

**T.R.
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES M.A. PROGRAMME**

M.A. THESIS

**MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS OF TURKISH
CITIZENS AND SYRIAN REFUGEES: CASE OF
THE EUROPEAN SIDE OF ISTANBUL**

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15735003**

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**ISTANBUL
2018**

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ÖZ

SURİYELİ MÜLTECİLER İLE TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ VATANDAŞLARININ KARŞILIKLI ALGISI: İSTANBUL AVRUPA YAKASI ÖRNEĞİ

Murat Karataş

Mart, 2018

2010 yılında Tunus'ta başlayan Arap Baharı'nın etkisi kısa sürede Ortadoğu ve Kuzey Afrika'daki pek çok ülkeye sıçramıştır. 2011 yılının Mart ayında bölgesel çatışmalar şeklinde başlayan Suriye'deki süreç, kısa zamanda bir iç savaşa dönüşerek milyonlarca insanın etkilendiği sosyal, ekonomik ve siyasal sonuçlar doğurmuştur. Aradan geçen yaklaşık 7 yılda, savaştan kaçan kayıtlı mültecilerin 3.6 milyonu Türkiye'ye gelmiştir. İstanbul ise 550.000 mülteciyi barındırmaktadır. Bu çalışma İstanbul Avrupa Yakası'ndaki Suriyeli mültecilerin ve T.C. vatandaşlarının ekonomik, sosyal ve politik anlamda birbirlerine yönelik karşılıklı algısını öğrenmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma özellikle bu iki grubun kesiştiği, karşılaştığı ve temas ettiği alanlara yöneliktir. Bu bağlamda, ekonomik açıdan kira fiyatlarının artışı, iş piyasalarındaki rekabet ve maaş ayrımcılığının; sosyo-politik açıdan din, kültürü görme biçimleri, medya ve ideolojinin politik bir çerçevede algıya olan etkileri nedir gibi sorular yanıtlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında Avrupa yakasında bulunan Fatih, Esenyurt, Bayrampaşa ve Bakırköy ilçelerinin seçilmiş bazı mahallelerinde nitel araştırma yapılmıştır. Seçili ilçe ve mahalleler hem sosyal, ekonomik ve politik açıdan hem de Suriyelilerin farklı oranlarda yaşadıkları yerler olması açısından görece genel bir temsiliyet ve karşılaştırma olanağı sağlamıştır. Bu bağlamda temasın az ve yüksek olması gibi algıya etki eden diğer faktörler de değerlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Karşılıklı Algı, Algı, Suriyeliler, Suriyeli Mülteciler, Türkiye'deki Vatandaşlar, İstanbul, Avrupa Yakası

ABSTRACT

THE MUTUAL PERCEPTION BETWEEN THE SYRIAN REFUGEES AND THE TURKISH CITIZENS: THE CASE OF THE EUROPEAN SIDE OF ISTANBUL

**Murat Karataş
March, 2018**

The impacts of the Arab Spring, which started in 2010 in Tunisia, spread to many countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa in a very short period of time. The process in Syria, which began as regional conflicts in March, 2011, incrementally turned into a civil war which affected so many people in social, economic and political terms. Within the 7 years since the beginning of the civil war, 3.6 million registered refugees who fled from Syria, came to Turkey. Istanbul accommodates 550 thousand of them. This study aims to learn and explain the mutual perceptions of Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens who live in the European side of Istanbul in economic, social and political means. The research focuses on the zones where these two groups intersect, interact and contact. In this respect, the economic questions about the rise of rental rates, the competition in the labour market and wage discrimination; the socio-political questions about the effects of religion, the ways of perceiving cultural values, and the political impacts of the media and ideologies on this perception were explored. In this study, qualitative research methods were utilized in the districts of Fatih, Esenyurt, Bayrampaşa and Bakırköy which are located in the European side of Istanbul. The various towns and districts selected enabled a general representativeness and comparability with respect to their social, economic, political differences and varying percentages of the Syrians within the community. In this respect, the other elements of perception such as the quality/quantity of the contact were also evaluated.

Key Words: Mutual Perception, Perception, Syrians, Syrian Refugees, Turkish Citizens, Istanbul, The European Side

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Istanbul; March, 2018

Murat Karataş

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“No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”¹

John Donne



¹ <https://web.cs.dal.ca/~johnston/poetry/island.html>

1. INTRODUCTION

The Arab Spring has deeply affected most of the Middle Eastern and some North African countries since 2010. The process started in Syria as a regional conflict in 2011, and it quickly turned into a civil war which has caused major economic, social and political changes. Consequently, millions of people have been displaced mostly to the neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Today, more than 3.6 million² and 550,000³ Syrian refugees live in Turkey and Istanbul respectively. It is highly possible that the majority of these people will stay in Turkey. Therefore, studies about Syrian refugees are important in terms of living together in Turkey.

Encounters of communities could have both positive and negative consequences. Especially in the case of huge number of refugees; integration problems, xenophobia, social isolation and other current or possible problems could be considered. However, the process could create mutual beneficial relationship between the communities as well.

Migration generates the risk of exclusion (Halfmann, 1998, 513). Therefore, huge forced migration of Syrians to Turkey, and the encounters of two communities in this context are worth to study. Especially social and economic exclusion of the incoming community; economic, social and political concerns for the host country should be analysed regarding long-term acceptance and integration issues. In this respect, coexistence dynamics and current conflicts between the Turkish and Syrian societies are studied in terms of perception.

Both the adaptation of the migrants to a new place, and the attitudes of existing society towards the migrants are important factors for coexistence. At that point, could we say that there will be an increasing conflict or harmonious relationship between the societies? Is there a possible Syrian question for Turkey on a long term basis? To answer these kinds of controversial questions are beyond the limits of this

² <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

³ http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

study, however I will try to show the ways in which we would approach to this puzzle. Perception is crucial, because, as the study of Bargh, Chen and Burrows indicates, it is directly related to our behaviours (Dijksterhuis, Knippenberg, 1998, 865). Perception is interpretation and making sense process according to experiences (Pickens, 2005, 52). If perceptions and the factors, which affect it, are understood, the behaviours could be explained. Therefore, the analysed perceptions will be a useful and guiding tool to understand the dynamics of coexistence between the two communities, and to solve the possible or current problems. This is the main significance of this study.

This study examines the interaction zones of the Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees who live on the European side in selected neighbourhoods of Istanbul. These areas were examined to compare the two sides in terms of presenting differences and similarities. Instead of a one-sided research, a double-sided research has been preferred for a better understanding, because double-sided analysis provides mutual viewpoints towards a particular situation and supports an empathic approach. Besides trying to understand only one side is not sufficient to discover the dynamics of coexistence.

1.1. Content

The study mainly consists of two parts, based on socio-political and economic perceptions. However, this approach does not mean that these two parts are disconnected. On the contrary; economic, social and political perceptions are intertwined and have complex structures. Nevertheless, the perspective was evaluated in two categories to present the study simply and clearly. On the part of economic perception, the labour and housing markets were examined. Especially the ‘number of Syrian refugees in the labour market’ and the ‘rising the demand in the housing market’ are the main points for researching the economic perception. In this context, questions such as “What are the mutual perceptions in labour market?”, “How do employers perceive this situation?”, “What are the mutual perceptions on the housing market” were asked to understand our hesitations or discomforts. Moreover, the framework also includes the analysis of selected neighbourhoods’ differences.

When it comes to the socio-political perception, the study considers the role of the religion and other components of culture as factors affecting the perception of the society within the framework of politics. The study tries to answer questions as “How are the perceptions of culture and ‘imagined’ Syria or Syrian identity?”, “How different do we perceive each other?”, “To what extent do life styles and religious perspective affect mutual perceptions?”, “Is there any relation between political stance and refugee perception?”, “What are the misinformation about Syrian refugees and their effects on the perception?” , “Is there social isolation and discrimination, and if there is, how are they formed?”. This chapter also includes sub parts concerning the analysis of the comparison of the selected neighbourhoods, because each neighbourhood has its unique social, economic and political factors which affect perception differently. For example, Fatih is a kind of centre for different religions and sects. Answers to questions as “Are there any differences, in terms of religion and perception, between the town of Fatih, where people mostly presented themselves as conservative, and Bakırköy where people mostly presented themselves as secular, Kemalist or nationalist?”, “How much does place differentiate the perception on Syrians?”, “What are the perceptions of Syrians towards Turkish citizens in terms of culture?”, “How does the religion affect these people regarding perception?”, “How do the differences and similarities of the Turkish and Arab culture are perceived?” were tried to find.

Although the study often refers to macro issues because of the tendency of the interviewees, it has also micro focal points. Macro social or economic data were rarely used in this study. Macro outcomes are the points which were expressed by the interviewees. The lifestyles of the interviewees, their reactions towards some particular events, the words they choose, their hesitations and attitudes towards me as a young Turkish researcher are important points for the study. Therefore, the viewpoints of the interviewees were presented with their own expressions in a micro-scale.

1.2. Limitations of the Study

Although the study doesn’t have a generalization aim, to interview with people from different towns provides some hints about effects of various factors. However, the size of Istanbul created some limitations (in terms of time and budget) and

constrained my field to European side and some selected neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, the study still doesn't have a claim to be representative of the European side. As a qualitative research, the number of people I reached is not as much as a quantitative research requires. However, the purpose was to reach a deeper understanding and presenting ethnographic viewpoints as much as possible. Therefore, micro scale interactions were kept at the forefront of the study rather than the number of participants.

The other limitation of the study was to reach female participants. 22 of 77 interviews were done with women, and only 7 of them were Syrians. Especially my interview requests were refused by female refugees. In addition to Syrian female refugees, it was partly hard to reach also Turkish women as well compared to Syrian or Turkish male participants.

Lastly, there were only 2 children with whom I conducted interviews which I did not add to the study because of the lack of depth. I think that these types of interviews (with children) require long term observations and due to time constraints, I could not add their viewpoints and perceptions to my study.

2. RESEARCHING MIGRATION

To study refugees has some theoretical difficulties. Despite “huge migration literature” (Halfacree, Merriman, 2015, 153) forced migration or issues regarding refugees “have limited conceptual and theoretical sophistication” according to Mazur (1988 as cited in Stepputat, Sorensen, 2014, 86). Because, being a refugee, when it is compared to other migration dynamics, has no complex elements. As in the case of Syria, it is a consequence of fleeing their homeland due to an intense and prolonged conflict. Therefore, to present a deeper perspective is pointless especially in terms of why they came to Turkey. However, refugee migration creates the possibility of economic, social and political transformations. Hence, to focus on the after-migration situations, especially with sociological and anthropological perspectives and concepts, is more appropriate than to focus on the causality of refugee migration. This viewpoint is implemented in the chapters of ‘perception on economy’ and ‘perception on society and politics’. Therefore, the main migration theories and the special position of being a refugee will be used to indicate especially the differences between migrants and refugees, and the dynamics of these two groups. Then, some factors will be analysed to show the formation of perception in the part dedicated to literature review. The last part of the researching migration is allocated to the methodology and research design which explain the details of the field study.

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Migration and Its Dynamics

Migration has always been one of the essential characteristics in the animal world. From mammals to birds, mobility between different geographies is a crucial survival strategy. The journey is a kind of ‘adaptation’ to find better habitats in terms of nutrition sources, climate or reproduction (Shaw, 2016, 1002-1003). More adaptable environments mean higher chance of survival and better conditions to satisfy needs. In this respect, human and animal migrations have basic similarities. Ultimately the

reasons are the same, yet the internal or external triggers and processes of decision making are different, because humans are led by a combination of complex social, economic and political ‘structures’ and personal ‘agency’.⁴ Therefore, human migration generally has a multi-layered causality.

There are several reasons for migration. Basically, the causing agents are classified as ‘pull and push factors’. While ‘pull factors’ means the desirable and attractive sides of the destination country or region, such as better economic conditions, stable political structure, democratic rights and so forth; ‘push factors’ refer to the lack of these ‘pull factors’ in the country of origin (Indumathi, Krishnakumar, 2014, 8-11). Each individual or social group perceive the factors differently. For example, according to Paxton, fascism is artificially produced and based on the philosophy of nationalism (Paxton, 2004, 41). Hence, fascist leaders, such as Hitler or Mussolini, could be appreciated and supported by nationalist groups easily; on the other hand, this politic structure could be seen as a ‘push factor’ for anti-nationalist camps.

We can witness the formation of the ‘pull and push factors’ in today’s world. For instance, after the 45th presidential election in the U.S., some Democratic Party voters applied for residence permits in Canada⁵. One of the key points could be the polarisation of society in terms of perception of the factors, whereas economic crisis, natural disasters or wars look more independent from perception when compared, because the perception could be related to the political ideology rather than objective factors, and open the door to manipulation.

2.1.2. Some Basic Migration Theories

2.1.2.1. Macro and Micro Theory of Neoclassical Economic Approach

To explain the reasons and the nature of migration, some theories have been developed throughout the 20th century. One of them is the macro and micro theory of neoclassical economic approach. According to macro theory, internal and external (international) migrations are the results of “geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labor” (Massey et al., 1993, 433). Some aspects of the migration from Mexico to the U.S. in the mid-90s could be analysed in this context for

⁴ While ‘agency’ refers to free choice and independence of action from constraints, ‘structures’ refers to constraints over freewill or free choice (Lee, 1990, 220-221).

⁵ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/how-to-move-to-canada-immigration-website-crash-donald-trump-president-a7406106.html>. Last Accessed on: February 12, 2017

example. In 1995, Mexico had an economic recession and experienced a great drop in real wages. In the same period, the U.S. economy was growing and performing better (Chiquiar, Salcedo, year, 2). Migration as a conclusion of the U.S. demand for Mexican labour and Mexican supply of labour to the U.S. is quite reasonable according to the macro theory, because while the oversupply of labour and economic crisis causes the decrease of the wages in the country of origin, and the demand of the destination country for labour with relatively high wages. This dichotomy creates migration. The theory assumes that “the international migration of workers is caused by differences in real wages between countries” and “the elimination of wage differentials will end the movement of labor, and migration will not occur in the absence of such differentials” (Massey et al., 1993, 434).

When we consider micro theory of neoclassical economic approach, we encounter more emphasis on individual and “heterogeneity between individuals” according to Bonin (2008 as cited in Kurekova, 2011, 6). Social factors, individual features or technology increase the probability of international migration (Massey et al., 1993, 435). According to Borjas, perception of migration depends on the ‘maximizing the benefit’ principle. As a rational action, decision making depends on the ‘expected net return, (ER)’ according to the theory. In the case of positive ‘expected net return, (ER)’, the person migrates. ER includes different parameters such as “probability of employment at the destination”, “the probability of avoiding deportation from the area of destination” or “psychological cost” (1990 as cited in Massey et al., year, 434-435) in which we could consider learning a new language, integration struggles, cultural shocks and so forth. These costs of migration are personal and differ from macroeconomic indicators. Emotionally, to leave ingrained cultural values and social relations could be as hard as to live with economic difficulties. Therefore, psychological factors are included in the theory.

2.1.2.2. The New Economics of Migration Theory

Unlike the key assumptions of neoclassical economic approach which are based on individual perceptions, ‘the new economics of migration’ theory mainly refers to households or families. “Migration decisions are not taken by isolated actors but by larger units of related people, typically households or families, is a trademark of the NELM” (New Economics of Labour Migration) (Martin, Taylor, 2001, 468). The

theory claims that migration is “a family decision” which considers reducing the economic risks and solving the financial problems in general (Porumbescu, 2015, 56). International migrations could minimize the possibility of economic problems for the rest of the family in the home country as well. Remittances from the destination country to the country of origin is the major example of this. According to KNOMAD (The Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development), worldwide remittance was probably more than \$601 billion in 2015 (Ratha, Eigen-Zucchi, and Plaza, 2016, V). And Turkey’s GDP to remittance received ratio in the same year was 0.1%⁶.

Stark explains these migrations as “the members of these groups act in common, not only to maximize their income, but also to minimize their risks and eliminate the restraints that come from the failures of national markets, not only of the labour field” (1991 as cited in Porumbescu, 1991, 17). Migrants send a portion of their earnings to family in the home county and this application creates variety in family income, hence the strategy helps to handle economic difficulties such as a possible economic recession in the country of origin.

2.1.2.3. World Systems Theory

This theory presents a quite different perspective for migration. The theory, which is mostly based on Wallerstein’s works, explains that modern migration is a direct result of the capitalist system (Massey et al., 1993, 444-445). According to Wallerstein, ‘geographical expansion’, global ‘division of labour’ and formation of ‘core states’ caused a drastic transformation from the feudalist system to the capitalist economic system.

He uses the notions of ‘core’, ‘periphery’ and ‘semi-periphery’ areas to explain the geographies of the exploited and the exploiter. Ritzer explains these geographies as

“The core geographical area dominates the capitalist world-economy and exploits the rest of the system. The periphery consists of those areas that provide raw materials to the core and are heavily exploited by it. The semi-periphery is a residual category that encompasses a set of regions somewhere between the exploiting and the exploited” (2010, 307).

According to Burawoy, the theory refers to “unequal economic relations” and it reflections on labour and the other sources (1976 as cited in Ponce, 2016, 89). This

⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS>

economic imbalance originates from colonial history and results as migration; flow from these periphery countries to the core countries (Ponce, 89), “because cultural, linguistic, administrative, investment, transportation, and communication links were established early and were allowed to develop free from outside competition during the colonial era, leading to the formation of specific transnational markets and cultural systems”, and there is a negative correlation between the flow of labour and capital migration (Massey et al., 1993, 447-448).

Essentially, capital flow to periphery areas provided mechanization in different sectors and created productivity. As a result of modernism, agricultural employment had decreased in the 20th century (Daly, 1981, 11). Of course, it is hard to say the same things for the automobile or steel industry (Miller, 1964, 300). Unemployment in agriculture brought about both internal, which is from rural areas to cities, and external migrations. In conjunction, “Mobile labor force displaced from the land with a weakened attachment to local agrarian communities” is attracted by the core countries because of the ‘material and ideological’ aspects of globalisation (Massey et al., 1993, 445-446). These interactions are evaluated in the frame of colonial historical background. However, after the colonial period, the theory focuses on relations between capitalism and nation states. Even if new technologies or historical transformations could change the modes of production, the system will maintain itself. Imperial, colonial, post-colonial or next generation systems are just different reflections of this holistic system (Çağlayan, 2006, 79).

2.1.2.4. Network Theory

Network Theory mostly focuses on the notion of ‘social capital’. According to Putnam ‘social capital’ is “the resources accessed through social networks, including trust, norms of reciprocity, and the ability to undertake collective action” (1993 as cited in Mackenbach et al., 2016, 97). In this sense, the notion could express the core elements of society formation, loyalty in a group, shared emotions or interests. ‘The resources’ could be economic, political or social. ‘Social capital’ could facilitate finding a job (Mackenbach et al, 2016, 246), spouse or to provide social acceptance, because support between people is reciprocal, therefore it has a high possibility to maximize the total benefit for these mutual interactions in the long term. From a nuclear family to a religious community, we could consider the same element: trust.

According to Fukuyama, “trust is a—probably the—main component of social capital, and social capital is a necessary condition of social integration, economic efficiency, and democratic stability” (1995 as cited Newton, 2001, 202). Moreover, it promotes collective action (Yamamura, 2007, 2054). Social capital is an essential part for cooperation which increases the motivation of an aim and its success through productivity. It works as a flexible and holistic connective link between people inside a group.

Network Theory is an adapted analysis of the notion of ‘social capital’ to a certain extent. The economic, political and especially social bonds between former, new and possible migrants or groups are taken into account through family relations, friendship, ethnic or religious closeness in the frame of ‘social capital’ (Massey et al., 1993, p. 448-449). “Social networks provide a foundation for the dissemination of information as well as for patronage or assistance” (Haug, 2008, 588). Before migration, the person could learn essential information about the destination country or society via these networks. Especially the developments of telecommunication and transportation in global scale has made the social networks between different geographies more possible and cheaper. These technologies produce/reproduce stronger pre-existing social patterns (Vertovec, 1999, 3). After migration, access to basic needs such as education, health care, accommodation, or employment could be met by the network relatively easier. Therefore, previous migrations and pre-existing networks minimize the possible risks and cost of the mobility (Massey et al., 1993, p. p448-449). The mechanism includes both skipping the process of ‘reinventing the wheel’ in terms of experience or information, and providing the solidarity of the ‘homogeneous’ group.

2.1.3. The Special Position of being a Refugee or a Displaced Person

The diversity of the previous explanations and assumptions about migration stems from the complexity of voluntary mobility. Extreme conditions and push factors, such as war or racist implications in an area, are not taken into account in migrations theories. They mostly focus on social and economic structures, in the macro perspective, in contrast to individual choices in the micro perspective. In this sense, ‘geographical differences’ regarding supply and demand, ‘expected net return’ for different individuals, considering household or family factors in terms of remittance,

‘social capital’ as a facilitative and risk reductive effect, and the capitalist system as a dominant worldwide structure are analysed to understand the reasons and dynamics of migration. However, to be a displaced person or a refugee is not optional for a person. Quite difficult political conditions, which could be against human dignity or prevent ethnic/religious freedoms, or crises such as war, could cause this situation. Hence, people mostly become refugees or are displaced for reasons of survival. Therefore, the reasons are apparent, yet results are complex and hard to cope with. Since migration from Syria to Turkey mainly originated from non-voluntary pull-push factors, in this dissertation, I will focus on unavoidable causes rather than voluntary preferences especially in the second chapter. In addition, I will discuss the network theory in order to explain Syrian refugees’ pathways and preferences in terms of efficiency, ‘social capital’ and security within the framework of ‘survival strategies’ especially in the fourth chapter.

2.1.4. Some social consequences of Immigration

In the case of migration, old and historical colonial relations and dynamics, as mentioned above, have a central importance according to the World Systems Theory. It is hard to find a universal description of colonialism, yet it could be expressed as “a form of domination-the control by individuals or groups over the territory and/or behaviour of other individuals or groups” in general (Horvath, 1972, 46). These groups or individuals maintain their presence as colonial power with a “regime of exploitation”, which includes social, economic and political domination, (Adeyeri, & Adejuwon, 2012, 2-4) and could be executed by certain assimilation policies.

Assimilation policies are crucial, because they have an important impact on identity. Identity consists of religion, language, gender and related components which are under destructive attacks by assimilation processes (Joseph, 2004, 61-62&195-196). Social, political or economic exclusion, language prohibition in schools or forced displacement could be considered as possible, intentional or unintentional practical applications of the notion. The processes and interactions of societies could cause different results. The first one is an adaptation of identity to the new circumstances and taking a similar shape according to the values of colonial power or settled and dominant group, in the case of migration or nation state structure, to overcome

difficulties. According to 'implicit deficit model' in the case of American immigrants:

“...to get ahead immigrants need to learn how to "become American," to overcome their deficits with respect to the new language and culture, the new health care and educational systems, the new economy and society. As they shed the old and acquire the new over time, they surmount those obstacles and make their way more successful” (Rumbaut, 1997, 489).

The reflections of adaptation process could be observed in different sizes. For example, picking a name for a child is an indicator of socio-cultural assimilation of the parents (Telles & Sue, 2007, 1408). Naming their children in English among Hispanic parents in the U.S. and “exposure to the U.S. culture” of these families have a positive correlation (Telles & Sue, 2007, 1383). It could happen as an unintentional and internalized fact, an intentional step as a preventive strategy against social exclusion or the combination of these possibilities. However, effects of adaptation could be radical in some cases. It is common to see advertisements about plastic eye surgery for a Western look at the main Vietnamese newspapers in Orange County⁷ (Rumbaut, 1997, 488). Decisions about changing a person's own appearance proves the importance of the adaptation, because geographic and biological diversity are parts of personal and national identities. Considering these characteristics as an obstacle for inclusion is an indicator of the dimensions of the issue. In addition, it should also be known that the adaptation topic could be evaluated both as intentional or unintentional, in terms of the non-dominant group, and desirable and undesirable in terms of the dominant group.

Secondly, these relations could cause interactive transformations in both societies and people. For example, in the case of slavery or forced migration, interracial marriages have surprising consequences in the U.S. Stoelting, Wohlford and Afful state this situation as “it destabilizes clearly demarcated racial and ethnic categorizations. The hybrid families that interracial marriages produce suggest to some the emergence of a new American family wherein cultural differences blend and new cultural forms emerge” (Afful, Stoelting, Stoelting, 2015, 662).

On the other hand, colonial practices of the hegemonic powers have the possibility of a counter reaction. For example, African nationalisms, in general, are based on the

⁷ A county in California.

hatred of colonial power (Dirar, 2007, 270). Hence, colonial relations have quite a multidimensional structure rather than a linear one.

When the Syrian migration is analysed within the framework of these types of interactions, we recognize that these scenarios do not fit the current situation of the Syrian refugees on the European side of Istanbul. First of all, there are relatively weak and limited interactions between Syrian and Turkish societies. Despite the shared neighbourhoods, they mostly live in relatively isolated, and peripheral parts of Istanbul. In addition, according to my field observations, Turkish people generally believe that Syrian people have a different culture which is not easy to accept. Moreover, the government didn't applied any particular integration/assimilation policy until last year. Temporary education centres for Syrian children, which were ruled by the Ministry of National Education and had a specific curriculum with Arabic language, were closed⁸ and most Syrian children were registered in Turkish schools. This policy revision is quite recent; therefore, it is hard to recognize the Syrian reaction about it. Yet, I didn't encounter either a counter nationalist reaction from Syrians, nor the voluntary acceptance of the new situation. They just preferred the previous educational system. Therefore, it is hard to say that there has been a significant degree of enculturation, acculturation, culture, cultural assimilation or cultural exchange between Turkish and Syrian societies up to now, in my opinion.

2.1.5. Ingredients of Perception

According to Yarborough; media, economy, politics and values, which includes such components like “beliefs about religion”, “moral standards” etc., are important factors for the formation of perception, and the researcher should have a symbolic-interactionist way of thinking to grasp this process, because the meaning of ‘things’, social interactions and their interpretations are very important to understanding human actions (Yarborough, 2008, 236 & 242). Therefore, I especially focused on the junction points between refugees and Turkish citizens to understand the social interactions within the frame of economy, politics, society and media.

Aljafari, Amro A. Maher and Ahmed Maher's (2017, 64) study indicates that some native people “perceive migrants as threatening to their economy and culture.” In the

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http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/egitim/708584/MEB_den_Suriyeliler_icin_acilan_egitim_merke_zlerine_kapatma_karari.html. Last Accessed on: April 5, 2017

case of the European side of Istanbul, we encounter the same perceptions in terms of economic circumstances. However, culture is not considered as a phenomenon which is threatened by Syrian refugees generally. Nevertheless, the field study mostly showed that Turkish citizens' perception of 'different culture' negatively affects the opinions towards Syrian refugees. On the other side, Syrian refugees perceive the culture, especially the religion, of Istanbul as a pull factor that is quite familiar to their own culture. When the politics is taken into account, according to Stockemer, "if individuals think that immigrants or aliens harm the country, they should be more likely to vote for the radical right than if they think that newcomers and foreigners enrich their cultural, social and economic surrounding" (2016, p. 1002). However, according to my data, perceptions about refugees are not so important in terms of voting dynamics in the context of Istanbul, although it could potentially change the political discourse and create a way to criticize opposed political views. Yet, ideology and religion related areas, such as patriotism or martyrdom, have more significance than direct political issues. It is probably the result of geographic differences, I think.

The effect of the media on perceptions about refugees is another factor, because in the case of "public perception, people form perceptions according to what media present to them" (Sadaf, 2011, 228). In my field study, it was witnessed that a significant percentage of my native participants based most of their knowledge, especially narratives of misinformation about Syrian refugees, on various media organs.

In the case of migration and being a refugee, perception issues go hand in hand with some discriminative practices and attitudes as well. Ang, Poynting and Noble state that discrimination against asylum seekers and people who have "Middle Eastern appearance" indicates xenophobia in Australia (2004 as cited in Fozdar, 2008, 32). When we consider Istanbul, there is an obvious spatial discrimination, which is essentially a consequence of wage discrimination in the labour market, against Syrian refugees. Economic circumstances create relatively densely Syrian refugee populated areas as partly isolated districts from the centre of Istanbul. The study also focuses on these structural aspects of the topic within the framework of perception.

2.2. Methodology and Research Design

The research was conducted through semi-structured interviews and focus group studies in the framework of qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research, compared to the quantitative research, provides for the saving of time and source (Rahman, 2017, 102), and, according to Johnson, deeper insight regarding the research topic (1995 as cited in Golafshani, 2003, 603). “Qualitative researcher... examine social processes and cases in their social context, and look at interpretations or the creation of meaning in specific settings. They try to look at social life from multiple points of view” (Neuman, 2007, 88). A qualitative researcher gives an opportunity to interviewees to express their ideas, feelings and experiences about the topic in their own words. Qualitative research has a structure which liberates the researcher and supports the study in terms of flexibility and depth. For these reasons, a qualitative research methodology has been chosen.

In this study, a total of 77 interviews were used for data collection from face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus group studies. Focus group studies are important, because they “allow researchers to study how people engage in collective sense-making; i.e. ‘how views are constructed, expressed, defended and (sometimes) modified in the context of discussion and debate with others’ (Wilkinson, 1998a: 186)” (Dahlgren, Öberg, and Wibeck, 2007, 249). Focus group studies provide a rich and in-depth setting of data through group interactions which are not possible in individual interviews. For the focus group studies, the group composition was selected carefully, because “there has to be sufficient diversity to encourage discussion. However, groups that are too heterogeneous may result in conflict and the repression of views of certain individuals” (Blooret al., 2002, 20). Yet, the main data collection method was face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The advantage of face-to-face interviews are “social cues, such as voice, intonation, body language etc. of the interviewee can give the interviewer a lot of extra information that can be added to the verbal answer of the interviewee on a question” (Opdenakker, 2006). Another advantage “is the presence of the interviewer, which makes it easier for the respondent to either clarify answers or ask for clarification for some of the items on the questionnaire” (Dialsingh, 2008, 259). Furthermore, a semi-structured method basically supports the freedom of expression without wandering away from the main topic (Rose, 1994, 23-24). The interviewer does not have to ask all the pre-prepared

questions and may add improvisational questions according to the conversation. Therefore, face to face semi-structured interviews were preferred by this researcher. Finally, snowball and judgmental sampling data collection methodologies, and discourse analysis approach has been applied to the research.

The interviews lasted one hour approximately, however several of them, which were not considered as interview and not added this study, were very short. An Arabic-Turkish translator, who had spent his 6-7 years in Saudi Arabia, helped me to talk to Syrian refugees, yet most of them has already learnt Turkish as much as they can express themselves. In addition, a small number of participants knew English with whom I conducted interview by myself.

The study was conducted in selected neighbourhoods, in which population densities of Syrian refugees are both high and low on the European side, both for comparison of the neighbourhoods and for representation concerns of the district. These neighbourhood are: Yeşilkent neighbourhood from the town of Esenyurt; Fener, Balat and Çarşamba neighbourhoods from the town of Fatih; Kartaltepe and Yeşilköy neighbourhoods from the town of Bakırköy and İsmetpaşa neighbourhood from the town of Bayrampaşa. Esenyurt and Fatih were especially chosen, because the ratios of Syrian refugees are high there (Çılgın et al., 2017, 36). However, despite the fact that Bayrampaşa town has more Syrian refugees than Bakırköy town, Bayrampaşa has an average Syrian refugee resident density when it is compared to Istanbul in general. Nevertheless, İsmet Paşa neighbourhood has a denser Syrian population than the selected neighbourhoods of Bakırköy.

Yeşilköy and Kartaltepe neighbourhoods are different from the other selected neighbourhoods in terms of socio-economic dynamics. Bakırköy, in general, is in a higher position on an educational index (TÜİK, 2013, 106-110). In addition, according to my observations, the selected neighbourhoods of Bakırköy are in higher position in terms of economy.⁹ A sub category, socio-economic differences of the neighbourhoods were also analysed in terms of mutual perceptions.

In this study there were 31 interviews conducted with Syrian refugees and 46 carried out with Turkish citizens. Most of the interviewees are informal sector workers. For example, they might find job in small local businesses such as textile workshops or a

⁹ Unfortunately, I couldn't find any statistical data to support this.

fırın’ (a traditional Turkish bakery). In addition, even if they represent a small group, the study also includes white-collar workers who work in formal sectors as doctors or lecturers for example. Furthermore, I also did some interviews with Syrian university students. I also had Syrian business owners participate in the study. On the other side, generally Turkish participants have better economic positions than their Syrian counterparts, because of their citizenship status which supports some advantages regarding wage levels. However, most of them are blue-collar workers who work in informal sectors. The rest of the Turkish participants, the minority group for my study statistics, have higher socio-economic position when compared to the general sample. According to socio-economic status (SES) index, in general, Syrian refugees belong in part to C2 and mostly D SES groups; yet, Turkish citizens belong in part to B, and C1, but most to C2¹⁰ SES groups.¹¹

¹⁰ According to IPSOS, a global research company, C2 is the best representative SES group for Turkey. For detailed information: <https://www.ipsos.com/tr-tr/sosyo-ekonomik-gruplari-ne-kadar-taniyoruz>. December 12, 2017

¹¹ For detailed information: Çelik et al.’s “Temsili Bir Örneklemde Sosyo-Ekonomik Statü (SES)” article.

3. THE BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION OF SYRIAN REFUGEES

3.1. The Syrian Uprising and Its Historical Background

In 2010, the world witnessed the profound reactions of several Arabic nations against the oppressive, autocratic and dictatorial policies of their regimes. Known as ‘The Arab Spring’ (also known as the Democratic Spring or the Arab Revolutions) demonstrations and riots caused the overthrow of governments such as Tunisia, Egypt and Libya while other countries encountered governmental changes or protest such as in the case of Algeria, Jordan or Morocco. The ‘Arab Spring’, therefore, created important economic, social and political consequences. In this perspective, the case of Syria has a unique position. It triggered a civil war in Syria which has lasted for 7 years and turned into an international crisis due to the flight of approximately 6,6 million refugees¹² and 7 years of war involving various international actors.

3.1.1. Syrian Regime and Hafez al-Assad

A glance at Syrian history indicates that she could basically be separated into three chronological and structural periods: The Ottoman, The French mandate and The Ba'ath rule. Ottoman dominance in the region started in the 16th century and had lasted until the end of the First World War. Defeat of the Central Powers converted Syria into a French mandate until 1946. (Hof, Simon, 2013, 5) The date of 1946 means both independence and political instability for the country. Since 1946, “the average lifespan of a government in Syria was less than one year, till Hafez al-Assad captured power in 1970” (Haran, 2016, 2). Numerous coups, coup attempts, and governmental changes occurred from 1946 to 1970. Therefore, Hafez al-Assad’s reign, which had lasted until 2000 when he died, was remarkable for its stability (Bunton, Cleveland, 2009, 397). However, political stability was accompanied by

¹²<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> and <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

huge costs in terms of democracy and human rights. “Decades-old state of emergency” (Sharp, 2010, 9), “deportees and exiled citizens”, breaches of freedom of expression in the parliament and public life were witnessed in the regime of Hafez al-Assad and his Ba'ath party. (Alvarez-Ossorio, 2012, 23). The state of emergency, which has lasted since 1963, allowed arbitrary and individual applications against some groups (Taştekin, 2015, 48). Hence, today's problems have slowly been forming for a long time.

Assad and Ba'ath Party rule were especially identified with secularism, anti-imperialism, pan-Arabism and socialism. The ideology of the regime has supported the political position of the minorities against the “Sunni Arab elite, to whom 400 years of Ottoman rule had bequeathed a sense of leadership entitlement” (Hof, Simon, 2013, 6). In addition to the new changing power relations; radical Islam, incidents of violence, “assassinations of Alawites” and the “June 1979 massacre” carried out by The Muslim Brotherhood (Hof & Simon, 2013, 11)[which is based on “urban Sunni middle class” (Pierret, 2014, 2) and one of the main opposition of the regime] and demands of a Sunni Islamist regime based on Sharia increased the polarization from the view of minorities. The anti-government discourse was based on dictatorship, whereas the discourse of the regime referred to infidelity and treason. In that atmosphere, some of the state of emergency laws were enacted and became a very long-term reality for Syria.

The Ba'ath and Assad regime has used various disciplinary and authoritarian ways. The Mukhabarat, Syrian Intelligence Service, is the main apparatus of control and the surveillance mechanism in the regime.

“They largely occupy normal jobs – taxi drivers, teachers, shop keepers – in order to infiltrate normal society and monitor the speech and behaviour of their fellow citizens in secret... Like the inmate, the average Syrian citizen “is seen, but does not see; he is the object of information, never the subject of communication” (Foucault 1991: 200)” (Sacranie, 2013, 138-9).

In his book of ‘Discipline and Punishment’, Foucault analyses Bentham's architectural design of the Panopticon which consisted of a central surveillance tower inside a circular building. The building contained lots of cells which could be easily control by the tower. “The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately... Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1977, 200-201). In that

respect, The Mukhabarat has provided a quite similar function to the Panopticon through creating a continuous feeling of spying on people.

3.1.2. Social Disintegration and Politics

As mentioned above, Sunni Arab elites had been in power during the Ottoman period. Zaki al-Arsuzi states that after the Ottomans, in the time of the French mandate, sectarianism was instigated to prevent Arab nationalism (Van Dam, 2000, 21). However, Hafez al-Assad had an opposite ideology. The Ba'ath ideology was mainly based on socialist, secular and Arab nationalist tendencies. Although secularism was associated as “hostility to religion” by a “great mass of the population” (Humphreys, 1979, 5) and utilized by opposites as “secular infidel” (Taştekin, 2015, 31-34), effects of economic reforms in favor of low income people within the framework of socialist ideology were more effective to the acceptance of his regime instead of opposing. According to Christopher Phillips, Hafez al-Assad's program had gotten approval from the vast majority of the Syria despite “certain social and economic inequalities”. Phillips states that

“Hafez won the support of Syria's working class and peasantry, largely from Syria's Sunni Arabs who make up 60 percent of the population, by building a large socialist state that provided employment and subsidies. He won the backing of Syria's non-Sunni Arab minorities – the Christians (10 percent of the population), Druze (3 percent) and his own Alawi sect (10 percent). These groups welcomed Hafez's secular Arab nationalist identity discourse as a means to integration, an identity that he promoted through expanded state institutions, notably the army and the ruling Ba'ath party. While this coalition of support was sufficient to build a popular base, Hafez deliberately excluded some groups: Syria's Kurds (15 percent of the population) and the former Sunni Arab ruling elite, as well as landowners and larger merchants that opposed his socialist policies” (2012, 37).

Hafez and Ba'ath party put different reforms into practice and they changed the dynamics. One of these reforms is the land reform which roughly refers to the redistribution of the Syrian lands. Before the land reform “maldistribution of land and tenancy” were the main problems. A small number of land owners had huge amounts of land on which a large number of peasant had to work in bad conditions in the mode of tenancy system (Keilany, 1980, 209). Redistribution of the lands changed the position of the peasants. According to Keilany,

“...The reform program is used as a vehicle to develop a new rural socio-economic infrastructure. The Syrian peasants have, generally, been freed from the domination of the landed gentry, but have become dependent on the government; and the latter has become a centripetal force pulling together the geographically scattered peasantry into a national community” (Keilany, 1980, 223).

In addition to the land reform, the Ba'athist regime nationalized lots of companies and old public officers, who were the members of the elite families of the Syria, were dismissed from their positions. “The new military regime was restructuring the Syrian political elite by forging an alliance between individuals of rural origins and the lower middle-class urbanites— schoolteachers, civil servants, and university students—who formed the backbone of the Ba'ath” (Bunton, Cleveland, 2009, 399). Although the regime was brutal and dictatorial, it carried on as a result of these factors.

Due to these mostly economic reforms, the economy could be considered as the main factor for the survival of the regime. Therefore, we should especially focus on the changing patterns of the economy and the political economy of the regime. Of course, the Syrian uprising has been affected by different social, economic and political factors. All of them are related; however, the social and political conjunctures in Syria seem more dependent on the economic circumstances in a wider perspective.

3.1.3. Changing Patterns

Certainly, negative economic transformations in Syria, which started from in the 1990s, were getting worst in the beginning of the 2000s when Bashar Assad came to power. The economic system was mostly based on “state-led economy” and small private businesses. The state provided huge subsidies on energy, food, and agricultural input with free education, health care and employment opportunities for poor urban areas and the rural part of the country through the oil revenues. However, the costs were getting higher. In addition, the amount of external funding and oil revenues decreased and “it became clear in the early 2000s that this economic model was unsustainable” (Azmeah, 2014, 20). According to Shamel Azmeah, these new circumstances and burdens on the state should be fixed by fairly redistribution of income and economic deficit among different groups which means the elimination of the privileged economic and politic groups. However, Syria was becoming more of a “crony capitalist system” than ever before. (Azmeah, 2014, 18-20) This political move aggravated hatred and polarization.

Apart from these factors, climate change could also be considered to influence the conflict, because “adverse climatic events increase the risk of violence and conflict...

in societies around the world and throughout history” (Burke, Hsiagn, Miguel, 2015, 610). Change of the Syrian climate has also had a considerable amount of impact on the crisis. According to Gary Nabhan, drought in Syria, which started in 2006, was evaluated as the “worst long-term drought and most severe set of crop failures since agricultural civilizations began in the Fertile Crescent many millennia ago” (2012 as cited in Gleick, 2014, 332). The drought caused “multiyear crop failures” which had brought about migration of 1.5 million people, who were working on lands, from rural areas to the urban areas in where unemployment rates and unrest increased. Therefore, serious reactions were not surprising for the near future.

The following graph was prepared by Marco Lagi, Karla Z. Bertrand and Yaneer Bar-Yam (2011, 3) to indicate the increase of global food prices and riots by countries in years:

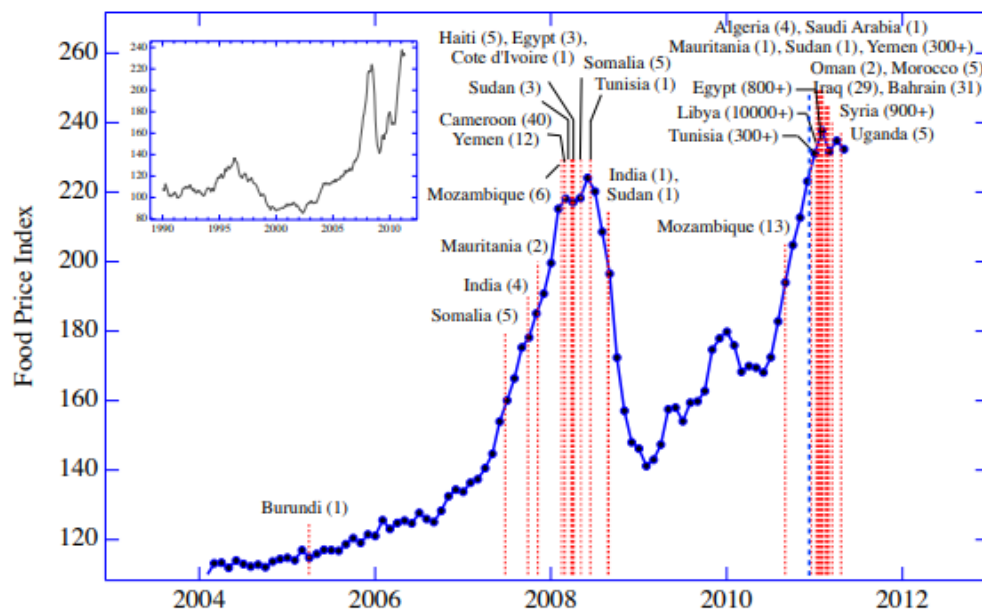


Figure 1: Food Price Index and Riots

NECSI. http://necsi.edu/research/social/food_crises.pdf. Last Accessed on: May 1, 2017

When we analyse the graph, we can clearly realize that the increases in index, which means the increases in the prices with respect to the base year, have a strong correlation with riots. It draws a general picture and could give some hints about the nature of the conflict in some parts of the world. In a nutshell, climate change is an important part of the economic problem which has social and political reflections; hence it should be analysed in that framework.

3.1.4. Bashar al-Assad Regime and the Uprising

Bashar Assad took over power in 2000, shortly after his father Hafez al-Assad died. He promised a more democratic system for the frustrated masses of the authoritarian regime in the beginning of his rule *via* some reforms such as releasing political prisoners or allowing for discussion forums; therefore, that reformist atmosphere started to be mentioned as the ‘Damascus Spring’ in the first year of Bashar Assad’s rule (Bhardwaj, 2012, 85). In 2000, he made the use of the internet possible, which would be used as a tool in the uprising ironically, in Syria (Sacranie, 2013, 145). Hence, the perception of Bashar al-Assad was quite positive when he took charge. Hope and expectation were the main points of this phase.

Although social reforms were important to a certain extent, economic transformations were more determinative. As mentioned in a previous part, while the oil revenues were decreasing, expenses were increasing. However, the main shift was on the economic regime. He converted the economic structure from a “socialist” to the “social market economy” (Pierret, 2014, 5). It could be appropriate for other countries in the 2000s, however his father, Hafez al-Assad had established the system based on ‘socialist’ dynamics which had ensured the survival of the regime through economic subsidies for poor people. According to Christopher Phillips;

“His reforms exacerbated and increased resentment towards the regime as a whole... Economic reforms alienated the Sunni Arab workers and peasantry...Syria’s GDP grew, but subsidies to Syria’s poorest were cut and public-sector employment decreased. Rather than genuine liberalisation, those close to power amassed huge fortunes through government contracts and monopolies...Bashar making far less effort than Hafez had to balance the sect’s privileged position by promoting prominent Sunni Arab families, fuelling resentment among the formerly supportive Sunni Arab poor...” (2012, 38).

Now, Assad was dangerously changing these economic patterns. In addition to the structural disaster, he worsened the merit system especially in governance. Because, Assad didn’t possess proper skills to maintain the inherited regime; he assigned his relatives to strategic and high-level positions in the administration. Furthermore, the examples of Egypt and Tunisia directed him to use extreme violence against the protests (Abbas, 2011, 1-3). These practices aggravated the situation. Because of these reasons, finally and unfortunately, the uprising started at Dar’a in 2011 and turned into a civil war which has lasted for more than 7 years and caused thousands of civilian deaths and created millions of refugees.

3.2. Descriptive Statistics About Syrian Refugees around the World and Turkey

Since the war started, approximately 6,6 million Syrians have fled from Syria. While the vast majority of this population have settled in neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan, a relatively small group had the opportunity to find a way to go to Europe. Germany has far the biggest Syrian refugee population in Europe, by far. The international Syrian refugee flow trend is shown in the following figure¹³ (figure 2):

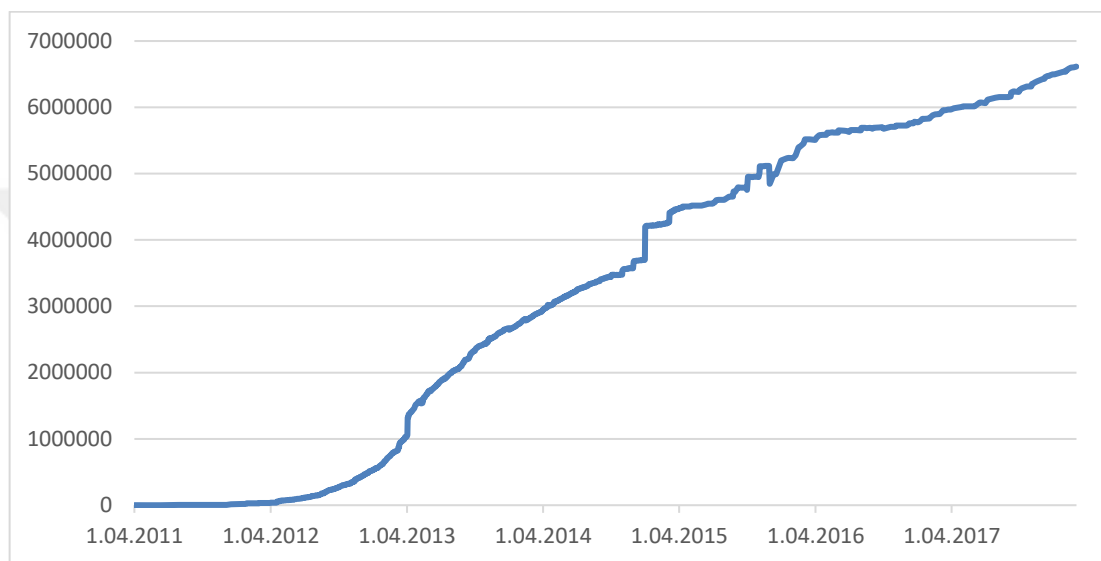


Figure 2: The number of Total Syrian Registered Refugees

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>.
Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018 &
UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>
Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

It is clear that there is a fairly linear trend of registered refugees around the globe from the beginning of the war. Especially in the period between the last quarter of 2012 and the end of 2014, there was a relatively rapid mass transition. However, the pace of influx had slowed down to some extent between 2015 and 2016. The next chart (figure 3) indicates Middle Eastern-North African acceptance of the Syrian refugees.

¹³ All the figures, in this chapter, includes both the Syrian refugees and Syrian asylum seekers. Most of 'data' of the figures are provided from UNHCR. For detailed information, visit the following websites: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> and <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>

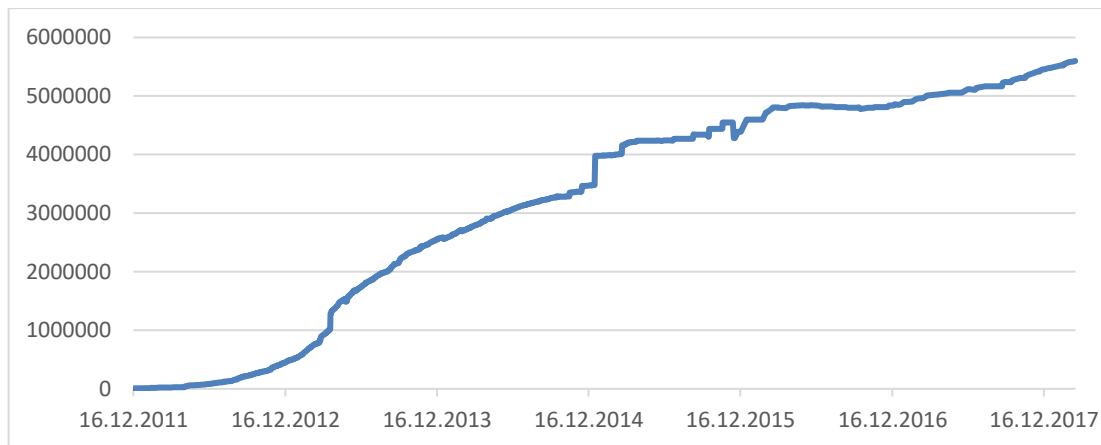


Figure 3: The number of Total Registered Syrian Refugees in the Middle East and North Africa

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

The similarities of these two charts above show the domination of Middle East and North Africa regarding the acceptance of Syrian refugees. Especially between the end of 2015 and 2017, we recognize a relatively inactivity of the flow. When we look at the European trend, a different outlook is seen:

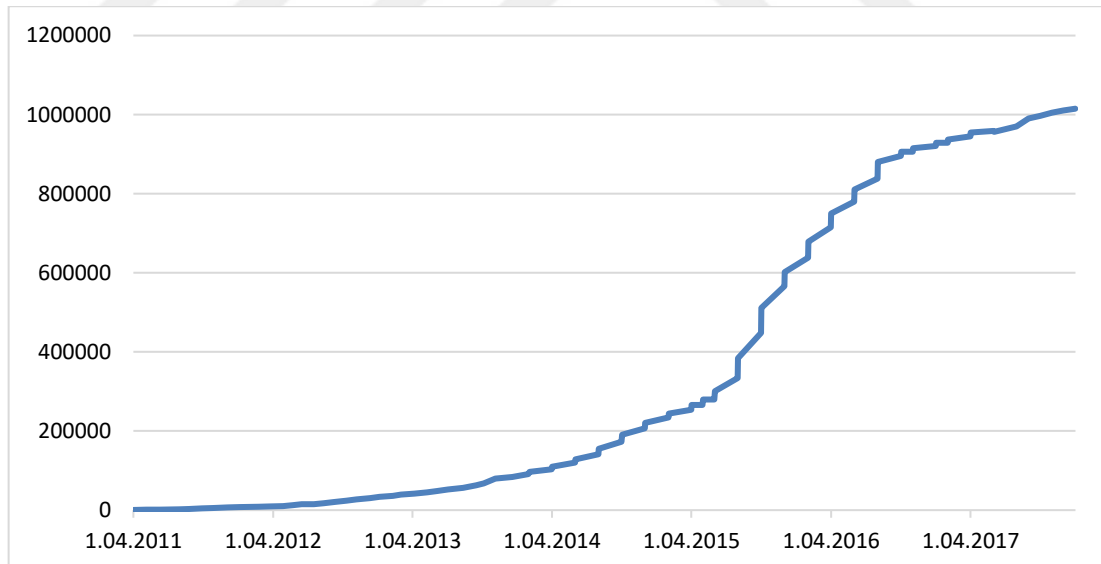


Figure 4: The number of Total Registered Syrian Refugees in Europe

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

Unlike the case of the Middle East and North Africa, main European acceptances started towards the end of 2013. The trend increased in 2014 has consistently

continued until 2017. These are the top countries that have accepted the largest number of Syrian asylum seekers in Europe (figure 5):

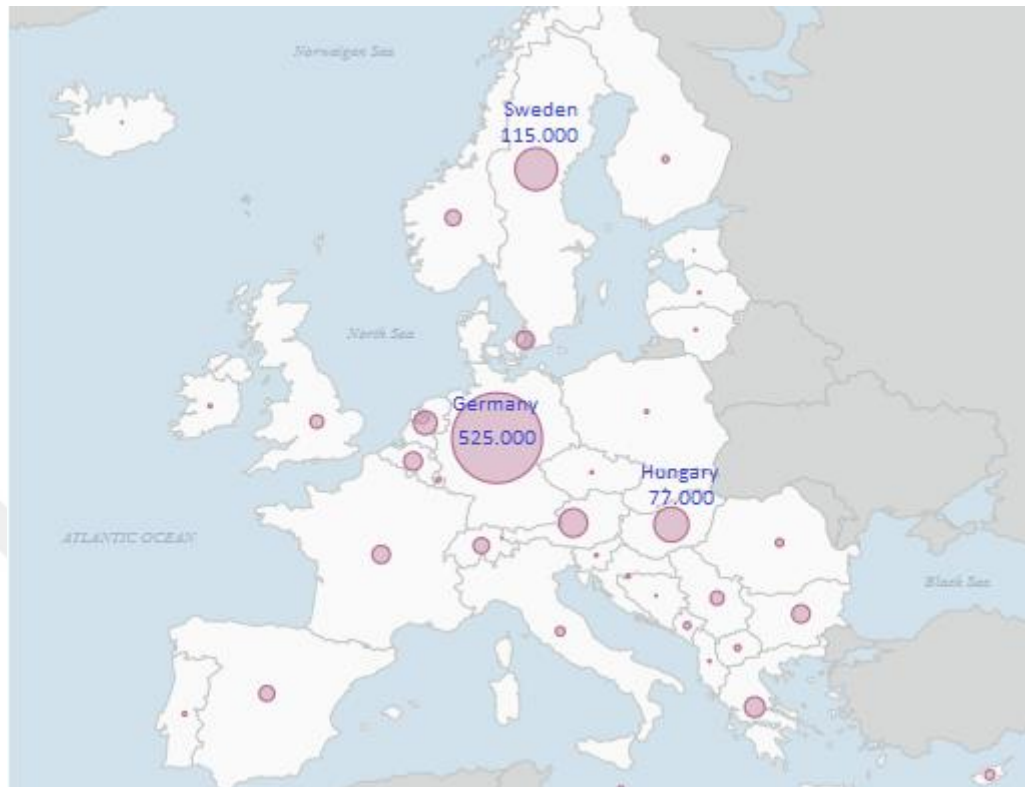


Figure 5: Top Countries that Have the Largest Number of Syrian Asylum Seekers in Europe

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

And this figure 6¹⁴ shows the response of the Middle East and North Africa to the crisis:

¹⁴ These two maps above was provided from the website of unhcr, and the data bubbles were added according to the data. For detailed information:



Figure 6: The Number of Syrian Refugee Acceptance in the Middle East and North Africa by Countries

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

Turkey and Lebanon take the lead on the number of acceptance. Figure 7 indicates the share of total Syrian refugees:

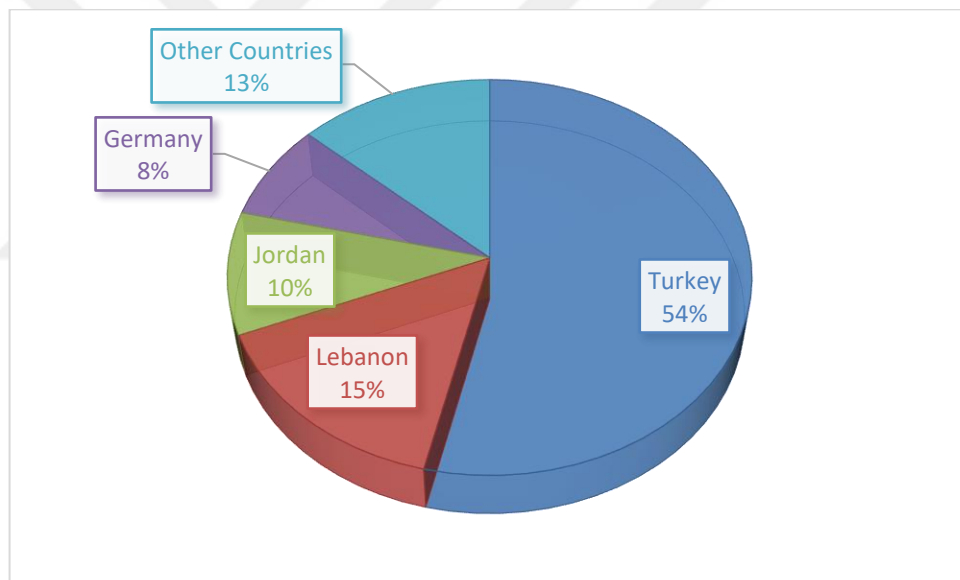


Figure 7: Rates of Registered Syrian Refugees by Countries

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

However, if we consider the population of the host country, the chart is significantly changed. Lebanon had a population of 5 million people before the influx of Syrian Refugees; which constitutes 17% of the whole population afterwards. The percentage of refugees in the population in Lebanon is a good deal higher than other host countries. This situation is indicated in figure 8:

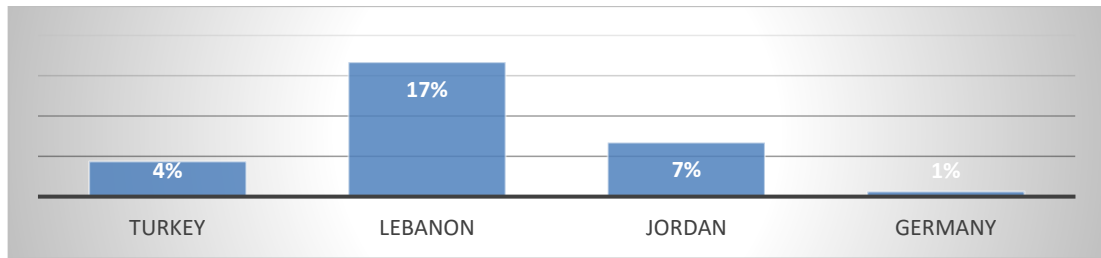


Figure 8: Top Countries by Registered Syrian Refugees rates of the Total Population

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

WORLDOMETERS. <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country>. Countries in the world by population (2018). Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

3.2.1. Situation in Turkey

When we analyse the flow of Syrian refugees in Turkey, we encounter a regularly increasing trend since 2012 (figure 9):

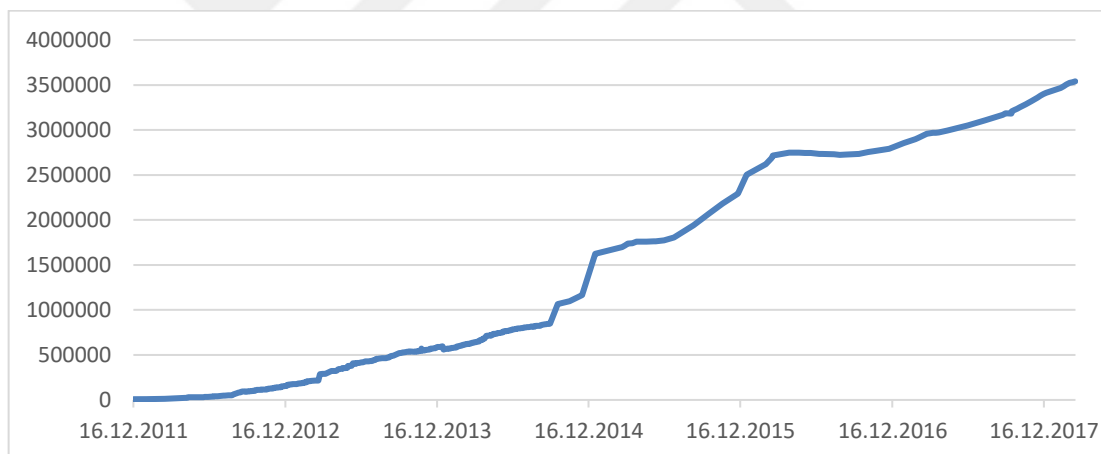


Figure 9: The number of Total Registered Syrian Refugees in Turkey

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

According to The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) nearly half of the Syrian refugees in Turkey are under 18 years old and distribution of gender is almost balanced (figure 10):

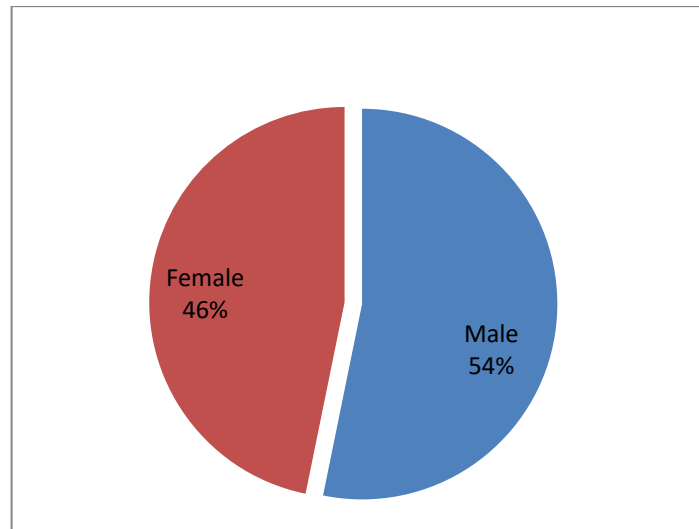


Figure 10: Gender Ratios of Registered Syrian Refugees in Turkey

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

And the following figure 11 shows the age distributions of the Syrian refugees in Turkey:

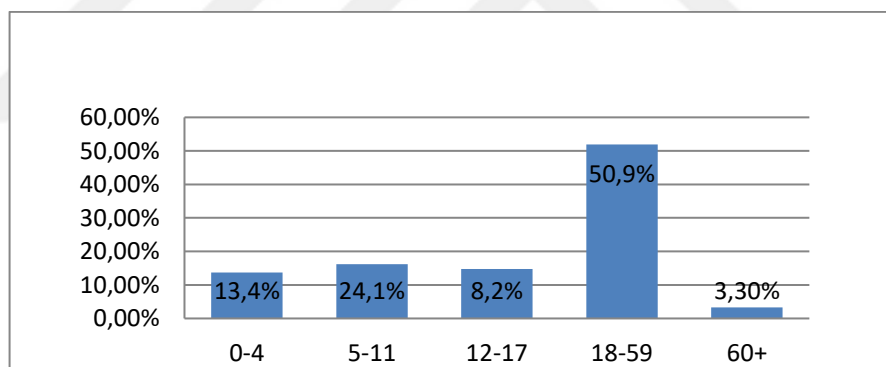


Figure 11: Age Groups Ratios of Registered Syrian Refugees in Turkey

UNHCR. <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>. Syria Regional Refugee Response. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

Lastly, the following map (figure 12) indicates the Syrian population in different cities in Turkey. While light shades refer small numbers of refugees, the darker ones indicate a vast number of refugees.



Figure 12: Syrian Population in Different Cities in Turkey

UNHCR.

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Language%5B%5D=1>.

Provincial Breakdown All Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Turkey. Last Accessed on: March 1, 2018

4. PERCEPTION ON ECONOMY

4.1. Perception on Labour Market

According to Erdoğan's study, which conducted in 2014, respectively 70.7 and 56.1 percent of the native population agree with the statements that "Turkey's economy suffers from taking care of this many refugees" and "Syrians took our jobs" (Erdoğan, 2015, 129-130). Competition in informal sectors, unemployment, wage discrimination and decrease of wages are the most important points of the perception towards Syrian refugees in Turkey. These are the acute effects of the refugee flows on any labour market and have significant roles in negative perceptions (Dancygier, Laitin, 2014, p.45). However, the perception is not always negative when the economic conditions are good. According to Dancygier and Donnelly "when European natives experience an increase in immigrant workers in their industries, their support for immigration diminishes, but only when economic times are bad..." (2013 as cited in Dancygier, Laitin, 2014, 46). Because, immigrants and refugees support the economic growth they are not welcomed in a bad way as long as the economy goes well. In addition, migrant workers may have certain positive effects on the economy apart from growth. For instance, Konuk and Tümen claim that due to the impact of Syrian refugees in Turkey, consumer prices decreased by 2.5%, since the migrants mostly work for lower wages and this decreases the cost of labour for the companies (2016, p. 23-24).

There are many studies which emphasize the economy and are carried out with economic perspectives in this areas. The "How the World Views Migration" report of the IOM (The International Organization for Migration), which is based on a Gallup World Poll and includes 160 countries and approximately 190,000 participants, expresses that:

"Adults who believe economic conditions in their country are "fair" or "poor" are almost twice as likely to say immigration levels should decrease as those who say conditions are "excellent" or "good." Similarly, those who say conditions are getting worse, are nearly twice as likely to favour decreased immigration than those who say conditions are getting better (48.0% vs. 25.3%)... In nearly all global regions, people who see conditions as "excellent or good" are

more likely to have a positive outlook on migration than those who see it as ‘fair or poor’” (2015, 4).

In some of the most extreme examples, researchers reach completely deterministic results regarding the economy. In her study, Mayda explains the main reasons for a negative stance on migrants are about economy and that “cultural differences between the majority and migrants have no great significance” (2006 as cited in Kirko, Koptseva, Petrishchev, 2016, 110). In addition to these studies and theoretical bases, the most heated and highlighted expressions and discussions were generally observed when economic issues were talked about in this field study. Therefore, perception of economy is important.

4.1.1. Discussions of Labour Market

The economic side of the refugee flow could be analysed according to variables of wage, employment and the housing market. Yet, the issues of wages and employment will be discussed separately from the housing market in this chapter to focus on the labour market, because perception of the labour market is more influential than housing prices and has different dynamics from housing market according to my experiences in the field. Therefore, wage and employment issues are clustered and presented together.

Wage differences in labour market between native people and refugees could be partly explained by the ‘refugee entry effect’. Frenette and Morissette claim that “due to their lack of host country work experience and language proficiency and the problematic recognition of their home country credentials, migrants are most likely to start at lower levels than natives” (Bakker, Dagevos, Engbersen, 2017, 1777). Furthermore, even though Syrian refugees have the opportunity to obtain a work permit if certain conditions are met, they generally could not receive it, because legal procedures are troublesome, and these people are mostly not able to cope with these statutory processes. Even interviews showed that some Syrian refugees hesitate to obtain a ‘Temporary Protection Identity Card’, which provides free health care service, education for their children and legalizes their presence, because of ignorance and tedium of the process. Therefore, the ‘refugee entry effect’ reflects an almost absolute inequality in the case of Turkey and particularly the European side of Istanbul.

I met a Syrian worker, Sayid (21) in Bayrampaşa and interviewed him at the end of his work day. Sayid works as a construction worker nowadays. He cited his experiences as:

“When I came in Istanbul, I had just a little money and a contact from Syria. He had come in here, İsmetpaşa-Bayrampaşa, before me...To find a job was not a problem for me, but the problem was ‘words, promises’. I changed a few places, because they either refuse to give me money at the end of the week or gave me little money. Once I argued with my second employer and threatened him to go to police. He said to me that “I don’t have enough money nowadays, you should wait, but if you want to go police, you will be arrested, and no one will believe you. Because you are a Syrian and you do not have any identity card or work permission. You cannot prove...”

Actually, Sayid was studying management in university and planned to work in a company after his graduation. However, war conditions did not allow him to complete his bachelor degree. Now, he works as much as native workers, yet earns less money. In addition to employers’ attitudes towards him, he also feels uncomfortable with the manners of the other non-Syrian workers. He states that

“They sometimes insult us. If there is a problem, they could immediately blame us. However, some of them are very good people. First time I came to work; some of them took care of me. There is Ahmet *Abi* (brother) for example, he is a master. He sometimes invites me to his home. I know, these are small things, but they make us feel better...”

By comparing the perceptions of native workers, it is easier to understand comprehensively. When we look at native informal workers, we mostly encounter negative views about Syrian refugees. Şemmuz (34), whom I met in Bayrampaşa, works at a small-scale textile factory. We had an interview in his workplace in the evening after he finished work. The place was quite worth mentioning I think, because their work conditions could also affect the perception. First of all, there was no signboard for the firm on the street. At the entrance, there was a camera which was watching the street. It must be for security reasons which, ironically, could disturb some visitors. The door opened towards the downstairs, and there was no way to upstairs from that entrance. The workshop was in the first basement. There were a few small windows through which it was probably not possible to see the sun. The place was so full of cigarette smoke it was difficult to breathe properly. Native and Syrian workers were working in these bad conditions, and presence of the refugees made the circumstances more difficult, according to him, especially because of the attitudes of his employers. Şemmuz especially complained about his employer. However, as the conversation went on, I witnessed a hatred which was slowly directed towards the Syrians. He stated:

“...In my work place there are 30 people. 18 of them are Syrians, 2 Turkoman and 1 Azerbaijani person works there. The rest are Turkish people... I am sorry to say but...my employer has got too big for his britches. Because of Syrian refugees, they (employers) do not spend much money as before. Our wages have fallen since they have come. Ok, they have escaped from persecution, we accepted them, but they have destroyed the sector... Once I argued with two of them. They walked in on me as if they were in their own country. This country is a country of veterans and martyrs. You escaped from war and took our jobs and caused wages to fall. I am complaining about them.”

In fact, the interview was going on in a calm manner and his feelings were moderate concerning Syrians in the beginning. He even mentioned sharing their sorrow. Yet, when we started to talk about the labour market and economy, he began to get angry. Therefore, issues of livelihood, especially labour competition, are crucial for him and the Syrian refugees mostly negatively affected him.¹⁵

4.1.2. “Justice” and “Loyalty”

One of the other characteristic of Syrian workers is their unregistered status. They generally do not have work permission; hence employers cannot provide social security for them. Because of the absence of work permission, Syrian workers cannot demand these types of worker rights and this situation is perceived as an ‘ideal employee’ for the employer. These circumstances are also the reasons of unfavourable perceptions and attitudes against refugees again, because it supports the cheap labour supply and they cause the reproduction of the exploitation especially by decreasing native worker wages. A native participant in the construction sector quoted his employer’s words as: “If I want, I can replace you with 3 Syrians. They are cheap and cannot demand these types of things (social security). As you wish...”. When I talked with the an Artisan, who especially work alone, I encountered similar feelings about Syrians. One Turkish barber, Ayhan (32), said that

“Look, my brother, Sundays no one can open his shop (barber shop), it is forbidden by the federation, but that man opens! (He points out the Syrian barber shop across the road) There are lots of artisans, friends came and said “We will remove these bastards”. We said, “never mind!” We soothed them. But they (Syrians) should obey the rules. Municipal officials come to me, they investigate us. We pay our taxes, but they do not! Officials do not say anything to them. We are minority here as artisan. 70 percent of the total artisans are Syrians. Esenyurt become the Syrians’ farm...”

As it is understood from the paragraph, in addition to the labour market competition; ‘injustice’ and claims of ‘double standard’ lead the perception in a negative way. The refugees are not members of the federation and unaware of the rules. Municipality,

¹⁵ The ‘labour market competition’ is the key term for the current discontent against Syrians also in Jordan and Lebanon (Turner, 2015, 399). On the one hand, the refugee flow provides cheap labour for the labour market of the countries, but on the other hand, it creates more intense exploitation and embittered relations between native and refugee workers.

the authority, “behaves” as if the Syrians are “the owners” of the neighbourhood. Hence, he intentionally chooses the term of “Syrians’ farm” which indicate the power relations to a certain extent. If you are the owner of the field, you can do anything you want; but if you are not, you should be quiet. Changing roles and the government support increase hatred against the Syrians. This is the political economy side of the perception. The answers of another participant deepen the issue. Berzan (33) is a Kurdish Alevi. He was “kicked out” from university because of the political issues. He works at his telephone shop, where we did the interview, alone. After I had asked questions about the economic issues, firstly he gave information about his world views as “I am not a nationalist man. I had been the head of a youth branch of the Communist Party of Turkey in İkitelli for years. I believe in the equality of all humans”. Then he stated that

“...When I wanted to open this shop the first time, they (the municipality) did not give me permission because of one letter of my signboard. It was a Kurdish name and included a “w” ...This neighbourhood is like an Arab country; their signboards are Arabic. I told the situation to the all the officers. We always say that we established this country all together, we are brothers. If we are brothers, so, these people, who did not do fucking anything...if these people live more comfortable than me, if the government treats them more positively than me, this is problem. If there is one religion, nation and so forth... The state takes stoppage and other taxes from me. They control me. Everything they (Syrians) have is illegal, they were denounced to the authorities, yet the authorities said, “don’t interfere”. I give the taxes, but the state protects them...”

In general, small business owners who are alone or do not employ Syrian refugees have negative perception against them. However, small and medium sized enterprises, which employ Syrian refugees, indicate a different story...

Employers, who hire Syrian workers, express their satisfaction regarding Syrian employees in general. I went to a small potato processing factory in Esenyurt¹⁶. 13 employees were working in there. I interviewed the employers regarding the Syrian workers they employed. Unlike the employers who do not hire Syrian workers, they are very happy to work with Syrian refugees. I interpret this dichotomy as an indicator to verify the data which shows the wage discrimination and exploitation in the informal sectors. The employer, Şahin (58), expressed his views about Syrian workers as:

“...They sometimes work and can’t take their money. There are lots of cases...When they came in here, they were shyly talking with us. But we give them their rights (money). But there are also bad financial and emotional examples (He means the other employers and different types of abuses, but I couldn’t get the details) I am satisfied. We came across good Syrians...Sometimes Turkish people ask me why I employed them. Because, we couldn’t find

¹⁶ The factory was near the Yeşilkent district.

workers. Peeling potato looks like...how can I say, people do not want to do this job. For me, Turkish or Syrian is not important. There is no unemployment in Turkey. For example, you cannot employ any young girl in here. She prefers to work in a mall for 1400 liras instead of working in here for 2000 liras... Sometimes Syrians need money apart from their wages; we give them money to solve their problems. Syrian wages are lower than Turkish wages, but a qualified worker takes how much he/she deserves...like 1300-1500 liras...For example, we heard that there was a problem with a Turkish employer and his Syrian workers. Then the Syrians came with 20 people. We also encounter such things... 6 Syrians and 7 Turks work here. Thanks to Allah, we found a vein. If there were no Syrians, we would live a crisis.”

His last two sentences actually summarize the importance of Syrians for local businesses. They are willing to work for longer time with lower wages in general, because they have no other way. Moreover, contrary to the general belief, they mostly don't take money or significant aid from the state.

Some of the employers I had interviewed expressed their feelings about Syrian refugees around the discourse of ‘ungratefulness’. According to them, they always sneak out of work and they are “ungrateful”. However, the majority of my Syrian worker participants were working more than 10-11 hours a day and 6 or 7 days a week. I even had to wait for 1 month for a second interview with one of my participants. He is a Kurdish boy at his early twenties who works at a textile factory. After we had met and had done a short interview, we agreed about a longer one for next week, yet he couldn't find any opportunity for it. Since he had to work 7 days a week and 12 hours a day for 4 weeks and he was not an exceptional case. Of course, during the peak times of the sector, Syrians and Turkish employees work much more than usual schedule, but perception of refugee makes the exploitation harder than their native colleagues. According to my experience in the field, class and status of different nations in the labour market transform and creates new positions via refugees. Now, the bottom layer includes mostly cheap Syrian workers instead of the other migrants or Kurdish work force. Syrians work more and usually earn lower wages because of their legal status.

4.1.3. Structural Transformations and Gender Differences

The presence of Syrians has dramatically changed the structure of the Turkish labour market. Almost all Syrian refugees work informally in Turkey, because they do not have working permits (Carpio, Wagner, 2015, 20). In addition, they are generally poor; hence they can easily be employed for really low wages. Therefore, their situation causes wages to fall and unemployment in the native informal labour

market. However, there is also an increase in the formal labour market. A study conducted in 2015 brought astonishing results:

“...refugee flows are positively correlated with Turkish employment. This positive correlation is driven by increasing formal, full-time employment... causal impact of an inflow of refugees is to decrease native employment. In the full specification 10 refugees displace around 3 native Turkish workers... This is the result of large-scale displacement among informal workers...At the same time there is a substantial increase in formal employment and employment in regular workplaces due to the refugees. For every 10 refugees 3-4 formal jobs in regular workplaces are created in a region...However, not all groups benefit from the increases in formal employment and job creation in regular workplaces. Specifically, women see no gains in formal, regular employment” (Carpio, Wagner, 2015, 18-19).

The statements above could look a bit contradictory, but indicate the transformation of the Turkish work force from informal to formal. On the one hand, the Syrian refugee flow causes a decrease in native informal employment, on the other hand this phenomenon provokes increases in native formal employment. Therefore, the process has pros and cons from different perspectives.

When we analyse the situation of Syrian refugee women in the Turkish labour market, we encounter harsher perceptions and attitudes against them. To interview particularly Syrian women is quite difficult. They generally do not accept interviews. Even if they accept an interview, they hesitate to talk so much and don't let a stranger know about their lives. However, highly educated Syrian women are more prone to talk. Rada#¹⁷(35) was one of them who had been an English teacher and graphic designer in Syria. We met her in an NGO where she works now. She came to Turkey twice, because she couldn't find a job the first time. She mentioned her work experience in Istanbul as:

“I worked with my tourist visa here. First, I worked in a tourism company, but they sent away us in the off season. It was not my job also. I found a job at a kindergarten. I worked 8 months. In summer, I couldn't earn money, but then I worked an extra 2 months. However, they didn't give my money for these two months. We learnt the school had gone bankrupt. Then I started in a language centre. I struggled for 3-4 months to get money from them again...Then I started here and also a private university as an English teacher...There is an interesting event I encountered while I was looking for a job. There are false advertisements especially for women! I applied for a job and she (the employer) wanted a skype interview through the internet. We connected, but she said that there was a problem in speakers, but I could write. Anyway, then we began to writing. However, there was a problem. She was looking at the screen but it was like a video loop. (Rada was smiling meaningfully in that point) That was a video, I was watching a video. They play with people. I asked and pushed the person and finally he confessed...The other was worse, it was an office and I went there with someone...”

¹⁷ This name could be correct or similar, because I struggled to understand Syrian names due to the pronunciation at times. Sometimes, I asked the names of my participants repeatedly, or asked them to write their names. However, mostly I preferred not to focus on the names, because in my opinion, stories are more important than names. In addition, to use pseudonyms, in terms of ethical issues, is sometimes more proper than using real names for the sake of participants. Therefore, from now on, I will put a # symbol to imply pseudonyms.

These examples give some hints about the cumulative repression of being a woman and a refugee together. While it is easy to exploit a refugee, a refugee woman could be the most vulnerable victim among them. Of course, the exploitation is not unique for just Syrians; all native women in Turkey could be considered as a target for labour abuse. However, Syrian women are more prone to be abused. Attitudes are important for this study, because they are direct reflections of perception. Therefore, it could be inferred that Syrian women are perceived as very defenceless by the natives.

4.1.4. The “Other” Side

Syrian shops and employers are the other side of the issue. These interviews also include them and their perceptions of Turkish people. Fawzi (23), a Syrian Kurd, came from Afrin. We met in a local Syrian restaurant-butcher where I had interviewed the owner of the shop before him. His story shows the market competition and difficult conditions between ‘natives’ and ‘foreigners’:

“I opened a tobacco store here (Yeşilkent), I had money. I could only withstand a week, because people from Diyarbakır came and threatened us... Before I opened the store, we couldn’t ever get our money from the employer. Then we gathered and beat the man. The Police arrested us, but then understood that we were right, so they took the money from him and gave it to us. Now, I am scared to work, because I can encounter such situations. Our friends have also been exposed to similar manners. In Syria, you think of the money at the end, here it is the opposite. By the way, most Kurdish people behave like this...”

Syrian refugees suffer especially from the competition with local labour in the informal sector. They are perceived as a threat for local people. Quillian states that “according to the frequently advanced argument, the connection between economic conditions and prejudice towards migrants is a consequence of ‘either blaming the subordinate group for economic hardship (scapegoating) or [of] competition with the subordinate group for scarce resources’” (Chonail, 2009, 24). However, it is hard to say that the negative perception in the formal sector is as clear as in the case of the informal sector. Syrian participants in formal sectors had mostly moderate or positive discourse about Turkish attitudes towards them. Ahmed# (30) is an English teaching assistant in a private university. We had interviewed in his office at his university. He expressed his opinions about his work place and Turkish people as:

“...I was lucky to have people who were emphatic, who were with the Syrian people, because when I was at school, the management told me that you need to tell the students and parents that you are Syrian. And if anyone has a problem with that you need come and tell us. All the managers and supervisors were supporting us (3 Syrian lecturers). The management said that we had accepted Syrians to come in here. You are qualified; you deserve to be here. If anybody

is against this, this is his/her own opinion. If they make any problem or trouble, just come and tell us...”

In the field study, similar attitudes and perceptions toward white collar workers were observed frequently. While mostly informal and blue collar Syrian workers are perceived as a ‘burden’ and ‘unpleasing’, white collar professionals are perceived as important and valuable in general. Although this viewpoint has an economic base, it also reflects the importance of social status of people. Hence economy and social status mutually reproduce themselves again and again inside the society to a certain extent. It should also be noted that the scarcity of white collar professional refugees has also encouraged tolerance of their presence relatively, because competition is not a reality of that particular class.

4.1.5. Conclusion

Most of Syrians refugees do not have any working permits, and labour market discrimination partly originates from that circumstance. In addition, employers perceive them as vulnerable, because of their status as refugees. Therefore, generally, Syrian refugees have to work under harsh conditions, such as longer working hours and lower wages than native people, in informal sectors. They reduce the cost to the firms. Therefore, they are also perceived as an opportunity for native employers. On the other side, native workers perceive them as threat, because their effects on the sector create an intense competition. Hence, the Syrian refugees are not welcomed by native workers. The economic structure creates anger against Syrian refugees.

When we consider Syrian refugees, their negative views are not as intense as the native people according to my observations, because they have many more problems than native people. In addition, they generally have an isolated life (which will be discussed in the next chapters) compared to citizens in terms of both place and social relations. Therefore, they can’t focus on the relations with native people. They have negative thoughts especially against their employers. However, they do not perceive the native workers on the whole as ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ According to Syrian refugees, while some of the native people are good, some of them are bad.

Finally, white collar highly educated Syrian refugees, which is a minority group statistically, feel less negative perception than the rest of the Syrian refugees. They are perceived better than the Syrian workers who work in the informal sector. This is a result of their small numbers, relatively low competition, and their social status

which is seen as more acceptable than the general profile of Syrians. They are mostly evaluated as beneficial by citizens and they perceive the native people as positive in general.

4.2. Perception on The Housing Market

Perceptions on the labour market are dominated by and related to economic competition and feelings of threat; on the other hand, perceptions of the housing market strongly depend on the labour market. Therefore, economic circumstances are still very important. However, socially exclusionary attitudes against migrants or refugees, because of their legal status and xenophobia, are as important as the labour market. Hence, perceptions on the housing market could be analysed both from economic and social aspects.

When we look at the general situation of the housing market for refugees, we realize the existence of an unequal access to the market in many ways. Mostly they encounter various direct or indirect discriminations such as high cost, wrong or insufficient information about the house, low recall possibilities for a meeting before renting, and separation from the majority which could occur as isolation, social exclusion (or marginalisation), alienation or the combination of them. In this context, we should also consider the landlords, estate agents, refugees (or migrants) and native community as the main actors. In addition, 'place' is another important point of the housing market, because it is a part of identity, which has a role in intergroup perceptions. Therefore, perceptions of the housing market are quite complex if we consider the refugees.

4.2.1. Discrimination in the House Market

Basically, the definition of the term is described as "a social practice that organizes prejudicial attitudes into the formal or informal segregation of social groups or classes stigmatized by the collective prejudice" in which gender, skin colour or ethnicity could be a significant reason (Lemert, 2006, 146). In addition, according to Becker and Yinger "personal hostility" could be a reason for discriminative attitudes (Baldini, Federici, 2011, 2). In the case of refugees, they frequently encounter various discriminatory attitudes. One of them is high-priced and overcrowded houses which are perceived as problem and opportunity for the refugees and landlords

respectively. It is an unsolvable problem, because low income enforces refugees to live with many people together in a single house, and sometimes they must share the house with other families if there are no other options. In that respect, we could consider the labour discrimination as a source of the problem. It creates an indirect discrimination. However, demand for higher prices from the landlords and estate agents for the house on the pretext of the excessive number of people creates direct discrimination in the housing market.

I had a Turkish participant (Bekir, 57) whom I saw in front of a 'kahvehane' while he was drinking his tea in Yeşilkent. Bekir had worked as pvc card cover maker until last year, yet after a liver disease he had to retire. He has been living for 15 years in Yeşilkent. Bekir approaches to this issue and gave an example:

"Now, I have a *hacı* (pilgrim) neighbour. He rented his apartment to many Syrians. Their lifestyle and culture were a bit free in Syria. They appear in front of the door with shorts or boxers. I am their neighbour. My door is beside their door which is always open. I said "hacı, please warn them!" A family lives here. He said, "They have escaped from war and I help them". I said "You do not help them; you rented another house, which is much bigger than this one, for 1000 liras, now you rent this small house to 12-13 single Syrians and earn 4000 liras. You do not help them. This is exploitation!" I mean there are lots of cruel opportunists in..."

Bekir was a conservative person and he spoke about Syrians in the frame of religion generally. He was angry about the landlord who rented the apartment to Syrians not because of their status or ethnic identity, but because of the attitude of the landlord. Bekir especially highlighted the landlord's social status as *hacı* (pilgrim), because these people should be more sensitive in these humanitarian issues according to him, because "Islam requires it...". Bekir's positive views were mostly based on his Islamic manners which support the idea of solidarity between Muslims. Therefore, frequently, the collective belief system works as a 'social glue' (which will be discussed in the next chapters) to acceptance and integration. While the landlord, as a direct actor with the tenants in this case, behaves discriminatively; Bekir, the indirect actor of the case, behaves indulgently despite the disturbances of Syrians. Hence, this is the question: Do direct relations affect the natives' attitudes or perception on the refugees? Or what are the roles of direct and indirect relation on perception? These are not clear, according to my fieldwork experience that while social relations are prone to get better through the interactions in the long term; economic relations are prone to get worse. Because, mutual values facilitate harmony, but economic competition (both for employers and employees), recession, and any kind of economic relation, such as the desire for increased profit, creates economic

discrimination and exploitation both in housing and labour markets. Therefore, it creates negative perceptions for both sides. There are many Syrians who complain about the issue. One of my participants, Maan# (22), who works at a '*firin*', remarks about the issue as:

"I had been there (Bayrampaşa-İsmetpaşa) until last year. We were 3 people and made a deal with the landlord for the whole apartment. It was totally 600 liras, so each of us were paying 200 liras. It was a small place, but enough for us, however we couldn't earn very much. Therefore, we found 2 more Syrians to share the rent. Anyway, the landlord learned about it and demand an extra 200 liras. We had a quarrel with him. Finally, he said "You have no contract, so I can call the police and get you arrested". Then we bargained with him for a fair deal. Finally, we agree with a total 100 lira increase. It was totally unfair. He fooled us, but we had no choice. In the beginning, we hired the whole apartment and gave a 2-month rental deposit. Actually, the rooms were almost empty, there was some old furniture. I mean there was no way to harm the apartment. 2 more people couldn't change anything about the apartment, but he took the money. Anyway, we found a better apartment later and moved there. The old landlord had to give us 1200 liras for the deposit, but he gave just 900 liras 2 months after we moved. He stole 300 liras from us."

Maan's or Bekir's stories are only two of the many examples. Price discrimination, by showing the large number of refugees for a house as a pretext despite the sizable deposit, is a frequently encountered type of discrimination. Weak legal protection because of their status, lack of language proficiency, knowledge, social capital and other factors create their vulnerability which especially leads to price discrimination. Another problem is language. Some of my Syrian participants complained about the language barriers to find a better house. One of them, (Affan#, 34, from Fatih), explains as:

"When I decided to change my place, I told some of my friends and relatives that I was looking for a new place. There were some places which were as bad as mine...Anyway, I decided to go to a small estate agent, I talked to him. I was barely speaking Turkish at that time. I am not sure that he couldn't understand me or intentionally cheated me, but he showed me some houses whose features did not meet my needs. In addition, I also saw some houses on the internet which were suitable for me, but when I asked about them to the agent, He said that he had rented them, but forgotten to remove the advertisements. I think, partly my language was not enough to negotiate the conditions, and also, I was a refugee, therefore, I could be fooled..."

This case shows the importance of language for possible discriminative perceptions. Affan could be right about his thoughts; if he knew Turkish, he would not be cheated. At least, Affan partly believed this. Therefore, proficiency in language, beyond a social fact and important problem for refugees, has a role on the housing perception.

4.2.2. Taste-based and Statistical Discrimination

The housing market also witnesses various discriminations which could be based on belief, feelings and prejudice. It is known as 'taste-based discrimination' in literature.

(Charles, Guryan, 2013, 426) I encounter some landlords, especially the nationalist ones, who do not want to rent their house to a Syrian because of their personal feelings regarding Syrians. One of my participants, Melih (62), had retired from The Turkish Armed Forces as a colonel. He was a bit of an aggressive man who refused an interview at first. However, while I was talking about Syrians with another participation in a '*kahvehane*' (traditional coffee shops for native people) in Fatih, he interfered and started talking. He clearly expressed his taste-based discrimination against the Syrian refugees as:

"I hate these people (Syrians). They escaped from war, and now they want to enjoy the pleasure of this country... I added in my rent advertisement "no-Syrian". They really disturb me!"

Besides, discriminative attitudes could be "based on rational optimising behaviour and limited information" which is known as statistical discrimination and refers making decisions according to information which could be real or perceived (Charles, Guryan, 2013, 418-420). For example, insurance companies use accident statistics to determine the insurance prices for different groups which could include age or gender. This classification system could be helpful for companies to a certain extent. For example, statistically older drivers could be more experienced, or females could be more careful while driving. These factors could create lower possibilities for accidents. Therefore, companies could prefer higher prices for the groups which have high a probability to have an accident. However, this generalization ignores people outside of the general clusters. Some inexperienced drivers could be better drivers than experienced ones for example. There is not full information about the 'population', because it is either impossible or expensive to search. Hence, limited information-based decision making could be preferred and creates discrimination.

Race or ethnic belongings could also be part of statistical discrimination. For example, imagine that an organizer needs a local band, which must be good at Romani music, for a festival. The organizer might think that there is no time to listen to all applicants and Romani groups are generally good at Romani music naturally. So, the organizer could just call Romani groups for interviews. However, no one could assume that all Romani bands make better Romani music than any other ethnic groups. It is possible that some of the bands from other ethnic groups could play better Romani music than some of the Romani bands. Therefore, bands, which were

not called, were discriminated against by the organizer independently from personal feelings (like hatred) against non-Romani people.

A research conducted in 41 Italian cities in 2010 indicated ethnic discrimination against migrants in the Italian housing market. The research was based on e-mail applications to landlord through the most famous internet buy and sell web sites. The main variables were sex, quality of email form and applicant names, which were specifically chosen for Italian, Eastern European and Arab-Muslim sounding names, to understand the discrimination of the housing market in terms of gender, ethnicity and other social factors. The results of the study are that:

“...There is a significant degree of discrimination against people coming from Arab and Eastern European countries. The most discriminated are the names of Arab origin and, within the same ethnic group, men... The quality of an applicant can be signalled in many different ways. We were thus interested in verifying whether an incorrect written form for rental application may be interpreted as a signal of a low stock of human capital and therefore of bad quality of the applicant” (Baldini, Federici, 2011, 13).

In terms of statistical discrimination, written skills could be associated with low education or integration problems to the society or labour market. Therefore, these conditions could be evaluated as possible low income or communication problems with these migrants. This is only a hypothetical interpretation of the results. The reasons could be different. On the other hand, discrimination by name could be taste-based discrimination and show xenophobia, because discrimination against Italian sounding names is not significant compared to Arab and Eastern European sounding names. In addition, Arab sounding names are exposed more discrimination than their Eastern European counterparts. It shows the differences perceptions between European and non-European people.

In my field study, I observed the statistical discrimination against Syrian refugees. Rıdvan (47) is a real estate investor, from Bakırköy, and has many apartments and also lands in and out of the city. We have a mutual contact, and three of us met in his house in Bakırköy for the interview. In our conversation, I asked him whether Syrians rent his apartments or not. He remarked that:

“Well, my customers are generally Turks. I have 12 apartments. 4-5 of them are proper for the middle class. Let's say 1500-2000 liras. But the rest are a bit expensive, therefore I rarely encounter Syrian people who asked about my apartments. But, of course, I've encountered some of them. However, I did not accept them. I couldn't say that they are bad people, or all of them are problematic. Probably they are very similar to us. I don't know, probably... But the problem is that I don't want to take a risk by giving them an apartment. They are refugees, if s/he does not pay the rental, it is hard to chase him/her. They work illegally, therefore I couldn't check them. I just have to trust them. Their status makes them risky despite the fact

that some of them are trustful and good people. Hence, I hesitated when they reached me and asked for a meeting. So, I refuse them generally.”

Rıdvan doesn't have a taste-based discrimination against the Syrians, because he doesn't have clear prejudice or hate. However, he also refuses them. According to him, having a Syrian tenant is risky for a landlord because of their status, and he doesn't want to take this risk. Therefore, he creates a statistical discrimination against them.

4.2.3. Segregation

Discrimination is a big problem for social inclusion. Firstly, labour discrimination basically causes income inequalities between refugees (or migrants) and the native society. Secondly, prejudices and xenophobia create social discrimination in social life. According to Fozdar and Hartley, insecurity, bad housing conditions and general discrimination create alienation and security concerns for refugees. (Denizou, Hauge, Støa, 2017, 7). Netto et al. claim that “fear or actual experience of racial harassment appears to be a significant factor which influences refugees' housing decision-making processes” (Netto, 2011, 134). They are not willing to stay with native people generally.

In the case of Syrians in Istanbul, especially labour discrimination causes the segregation, yet I couldn't say that social pressure has a huge impact on segregation. Most of my participants explained their neighbourhood choice according to their income level and ‘migration chains’ which refers to; pioneers are followed by newcomers (Castles, Miller, 1998, 26). In that process, refugees use social networks. Before Syrian refugees came to Turkey, they contacted with their family members or friends, who had come to Turkey before them, to optimize their life after migration. Mostly they stay with these initiators before finding another place. The newcomers have come directly to the predetermined neighbourhoods maybe for 4 or 5 years. However, the pioneers encountered struggles to determine where was more convenient for them. Therefore, according to network theory, these networks reduce the costs and risks to the newcomers (Masey et al., 1993, p449).

In one way or another, Syrian refugees in Turkey are mostly segregated from the majority of the population. Nevertheless, segregation, by its nature, provides a feeling of safety. It creates “social networks among immigrant communities” (Murdie, Teixeira, 2015, 85). Halil (48), who is a Kurd and lives in the Yeşilkent

Neighbourhood (Esenyurt), was one of the participants. When Halil talked about Syrians, He started with his migration from Erzurum in 1995. He said:

“When I came to Istanbul, I had only a few relatives in here, nothing more... I had various difficulties. I experienced different jobs, but finally I have overcome the hardships, mostly at least, Thanks Allah... Now, I see Syrians, actually I see my past a bit. Of course, some of them lost their families and probably they have suffered more than me, but still I understand them, a bit maybe... People here understand these people I think. Maybe sometimes we have some problems, but we know that it is not irreparable. This region is full of poverty. Kurdish, Turkish or Alawite, it is no matter...”

Although it is not possible to say anything about social inclusion in the labour market in Yeşilkent, social life sometimes reflects empathy probably because of the shared poverty and migration histories. It creates solidarity between different minority groups and Syrians. Therefore, this segregation also creates a space for Syrians. However, the same segregation also makes it difficult to reach the proper services. Furthermore, they postpone the process of general integration and acceptance. In my opinion, interactions in social life between refugees and native society reduce fear and misleading perceptions on both sides.

4.2.4. Place, Encounters, Perception and Identity Constructing

According to Murdie, preferring low priced houses by refugees because of poverty causes isolation and ghettoization (1992 as cited in Carter, Polevychok, Osborne, 2009, 308). As a consequence of this necessity, housing mostly becomes a passive position for them. They have to live in small houses with many people. Sometimes 2 or 3 families share a particular house. This reduces private space per household. According to Ryff these all affect the wellbeing of refugees and wellbeing is positively correlated with “self-acceptance and positive relations with others” (Denizou, Hauge & Støa, 2017, 17). Therefore, these factors also affect identity construction.

Some of my native participants complained about the noise had come from Syrian houses. According to them, when there are many Syrians living together, even after midnight they make noise. Few complainants insulted them as “they are like animals, as if they came from a mountain”. The main problem is mostly highly overcrowded households. The important thing is that sometimes there is no opportunity to discuss these types of issues on a friendly ground. Despite the fact that they mostly live in isolated areas with other “marginalized” groups, they have more contact with each other than the rest of Istanbul. Some parts of Istanbul, such as Bakırköy, have very

limited relations with Syrians. They mostly have narratives and belief about Syrians. Finally, it should be noted that Syrians also maintain isolation inside the isolated neighbourhoods. Still we cannot talk about close or intertwined relations between native groups and Syrians on a large scale. Therefore, Syrians and other minority groups still hold prejudices (positive or negative) against the opposite. This is important, because “how they are viewed by others, a significant component of identity construction”. (Netto, 2011, 134) Hence, perception and identity have a strong correlation.

4.2.5. Rental Inflation

Perception and rental price relation have been observed in this field study. Turkish citizens generally complain about rising rents and the difficulty of finding a new apartment. Most of the people blame Syrian refugees for rental inflation. They can be right, because migration causes growth of housing prices (Andreeva, 2015, 51). In some cases, it could be very drastic. For example, according to Kurschner, “a one percent population increase due to immigration is associated with an approximate increase in minimum and average rents by 4.8% and 3.3%” in the case of the migration of East Germans to the West side after the Berlin Wall fell (2017, 19). When we consider the Syrian refugee ratio in Istanbul, which is about 3.47%¹⁸, and the towns where they have quite higher population density than other parts of Istanbul, these complains seem reasonable. Therefore, the inflation of rent generally causes a negative perception of native people in the case of the selected parts of Istanbul according to the field study.

Fıraz# (28) lived in Bursa until he graduated from the university. Then he came to Istanbul and stayed with his cousin for a while in Yeşilkent. After that, he found a job and tried to find a place to live permanently. According to him:

“It is always hard to find a place in Istanbul. I have some friends and a cousin here, in Esenyurt. For a few years, I have checked the prices. Believe me, the prices rise day by day. There are a lot of Syrians, and their population is growing. I think one of the main reasons is the Syrians. Some landlord only rent their apartments to them, because they prefer to live in small apartments with many people. Because, they have not enough money. However, the landlord earns much more money than the Turkish tenants at the end of the day. The current situation keeps both sides happy.”

On the other side, another Turkish participant, Kenan (38, from Fatih), remarks that:

¹⁸ http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik. Last Accessed on: January 8, 2018

“This problem is based on the exploitation of the landlords. They force many Syrians to live together and earn a lot of money. Therefore, they hesitate to give the house to Turkish people. To a certain degree, Syrians increase housing prices. However, their effects are limited. In addition, we had an inflation problem in the housing market before the Syrians. Now, everyone finds a scapegoat: the Syrians! That is a very simplistic way of thinking. Syrians’ hate also legitimates these ideas among society I think. The problems are our xenophobia and the exploitative system.”

While Berat’s views particularly focus on the Syrians, Kenan’s views more focus on Turkish society, landlords and the system. According to Kenan, Syrians caused the price increase, but its effect is not so significant. However, landlords get extra profit by exploiting Syrian refugees. Therefore, the main reason is the attitudes of the landlords. In addition, society is ready to blame them for a reason, because people are xenophobic.

4.2.6. Conclusion

Basically, economic structure determines perceptions of the housing market. First of all, discrimination in the labour market causes income inequality against Syrian refugees. This problem led the first refugees to migrate to relatively isolated and cheap neighbourhoods. Secondly, newcomers use pre-existing relations to reach better conditions. Within the framework of network theory, they follow the people who they knew, came and discovered the environment before the later ones. This ‘migrant chains’ support human capital, survival chances, safety and better conditions, because “reinventing the wheel” is not effective in any other places which don’t have a dense Syrian population. In addition, the next migrants encounter the same wage discrimination which necessarily makes these districts popular for Syrian refugees. Therefore, the structure creates the isolation between Syrian refugees and the majority.

Native land lords and estate agencies perceive the Syrian refugees as weak, because generally Syrians are not aware of their rights and they do not have documents such as a lease contract. Furthermore, they have not enough money to rent an apartment without sharing the price by a large number of people. Hence, land lords and estate agencies frequently rent the total house at higher prices than they would to citizens. Although the per share price for a particular house could be smaller than the native counterpart, Syrians have to live in very limited space because of the number of people. Moreover, the houses have to be shared by two or three different families sometimes. Sometimes, this exploitation can be justified as “a help to Syrian

refugees who fled the war” by landlords. However, some landlords hesitate or refuse to rent their houses to Syrian refugees. According to them, this is a risk, because they have no documents and their economic conditions are uncertain; therefore, in case of a problematic situation, it is better not to rent them a house. It is not worth taking the risk. Hence, they cause statistical discrimination against Syrian refugees by evaluating on limited information, which is not based on a personal hatred, about the Syrian refugees.

On the other side, Turkish citizens mostly perceive Syrian refugees as the main factor of rising the housing prices especially in the districts where the Syrian population is denser than other neighbourhoods. However, a relatively small number of native people believe that the biggest problem is not the negative effects of the Syrians, but the exploitative attitudes of landlords and estate agencies against the Syrians.

5. PERCEPTIONS ON SOCIETY AND POLITICS

The labour and housing markets indicate how significant the economy is in perceptions. Economic competition constitutes the main point of the negative perception of Turkish people about Syrians and Syrians about Turkish people. At the same time, despite the importance of economic concerns, social and political views also play considerable roles in shaping perceptions. In this section, in general, the mutual perceptions between Turkish people and Syrians is examined in an intertwined socio-political framework. Specifically, an ideological approach is used in the framework of nationalism-patriotism, a unifying or separating structuralist one is used for the religious framework, and a view focusing on gender and religion is used in the framework of war. In addition, to examine perception, a regional analysis is also made as a sub category. This will give way to a comparison between the regions where our study was made.

5.1. The Religious Discourse and the Relationships between Religion, Politics and Perception

In my field studies, I discovered that religion has a significant role in shaping perceptions about social life in Fatih. I observed that religious views have usually collective attributes regarding social harmony. In the interviews with Turkish people, two concepts are repeated so frequently: “religious brotherhood” and “Islam requires tolerance”. In this respect, for the case of the selected parts of Istanbul, religion has a collaborative and tolerate function. Especially the town of Fatih and its selected districts, Balat-Fener and Çarşamba, have unique characteristics in terms of perception and religion relations. These parts of Fatih have religious importance, because The Greek Orthodox Church, İsmailağa, a strong religious community, and some ‘*dergâhs*’ (dervish lodges) are there.

I had an interview in the courtyard of Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque in Çarşamba (Fatih). Murat (44) works in a store which supplies dresses and various materials for ‘*hacı*’ (pilgrims). He was a very talkative and warm person who showed a great interest in my study and answered the questions. We talked about various aspects of the mutual lives of Syrians and native people in Çarşamba. When we started to talk about the problems related with Syrians, Murat mentioned begging, and noted that he is both disturbed and sad about this issue in religious discourse:

“On one side, I think that they fled from civil war and we help them with religious and cultural values. I become happy. Thanks to Allah, we are able to help them. On the other side, I start to think about begging which is problematic. When we come out of the mosque after the prayer, we see 7-8 Syrian children every day, literally every day. One day we give them money, one day we buy food, I bought a doner sandwich for one of them for instance. Then, I started to question what will be the end of this. Look, in Islam, it is said that if you have food for one day, you mustn’t beg for it. So that, on the one hand, I feel relieved that I help them but on the other, I doubt whether I made a mistake. Thus, the state has to regulate this issue, how far can ordinary citizens finance them? And, people start not to trust these Syrians, helping them over and over.”

From the dialogue with Murat, it is easily understood how he behaves towards Syrians is strongly shaped by his religious motives, and his perceptions about them are intertwined with his religious views. Another participant in Fatih town, Ahmet at the age of 42, had a similar perception. He is a Sunni person from the local community. The interview was conducted in Çukurbostan Park. Although he changes his job from time to time, in the last 2 years he has been working for a local restaurant. He generally buys food from wholesale markets, supplies kitchen gadgets and accessories such as paper napkins or salt shakers, or other types of supplies for restaurants. When we start to talk about Syrians in Turkey, he remarks that:

“First of all, we are Muslim brothers. Look, how Europeans behave against us, the Dutch government¹⁹ prevented us from having a meeting, and tortured Muslims. Our minister went there, and they refused to let her in. How is this possible? This means that “You are Muslim, you are not like us. So that, I do not let you in, will not allow you to construct mosques, and meetings of your community.” You see, Muslims, Christians and Jews always fight against each other, and we have to unite to be strong. You definitely have to mention this in your dissertation. My name is Ahmet, I do not feel fear of anything, you ask about me in this neighbourhood. Secondly my brother, we have truly devoted our lives to Islam. We cannot feel relaxed if our neighbour is hungry. A Muslim must look after his brothers, if not we will all become like Palestine. Do not take the Middle Eastern countries seriously, they say we are Muslims but we -Turkish people- are the real Muslims. We live in unity and peace. Last week, I read on the internet that 99% of our population is Muslim, the rest is Armenian, Greek or

¹⁹ The participant addresses the political tension between the Turkish and the Dutch governments after the Dutch government did not allow the Turkish government to organize meetings with the Turkish community in Netherlands in the framework of their campaign for the referendum of 16th of April, 2017. For detailed information:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/12/world/europe/netherlands-recep-tayyip-erdogan-turkey.html?mcubz=3>, Last Accessed on: April 28, 2017

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39238618>, Last Accessed on: April 28, 2017

Circassian. Which other country has this power? Since we have this power, we face problems. Last week, there was a huge fight here between the Syrians and our guys, mostly unemployed. There are incidences like this, but in the end, we are all Muslim and we will overcome these problems with the help of our government thanks to Allah.”

Ahmet’s point of view shows a perception in which religion, politics and ideology are intertwined. Uniting and being powerful, Muslimhood and brotherhood are mostly interchangeably used and one’s remarks in this framework give an idea about his/her habitus. In this context Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is relevant and significant since it “comprises a system of dispositions that generate perceptions, appreciations and practices (Bourdieu 1990: 53). Habitus is thus a result as well as a cause for an individual’s way of being, acting and thinking” (Nowicka, 2015, p. 12). As a matter of fact, we have to take into account the significance of both the habitus of the local community and the habitus of the refugees which is supposed to change due to forced migration (Morrice, 2013, 652). The migration has to be analysed both in terms of its casual push factors and the circumstances and the impacts of the host country. Because:

(According to Bourdieu) “habitus is durable but not eternal. Habitus is adjusted when the conditions in which it is embedded cease to exist. The degree of stability of habitus is subject to changing economic, social and cultural conditions. For asylum seekers and refugees this would mean that settlement in the host country brings a shift in field conditions with it” (Glastra, Vedder, 2009, 84).

In this respect, in social terms, the local groups, who express their negative perceptions by mentioning their differences to Syrians, generally develop a common value rhetoric when the issue is religion, and emphasize the existence of a common religion as a value of the habitus not in practice but in mentality which is not subject to change by migration. As a result, Muslimhood could be relatively regarded as a common subjective social zone between the refugees and the conservative local community in Turkey in the framework of the concept of ‘social glue’ which is frequently associated with technology in the literature. The term of ‘social glue’ is:

“... primarily used in contexts where people’s feeling of social connection is strengthened through a shared experience which may or may not be facilitated by technology...it must bring people together and hold them fast in some social dynamic. And, the experience of being together, of sharing something, should produce some “bond” ...between people” (Churchill, 2009, 229).

The religion, by its nature, gives way to construct a strong link both in its theoretical terms and religious practices. It is theoretical, since in the end of the day, the one who declares that he/she is Muslim is accepted as Muslim although he/she does not attend any religious practices. In this respect, to believe is something abstract and

subjective. At the same time, it is concrete and physical; since religious days, feasts or common prayers are observable reflections and could be shared physically in the socialization process. In the end, the religion becomes an effective “social glue”.

Regarding my interviews, on the other hand, it is clearly not possible to talk about a common acceptance and positive perception in terms of religion about the Syrians in Istanbul. I think that this has two main causes. Firstly, when the physical dimension of religion cannot find common ground in conservative regions, the already existing confidence and the identity of “Muslimhood” starts to disappear in perception. In Balat, I had an interview with a school bus driver. Recep (58) invited me to his small basement below the building he lives in. We drank tea and had our interview there. He stated that:

“We never discriminated against the Syrians, but they have a different and easy perspective on religion. I would not tell this about migrants coming from Bulgaria since they came from a country where the call to prayer was forbidden and the practice of prayer did not exist. However, the Syrians came from a country where most of the population is Muslim but they do not attend prayers in the mosque here. They do not attend the prayers for special religious days as well. 90% of them never go to the mosque. They do not even fast. They lie. They say we fast but they do not. Most of them. You know, the best Muslimhood is in Turkey. The Syrians generally have nothing to do with the Quran, they do not read it, okay it is in classical Arabic but they make no effort to understand it.”

Similarly, I discovered certain negative perceptions about Syrians regarding the concept of martyrdom and Islam. I met Hüseyin (24), who lives in Yeşilkent, in a ‘kahvehane’. He is unemployed, but worked as a delivery rider for a fast food franchise before. He has such views, regarding martyrdom and Islam, in which war, religion and gender are intertwined: “They flee from the war in their country, but if needed you have to die for your country. For women, kids it is okay but for young Syrians in their 20s, how come do not they fight for their country?” These kinds of expressions are significant in my study since they play a pivotal role in negative perceptions and views about Syrians. In this respect, we initially have to have a look at the concept of martyrdom in Islam. According to Islam, martyrdom is a prestigious level and martyrs will be gifted with very valuable rewards by Allah (Yaran, 2012, 211). “Death is associated verbally with heaven. Heaven, by definition, cannot be directly experienced, as can houses, cars and parks. But by way of a transfer of functions through relational classes...” (Houmanfar, Ward, 2011, 67). According to Graham, “...army soldiers ...affirmed their manhood through their role as warriors, they risked their lives defining their gender identities by this occupation” (Graham, 2003, 21). As a result, a war for religion and at the expense of living is something

valuable and linked with manhood. In this respect, whether perceptions about Syrians changed or not after the coup attempt on 15th of July, 2016, is examined in this study. Although it was not frequent, there were participants who declared their negative comments about the Syrians referring to “they did not take on the streets to defend the nation on the night of the coup with local people” and “they did not help” Turkish people. Hasan (27), from Bayrampaşa, said:

“We all went out on the night of the coup to defend the nation, but the Syrians did not, they said that my wife is afraid, my child is afraid. They have no willingness to become martyr. They are afraid. Actually, they are ungrateful. This country goes to war for you and embraces you but when it needs you, you are not there. This is truly ungratefulness. Supposedly, their children feel afraid, your child deserves a peaceful night at home on the coup night, but my kid does not? We actually took to the streets for the future of our children. After the 15th of July, this was discussed in the neighbourhood. Most local people say: the ones who fled from war in their country are not capable of fighting here. The guy did not defend his own country, why would he defend ours?”

The discussions about the coup attempt exemplify that perceptions about Syrians are also affected by such sentiments like patriotism. So that; religion, gender, ideology must be analysed together and their role in shaping the perceptions might be put forward accordingly.

According to my observations, the other major causes of the fact that there is no clear common acceptance or positive perception about the Syrians in terms of religion, are the differences in life styles in different regions and the fact that there are different religious dynamics within Istanbul. Especially during my interviews in Fatih, the religion and its discourse have been overemphasized. On the other hand, in Yeşilkent and Bayrampaşa, the religious discourse is less strong than Fatih. So that, in these three neighbourhoods, positive or negative perceptions can be shaped by religious motives. In contrast, in the centre of Bakırköy and Yeşilköy, almost no one referred to religion; comments on religion were only made after certain questions about religion and religion didn't seem to have a considerable role in shaping perceptions. As a result, we cannot evaluate perceptions of Syrians as if it is homogenous throughout the city, in fact it changes a great deal from one place to another.

It becomes clear that there are spatial and individual differences in perceptions and views about Syrian refugees. However, regarding the recent debate about whether Syrian refugees in Turkey would be given Turkish citizenship or not, no participant had a positive view except for one. His name is Bekir (57) whom I saw in front of a ‘kahvehane’ while he was drinking his tea. Bekir had worked as a pvc card cover

maker until last year, yet after a liver disease he had to retire. He has lived for 15 years in Yeşilkent. Bekir approaches this issue referring to means of national interests:

“We have to give them Turkish citizenship, then we will become more populous and stronger. They do not harm us. They will work and contribute to our industries and nation. Look, our president says that a couple must at least have 3 children. Why? Because becoming more populous means becoming stronger. I agree with this idea. Now, China and India, they are all strong countries. Let me give you an example from history. Our ancestors, you know we have also roots from the Mongols. Genghis Khan lost when he was young and they left him. Then, Genghis grew up and gathered all Mongol governors around him. He reached to superiority in terms of quantity of people he had around, and then he conquered all Asia. So that, becoming more populous is something good. I am not against giving them Turkish citizenship, I hope they will get it.”

In contrast to Bekir, all other participants opposed the idea of giving the Syrians Turkish citizenship with an emphasis on unfairness. I came across Fatma (24) in Yeşilkent while she was cleaning her garden. First, she hesitated to talk, and answered the questions very briefly, but then we went on and had an intense and useful dialogue. About ‘unfairness’, Fatma said that

“We all know that there are significant problems in Syria and still going on. Knowing this, we do our best to help them here. Look, normally, I can hardly afford to buy a dress for my own child but when we see the Syrians desperate, we forget our own problems and help them. I cannot say we did a lot, but we did our best. On the other hand, the citizenship issue is something else. You come to another country, a foreign government helps you, all the nation helps you, and as if all these are not enough you demand citizenship. This is too much. I cannot accept this. That’s why I am against the idea of giving them citizenship.”

I had a barber participant, Alparslan (28), whom I interviewed in his barber shop in Barkırköy. He got really angry when we started to talk about the citizenship issue:

“You flee from the war, do not defend your country, and come here and hang around as a real man, and after all of this you get financial aid from the Turkish government. Is it acceptable? Is it normal? Look, I participated in nationalist political groups for years but still I am a moderate man. However, when someone talks about the idea of giving them citizenship, it drives me crazy. You just think about the reactions of more radical nationalist Turkish people. These Syrians, first of all, cannot embrace the idea of Turkishness. I am not talking about Turkishness, Kurdishness or Arabness. I know Kurds who love the Turkish nation. But the Syrians, no. No. Because, they fled from war in their country and did not defend their home, they have no sense of patriotism. I do not like their culture and lifestyle, either. You cannot differentiate religion and culture in their lifestyles. We are not like them. You agree or not? In this country, some of us both drink alcohol and go to Friday prayers but this Arabic culture is totally different. I do not like their culture. If they are given citizenship, there will be huge problems in Turkey. No one will accept this.”

Alparslan, like other nationalist participants, explains his views about Syrians while combining all the concepts of citizenship, patriotism, culture and resentment. On the other hand, the participants who regard themselves as secular and declare that they are not nationalist-conservative, generally put an emphasis on unemployment, crime rates, and unfairness while they discuss the citizenship issue. Although participants

who regard themselves as conservative are more moderate in their wordings about the Syrians than nationalist-secular ones, they are still against the view of giving the Syrians citizenship. Some pro-government participants remarked that they do not like this idea but if the government enacts such a law enabling Syrians to have Turkish citizenship, they will not oppose it. One of them (İsmail, from Balat) said:

“Look my son, I voted for the ruling AKP from the beginning. Thanks to our president Erdoğan, the country has improved so much, made a history. Mostly they did good stuff. But honestly, I am against their policies about the Syrians. Ok, the Syrians fled from a civil war, and they are welcomed here. But 4 million of them came. This is a bit difficult. But still we say okay. But now, there are discussions about giving them citizenship. I am totally against this idea. I like AKP so much, I always support Erdoğan but I wish this citizenship issue would never happen. But sure, it is the decision of the government. If they say so, I will still vote for the AKP but not approve of this policy. I hope they will never make such a decision.”

İsmail explains that although political tendencies cannot totally change their perceptions, they can moderate them. People against the government combine their views about the Syrians with references to their resentment against the government. So that, in the framework of my field study, I discovered that political views have a role in shaping the perceptions.

Lastly, I want to mention the ‘*hutbe*’ (khutba) [“short sermons delivered at noon prayers on Fridays and at religious feasts” (Keyifli, 2013, 78)] which refer to Syrian refugees. Alongside their social features, hutbes have political implications since they are prepared by government bodies. Hutbes are significant since:

“the hutbe functions as a platform from which to influence the Muslim community’s perception of a certain issue, mobilize activism, strengthen ties and relations amongst the congregation (Wiktorowicz 2001) and formulate responses to the challenges faced by locals, such as social and religious discrimination (Fink 2007; Hashem 2010) ...” (Hopkins, Samuri, 2017, 50)

Because of these reasons, we have to take into account the role of the ‘*hutbes*’ in shaping the perceptions of the native conservatives about Syrian refugees. The Presidency of Religious Affairs, which is an organizing body of the Prime Ministry, publishes ‘*hutbes*’ which have been delivered since 2015 on their website as well. I found 8 ‘*hutbes*’ which mention the issues related with Syrian refugees. One example is that of 7th of July, 2017 with the title of “The Test for Our Humanity and Faith: The Refugees”. It starts with how first Muslims behaved well to the people who migrated from their lands to protect their faith in the first years of Islam. It continues with references to today’s Syrian refugee crisis as follows:

“In last years, millions of our brothers, who fled from civil wars, massacres and torture in our region, took refuge in our country. Our nation, with its generosity which all the world envies,

helped them. Our nation welcomed them very well. However, in last days, we witness some incidences which put a shadow on our generosity and helpfulness. In some specific contexts, there is perception engineering against our brotherhood and unity. They try to provoke our nation against our Syrian brothers, with some unreal claims and harm our unity. We have to be wise and on alert on this issue, we, all Muslim brothers²⁰

The hutbe takes a nationalist stance in the beginning by referring to how the Turkish nation is helpful to others. Then, it refers to some “perception engineering projects” which target our national unity and peace with unreal claims. This exemplifies how the negative perception about Syrians is attempting turn into a positive through the ‘*hutbes*’.

5.2. Views of Syrians: Perception of the ‘others’

In my field study, I see that perceptions of Syrians about Turkish people are various and differ in terms of politics, religion and ideology, as perceptions of Turkish people about the Syrians also differ through these terms. In my interviews, I discovered the importance of religion for Syrians and how religion becomes a significant criterion for them to choose Turkey as a country to take refuge in instead of European countries. Kıram (26), a Syrian butcher in Yeşilkent, said that:

“I wanted to go to a country where I can practise Islam easily with my wife. The ones choosing Europe, only want to get financial aid from European governments and survive without working. The ones coming to Turkey on the other hand, want to work and earn money by themselves, and be able to live according to the norms of Islam. The traditions and life styles in Europe are totally different. We cannot live there. But Turkey is like a bigger version of Syria. We have the same religion here with a similar culture. That’s why we are here. And I do not understand why people ask me about why we choose Turkey. Now you make a study, you can ask such questions but some people asking this question implies that they wish we were not here. But Turkey is both very close to Syria and it is a Muslim country. We are so lucky that Turkey accepted us.”

Kıram has a strange life story. He graduated from the English Translation department of a university in Syria 2 years ago. He lives in Yeşilkent with his wife who is now pregnant. His wife was studying Fine Arts in Syria before coming to Turkey but she could not complete it because of the war. Kıram applied for jobs to be an English teacher in Istanbul but he was not accepted. Then, he became a butcher in a supermarket. After he learnt the basics of this profession, he rented a small store, becoming self-employed, serving both as a butcher shop and a restaurant, where we conducted the interview. I asked him why he did not go to Europe since it was easy

²⁰<http://www2.diyaret.gov.tr/DinHizmetleriGenelMudurlugu/HutbelerListesi/%C4%B0man%C4%B1m%C4%B1z%20ve%20%C4%B0nsanl%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1m%C4%B1z%C4%B1n%20C4%B0mtihan%C4%B1%20M%C3%BClteciler.pdf>. Last Accessed on: August 21, 2017

for him due to the fact that he can speak English, and he replied as I mentioned above. I faced similar views as Kıram's. In this viewpoint, common religion is regarded as a common cultural value by many Syrian participants and they emphasized many similarities between the traditions in Syria and in Turkey. On the other hand, Turkish participants mainly think that Syrians are totally different than Turks in terms of cultural values. I had an interview with Ahmed# (30), a Syrian refugee working as a teaching assistant at a private university, in his office and he told me that:

“For example, Ramadan, I felt that it is the same like one country. If you go to a European country, for example some of my friends are in Germany and they cannot get used to the culture... But here, Ramadan is special like in Syria, like the atmosphere is same. For me, it is very easy to adapt to the culture...”

We see among Syrian refugees in Turkey that religion functions as an adaptation instrument, a “social glue”. Religion is seen as an important part of the culture by Syrian refugees as well. Perceived European culture and religion are different and undesirable compared to the Turkish or Syrian culture according to many of my Syrian participants. Research of Çelik, Sunata and Yıldız had similar findings about the perceptions of cultures (2017, 530-531).

Regarding the issue of fleeing from the war, Syrians have two main different views. Some participants declared that they wanted to survive and save their family, that's why they came to Turkey without giving other details. Some of them stressed the dynamics of the civil war in Syria and how it is unclear for both sides. Especially young male Syrians feared to be taken into the military service in Syria. I had a focus group, which included three young Syrian refugees, in İsmetpaşa (Bayrampaşa). We met in their house. Samir (22) and Hussein (26) are high-school graduates, and work in a glazier and carpet shop respectively. They had to flee before any armies pushed them to join their sides. Samir told me that:

“Brother, I was in Şanlıurfa. When I first came to Şanlıurfa they insulted us, saying, why didn't we fight for our country. Some of them hated us. We were so upset. We could not find a proper job. Then, we decided to come to Istanbul. First, there are problems like the duration of military service in Syria is uncertain. They may take you into military service, and you can stay there forever. Secondly, which side to take is really complicated. Kurds, Assad, ISIS they all had different armies. Let's say, you are against Assad and you take a side which is against him. In that opposing group, there are spies for Assad, they categorize you among risky people against the regime, they may torture your family. There are such problems. Secondly, Assad is everywhere and he is very strong. Fighting against him is something impossible. We could not decide what to do. If there was unity no one could beat us but we are so separated that we did not know who is a friend or who is an enemy. We did not have any other option than fleeing from our land. If a brother kills his brother, what can you do?”

When we talk about the coup attempt in Turkey with the Syrians, another young refugee, Hussein, said that “On the coup night, I did not go out with Turkish people, then they insulted us, about how they helped us, but we did not defend them.” to point out the views of the local people against the Syrians. Another one, Hussein, said that:

“I like you guys so much. I like the Turkish military, and Erdoğan. I went out on the coup night. I took refuge here, I live here, I cannot say that I like here more than Syria but I like Turkey so much. You had an enemy, and the president wanted us to take to the streets to defend the nation, and I did.”

Hussein perceives Turkey as his country, and supports the political structure here. He thinks Turkey is in unity and peace, and there was a clear enemy on the coup night and he went out against the coup plotters to defend the country he likes and took refuge in. So that, in terms of perception, in addition to his feelings, he is able to take material costs.

Lastly, when I discuss the citizenship issue with Syrians, I discovered that some of them want to stay in Turkey so that they are willing to take Turkish citizenship, but some of them want to go back to Syria after the war ends, so they are indifferent about the citizenship debate. The ones who demand Turkish citizenship emphasize that they think they will be better off in terms of basic rights and working standards.

5.3. Us and Them: “There Was No W.C. so We Came to Turkey”

In my field study, in social areas, it is possible to categorize the perceptions of Turkish Citizens about the Syrians in 6 different topics. We can enumerate them as hatred and resentment, mercy and empathy, security concerns, narratives of conspiracy, orientalism and anti-Arab thoughts. The participants usually perceive these concepts in an intertwined manner. For instance, the reason for one local person to hate Syrians could be his security concerns. In addition, these people may believe narratives of conspiracy about the Syrians. In some cases, it is possible to see some contradicting perceptions together. So that, perceptions about Syrians are in complex forms which consist of intertwined concepts. In some interviews, I got certain impressions that Syrian refugees may have created new layers in the social structure. Especially the participants with nationalist views, compare Turks, Arabs and Kurds and constitute a hierarchical structure intentionally or unintentionally. Mert (29), from Yeşilkent, had such a hierarchical mind set:

“Let’s say there are 3 shopkeepers. If I do not know any of them, I would first choose the Turkish one. After, I would not differentiate between the Turkish and the Arab one. Sorry, let me correct, if he is not involved in terrorist organization I would choose the Kurd after the Turk, and Arab would be the last option.”

During the interview Mert remarked that he does not really trust Kurds. So that, his priority is the one from his “own nation”, Turks. The nation comes before citizenship. And when it comes to Syrians, they are even less trustworthy than Kurds. There is a hierarchical ladder in Mert’s mind, and the Syrians now take the former role of the Kurds in this hierarchy.

Another perception about Syrians is based on hatred, resentment and discrimination. I had a chance to interview a woman at a house in Bakırköy, who reflected these feelings together with her security concerns. Türkan (37), works as a cleaning lady, said that:

“We could not keep them in refugee camps, they infiltrated our community without our approval. I do not find all of them responsible but...Some of them behave as if they have not see a human being before. They steal, they murder, maybe to survive I do not know, but...They are victims but they also victimize us in this way. My son is taken by bus at 4 a.m. and my husband looks after my son, a guy at his 20s, with a concern whether he will be stabbed or robbed by the Syrians around. Especially in the last 2 years, the number of them increased and they lost their control. They do not work. They have to go to cleaning jobs, do child care, elderly care. There are a lot of sectors in which they could work. But they do not! They scratch people’s cars, puncture their tires. As a reaction, the local community starts to hate them. I became discriminated against in my own country. And there is another problem, they do their toilet where they live. I have not seen with my eyes but I am told so. I am told that Arabs do not always use a toilet and do it anywhere.”

Türkan’s wording gives certain clues about her perceptions. According to her, the Syrians are harmful people who have to be kept in camps. There is a fear about Syrians and to Fatma proper fields for them to work in are informal ones like child-elderly care or cleaning jobs. At this point, we have to take into account that, she is herself a cleaning worker.

In another interview in Bakırköy, similar views are pointed out in a more intense tone. Mehmet (32) is a white-collar employee in the banking industry. We met in a house of a mutual friend, therefore it was an easy-going interview. He represents a part of white-collar employees in terms of self-confidence, discourse, social and economic status which includes higher education and a specialized professional. I also heard many English words during the interview which was predominantly in Turkish. He perceives Syrians as:

“When I see them on the shore, I feel disturbed. Firstly, they are different to your language and culture. In socio-economic terms, they are inferior. I do not only have this resentment against them, I have the same feeling when I go to poor towns like Bağcılar. People who have no idea

about how to live and social codes, may attack you, risk your life or property. They do barbecue on the shore, go swimming in their underwear. Ok, we had these problems before the Syrians as well but it was a small minority, now they are so many. It is disturbing now that these kinds of people are so many and they are not Turkish. There is fear and lack of peace in the local community, their psychology is worsened. The Syrians have no home, they beg on the streets. They have nothing to lose. Not all of them but most. What might they lose? I support the view that they get free medical care, health is something basic. And there must be free education for their children, but this education must not be with us and in our standards, they have to have basic level of education in separate schools. They have to be taught in Arabic, because I do not want them to learn Turkish and stay here. Because we cannot afford this. Even Kurds fought for education in their mother tongue, they did not have any social rights that Syrians have right now even though they were citizens of this country. But this, new coming 5 million of Syrians, should not be given such rights... I do not want to call them parasites but they almost are. They are parasites on our back. It is like, if there is a rotten potato in the whole box, you have to take it out, otherwise the whole box would get rotten. If these were Greeks, I would not feel this resentment because we have more common things with them like dance, music, food... But since these people are Syrians, I do not show any hospitality. If they were Greeks, we would not have this much problem because for instance they would not swim in their underwear.”

Mehmet had a discriminating approach shaped by fear, resentment, hatred and perception of cultural differences. The cultural differences he perceives are expressed by the word “inferior”, and he discusses the topic in the framework of “superiority-inferiority”. By referring to them as “People who have no idea about social norms”, he draws attention to the social structure and thinks that Syrians harm the social order and this is the reason for his hatred. In this respect, in the social order, one can witness anything like “robbery, attack, loss of property or life”. Since this process may eradicate the “control over the space” as Yeğenoğlu notes that:

“The European subject’s desire to travel to and see the “authentic” Third World native and culture is particularly interesting given that it could have been much easier to see them around as they are also living nearby as migrants. But interestingly, while the proximate native signifies pollution, abjection, and a threatening dangerous zone that the European subject wants to keep away from, the faraway native becomes an object of fascination, pleasure, and excitement. The voyeuristic desire of the European tourist for the exotic other in its own authentic space becomes all the more striking when we think of all the spatial provisions that render the migrants’ presence invisible in European cities. When the native is in “our” space, he or she is an object and a symbol of danger that “we” want to keep away from. But the same native becomes an object of desire and source of pleasure when she or he is distant from “us.” Why is this so? Does this reversal of desire tell us something about the sovereign constitution of the European subject and his or her ability or lack of control of its own space? **“(2012, 36)**

In his interview, Mehmet may address “a civilization without an understanding of aesthetics”, while he refers to the activities like swimming in their underwear or having a barbecue on the shore. In addition, he notes that there were already these kinds of people in Turkey but they were still one of us, now these ones are even not Turkish, and this is very disturbing for him. Alongside all these, there is a rational explanation for all of his comments: the Syrians have nothing to lose. Mehmet did not want them to integrate that’s why he wants them to have education in Arabic and in separate schools. Then, he takes a perspective on unfairness, giving references to

the citizenship debate and comparison of Syrians with Kurds. Lastly, he takes an orientalist stance, and compares Syrian refugees with possible Greek refugees and finds the Greeks more acceptable. This exemplifies the feeling of closeness of secular Turkish people to the West instead of the East, and to the European instead of the Arab, and a form of orientalism within the orient. Now, I want to mention how the ways in which Turkish citizens imagine and perceive the East shape their views about Syrians. This point of view has two different forms. Firstly, it is in the form of discrimination and negative perception with respect to cultural differences as Mehmet does. This approach emphasizes the fact the Syrians are harmful that's why they are not accepted here. Some people stress a general resentment against the Arabs in the forms of "Arabs are all dirty" or "They betrayed us in the Second World War, and these general views mainly shape their negative perception about Syrians. I think this way of thinking may have spatial dimensions, and want to give another example from Bakırköy:

"I don't like Arabs at all. They always betrayed the Turks. A European tourist is not like this, they do not harm me. They are polite. But I do not like their nationalist ones, either. Sometimes they talk nonsense about Turkey. I do not like the Romani community as well. When I was a child, we were told that they will eat us²¹, I was afraid of them. And, the Arabs, they are always in favour of fleeing away. Disgusting. They are all benefit scroungers. Dark skinned people. ...Spanish people are also dark skinned but they dress up well. Their hair, clothes, dances..."

This is quoted from a focus group study which included four women. All the women are in their mid-fifties. Three of them are high school graduates and the other one has a bachelor's degree. Economically, they are all in good positions. The interview was conducted in a cafe in the morning in the Yeşilköy district where they live. The woman whom I quoted is an owner of a small souvenir shop there. Her name is Bedriye. She is a secularist and nationalist person. Bedriye sometimes encounters Syrians refugees and some tourist from different nationalities. Besides, Fatma, the one that has a bachelor's degree, and Nejla retired nearly 10 years ago. The fourth participant Ayda is a housewife who has never worked before. Except Bedriye, three of them are not nationalists, but secular people.

They have general discomfort about Syrians and Syrian related issues, but only Bedriye showed clear and intense hostility against Syrian refugees. When Bedriye named the Syrians as dark-skinned ones, another participant, Fatma, laughed and asked about Spanish people. The way Bedriye defended her views by praising

²¹ She was laughing when she mentioned the roots of her fear.

Spanish people indicates that the perception has spatial dimensions I think. We have to bear in mind that there were also many negative perceptions about the Europeans and European countries as well. However, when they are compared to Syrians, all these criticisms are political rather than cultural. For example, Nejla criticized Serbians, because “they have always considered Turkey as an enemy and Turkey’s horrible foreign policy allows it”. Even, six months ago, Serbian authorities checked her and other Turkish passengers rudely at passport control. According to her, Europe culture or people are not a problem, but governments, especially Turkish, and politics creates conflicts. On the other hand, negative perceptions about Syrians are mostly cultural. Their clothes, life styles and also language could be a reason for discrimination.

A second type of orientalist viewpoint in an indirect way from the questions asked to the Syrians about their interactions with the local community. These questions give us clues about the “imagined” Syria, and this directs us to a process in which perception and prejudice are intertwined. In the interviews, I asked the Syrians whether they are subject to strange questions. There were participants who told me that they were asked whether they had mobile phones, cars, coke or toilet paper in Syria. Another participant remarked that “a woman came and asked whether there are toilets in Syria or not, and I told her that there was none that’s why we came to Turkey.” I think that these kinds of questions must be examined together with the prejudices like “Arabs do their toilet anywhere.” or “Arabs betrayed us.” In addition, different types of this negative perception can be seen in different socio-economic groups. Salim²²(29), who was a doctor in Syria, had to take additional lectures from the Ministry of Health of Turkey to work as a doctor. During these lectures, he tells me that, Turkish doctors were surprised by the knowledge of medicine of the Syrian doctors. At the same time, Syrian doctors were subject to discrimination:

“The doctors were shocked that we knew medicine. They said “Oh, do you know this medicine or disease...? When I went to these practical courses, there were Syrian and Turkish doctors. And the toilets were only for Turkish doctors. They had the keys. If you are a Syrian doctor, you must go the Mosque...”

Lastly, although I witnessed this rarely, I met some Syrians who wanted to hide their national identity since they do not want to be subject to threats, discrimination and

²² This interview was conducted at a NGO office in Şişli, but Salim has lived in near Yeşilkent for 1 year.

loss of their basic rights. In a group interview I conducted in a private university, one of the Syrians, Mohammed (23), told me about speaking Arabic that:

“They behave us so well in school, people are helpful. We cannot speak Turkish now but we started to learn. In school, we communicate in English. But outside the school, we may face some problems. For instance, I hesitate to speak Arabic. Once, another Syrian was speaking Arabic on a public bus, and someone in the bus warned him in a really impolite way. After that incident, I do not speak Arabic on public transportation. I hesitate outside, but here in the school, we feel relaxed”.

This example demonstrates that fears are mutual. Turkish people are afraid of the Syrians, and Syrians have many fears for their lives in Turkey.

5.4. Contact, Narratives of Conspiracy and Their Sources

One of the most significant findings of my field study was that the perceptions of those having contact with refugees are generally more positive than the perceptions of those who have no contact with them. To McLaren, in Europe, in contrast to the case in the U.S. (2003, 929), “contact mediates the effect of the environment, helping to produce lower levels of threat perception in contexts of high immigration” (2003, 909). In this respect, in the towns like Bayrampaşa, Fatih (Çarşamba and Balat neighbourhoods) and Esenyurt (Yeşilkent neighbourhood) where local people have contact with the refugees, perceptions of Turkish people about the Syrians are more positive than the ones in Bakırköy (Central Bakırköy and Yeşilköy neighbourhood) where the contact of local people with the refugees is limited. Thus, the examples in Istanbul are more similar to the European context rather the U.S. one. However, contact is not the only variable here, the socio-economic conditions of the local people also vary. That is why we have to pursue a multi-variable analysis. Still, through my case studies, it is pointed out that contact with refugees is an important variable, though it is not the only one. In this respect, the interview I had with İrem (27) was very important. İrem lived in Bağcılar where the Syrian community was dense until she was 24. After she got married, she moved to Bakırköy. Respectively her husband and she work as a manager and as a sales consultant for a store of the same textile retail company in Bakırköy. İrem has been working in Bakırköy for 2 years so that she knows lifestyles and social dynamics there; at the same time, she spent 24 years in Bağcılar, thus she knows there pretty well too. That’s why she is an important participant for my study, combining two spatial categories in my field study. Her general views about the Syrian refugees in Istanbul were as follows:

“I definitely think that regarding the perceptions about Syrians, Bakırköy and Bağcılar differ in many ways. Although it changes at the individual level, in general, Turkish people hate Syrian refugees, and you can see that both in Bağcılar and in Bakırköy. When you start to talk about the Syrians, you can easily see that. On one side there is mercy and tolerance, on the other there is inhospitality. This is the common point between Bağcılar and Bakırköy. Despite this commonality, in Bağcılar people more or less accept their existence, they do not hate them by any means but conditionally. I do not know how to describe this but it is like, in Bağcılar one gets angry with Syrians if they increase the rents in the region, or if a Syrian opens a store next to his but he does not feel disgusted about Syrians in contrast to the people in Bakırköy. In Bağcılar people feel afraid about the Syrians as well, some local people were stabbed but these kinds of incidences are rare. In contrast, in Bakırköy, local people have no contact with Syrians but they hate the refugees categorically. This is so strange for me, I do not know. When I was in Bağcılar I did not observe any categorical disgust, but here, in Bakırköy I do. They only know Syrians through the news or from stories told by other people but they categorically hate them. Some of my friends in Bakırköy tell me stories about the Syrians which make me shocked and doubt about whether these people are the same Syrians with the Syrians I met in Bağcılar. Then, I realized that they have not seen any Syrian at all, but these are the stereotypical stories that they hear from other people.”

What Irem told me is something that I witnessed through some other interviews as well: feelings of categorical disgust and hate against the Syrians without having any contact with them. On the other hand, I cannot say that in cases of contact the perception becomes totally positive, but it becomes more positive. I can at least point out that, except for economic issues, the contact functions as a mediator and eases the level of the hate.

Another way of examining perceptions about Syrians is to focus on reproduced narratives of conspiracy. There many narratives and I want to mention a few of them. Some Turkish people believe that some Syrian refugees are potential criminals because there was not enough level of control during their passage of the border into Turkey. Among those, there is this perception: “There are people coming with the title of a Syrian refugee who actually is a terrorist”. In addition, most of my Turkish participants believe that Syrians excessively increase crime rates in Istanbul. They also have a common perception that most Syrians beg on the streets. Regarding this perception, the Turkish Ministry of Internal Affairs declared on its website that:

“Some newspapers and social media accounts make news like our Syrian friends increase crime rates without any grounds. In the current practice, the Syrians in or outside the refugee camps, are all registered, their fingerprints are taken and they are given a “Temporary Identity Card”. In recent days, some incidences regarding the tension between local people and the Syrians are put in the news in an exaggerated way to target our friendly feelings towards the Syrians. These media try to break the unity between Turkish people and our Syrian friends, and this issue is mainly used as material for domestic politics. Despite this news, the statistics held by the Ministry show the opposite. The portion of the Syrians who are involved with crime is less than the general average in the whole of Turkey. The crimes that the Syrians have been involved with constitute only 1.32% of all crimes in Turkey from 2014. Throughout the country, on 17th and 27th of May, there were police operations against the beggars and 3,046 people were found while begging and they were interrogated. In the first operation 149 of them were Syrian, in the second 230. All necessary legal actions were taken against these people. In addition, some of the arrested people were non-Syrian in disguise who pretend to be Syrian

while begging. With all this data, we believe that with these newspaper articles and social media accounts, which claim that the Syrians increase crime rate, the aim is to break the unity of Turkish people and our Syrian friends.²³

One of my Syrian participants, Ecved# (22) from Yeşilkent, complained about this:

“Brother, in the end, there are good and bad people among us. It is like this in any nation. But they generalize bad examples. Some people claim that we are all beggars and commit crimes, we increased crime here. In fact, the Syrian beggars here were beggars in Syria too in their past. Additionally, involvement with crime is not that high. They do not rent their flats to us and they do not hire us. They believe we would not pay the rent. I heard about some cases, some Syrian workers beating their boss because they could not get their wage. I do not know whether this is true but if it is true, it is a simple case and they cannot generalize this. As there are good and bad Turks, there are good and bad Syrians.”

Many other Syrians like Ecved, had similar complaints. They told me that these kind of discriminative generalizations and prejudices makes their life more difficult here.

Similarly, another prejudice against Syrians is that Syrians get admission to universities in Turkey without any examination. Not only have I witnessed this kind of perception in my interviews but also this perception is widely seen in the media. Regarding this prejudice, a social media account named “Syrian Citizens Bureau” published this post on 10th of August, 2017:

“According to official figures, 131,746 young Syrians have their education at university level in Turkey. The ones who get monthly scholarship amount to 800 TL are distributed to the universities by a lottery system. The departments most selected by them were: Medicine, Law, Computer Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. Ahmed Zevat who was admitted to METU said that: “If there was an exam, we could have passed that. I aim to go to Oxford University afterwards²⁴.”

A website “teyit.org” examined this post, and revealed that this post was first published on a comedy website named “MizahTürk²⁵”, and after reactions with a note they mentioned that this text was fiction.²⁶ In fact, according to the ‘Principles Regarding the Admission of Foreign Students’²⁷ of the Council of Higher Education, it is expressed that there will be admission of foreign students by certain national and international standards. In this system, there is no specific lottery for the Syrians. In addition, my Syrian participants studying at universities told me that the department they study in had their own exams, and although there is no nation-wide examination, their admission was not exam-free. In addition, I have to express that

²³ <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/basin-aciklamasi05072017>. Last Accessed on: August 30, 2017

²⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/suriyedeleti/photos/a.352286998447392.1073741828.352277498448342/517287148614042/?type=3&theater>. Last Accessed on: August 30, 2017

²⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/MizahTurkTR/> ; a humor website.

²⁶ <https://teyit.org/131-bin-746-suriyelinin-universiteye-yerlestirildi-iddiasi/> . Last Accessed on: September 15, 2017

²⁷ http://www.yok.gov.tr/documents/10279/58373/yurtdisindan_ogrenci_kabulune_il_esas.pdf/e3ded5b2-c26e-46ed-9f05-6b74f302f5e2. Last Accessed on: September 15, 2017

only in 2012 and 2013, in 7 universities (Gaziantep, Çukurova, Osmaniye Korkut Ata, Mersin, Harran, Mustafa Kemal and Kilis 7 Aralık Universities) gave some Syrians the status of “special student” with the condition that they were refugees (Erdoğan, 2015, 87). However, this was a specific and limited practice. On the other hand, most citizens believe that all of the Syrians go to whichever university they want in Turkey without any exam. In a conference on 9th of March, 2017, the vice president of the Council of Higher Education Professor Hasan Mandal expressed that there are 7.3 million registered students in Turkish higher education institutions and only 14,740 of them are Syrians.²⁸

Apart from these prejudices, in my field studies, I witnessed various claims about Syrians on social media and in internet newspapers. In general, most of the news was based on claims regarding prejudices that Syrians in Turkey are freer to commit crime and they are not punished, but protected by the government or a discourse based on mercy-tolerance. To understand this discourse, media analysis is significant since “media is the main transmitter of this kind of rhetoric to the general public opinion” (Çetinkaya, Erdoğan, Kavukçuer, 2017, 12). This news is especially posted on social media and internet newspapers and they play an important role in shaping perception about Syrians. They are significant since most Turkish people have no contact with Syrian people but they all follow social media and read internet newspapers.

5.5. Conclusion

Religion could be an important factor in terms of perception. In Fatih, rather than other neighbourhood, religion could sometimes play a role as ‘social glue’. Especially discourses about “Muslim brotherhood” and “Islam requires it” are frequently repeated. However, in some cases, the religion could create discrimination against Syrians. Specifically, perception of “fleeing the war” and hesitation about becoming a martyr, which should be analysed within the intertwined framework of ideology, religion and politics, negatively affect the perception of especially conservative and nationalist participants. Therefore, it is not possible to consider religion as a whole a positive or a negative component for perception. It depends

²⁸ <http://www.yok.gov.tr/web/guest/suriyeli-ogrenci-ve-akademisyenlere-yonelik-uluslararası-toplantı>. Last Accessed on: September 1, 2017

completely on the context. In addition, people who consider themselves secular, generally do not refer to religious discourse when they show their hatred against Syrians. Hence, the religion usually doesn't work as a function for secular people in terms of perception.

Citizenship and the coup attempt are other significant topics for perceptions. Almost all of the native participants are against giving citizenship to the Syrians, because it is 'unfair'. Otherwise, Syrians attitudes on the coup attempt evening are perceived in different ways. Some people, especially conservative and nationalist people, perceive Syrians, who didn't go out that night, as natural, because "they fled their own war", and they don't care about 'martyrdom' as well. Besides, the perceptions of secular people are not related to the Syrians' behaviour on the night of the coup attempt.

Contact is another significant factor according to my observations. In my opinion, there is a relatively negative correlation between contact and negative perception to a certain extent. Especially some people, who have no contact with Syrians, are prone to believe information which is based on media sources and generally have negative opinions about Syrian refugees. They are also more prone to believe and reproduce the narratives of conspiracy which are based on misinformation.

When we analyse the perception of Syrians, we encounter different results. First of all, they don't associate fleeing the war with manhood and martyrdom. According to them, the sides of the war are blurred, because there are too many different armies in Syria and there is no unity. In addition, this is a civil war, therefore you have to kill your brother if you stay. Furthermore, Assad is so powerful; there is no way to stand against him. Therefore, to stay there is futile and "foolish". They don't react to the issue of citizenship as much as Turkish citizens. Some of them plan to return Syria, therefore they don't care about citizenship too much. The rest of the Syrians believe that citizenship may make their conditions better, hence they are willing to become a citizen of Turkey. Yet, their priority is not to be a citizen.

6. CONCLUSION

Syrian refugees usually do not have work permits; therefore, they generally work in informal sectors. There are two clear views regarding Syrian workers in the informal labour market. While native workers perceive them as threat, employers perceive them as an opportunity. They accept lower wages and longer working hours. Furthermore, they can't demand social security because the absence of work permits. These factors decrease the cost of Syrians labour for employers and they are willing to hire them. It satisfies employers; however, labour competition creates wage drops and causes the replacement of native workers which creates hatred against Syrians. According to Erdoğan and Ünver, "the informal economy is also increasing in a manner that paves the way for social unrest and conflicts. The number of people who have lost or might lose their jobs due to cheap labor supplied by Syrians and the unrest among them has been increasing" (2015, 74). Together with this, Syrians have to work quite a lot and deal with various problems which also promote social isolation. They don't contact each other so much and Syrians have different and more urgent problems. Therefore, as I observed, their negative perceptions are not as intense as native people. They frequently remark about native people "while some of them are good, some of them are not". They mostly do not have an exact judgement of them.

On the other hand, small numbers of highly educated white collar Syrian workers are perceived as valuable. Therefore, their colleagues treat them better than the majority of Syrians. Hence this group of Syrians perceive native people as quite moderate and positive in general. I believe that this is a result of lack of labour competition and the social status of white collar workers especially for doctors, lecturers or engineers. A small number of formal workers are perceived as beneficial instead of as a threat.

When the housing market is analysed, we encounter connected factors. Housing discrimination is mainly based on the economic situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Because of their status, they are exposed to discrimination in the labour market and it results in low income for them. Therefore, they have to find cheap and

low-quality houses in particular neighbourhoods such as Esenyurt or Yeşilkent where other minority groups have lived for years. In addition, they are more vulnerable than other groups; therefore, they use their pre-existing relations to follow a pathway to survive through a framework of ‘migration chains’. It both supports the refugees’ collective human capital and creates safety zones for refugees. However, the process also creates concrete isolation from the majority of the people. They have limited relations with the major population in these areas like the other minority groups which share the same poverty and a partly similar migration history. In that respect, some native ex-internal migrants empathize with their similar ‘fate’. In addition, sometimes religion also helps these societies to create moderate attitudes toward Syrian society.

On the other hand, economic relations are still more dominant than religion or some other factors. When we focus on the labour market, we realize that Syrian refugees are discriminated against in various forms. The most significant exploitation is regarding housing prices. Single houses are rented to many Syrians or a few Syrian families with higher prices, because they are refugees. Native people frequently perceive them as weak people who are unable to seek justice and have to live in bad conditions to survive. In addition, landlords and estate agents justify themselves through the discourse of “helping people who fled from the war” in the case of high house prices.

In spite of the fact that some participants expressed personal hatred as the main reason among people who refuse Syrian tenants, the rest show statistically discriminative attitudes against Syrians. For example, they mentioned their low-income level, and it creates a risk for regular payments. Some of them mentioned about their friends’ experiences or rumours about Syrians that sometimes they do not pay bills or some of the instalments and flee. Then it is almost impossible to find them again. Therefore, they generalize Syrians as high-risk group as possible tenants and do not accept them. Therefore, their current situation creates statistical discrimination. And mostly perceived realities have a crucial role on these decisions.

It is important to note that the perceptions of Syrians and native people depends on complex and intertwined factors. Experiences in the housing market, refugees’ limited agency because of restricted social, political and economic realms, and

‘place’ as a shared environment of poverty are significant findings of my study regarding the labour market and its reflections.

Finally, most of the native people perceive Syrian refugees as the main factor in terms of rising housing prices. According to these people, after the Syrians came to Istanbul, the rentals increased especially in the towns in where Syrians have higher population density. Some people believe that landlords prefer Syrian refugees, because they will live in a crowded house with relatively low prices. Therefore, the landlords’ profit will less in terms of per Syrian, but the total gain will be higher than when the native tenants are taken into account. On the other hand, a few participants remark that in spite of the Syrians’ negative effects on the housing market, the major problem is the exploitation of landlords and the real estate agencies, because if they treated Syrians like native people, price increases could not reach the current level.

When we analysed the perception of society and politics, we encounter different factors. For example, religion could play a significant role in the perceptions of Turkish people about Syrians in Fatih. Specifically discourses like “Muslim brotherhood” and “Islam requires it” were widely used during interviews in there. In this respect, it is possible to say that religion can function as a “social glue”. In addition, religious motives may sometimes have discriminating features. Religion with respect to its practices is shared socially. In some of the interviews, conservative Turkish participants showed their dislike against Syrians since they missed the chance to be martyrs since they fled from the war and did not protect their nation. This is the focal point of negative religious perceptions. In addition, among Turkish participants who regard themselves as secular, religion has no unifying role. Thus, I cannot say that religion has purely positive or negative effects. On the other hand, religion was stressed more by Syrian participants as a reason for them to choose to live in Turkey. According to those Syrians, in Turkey they have the same religion with a similar culture.

Ideology and politics are as important as religion in social perceptions, and they are all intertwined. In my interviews, the issues of citizenship and the coup attempt were mainly debated, and these issues were linked to concepts like unfairness, martyrdom, and manhood. The perception of Syrians among secular and anti-government Turkish people is mainly negative. Those who regard themselves as pro-government and conservative are more moderate. Another categorization could be based on the

variable of contact. Those who have contact with Syrians and those who do not, are two different categories. In Bakırköy, where the contact is weak, discrimination and hate are more obvious. On the other hand, in certain neighbourhoods like Yeşilkent, Bayrampaşa and Fatih, perceptions are more moderate. This is a reflection of the contact the two communities have. The Syrians, view fleeing from the war not with the ideas of manhood or martyrdom. They put forward the ambiguity about the sides of the war, and the dominance of Assad. Regarding citizenship, those Syrians who plan to stay in Turkey show their willingness since it would improve their status here. Some other Syrians do not pay attention to discussions about citizenship since they plan to go back to Syria after the war ends.

Lastly, I observed that my Turkish participants, who have limited contact with Syrians, were more prone to believe the news in internet newspapers and social media accounts and their perceptions about Syrians could be shaped by these media sources to a certain extent. Most of the time, negativities about the Syrians are exaggerated in these news sources with fictive numbers and data, and it is presented that Syrians are given rights which Turkish citizens do not have. This provokes a feeling of unfairness among Turkish people. These reproduced narratives play a remarkable role in shaping the perceptions of Turkish people about Syrians.

Research regarding Syrian refugees in Turkey was not sufficient and comprehensive until 2016. Particularly there were few academic works, which included proper theoretical bases, about the topic. Today, we have more studies, yet they still have a limited holistic structure I think. In that respect, interdisciplinary perspectives might be better to understand the issues with Syrian refugees.

The relations of Syrian refugees and the citizens in Turkey or Istanbul, in terms of perception and contact, have not been examined yet. Of course, although all social research about Syrian refugees somehow touches upon this point naturally, it has never become a central part of studies. Especially focus on the issues of contact as a formation of perception could be used as an important part of integration studies. In my dissertation, I also tried to focus on contact, and compared the selected districts qualitatively. However, adding more of the towns of Istanbul and multivariate statistical methods to the qualitative approaches would be more proper for analysis; because, there is not only one factor which changes perception. Different districts have their different dynamics, and all these intertwined factors, which also affect

each other, should also be analysed by neutralizing the effects of each factors. Therefore, a comprehensive statistical analysis should be considered for further studies which should include contact and isolation issues.



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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Status

1.1. Migrant Status

Internationally accepted legal status is important to evaluate the situation of Syrians. Although the notions of refugee, asylum seeker, stateless person and displaced person have some similarities and are often used interchangeably, they should be used according to the context, because each of them refers to unique conditions, rights and responsibilities. Therefore, to begin with the descriptions will be more enlightening for analysis.

1.2. Refugee

The status of refugee refers to an escape from one's homeland because of an excessive amount of mental or biological oppression, torture or danger of death because of particular belongings. The refugees feel a high 'persecution' and it prevents them from returning to the home country. In 1951, 'Convention relating to the Status of Refugees' described the notion as;

"...Owing to 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 or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (*Convention Protocol Relating to The Status of Refugees*, 14).

We could easily classify Syrians, who have escaped from the war, as refugees in that perspective. As mentioned in previous chapters, the Syrian war has a sectarian characteristic and millions of people have encountered persecution and feel fear about the continuation of civil war in the case of returning to Syria. Therefore, their current conditions coincide with the status of being refugee. However, the process is two-sided in which the main actor is the destination country for legalization this

status. For example, Turkey is a party to the Convention with a special geographical limitation which has prevented non-European people granting refugee status because of “security threats” (İçduygu, Keyman, 200, 384-385). Especially, Turkey’s geographical position as a country neighbouring Europe and the political instability of the Middle East has created a great possibility for influx from Eastern geographies.

1.3. Asylum Seeker

The status of asylum seeker is a position in which the person awaits his or her application for being a refugee (Kaya, Eren, 2015, 17). Therefore, roughly an asylum seeker is a precondition for the refugee status. They have problems before fleeing the homeland. All refugees were asylum seekers during their processing, yet it is not guaranteed that all asylum seekers will be refugees. After the evaluation of the country of arrival, the host country could also send the applicant to his or her own country if there is no need for international protection.

1.4. Stateless Person

According to the 1954 Convention, a stateless person “is a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law.” (Foster, McAdam, Wadley, 2017, 406) This status is quite different from the other ones, because refugees or asylum seekers are ensured basic rights, at least on paper, according to the framework of their legal statuses. However, stateless people encounter worse scenarios in general. “In most countries there are no explicit rules/regulations that affirm their access to care” (Limwattananon et al., 2016, 262). Hence, this status creates more uncertainty and causes more vulnerable people.

1.4. Displaced Person or Forced Migrants

Although the notions of displaced person and forced migrants are not legal statuses, they are widely used in the literature. These notions are used for a person who is forced to migrate to another country or different location inside his or her own country. The first is known as externally displaced person, and the latter is known as internally displaced person. Reasons could be the same with refugees, yet natural or nuclear disasters also could be a reason.²⁹ Hence, forced migration could be

²⁹<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/hs/pubhealth/modules/forcedMigration/definitions.html>. Last Accessed on: February 9, 2017

summarized as an unwilling migration of a person because of excessive amount of pressure or desire for survival.

1.5. Legal Status of Syrians in Turkey

Since the beginning of the Syrian flow in 2011, they have been called various bureaucratic terms or status. At first, “guest” was often associated with Syrians in the social, economic and political realm. Although to come across “our Syrian guests” type of discourse in media or daily life could be considered as wrong according to international agreements and their legal position, this tendency is quite understandable. However, guest discourse is risky and inappropriate for the political arena. Their legal status is determined according to national and international Conventions or laws. That is an important point, because this framework provides a systematic approach for the process. However, the war was not predicted to last so long by politicians in the beginning (Taştekin, 2015, 29). In addition to the false forecasts about the permanence of Syrians, entering into a discursive obligation through saying “refugee” would not have been wise. Therefore, “our (little) brothers”, “our guests” or “our coreligionists” were repeated in the media.

When the status of Syrians is examined according to international contracts and Turkey’s regulations, we encounter some problems. If the scope of the 1954 Convention is taken into account, Syrians are refugees, because they were persecuted and escaped from war. They still feel the fear of persecution and there is no way to stay away from return to their homeland. Hence, they are accepted as refugees in many countries or in the process of being refugees (asylum seekers). However, as mentioned before, Turkey has a geographical limitation. This regulation eliminates them from having refugee or asylum seeker status. And, it is also obvious that they are not guests. So, what is their status?

According to Turkey’s “temporary protection regulation”, which was published in 22nd October 2014 in the Government gazette and updated in 12th July 2017, Syrians have a special status. The regulation includes descriptive parts and refers particularly to Syrian migrants who escaped from the war:

ARTICLE 7 - (1) “Temporary protection shall be granted to foreigners who were forced to leave their countries and are unable to return to the countries they left and arrived at or crossed our borders in masses to seek urgent and temporary protection

and whose international protection requests cannot be taken under individual assessment.

(2) Temporary protection shall not cover persons who arrived in our country from the country or region, where events constituting a basis for the temporary protection announcement take place, prior to the effective date of temporary protection announcement, unless the Council of Ministers decides otherwise.

(3) Persons benefiting from temporary protection shall not be deemed as having been directly acquired one of the international protection statuses as defined in the Law”

...

Interim provisions

PROVISIONAL ARTICLE 1 - (1) The citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic, stateless persons and refugees who have arrived at or crossed our borders coming from the Syrian Arab Republic as part of a mass influx or individually for temporary protection purposes due to the events that have taken place in the 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.

...

Legislation repealed

ARTICLE 61 - (1) Regulation on the Procedures and Principles related to Possible Population Movements and Aliens Arriving in Turkey either as Individuals or in Groups Wishing to Seek Asylum either from Turkey or Requesting Residence Permit in order to Seek Asylum from Another Country enforced by the Council of Ministers Decision No. 94/6169 dated 14/9/1994 is repealed” (*Temporary Protection Regulation*, 2014, 3 & 18-19).

These articles refer to statuses which do not include temporary protection: asylum seeker and refugee. This and previous regulations prevent giving any international protective status to Syrians. When they are in Turkey, their “applications for international protection shall not be processed...” It is hard to conceptualize their position. On the other hand, some of the government units have started to use the

concept of “persons under Temporary Protection.” (UNHCR, 2017, 5). This definition is correct, but unknown for international literature. Therefore, the term of ‘refugee’ was used to refer to Syrians in the dissertation.

Appendix 2: Profiles of the Participants

District/Town	Name	Gender	Status	Age	Occupation	Type of Interview
Fatih	Murat	M	Citizen	44	Selling Worship Materials especially for Pilgrimage	Individual interview
Fatih	Ahmet	M	Citizen	42	Supplier for a local restaurant	Individual interview
Fatih	Recep	M	Citizen	58	School bus driver	Individual interview
Fatih	Melih	M	Citizen	62	Retired coloner	Individual interview
Fatih	Aysel	F	Citizen	21	Unemployed	Individual interview
Fatih	Kenan	M	Citizen	38	Lawyer	Individual interview
Fatih	Abdullah	M	Syrian Refugee	27	Student	Focus group
Fatih	Mohammed	M	Syrian Refugee	23	Student	Focus group
Fatih	İsmail	M	Citizen	42	X	Individual interview
Fatih	Hamdi	M	Syrian Refugee	X	Student	Individual interview
Fatih	Gökhan	M	Citizen	40	Taxi driver	Individual interview
Fatih	Ahmed#	M	Syrian Refugee	30	English lecturer	Individual interview
Fatih	Affan	M	Syrian Refugee	34	Worker at a textile factory	Individual interview
Fatih	Shakir	M	Syrian Refugee	62	Retired	Individual interview
Fatih	Ali	M	Citizen	80	Retired	Individual interview

Fatih	Şerife	F	Citizen	46	Housewife	Individual interview
Fatih	Sultan	F	Citizen	28	Waiter	Individual interview
Fatih	Abbas	M	Syrian Refugee	x	Plumber	Individual interview
Fatih	Yaser	M	Syrian Refugee	24	Construction worker	Individual interview
Fatih	Najah#	F	Syrian Refugee	46	Unemployed	Individual interview
Fatih	Rıza	M	Citizen	55	unemployed	Individual interview
Fatih	Hediya#	F	Syrian Refugee	X	Housewife	Individual interview
Fatih	Aimar#	M	Syrian Refugee	54	Worker at a textile factory	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Alparslan	M	Citizen	28	Barber	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Türkan	F	Citizen	37	Cleaning lady	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Mehmet	M	Citizen	32	Finance sector, banking	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Bedriye	F	Citizen	mid-50s	Owner of a souvenir shop	Focus group
Bakırköy	Nejla	F	Citizen	mid-50s	Retired	Focus group
Bakırköy	Ayda	F	Citizen	mid-50s	housewife	Focus group
Bakırköy	Fatma	F	Citizen	mid-50s	Retired	Focus group
Bakırköy	Rıdvan	M	Citizen	47	Real estate investor	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Berat	M	Citizen	29	Sales consultant	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Fehim	M	Citizen	33	Manager at Bakırköy store of a textile retail company	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Cenk	M	Citizen	22	Student	Individual interview
Bakırköy	İrem	F	Citizen	27	Sales consultant	Individual interview

Bakırköy	Ece	F	Citizen	22	Student	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Aziz	M	Citizen	28	IT	Individual interview
Bakırköy	Joram	M	Syrian Refugee	59	Retired	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Hüseyin	M	Citizen	24	Unemployed (ex-delivery rider)	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Fatma	F	Citizen	24	unemployed	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Bekir	M	Citizen	57	Retired pvc card cover maker	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Mert	M	Citizen	29	X	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Salim	M	Syrian Refugee	29	Doctor	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Fawzi	M	Syrian Refugee	23	Unemployed-Ex owner of a tobacco shop	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Ayhan	M	Citizen	32	Barber	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Rona	F	Citizen	32	Waiter	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Berzan	M	Citizen	33	Owner of a small telephone shop	Individual interview
Küçükçekmece(near part to Yeşilkent district)	Şahin	M	Citizen	58	Owner of a small potato processing factory	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	İrem	F	Citizen	44	Housewife	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Halil	M	Citizen	48	X	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Ecved	M	Syrian Refugee	22	X	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Aseel#	F	Syrian Refugee	32	Worker at a textile factory	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Fıraz#	M	Citizen	28	Sales consultant	Individual interview

Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Sami	M	Syrian Refugee	36	Worker at a 'fırın' (Traditional Turkish bakery)	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Merve	F	Citizen	37	Housewife	Individual interview
Küçükçekmece(near part to Yeşilkent district)	Velid	M	Syrian Refugee	40s	Worker at a NGO as a Turkish Teacher	Individual interview
Yeşilkent/Esenyurt	Kıram	M	Syrian Refugee	26	Butcher-owner	Individual interview
Küçükçekmece(near part to Yeşilkent district)	Rada	F	Syrian Refugee	35	Worker at a NGO (Ex-English teacher and graphic designer)	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Hasan	M	Citizen	27	X	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Hayyan	M	Syrian Refugee	33	Construction worker	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Abdullah	M	Syrian Refugee	42	Construction worker	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Samir	M	Syrian Refugee	22	Glazier	Focus group
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Hussein	M	Syrian Refugee	26	Worker at a carpet shop	Focus group
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Joram#	M	Syrian Refugee	X	Worker at a 'fırın' (Traditional Turkish bakery)	Focus group
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Najah#	F	Syrian Refugee	X	Worker at a textile factory	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Ayşe	F	Citizen	48	Housewife	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Sayid	M	Syrian Refugee	21	Construction worker	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Şemmuz	M	Citizen	34	Worker at a small sacale textile factory	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Miran	M	Citizen	35	X	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/Bayrampaşa	Asım	M	Citizen	57	X	Individual interview

İsmetpaşa/ Bayrampaşa	Sevgi	F	Citizen	31	Unemployed	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/ Bayrampaşa	Maan#	M	Syrian Refugee	22	Worker at a 'fırın' (Traditional Turkish bakery)	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/ Bayrampaşa	Perwer	M	Citizen	X	Locksmith	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/ Bayrampaşa	Hediya#	F	Syrian Refugee	26	Worker at a textile factory	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/ Bayrampaşa	Berkant	M	Citizen	33	X	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/ Bayrampaşa	Fizza#	F	Syrian Refugee	33	Cleaning lady	Individual interview
İsmetpaşa/ Bayrampaşa	Samet#	M	Syrian Refugee	53	Owner of a local restaurant	Individual interview

Appendix 3: Questions

3.1. The Questions asked to Syrian Refugees

1. Could you please talk about yourself?
2. When did you come to Turkey? Under what circumstances did you enter Turkey?
3. Did you directly come to Istanbul or live somewhere else before coming to Istanbul?
4. Did you have any connections in Turkey?
5. Why did you choose to live in here? How are your relations with your neighbours and landlord?
6. Did you face any difficulty before finding accommodation?
7. How much money do you pay for rent and how many people you live with?
8. What is your current occupation? How much money do you get as wage?
9. Can you describe your working conditions?
10. How do your co-workers and employer behave you? How are your relations with co-workers?
11. Do you think that the Turkish and Syrian culture or people are similar or not? How do you feel about living in here?
12. Did you encounter any questions which make you feel bad?
13. In your relations with Turkish citizens do they ask you about your military obligations or whether you escape from the civil war?
14. How did you feel and what did you do on 15th July when the coup attempt occurred? Do you talk about that specific night with Turkish people and how do they react to your experience?
15. Do you plan to leave Turkey if civil war ends? Would you like to get Turkish citizenship if you are eligible?

3.2. The Questions asked to the Turkish Citizens

1. Could you please talk about yourself?
2. Are there any Syrian refugee in this neighbourhood? How are your relations with them?
3. How did they affect the housing market in the neighbourhood?
4. Did you face any difficulties in your social relations with Syrians?
5. Do you think they adapted to the social life in Turkey?
6. Do you have any Syrian co-worker? (Did you hire any Syrian worker?) How did they affect the labour market? Did they affect wage levels?
7. Do you think that the Turkish and Syrian culture or people are similar or not? How do you feel about living together?
8. What do you think about their reactions to the civil war in Syria?
9. What do you think about their reactions to 15th July when the coup attempt occurred?
10. What do you think about giving citizenship to Syrians?

Appendix 4:

I believe that the ability to empathise provides better and more in-depth knowledge to perceive, and in order to empathise with a refugee requires to know some extraordinary sections of their lives in terms of the critical decisions they took and the processes that occurred before they were able to create a stable life in Istanbul. Therefore, I have chosen to share a story to help those who read this dissertation to experience the life of a typical refugee.

During the study, Syrians' life stories were also listened to, in order to understand what circumstances/events they had encountered. This approach both prepares the interviewee for the main parts of the interview and creates a mutual trust which is an essential point for a meaningful interaction. Hence, this point is an important issue for both the ethical side and the methodological structure of the research. However, the life stories of the refugees are mentioned only briefly in the study to avoid going beyond the scope of this dissertation. For of this reason, I will share the life story of only one of my participants, from the civil war in Syria until now in Istanbul. This appendix part is intended to help the reader of this study, understand what it means to be a refugee and to facilitate the development empathy. I deem the life story of the Syrian refugees significant, because their experiences, migration stories or people they met are not only simple incidents or coincidences, but also these events have had an effect on preparing their perception of the society they find themselves in at present. Questions directed only to the issue of perception could prevent a complete

insight into the topic. For example, knowledge of the difficulties of crossing the border could cause serious changes of the pre-existing perceptions for a person who heard hopeful stories about Turkey. Therefore, I decided to share, at least, one of the full stories in this part:

Velid is a Turkoman who came to Turkey in 2013. He was a class teacher, but after the war, he went to his village with his wife and 2 children. His wife was a pharmacist, but she couldn't find a job in the village. Then they suffered from economic problems. He explains his decision to come to Turkey as follows:

“One day, we went to a village clinic, because my son had a toothache. On the road we walked, a mine had exploded. If we had been there 5 minutes earlier, we would have died. They blew up a general's car. So, I decided that day to come here.”

I have heard very many stories like Velid's during this field study. Some of the refugees showed me their bullet wounds or told me about the people who they had lost. Some of them told me of their prison conditions. Under these extraordinary circumstances, Turkey is generally perceived as a favourable country by the refugees especially in the early stage of their arrival. However, some of them encountered problems crossing the border. Velid remarks his feelings and experiences as:

“...We arrived at the border. By the way, my wife was 6 months pregnant. Actually, Turkish soldiers saw us while we were crossing the border. At that time, probably legally, the border was open but also there was not full permission given. They did not let us enter, but you could cross if you were able. We had to cross the border, but the tanks were rapidly passing in front of us. We couldn't pass, because I had a pregnant wife and 2 little children...We were slow...The smugglers were shouting on the other side of the border: “come here, come here” it was like a movie! My wife sat down on the ground. Then I helped her. Anyway, we entered the country from the region of Karkamış. There was pistachio field. After we had crossed the border, 2 smugglers met us. There was a van with 40-50 people. They said, “come here immediately” They gave us a place, the front seats, because of my wife and children. Then we moved away and came to a big house. It was Ramadan, the weather was very hot, and everybody was fasting. A man held a bunch of grapes and was eating each grape from the bottom of the bunch. There were 15-20 years old boys, who held bats, next to him. Then they took us inside and closed the door. It was like the movie of Polat Alemdar. They said “10,000 Syrian lira per person”. I said, “I do not have money. This is Turkey lands, why do I have to give you money?” Then he said “You escaped from my fields.” There was a quarrel in the house. He gave orders to the boys and they showed us the bats. They were ready beat us! There were women, my wife among them. My wife began to cry. I was crying also, I mean I lost myself. I asked myself what have we become? My older son was 4 years old, he was also crying. Anyway, there was a second floor in the house. I left my wife and sons there, because the young men would fight, and my family might be hurt. Then the boys fought and finally the man, the smuggler, pulled them back. The people said, “we have fled our country. This is not the same country we know as Turkey. Why do you want money?” Then the smuggler lowered the charge and we agree on 2,000 Syrian liras per person... After I had given the money, I said, “Assad was more merciful than you, you should be ashamed!”. He responded that “Sorry about this, but that's how we make money” That experience was the first shock for me. After this incident, nothing else surprised me in Turkey. The bad things have begun to be seen as normal.”

Velid's last two sentences are maybe the most important insights of his negative perception of Turkey. The gap between his expectations and the inhuman reality shocked him and he associated the following negative experiences with this unfortunate day. That is important, because a person creates perception partly according to previous experiences. Therefore, not only the Syrian refugees' interactions after migrating to Istanbul, but also their previous stories could be important for their perception.

In the following parts of the interview, Velid mentioned their first house, which was provided by his family connections, and job applications at Ministry of National Education. Although he knows Turkish and Arabic, he didn't find any job in the Ministry of National Education or in private schools. Therefore, he tries to work in the informal sector:

"...Then I went to a '*simitçi*', bagel seller, and asked him for a job. He sent me to the baker to ask him. I went there. His name was Muharrem, and he was a very good person. Allah bless him. He gave me both the cart and *simits*. I tried to give him money, but he didn't take money. He said, "sell the *simits*, then you can pay..." Anyway, I started to sell the *simits*, I shouted out "*simit*". Some people were looking out when I shouted, but mostly they didn't buy *simit*, maybe they did not trust me. However, I sold a few *simits* in the streets. Then I decided to go to squares and crowded places. Each time, someone came to me and ask not to sell them in the places, because each place has its owner. Sometimes, some small restaurant worker came and asked me to go to another place. I mean I couldn't stay in a particular place... Some of them thought that I was Azerbaijani by the way. The first year when I arrived, people were interested in me, they were friendlier. But after 2015, I think, people felt uncomfortable with us because of the number of Syrian refugees... Anyway, then one day I went to a school and waited for the students. I was in front of the garden. A teacher, who was wearing stylish clothes, came to me and asked me not to sell *simits* in front of the school. I asked the reason. He said, "This is the school door, we cannot let anyone sell something here." Maybe parents are afraid about it, you cannot sell *simit* just anywhere. This incident offended me very much. He was a teacher and so am I! He asked me to go somewhere else. Actually, he didn't say anything bad and he was kind... Then I went to a park nearby and cried loudly. Then the rain started! The *simits* got wet... I went back to the house. Fatma said, "what happened to you!" and I explained... Then, for a while, I worked as carpenter, but then they didn't want me anymore. I gave my curriculum vitae to the Ministry of National Education when I came to Istanbul. They called me, there was a private school which needed a translator for their school bus. I couldn't be a teacher again, but I found a better job at least. After a while, the manager asked me to be a Turkish teacher for some classes. Then I started to work both as a translator and as a Turkish teacher. Later, I took some courses, I worked in Syrian schools and hospitals, and now I work here, at "Support to Life"³⁰, as a Turkish teacher."

Like Velid, most of Syrian refugees have to work in various areas which do not suit their educational or professional backgrounds. In part, researching perception has also required the analysis of what kind of psychological processes were involved, because a white-collar person in Syria could only find work in the informal sector for example, and that shift could also affect perception. Because of these types of

³⁰ A non-governmental organization. For detailed information: <http://www.supporttolife.org/en/>

concerns, I would rather present sequences of a refugee's life from their decision to leave their homeland to the moment of the interview.



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