgotten that the number of refugees in Istanbul is over 30 thousand in 5 district municipalities, over 20 thousand in 10 district municipalities and over 10 thousand in 21 district municipalities. Considering that of 28 EU members only Germany, Sweden, Austria and Italy have more than 50 thousand refugees and most of the others have less than 10 thousand, we could better understand how big the numbers are for each district municipality.
- ▶ In addition to the role and contribution of the extraordinarily self-sacrificing municipal staff working on this issue, the support and tolerance of local community is also of utmost importance in process management. However, there is still need for additional arrangements and support for sustainability.

- ▶ The municipalities provided services such as distribution of aid and emergency management in the first years. Then, while they continued to distribute aid to people in need, they also started to conduct -planned or unplanned- harmonization programs.
- ▶ The interest of municipalities in this issue varies depending on the number of refugees within the borders of their district or province. In some municipalities there are refugees up to 50 thousand, reaching 10% of their own population, while in some municipalities the number of refugees stays in three-digit levels.
- ▶ The most basic problem for municipalities is legal and administrative restrictions on responsibilities. The emphasis on "service to citizens" in regulations related to municipalities, especially in Municipal Law, has made it problematic for municipalities to provide services to non-citizen refugees.
- ▶ Another obstacle in the service delivery of municipalities is the difference between registered/unregistered refugees. Similarly, there may be differences between those with a "Foreigner's ID Number" starting with 99 and those with a "Personel Number" starting with 98, even though all of them are registered.
- ▶ The interest and willingness of mayor, deputy mayor, director and relevant staff are particularly influential in the process management, especially for the municipalities with high number of refugees within their borders.
- ▶ In order to abolish legal and administrative restrictions, teams aiming to serve refugees do this in such a way that it is considered as "providing assistance to poor/those who are in destitute" based on "fellow-citizenship law". While some municipal officials say that what they do is completely in line with the legislation, some say that they provide services at risk, despite legislative barriers.
- ▶ In order to overcome the legal-administrative restrictions they face while serving refugees, and at the same time, to make use of charitable donations in this regard, municipalities often use the method of managing the process through an already existing and reliable NGO that they know.
- ▶ It is of utmost importance that local governments have access to valid data in the process management. The most serious problem municipalities with a high number of refugees experience in providing help/support to refugees is the lack of healthy information and data. The fact that the central government does not share the data on refugees with municipalities creates a serious obstacle for municipalities to correctly plan the services they will provide to refugees.
- ▶ Some municipalities try to determine the needs and neediness, and to prevent duplication by creating their own databases to serve as a basis for services to refugees. These municipalities carry out highly sophisticated and detailed studies in this regard and conduct needs and inventory analysis via home visits.

The emphasis on "service to citizens" in regulations related to municipalities, especially in Municipal Law, has made it problematic for municipalities to provide services to non-citizen refugees.

The fact that the central government does not share the data on refugees with municipalities creates a serious obstacle for municipalities to correctly plan the services they will provide to refugees.

- ▶ Although municipalities are required to create databases for refugees living within their borders, which are highly necessary and are created entirely by well-meaning employees, these practices occasionally conflict with the privacy principles of personal data.
- ▶ District municipalities frequently express the need to create a common database. In this way, determination of neediness, prevention of duplicative beneficiaries and, most importantly, sharing of a reasonable burden among municipalities could be possible. Some suggest that Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality should create a common database at least for Istanbul, or Marmara Municipalities Union for Marmara Region.
- ▶ One of the problems that district municipalities most often expressed at each stage is the lack of coordination. It was expressed that even the departments of the very same district municipality are uncoordinated. There is a serious incoordination between district municipalities and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, among the district municipalities themselves, and between public institutions especially the Governorship, the District Governorship, the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation, the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health. However, the most frequently expressed complaint is about the disconnection between district municipalities, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. The need for a coordination department within Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality was frequently expressed.
- ▶ Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and district municipalities expect the coordination issue to be regulated by the Governorship and District Governorship as they are legally responsible for this issue.
- ▶ The municipalities have mostly not established special departments for refugees -with a few exceptions - and they are trying to manage the process through their existing directorates. However, in the districts where refugee numbers are high, there is a significant staffing problem in this regard. It was expressed that not only quantity, but also quality of the staff is important as there is a serious need for staff who could speak the relevant language (mostly Arabic).
- ▶ The number of staff members that municipalities have employed regarding this issue is very limited. It is expressed that the need in this regard increases day by day.
- ▶ In addition to the legal limitations for municipalities on refugee issues, their financial resources are also very limited. The fact that refugees are not included in the shares transferred to the municipalities by the central administration, which are on the basis of population, causes both

malfunctions in services and serious grievances for municipalities. It was stated that new arrangements should be made in the legislation on municipalities to provide some financial support that includes refugees.

- ▶ Municipalities are increasingly focusing on providing "harmonization" centered services to refugees.
- ▶ Although municipalities have a very high potential to cooperate with national and international institutions on refugee issues, the lack of staff to develop and carry out projects is very obvious, with some exceptions. This is a major obstacle to the municipalities.
- ▶ One of the most important functions of municipalities in the process is the elimination of the concerns of local people, who are anxious about the mass migration-refugee influx. In this regard, municipalities are struggling to balance support campaigns with the needs of local people.
- ▶ "Begging" is one of the most frequently expressed complaints by society in terms of Syrian refugees, and it affects Syrians at a high level. Unfortunately, this problem has been on the agenda of society since the very beginning of the process. The sight of Syrian child beggars in Istanbul, usually begging near traffic lights, in parks and in crowded areas, also creates a serious illusion. In fact, Syrians are working as urban refugees and trying to exist in many areas of life. According to the fact there are at least 100 thousand Syrian households in Istanbul today and these people do not receive support from outside, it could be said that

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at least 100 thousand Syrians work in Istanbul, albeit as informal and cheap labor force. Municipalities also see beggars as a negative label for all Syrians and have been fighting against this problem. However, it is important to fight against the problem in reality as well as perception; especially children should be taken from the streets and directed to schools. The incoordination between districts is a main obstacle in this case as well.

- ▶ The fact that macro policies on refugee issues are not clear enough is another important problem of municipalities. This case lays at the foundation of Turkey's refugee problem. Naturally, there was the evident expectation of "temporariness" between 2011 and 2013. However, at the time, the likelihood of permanence for Syrian refugees has increased. Even today, it is not easy to find out whether Syrians, who came to Turkey more than 5 years ago, will stay permanently in Turkey, return to their country or go to a third country. However, sociological facts point to the permanence of Syrians in Turkey. In this case, a comprehensive harmonization policy should be set up and local governments should be given a special place in this policy. Local harmonization (or integration) is the most important part of the harmonization process, and local governments are the main actors on this matter. In the interviews with municipalities, it was observed that this issue exceeds the authority limits of municipalities, the central government should make the decision. As this decision is not clear, the current practices are focused on meeting daily urgent needs and this process is leading to the waste of resources and time at the local level.
- ▶ In general, mass migration/refugee influxes all over the world make local community anxious, especially about the possibility of disruption in public services. This situation is also experienced in Turkey. In areas where refugees live in high numbers, local people frequently report complaints about that they cannot use public services because of the refugees. These complaints may be a source of social problems in the future. Municipalities are striving to be as careful in this regard as possible and not to share some of their services provided to refugees with the public due to the fear of a possible reaction from society. In fact, disruptions in local services such as health, education and park use are experienced in relatively small dimensions; however, municipalities, who are also political features, are highly sensitive in this regard.
- ▶ The municipalities say that the most serious problem with Syrians is the language barrier. The table on the educational status of the Syrians generally also makes language learning more difficult. It is hard for municipalities to find and recruit people who can speak the language (mostly Arabic). It is not easy to overcome the language barrier during

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the preparation, delivery and implementation of municipal services.

- ▶ In Turkey, it is obvious that municipalities have a special and important place among the elements of local government; however, the city councils could, and actually should also have a very important function in this regard besides municipalities. This structuring has not settled in Turkey yet. Municipalities also expressed that city councils, who have the capacity of including everyone living in a city, citizen or non-citizen, regardless of their statuses, and producing common projects for all these people, should play a more important role in these issues. It would be beneficial if city councils develop some policies that include the participation of foreigners.
- ▶ Neighborhood headmen play a special role in process management related to refugee issues. Municipalities appreciate and need neighborhood headmen for collecting information and delivering services.
- ▶ The central government has focused more on supporting municipalities; however, municipalities are still unable to reach sufficient levels of authority and intervention both in the process of crisis and coordination and in the distribution of funds.

The fact that macro policies on refugee issues are not clear enough is another important problem of municipalities. This case lays at the foundation of Turkey's refugee problem.



**CONCLUSION
and
POLICY PROPOSALS**



Between 17% and 20% of all refugees in Turkey live in 39 districts of Istanbul.

Since 2011, Turkey has been experiencing the greatest mass migration in its history. As of December 2016, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey has exceeded 3.1 million. As of December 2016, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey has exceeded 3.1 million. Even more importantly, only 8% of these refugees live in the 26 camps in 10 provinces; the rest live as “urban refugees” in all of Turkey’s provinces together with Turkish local community. Today, Istanbul has the largest share of Syrian population in Turkey, with 539 thousand Syrians. The registration process is still ongoing. Therefore, this number will probably increase even more. The appeal of Istanbul also attracts refugees, so that between 17% and 20% of all refugees in Turkey live in 39 districts of Istanbul.

This research, titled “Urban Refugees from ‘Detachment’ to ‘Harmonization’ Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul”, is the most comprehensive work that has ever been conducted on the subject of urban refugees living in Turkey and it reveals the position of local governments not only in Istanbul but in all Turkey. Based on the field study of this research and all the studies conducted so far, the policy proposals that should be emphasized are listed as follows:

There is a serious uncertainty about the extent to which municipalities could/ should provide services to non-Turkish citizens, especially in the Municipal Law No. 5393. This law should be rearranged to emphasize municipalities’ “fellow-citizenship law” more; and in the law, municipal services need to be expanded to “citizens living within the municipal boundaries and all other individuals on condition that they are registered”. In order to reduce unregisteredness and control the relocations, it is important to include the condition of “being registered” in legal regulations.

The shares transferred from the central government, which constitute the most important share of municipal source of revenue, are determined on the basis of the Turkish citizens living within the municipal boundaries. However, there are examples like Kilis, which now houses more refugees than the population. The number of refugees constitutes 3.67% of the total population in Istanbul; however, in some districts, the ratio of refugees to district population is up to 10%. As generally practiced in Europe, municipalities should receive additional financial support per registered refugee within their boundaries also in Turkey. In fact, considering urgent needs of the refugees, their grievances and the urgent necessity of creating new capacities, this amount should be higher for refugees than it is for citizens. The average resource transferred by the

central government for each Turkish citizen can be arranged to be 50% more per capita for refugees. Legislative and administrative regulations, particularly the "Foreigners and International Protection Law" No. 6458, should be implemented to ensure that municipalities have a special role to play in local harmonization and they involve in this subject more actively. Municipalities should be regarded as the primary institutions that determine migration, refugee and cohesion policies rather than as institutions that might or might not be consulted in this regard depending on the central government's preference.

In the regions where there are metropolitan municipalities, like Istanbul, it is necessary to establish a "Refugee Database" which gathers all district municipalities under the same roof. This database should be created specifically for municipal services. The privacy of personal data should be taken into consideration when creating this database. In addition, a needs analysis should be conducted to ensure that plans in this regard are effective not only in the short term, but also in the medium and long term.

The Metropolitan Municipality should establish a department in order to ensure the efficient coordination on refugee issues. The lack of such a coordination unit is seen as a serious shortcoming especially in a city like Istanbul, which has between 600 thousand and 1 million non-citizens within its boundaries. This department should be designed as a department to regulate the coordination with district municipalities as well as the communication with other central administrative institutions related to refugee issues, including especially the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management of Governorship of Istanbul. It would be appropriate for Marmara Municipalities Union to play a special role in providing the coordination for Marmara Region on a slightly larger scale and, in particular, laying the groundwork for international cooperation.

Each district municipality should establish an independent department related to refugees and immigrants. 'Regulations on the Permanent Staff Principles and Standards of Municipalities and Affiliated Institutions and Local Administrative Unions' should be regulated in a way that would enable relevant department establishments in both metropolitan municipalities and district municipalities.

Employment opportunities for interpreters, psychologists, social workers, etc. should be provided so that they can better serve refugees in the municipalities.

The law should be rearranged to emphasize municipalities' "fellow-citizenship law" more; and in the law, municipal services need to be expanded to "citizens living within the municipal boundaries and all other individuals on condition that they are registered".

In the regions where there are metropolitan municipalities, like Istanbul, it is necessary to establish a “Refugee Database” which gathers all district municipalities under the same roof.

We should proudly state that this extraordinary humanitarian crisis in Turkey since 2011 has been managed with great success. Despite some disruptions at the center, especially with strategic instability, the serious and devoted work of all local institutions and the extraordinarily high social acceptance of Turkish society have led to a successful process management.

However, problems at the local level, such as refugee-related problems in the use of public services by local people, heavy workloads, negligence in areas involving safety, and the like, can undermine the highly fragile social acceptance. In this respect, local governments, especially municipalities and city councils, should be allowed to establish a serious bridge between the local community and refugees at the provincial and district level, and the legal restrictions in this regard should be removed.

The services of local governments on the issue of refugees is usually a product of necessity arising from the humanitarian tragedy that has taken place. However, the official approach and policy of the central government will seriously affect the continuing process. Therefore, for a sustainable structure, it is necessary for the central government to make its strategic decision on Syrians clear and also share it with the public. In this context, special roles should be given to municipalities in the preparation of both refugees and local community at the local level.

At both national and local levels, refugees generally prefer poor regions as it is a common idea that “The poor helps the poor.” However, this situation causes the already disadvantaged areas to suffer more. In this respect, a balanced distribution of refugee population to different districts should be encouraged, although not in opposition to the will of refugees.

Multi-purpose Community Centers have an extremely important function and should be increased in number. It would be more appropriate if community centers are structured with the cooperation of municipalities and Red Crescent, in terms of both obtaining more efficiency and reducing security risks.

As refugees have concentrated in the same regions, there is a tendency for ghettoization. In this respect, legal and administrative regulations and encouragements should be increased to ensure that municipalities are actively conducting harmonization programs.

Many activities are challenging for refugees, such as registration, health care, enrollment of children in school, job seeking and even bank operations. The main reasons of this problem are the language barrier and lack of education. For this reason, it would be useful if municipalities develop special applications on smartphones, which are commonly used by refugees, to help them deliver the services to refugees. Another practice that would be as efficient as the previous one is the development of mechanisms to gather all relevant public institutions under one roof. It is important to create areas for refugees where all services can be offered in one place.

The serious and devoted work of all local institutions and the extraordinarily high social acceptance of Turkish society have led to a successful process management.

The municipalities should plan their services with the help of scientific data they have collected from the field. In this context, it is necessary to carry out field studies on needs analysis and social sensitivities at certain intervals. With these studies, expectations, worries and predictions of refugees and local communities could be identified and process management would be more successful. The presence of some municipalities working on this subject is pleasing. However, it is obvious that all municipalities should simultaneously conduct such practices.

The municipalities are the most advantaged institutions in terms of receiving funding from international institutions on refugees. However, municipalities should be trained in project writing and finding funds from national and international sources. They should be encouraged to apply for project-based funds as well.

In local services, refugees should be involved in the decision-making process. We should consider the needs, suggestions and concerns of Syrians, as we are living together with them now. Both legal and administrative arrangements may be made in this regard.

It is also very important that local governments, especially municipalities, work on preventing potential tension between local people and refugees while providing services to refugees in this process. The performance of municipalities on local harmonization will directly affect the overall harmonization in society. Programs involving social inclusion are extremely valuable in terms of developing the capacity to cope with social conflicts.

APPENDIX: Semi-Structured Questionnaire

**RESEARCH ON SYRIAN REFUGEES IN
ISTANBUL AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES:
MARCH-NOVEMBER 2016**

DATE OF INTERVIEW
.....
INTERVIEWER(S)
.....
MUNICIPALITY
.....
MAYOR
.....
POLITICAL PARTY
.....

INTERVIEWEE(S)

NAME
.....
TITLE
.....
POSITION IN THE MUNICIPALITY
.....
MUNICIPAL REPRESENTATION STATUS
.....

BASIC DATA ON THE MUNICIPALITY

POPULATION

AREA (TOTAL)

BUDGET OF 2016

NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL STAFF

NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL DIRECTORATES/DEPARTMENTS

NUMBER OF NEIGHBORHOODS

NUMBER OF NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS (PRIMARY/SECONDARY)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

NUMBER OF MEDICAL CENTERS (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)

OTHER

INFORMATION AND POLICIES ON SYRIAN REFUGEES

How many Syrian refugees are there within your municipal boundaries? How many of them are women and children?

What are the official numbers and the numbers according to the data of your municipality?

How many of the refugees within your boundaries do you think works? In which job sectors do they work? Does local community react negatively to this?

How many Syrian-owned businesses are there within your boundaries? What are their types/In which sectors are they?

Which department works on refugee issues in your municipality?

How many people work on refugee-related issues in your municipality? In which positions do they work? Is there a department established specifically for this purpose?

.....
 If yes, since when this department has been functioning?

.....
 If no, do you think such a department is necessary?

.....
 Are you working on detecting the needs of Syrians? If yes, in what ways are you doing this? Do you visit homes?

.....
 Do you have any kind of information/database on the refugees residing within your municipal boundaries?

.....
 If yes, how and from where was it provided?

.....
 Is it possible for you to share it with us?

.....
 Is there a software you use or have specifically developed for the database?

.....
 What do you think about establishing a refugee database system by developing a common software for all municipalities and NGOs in Istanbul to help prevent duplicate benefits - including assistance provided?

.....
 What institutions do you cooperate with regarding refugee issues?

.....
 Official Institutions (Governorship, District Governorship, AFAD, DGMM, etc.)

.....
 NGOs

.....
 International organizations

.....
 Municipalities

ACTIVITIES AND COOPERATION AREAS

.....
 What kind of services do you provide to Syrians within your municipal boundaries?

- a. Help
 - i. Winter help
 - ii. Food/provision parcels
 - iii. Hot meal
 - iv. Clothes
 - v. Domestic utensils
 - vi. Stationery
 - vii. Rent aid
 - viii. Financial aid
- b. Translation services
- c. Transportation services (to hospitals, schools, etc.)
- d. Psycho-social support, health services
- e. Referral to relevant institutions
- f. Language courses
- g. Vocational courses
- h. Education (Syrian schools, temporary training centers etc.)
- i. Other

.....
 How many of the Syrian refugees benefit from municipal services?

DO YOU THINK municipals are (legally and administratively) obliged to take care of refugees?

Which persons and institutions lead these activities? What are their cooperation areas? (NGO, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Municipalities, District Governorship, Governorship, DGMM etc.)

Did your municipality establish any NGO or have any NGO established in order to conduct such activities? If yes, which NGOs are these? When were they established?

Which NGOs does your municipality directly cooperate in carrying out activities related to refugees?

In which areas are these NGOs cooperating?

Do you cooperate with foreign NGOs or international institutions?

If yes, which ones?

In which areas?

What is the financial size?

Would you like to cooperate more with foreign NGOs or international institutions?

Do these institutions have activities that would be inconvenient to your municipality or to society?

How is the financing of refugee-related activities provided?

Do you cooperate with Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality on refugee issues?

If yes, how and in which areas?

Do you cooperate with other district municipalities on refugee issues?

If yes, how and in which areas?

What is the monthly average of the municipal resources spent for refugees so far? (Could be estimated)

How much have refugees increased your workload and financial burden?

Has the capacity of municipal resources or staff increased due to refugees?

If not, what is the need in this regard?

SERVICES

Where and how do you provide services to Syrian refugees?

Is there a Community Center for the refugees that your municipality has established, governed or cooperated with?

If yes, in which areas does it function? How many people does it serve?

If not, are you planning to establish one?

Does your municipality have a contribution or effect on the settlement process of the refugees? (Finding a house, rent payment etc.)

Does your municipality conduct health services for refugees?

Does your municipality conduct education services for refugees?

Do your municipalities provide education or social support to special groups? (Women, Children, Disabled, Older etc.)

PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATIONS

What do you think Syrians are planning for the future? (Do you think they will stay or go? Why?)

Do you have any expectations on legislative changes? If so, what kind of changes should be made in the Municipal Law and other legislation?

DO YOU THINK there is a tension, conflict or possibility of conflict between Syrians and local community? If yes, why? What could be done to prevent this?

What DO YOU THINK the most important three problems of refugees are?

DO YOU THINK refugees are causing problems for the local people living within your municipal boundaries? If yes, what are the most important three among these problems?

Related to refugees, what are the top three problems the local people are most complaining about?

What DO YOU THINK the most important three contributions of refugees to your municipality and to local community living within the boundaries of your municipality?

Which ones DO YOU THINK are already existing problems especially affecting refugees? (You can also choose one.)

1. Being unregistered
2. Failure to provide education
3. Concerns about access to health care
4. Settlement problems/Ghettoization
5. Lack of communication due to language barrier
6. Economic problems/Unemployment
7. Negative reaction of local community
8. Cultural differences
9. Security
10. You can add:

HARMONIZATION / INTEGRATION

What DO YOU THINK harmonization/integration is?

What do you think should be done about the harmonization of the refugees in your district?

What do you do for the harmonization of the refugees in your district?

What are the expectations of refugees from you? What do they mostly demand from you? Which problems do they expect you to solve?

Should refugees be involved in the decision-making process?

If yes, how and by what means?

What DO YOU THINK should be done to allow your municipality to better manage this process? Could you list them according to priority?

If there is anything else you would like to add, please do so.

 **MARMARA**
BELEDİYELER BİRLİĐİ
KÜLTÜR YAYINLARI



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