

# Refugee Routes to Istanbul and the Dynamics of Labor Market Participation: The Case of Syrians in Comparison to Non-Syrians\*

Ulaş Sunata<sup>a</sup>, Esra Yıldız<sup>b</sup>, Ezgi Araç<sup>c</sup>

## Abstract

Turkey as a country has been hosting the most refugees in the world since 2015. Although it has experienced distinctive immigration in past years, the Syrian refugee flow has increased in significance in terms of quantity and quality, with the number now expressed in millions. Thus the aim of this study is to display the similarities and differences of Syrians' migration and integration processes in comparison to other forced migrants. To reach this aim, 32 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in Istanbul, the city that has received the most migrants. We have studied refugees' routes and their social networks using content analysis. Kunz's models are confirmed with our sample by analyzing arrival paths to Istanbul and a typology for Syrians in this context is developed. Then, the study reveals no family network among non-Syrians migrants' settlements, even though migration is a family decision for Syrians. Moreover, having relatives is seen as an opportunity to build networks and to get a job in order to become involved in their new environment, with Istanbul set as the destination. In addition, labor market participation has been identified as the primary subject for evaluating the integration process. Relations with employer and work-related problems are significant parts of the integration phase and challenging for both groups. Furthermore, informal work conditions have resulted in not only discrimination but also problems such as wage payment issues, skill mismatching, child labor, and more importantly work accidents.

## Keywords

Syrians • Turkey • Refugees • Integration • Employment • Labor market participation

\* Special thanks to the class "Sociology of Migration" of 2016 Spring Semester at the Bahçeşehir University.

a (✉) Ulaş Sunata (PhD), Department of Sociology, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Bahçeşehir University, Çırağan Cad. Osmanpaşa Mektebi Sok. İstanbul 34353 Turkey. Email: ulassunata@gmail.com

b Esra Yıldız is a Senior Student at the Department of Sociology, Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul, Turkey, student assistant of Assoc. Prof. Ulaş Sunata and an Office Chief of BAUMUS (Center of Migration and Urban Studies), Bahçeşehir University, Çırağan Cad. Osmanpaşa Mektebi Sok. Beşiktaş, İstanbul 34353 Turkey. Email: esra.yildiz@stu.bahcesehir.edu.tr

c Ezgi Araç is a Senior Student at the Department of Sociology, Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul, Turkey, student assistant of Assoc. Prof. Ulaş Sunata and an Office Chief of BAUMUS (Center of Migration and Urban Studies), Bahçeşehir University, Çırağan Cad. Osmanpaşa Mektebi Sok. 34353 Beşiktaş, İstanbul 34353 Turkey. Email: ezgi.arac@stu.bahcesehir.edu.tr

Received: May 2, 2018

Accepted: June 29, 2018

Online First: July 1, 2018

Copyright © 2018 • The International Refugee Rights Association • <http://mejrs.com/en>

ISSN 2149-4398 • eISSN 2458-8962

DOI 10.12738/mejrs.2018.3.2.0007 • Summer 2018 • 3(2) • 121–144

Kunz (1973) presented two fundamental kinetic models for refugee movement: anticipatory and acute. On one hand, anticipatory refugees leave their home areas and arrive in the country of settlement prepared with some amount of knowledge about the destination. The acute model refers to refugees who suddenly cross the border and have no idea about the new host country and no apparent desire to live there permanently. Kunz also divided the acute kinetic model of refugee movements into three different forms: displacement by flight, displacement by force, and displacement by absence. By defining both anticipatory and acute refugee movements as social forces, he also underlined the affinitive property of vintage patterns in refugee wave dynamics.

Essentially, forced migration is not a single-step motion connecting an origin and a destination point in a straight line but a multi-step motion; each step can be activated by different forces with interruptions in the spatial and temporal dimensions (Kunz, 1973). As the focus of this study is migration to Istanbul, a similar typology can be observed. Furthermore, Syrian migration has been mentioned to appear acute, but rescaling migration to the city level may reveal that the flow to Istanbul is able to take both forms, as there are also multiple-step motions inside the country. In this study, we will examine refugee settlers' movement in two stages in Turkey: the *flight phase* and the *settlement phase*. To understand flight, we will focus on refugee routes (migration patterns), then we will analyze labor market participation, changes in household composition, and gender arrangements in order to explore the settlement stage of the refugees' developments.

More researchers have recently further focused on the subject of migration. By marking the significance of comparative analysis when working with refugee groups, we proclaim our study to compare Syrian refugee groups to non-Syrian migrant groups in terms of migration experiences and integration processes in order to better understand the characteristics of Syrian refugees. This point of view allows us to understand the steps that different groups of refugees go through while migrating and integrating into society. Thus, our study aspires to build a structure comparing the integration phases of the migrant groups.

### **Turkey as a Country and Istanbul as a City for Hosting Refugees**

Turkey as a country has been hosting the most refugees in the world since 2015. Although it has experienced distinctive immigration in past years, the Syrian refugee flow has increased in significance, with the number now expressed in millions.<sup>1</sup> The distribution of the refugee population is also non-homogenous in the country. In the Directorate General of Migration Management's (DGMM, 2016) data, Syrians can be

<sup>1</sup> Since 2011, Turkey has been an important country for understanding the migration wave caused by the Syrian civil war. According to UNHCR (2016), more than 4.5 million Syrians are internationally displaced and as the Ministry of Interior's DGMM (2016) has announced, 2,743,067 displaced peoples reside in Turkey.

observed to mostly populate near the border and in camps, and the four cities with the greatest Syrian populations in Turkey are Istanbul, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, and Gaziantep. While the latter three have similar characteristics, such as having several refugee camps and sharing a border with Syria, Istanbul stands in a unique position. It holds the largest population of refugees in Turkey at 401,928 people (DGMM, 2016), but is not immediately reachable after crossing the border. Moreover, it is the only city that attracts such a large refugee population without a temporary protection center. However, Istanbul's exclusivity as a city, which draws vast amounts of regular and irregular immigrants from several countries, is its most important point. As such, it is a significant city where newcomers meet not only locals but also people of various origins.

Another perspective we have taken into account while studying the issue is the trend of mixed migrations to Turkey. Turkey has recently been observed in a receiving position of a mixed migration dynamic that can be defined through mixed motivations and various waves.<sup>2</sup>

Iraqis are the most significant migrant group in Turkey after the Syrian population. However, our main intention is to emphasize Turkey as a multi-step movement destination rather than studying acute movements among border neighbors. Moreover, the Iraqi migration trend of the last years is assumed to have characteristics similar to the Syrians'. As the focus of this research is Syrian migration, we have excluded countries that may cause an error in selecting the comparison group. Hence, we have limited our target group to include two groups in our research: Syrian refugees and people whose country of origin requires multi-step movements, excluding those with acute migration flows to Turkey. We will try to identify the Syrian refugee phenomenon in Istanbul through arrival cohorts. We know this phenomenon covers the escape of certain individual and groups, but mostly it covers mass flight. This work does not aim at evaluating refugee situations as individual historical occurrences but as a reoccurring phenomenon. For this purpose, we will explain the refugee experience from Syria to Istanbul in comparison with non-Syrian people living in Istanbul by identifying the causalities behind participants' choices. Turkey is expected to appear

---

2 TURKSTAT declares 650,308 regular foreigners live in Turkey (TÜİK, "Türkiye'nin Yabancı", 2016). According to this data, Istanbul has the largest foreigner population at 199,260 people. This data includes those with residence or work permits, those with an extended visa for residence or work for at least three months from the date of entry, and those who have lost citizenship but still live in the country. In this category, the top three countries with citizens living in Turkey are detected as Iraq, Germany, and Syria. According to the DGMM report (2016), Turkey has 422,895 residence permit holders. Except for Syrians, the permits holders are seen to be Iraqi, Azerbaijani, Turkmen, Russian, Georgian, Ukrainian, Uzbek, Libyan and Iranian in terms of the significant nationalities. More than 200,000 of these permits are temporary, while family, student and work permits also have large numbers. Iraqis have the most temporary permits, while Azerbaijanis have the most family and student permits. Georgia nationals are the biggest group with work permits. Other residence permit types, which have been issued to 16,502 people, include long-term, humanitarian residence, and victims of human trafficking. This same report also states 146,485 irregular migrants to have been taken into custody in 2015. Afghani, Iraqi, Burmese, Pakistani, Georgian, Iranian, Eritrean, Uzbek, and Turkmen peoples are largest groups among the detained irregular migrants apart from Syrians.

as the first country of asylum for Syrian participants. On the other hand, we assume we will observe two groups of non-Syrian migrants: those who come to Turkey as a safe third country and those included in this wave for economic reasons.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design and Sampling**

We have used the case study approach as a guide to our research. Our design is a snapshot and comparative case study that includes face-to-face interviews with Syrian refugees as the primary group and non-Syrian refugees as the reference group. By concentrating on the Syrian refugee community in Istanbul, we aim at uncovering the refugee arrival lines to Istanbul and the factors for their participation in the labor market. Using this case study method, which is not associated with theory testing, we plan to offer a descriptive study with theoretical implications. The judgmental sampling strategy for this hard-to-reach target population and the semi-structured interview form were developed for the “Sociology of Migration” class during the 2016 spring semester at the Bahçeşehir University by Assoc. Prof. Ulaş Sunata. After completing training on interviews, each student randomly selected one participant in accordance with the study’s aim and ethical concerns by receiving the professor’s approval. In terms of collecting data, this study intends to decrease reliability bias in qualitative studies and increase students’ awareness of refugees.

### **Measures**

We have preferred interview data collection using purposive sampling for this descriptive case study. Thirty-two in-depth interviews were conducted between April 12-27, 2016 with refugees living in Istanbul. Of these, 24 interviews were with Syrian refugees (our main target group) while the other eight interviews, which consists of our reference group, were with people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Somali, Iran, and Turkmenistan. The interviews took place in 13 different districts of Istanbul: Ataşehir, Avcılar, Bağcılar, Bayrampaşa, Beşiktaş, Beyoğlu, Fatih, Gaziosmanpaşa, Kağıthane, Küçükçekmece, Mecidiyeköy, Şişli, and Ümraniye.

### **Procedure and Data Analysis**

Every interview began with the request to explain their migration story. Follow-up questions were asked to avoid misunderstandings and incoherencies and to complete the story. Moreover, data was collected on demographics, educational background, work life, and social relations. All interviews were fully transcribed and individually analyzed by the interviewer. Afterwards, the entire qualitative data derived from all the interview texts and field notes were read hermeneutically and systemically categorized by the researchers. Content analysis was implemented through the use of coding frameworks.

## Participants

A code name has been assigned to each participant, and all are presented through six criteria: gender, age, marital status, city of origin, time since coming to Turkey, and district of current residence. Nineteen (79%) of the Syrians participating in the research are male and five (21%) are female. Males clearly dominate in our non-Syrian sample as there are no non-Syrian women interviewees. This can be considered a limitation in comparing the two groups of migrants. Furthermore, all the interviewed women are married, while 52% of the men are married. In our Syrian sample, nine (38%) interviewees are single while 15 (62%) are married. Moreover, 75% of the non-Syrians interviewees are single, which is higher than for Syrian refugees. The age range of Syrian participants is between 15 and 46 ( $M = 32$ ). On the other hand, the age range of non-Syrian interviewees is between 20 and 46 ( $M = 24$ ). Thus, an age gap can be observed in the sample and reference groups, as the non-Syrian participants are mostly younger in age while the Syrian participants are mostly middle-aged.

In the case of the non-Syrians participants, all but one have been revealed to have arrived in Turkey within the last five years. Thus the group, being equivalent to Syrian participants in terms of cohort migration and time of stay in Turkey, is suitable for comparison. The average duration since migration for all interviewees is found to be 2.96 years. Syrian refugees are understood to have lived in Turkey for at least three months and a maximum of five years. As a result, the average period is 2.62 years. The non-Syrian people have lived in Turkey for at least one-and-a-half and at most nine years. The average period is 4 years, which diverges from the Syrian refugees' average.

Although household size is limited to one or two people among the educated participants, most interviewees are found to live in shared flats of six to seven people. According to the nuclear family size reported by 80% of married participants, the average family size has been calculated as five. The average household size for people sharing the same house in the joint family model is found to be 11.

## Employment

Only a third of the women are employed, which leads us to the domination of men in employment. Women are more likely to be in the position of organizing the family and doing housework, while the majority of men provide breadwinning. Thus, families can be said to be significantly shaped by employment.

Before the war, the majority of Syrian participants in our sample had white-collar positions, while blue-collar workers, self-employed, and students had roughly the same amounts. A drastic change had been observed on the issue of employment after the war. More than half reported a sharp increase of work in blue-collar positions while white-collar positions had dramatically decreased. The population of self-employed

remained at the same ratio in their new settlement. Moreover, unemployment rates were also observed to have risen due to war and migration. A large proportion of married participants' partners are seen to be unemployed. Among the jobs of married participants' partners who work are in the textiles, domestic services, restaurant management, and art.

In our sample of non-Syrians, nearly half of the interviewees are university students while the others work at various jobs. These jobs include car-washing, office works, film making, and working in research institutes or furniture shops. Thus, we have discovered this group to have a more stable situation of wealth through their opportunities for self-development regarding employment and education. Meanwhile, none of the non-Syrian migrants are self-employed in comparison to the Syrians. The reason for this difference might be Syrian's harder effort imposed on society or their attempt to build a more domestic environment to live in. Craftsmen are expected to maintain their vocation. Highly-educated people tend to prefer small-scale entrepreneurship. A fifth of the Syrian refugees were seen to work in decent jobs, while a sixth work in restaurants as waiters or owners. In addition, another fifth work in the textile industry.

As expected, Syrian participants are observed to reside in districts with dense refugee populations and rents ranging between 250 to 1,200 TL a month. Half the Syrian participants have a monthly income less than minimum wage (1,300 TL). Although non-Syrians did not want to give a precise answer for their income level, the majority mentioned that it was below their expectations and qualifications.

### **Limitations**

Through the conducted research, Syrian refugees' Turkish skills have been categorized under four levels: elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced. The interviewers determined this categorization. Of the participants, 25% have elementary, 42% have pre-intermediate, 25% have intermediate, and 8% have advanced Turkish skills. Interviews were conducted with elementary and pre-intermediate level speakers using translators or in English.

## **Findings**

### **Refugee Routes**

The interviews show most of the Syrian refugees in Istanbul to have intentionally come to the city. While four Syrians had reached Istanbul through Lebanon, seven refugees had spent some time in border cities such as Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mardin, Adana, and Mersin before reaching Istanbul as their last current destination.

Also, three interviewees had previously started their migration experience working in European countries, but conditions in Syria had forced them to Turkey though they had intended to return to their homelands. Table 1 demonstrates that while 11 participants arrived directly in Istanbul after leaving Syria, some needed to make stops in their travels. Although the majority had taken small breaks refuging in cities, some needed as many as seven stops in cities before reaching Istanbul.

Approximately 44% of the Syrian refugee participants had migrated from Aleppo, 24% from Damascus, and 16% from Latakia. They also appeared to have come from the Syrian cities of Idlip, Hama, and Homs in our sample.

With respect to our sample, we determined four different types of arrival paths to Istanbul and how our Syrian refugee fit in relation to the related routes. The first and most common arrival path among Syrian refugees currently living in Istanbul is the non-stop route after leaving their homeland. Aleppo-Istanbul migration patterns mostly appear among this type of refugee. The second most common refugee route after crossing the border is to stay for a while in a border city and then come to Istanbul. The third type of Syrian refugee in Istanbul consists of people coming to the city from another country neighboring Syria. The last refugee type is the one preferring Istanbul after experiencing migration in Europe.

Table 1  
*Syrian Participants' Routes from Their Homeland to Istanbul*

Name	Stop 1	Stop 2	Stop 3	Stop 4	Stop 5	Stop 6	Stop 7	Stop 8	Stop 9
İrem	Aleppo	Istanbul							
Orhan	Aleppo	Istanbul							
Osman	Aleppo	Istanbul							
Kandemir	Aleppo	Istanbul							
Dündar	Aleppo	Istanbul							
Söz	Aleppo	Istanbul							
Demir	Aleppo	Istanbul							
Aslı	Damascus	Istanbul							
Nevin	Damascus	Istanbul							
Alpay	Latakia	Istanbul							
Peri	Idlip	Istanbul							
Gizem	Aleppo	Gaziantep	Istanbul						
Soydan	Aleppo	Mardin Kızıltepe	Istanbul						
Reis	Aleppo	Kilis	Istanbul						
Yaşar	Damascus	Gaziantep	Istanbul						
Kerim	Damascus	Adana	Mersin	Istanbul					
Selim	Latakia	Hatay Yayladağı	Istanbul						
Yılmaz	Syria	Gaziantep	Istanbul						
Yıldız	Latakia	Lebanon	Istanbul						
Arslan	Homs	Lebanon	Istanbul						
Aras	Latakia	Beirut	Adana	Mersin	İzmir	Bodrum	Bursa	Ankara	Istanbul
Yalçın	Aleppo	France	Lebanon	Istanbul					
Çetin	Damascus	Eastern Europe	Damascus	Istanbul					
Yıldırım	Damascus	Scandinavia	Damascus	Istanbul					

Table 1 reveals most of the participants to have landed directly in Istanbul after leaving Syria. For half, such as İrem, Orhan, and Peri who joined their relatives that had come earlier, coming to Istanbul was relatively pre-determined. For the other half, the main motive was to avoid war conditions, so they simply settled down in the first city landed in. For instance, Söz arrived at Istanbul while running away with his family from the destruction that had hit their home and demolished everything they had.

While the majority of Syrians appear to have taken a direct route to Istanbul, the table also revealed some to take stops in-between their travel. Of the sample, those who had stayed in border cities such as Gizem, Yaşar, or Reis tended to have little or no preparation before migrating. Those cases show that participants preferred staying a few days at most at these stops, using them as transit points. As seen in these instances, refugees with limited local networks at their destination appeared less likely to have previous information on life in Turkey. Thus, they did not risk their chances in small cities, instead moving on to larger ones. Some refugees like Selim and Soydan have local ties with the cities they lived in before coming to Istanbul. Their settlement tendencies were observed to differ from those with limited local networks. In those examples, participants were seen to first aim at settling down in these cities and had had some plan for migrating to Turkey. However, limited job opportunities and economic struggles made them move on to Istanbul.

The cases of Çetin, Yalçın, and Yıldırım demonstrate that previous migration experience can impact having more informed decisions on migrating to Turkey. Long years of work experience in other countries provided them with more options and possibilities to choose from when war broke out. Their migration stories include long years away from homeland, at some points as long as 18 years. However, other involved actors can interfere with this claim, as they share other common characteristics, too. They all are highly educated as engineers and traders, and their educational background could have contributed to their informed decisions. In addition, all three are male participants; this conforms to the dominant masculine nature of the sample's decision makers. Yalçın talks about this issue, saying that he applied for a residence permit to France and Germany but in the end was left with no other option than Turkey.

In the field of international migration, forced migration is distinct from voluntary migration according to the migrant's reluctance to uproot. However, determining the difference between refugee and non-refugee appears difficult, particularly when coming from the same place and ethnicity. In the case of non-Syrians, the fact that participants migrated for economic or educational reasons were shown more likely to come directly to Istanbul, while those who had experienced violence or difficulties in their countries needed to take stops in their journeys. As seen in Table 2, however, these participants



are not observed with more than one stop, which was usually used as a transit point. Moreover, regardless of background, the research's non-Syrian participants are observed to have made more informed decisions when migrating to Turkey. All interviewees except Mehdi stated having had some kind of preparation before coming. These preparations include attending Turkish schools in their countries, learning the language, and collecting information through pre-existing ties with the country.

Table 2  
*Non-Syrian Participants' Routes from Their Homeland to Istanbul*

Name	Stop 1	Stop 2	Stop 3	Stop 4
<i>Mehdi</i>	Afghanistan	Pakistan	Iran	Istanbul
<i>Itiraf</i>	Pakistani village on Indian border	Islamabad	Dubai	Istanbul
<i>İbrahim</i>	Palestine	Israel	Istanbul	
<i>Kasım</i>	Mogadishu	Eastleigh in Nairobi	Istanbul	
<i>Pers</i>	Bushehr	Istanbul		
<i>Maksat</i>	Turkmenistan	Istanbul		
<i>Aman</i>	Lebap	Istanbul		
<i>Hasan</i>	Tehran	Cyprus	Istanbul	

In the case of non-Syrian participants, all except Hasan were observed to have arrived in Turkey within the last five years. These interviewees' average duration since migration is found to be four years. The group is found to be equivalent to Syrian participants in terms of time of stay in Turkey and hence suitable for comparison.

## Reasons

The majority of the participants reported having left the country due to the life threatening conditions of war there. In some instances, participants mentioned close relatives or friends lost or injured in attacks. As seen in Söz's story, his uncles and children had been killed in a bombing, and the fate of one cousin is still unknown after being raped and disappearing. Another significant reason that forces people to migrate is the absence of resources and economic possibilities. Çetin and Arslan stated that basic infrastructural needs like electricity and water had either only been supplied for a few hours once a week or not at all. Kerim mentioned all his property to have been completely lost in Damascus due to war. Similarly, Aras complained about the high inflation over prices. All these together draw a picture of the economy being unable to sustain life.

Avoiding compulsory military service was also mentioned as a reason for migrating to Turkey. Nevin also said that she and her family had come to Istanbul to protect her son, who had become old enough to join the war. In Syria, young men of 18 are required to serve in the army, which means they will need to actively fight in the war. Thus, running away from the government's constraints became a reason for migrating to Turkey.

The participants who had reported great loss were observed to arrive in Turkey at various times. Some participants arrived in Turkey as early as four years ago, like Kerim who had lost a significant amount of property, and as late as eight months, like Aslı whose father-in-law had been killed. However, the greatest losses are found concentrated around interviewees who had arrived between two and three years ago. For instance, Söz who arrived three years ago, had lost several family members, and Nevin, who came two years ago, stated that everyone she had known was either dead or in prison when she left her country.

The sample reveals migrating to have been a family decision for the Syrian interviewees. The clear majority of participants were observed accompanied by their family when coming to Turkey. Similarly, only two had travelled alone to set up the basic conditions for their family, whom they then brought to Turkey after a while. In the interviews, families can be seen preferring to stay together when migrating due to direct threats to one or more family members. As seen in Nevin and her son's example, the whole family migrated together instead of sending the elder son to a safe country. Similarly, Yılmaz was a supporter of the opposition and had left the country with his family when this support became dangerous for them. Another point observed in the interviews is that all migrants coming alone are male between 24 and 46 years old. In other words, those who are confident at finding a job in new lands are freer for traveling alone. However, leaving the country without the company of family does not mean that they are all alone. On the contrary, they still carry responsibilities for other family members' wellbeing. As seen in Çetin and Yalçın's cases, they both are still responsible for making sure of their parents' safety. Çetin stated being content with his family's safety in Damascus, but Yalçın's family resides in Switzerland today for safety. Also, Selim's, Yıldırım's, and Arslan's experiences show that some participants migrate alone to settle down before the family arrives. Selim and Arslan stated having their families join them after a while and that they live with them now. Yıldırım has not been able to bring his yet but is planning to have them come with him in a few months.

### **Non-Syrians**

Reasons for leaving one's country are more varied for the non-Syrian participants. Half of them reported experiencing violence in their past, having witnessed terror and war in their homelands. Itiraf lost all his family's livestock on a terrorist attack in their village, thus losing all means of sustaining themselves. Kasım similarly witnessed the Somalian war, and Mehdi ran away from Taliban's war in Afghanistan. Poverty is also reported to play an important role in the decision to migrate for this group. Participants are observed to have experienced financial problems and dire conditions to the point of starvation, lacking options beyond migration. As seen in Itiraf's case, these problems are sometimes

as serious as losing all the resources a family depends on. Apart from Itiraf, Aman is also able to provide for his family in Turkey. He stated that his family only lives on 200 US Dollars a month, which is far from sufficient. Moreover, his mother regularly needs some expensive medicines for her illness, thus he needed to work in Turkey to earn more and support his family. Other reasons include government oppression in their homeland experienced by Hasan, exile as Ibrahim's case demonstrates, education for Maksat, and relocation at workplace as is the case for Pers's family.

Non-Syrian migrants are seen to tend traveling without their family, unlike the Syrian refugee population. This phenomenon seems to relate to the motive for migrating, as these interviewees stated having come to Turkey due to exile, increasing violence, economic problems, and educational reasons. Only two participants were recorded traveling with their families. In Kasım's case, he stated that he had left Mogadishu with his family. However, his family settled in Kenya while Kasım moved on for his education. Thus, he was actually initially accompanied with immediate relatives but the course of his travel made him continue solitarily, similar to other interviewees. The only participant who travelled with their family from beginning to end is Pers. He stated that his main reason for relocating was his father's job, and all arrangements to keep the family together were handled with ease from the comfort of his hometown. As a result, having no bitter experience to drive one away from one's country can be related to making migrating as a family convenient. Although the non-Syrian participants appear to travel more than the Syrians, reunions are still observed. For example, Maksat brought his brother to Istanbul and stated intending to bring other members, too. Moreover, Hasan is also observed to have come together with his family after his education. As he tells, his family settled in Turkey while he was in Cyprus for his education, and the reason he came to Turkey without considering any other option after graduation was to reunite with them.

### **Outstanding Network**

The tendency to select Istanbul is obviously due to higher chances for job opportunities. First of all, having relatives is obviously seen as mostly a network for getting a job, as well as for providing a living space and harmonizing with the new environment. For example, in the case of Irem, their existing network in Istanbul was been helpful for being able to settle in and the husband to find a job. She always spoke in a tone of gratitude for their relatives' help and their fortune. Most of our interviewed sample mentioned having an existing network in Turkey. While migrants without family networks are still apparent, the cooperation of relatives obviously is found both in Turkey and Syria. Living in a house with relatives is common in our sample. Two of the interviewees live in two bedroom houses with more than two families. Peri's case clarifies living with all eight relatives together in Kağıthane. In addition,

they also work together in a restaurant they own in Aksaray. As a nuclear family, living with parents or siblings is also observable in our sample. In consideration, finding work with the help of relatives or working with them can also be said to be frequent. While the network found in Istanbul provides settling, becoming employed is also afforded through relatives. That is the reason why Syrian's have a family network in places of work. Except for one case, all the interviewees who came to Istanbul after living for a while in the southeastern Anatolian metropolises next to the Syrian border in Turkey originally have relatives in these cities. The one exception is Kandemir who has relatives in Adana, a city in southern Turkey; however, he maybe preferred coming to Istanbul directly due to the variety of job opportunities.

In comparison, great differences are found between Syrian refugees and non-Syrian refugees in Turkey. First and foremost, the results of the built network factor are found to differ enormously for non-Syrians. No family network is apparent among the non-Syrian refugees except for one case: Hasan is a 30 year old Iranian film maker who came from Tehran. He left his country when he was 17 and went to Cyprus. After staying there for four years, he moved to Turkey. His mother is Turkish, so he has preexisting ties with the country. All other non-Syrian interviewees were on their own when they first arrived in Turkey.

### **Labor Market Participation**

**Demographic profile.** We first looked at employment qualifications in comparison with their demographic profiles. In our sample, we represented demographic profiles by marital status, age, gender, current employment status, and time living in Turkey (see Table 3). 56% of the unmarried interviewees work in qualified job or are self-employed. The term “qualified jobs or self-employed” means: self-employed in hotel management, self-employed in the textile industry, having an architecture office, being a musician, or self-employed co-owner of a small hotel. Meanwhile, 27% of married interviewees work in the following qualified jobs or are self-employed as: a company's international trade department, vice manager, or flower shop, and as job organization marketing or self-employed at a restaurant for secondary work. In our sample, refugees' marital status has an obvious impact on getting a qualified job or being self-employed. This reveals that single refugees are more confident at taking risks, while married refugees are less so. The mean age for those with qualified jobs or who are self-employed has been calculated as 32. Furthermore those with qualified jobs from the sample are revealed to be predominantly male. All in all, we can say a total of 37% have qualified jobs or are self-employed, which means the majority work in unqualified jobs. These unqualified jobs are commonly waitressing and working in the textile sector. As a result, we have noticed an affective link among marital status, age, and gender in terms of refugee's job selection preference.

Table 3  
*Demographic Details of Syrian Interviewees*

District	Hometown	Marital Status	Age	Gender	Employment	Time of Living in Turkey
Fatih	Damascus	Single	45	Male	self-employed hotel management	5 years
Şişli	Latakia	married	37	Male	waiter	2.5 years
Fatih	Aleppo	married	33	Female	housewife	2 years
Beşiktaş	Aleppo	Single	26	Male	self-employed textile sector	4 years
Ataşehir	Aleppo	Single	23	Male	architecture office	4 years
Gaziosmanpaşa	Aleppo	married	36	Male	textile workshop	2.5 years
Gaziosmanpaşa	Damascus	married	40	Female		8 months
Gaziosmanpaşa	Damascus	married	42	Female		2 years
Gaziosmanpaşa	Latakia	married	36	Male	textile workshop	3 years
Fatih	Latakia	single	24	Male	musician	1.5 years
Fatih	Aleppo	married	30	Female	packaging folderer	2 years
Avcılar	Aleppo	single	23	Male	waiter	5 years
Fatih	Aleppo	single	15	Male	errand boy	1.5 years
Avcılar	Damascus	married	38	Male	barber	2.5 years
Beşiktaş	Latakia	single	28	Male	charcutery	6 months
Fatih	Damascus	single	36	Male	self-employed co-owner of a hotel	3 months
Beyoğlu	Aleppo	married	22	Male	restaurant	2 years
Ümraniye	[Missing data]	married	24	Male	a company's international trade department	4.5 years
Bağcılar	Aleppo	married	39	Male	textile workshop	4 years
Fatih	Homs	married	46	Male	vice manager	4 years
Fatih	Aleppo	single	23	Male	textile mill	3 years
Bayrampaşa	Damascus	married	39	Male	flowering business and as an extra job organization marketing	3 years
Kağıthane	Idlip	married	28	Female	self-employed restaurant	2 years
Beşiktaş	Aleppo	married	40	Male	valet parking service	3 years

On the other hand, the non-Syrian refugee sample clearly is dominantly single and male, with no non-Syrian female interviewees. This can be a limitation in comparing the two groups of migrants. Moreover, 75% of the non-Syrians are single, while this percentage is 36% for Syrian refugees. Except for a 46-year-old interviewee who is married and a 20-year-old Afghan refugee who is engaged to a woman in Afghanistan, all other non-Syrians are single. Considered among the reasons for coming to Turkey, which are mostly educational and economic, marital status is found to be mainly single (see Table 4). Furthermore the average age has been detected as 24. Not great age difference is noticed between Syrians and non-Syrians. In fact, they are similar. Non-Syrian interviewees have also been identified as working in unqualified jobs as often as Syrian refugees.

Table 4  
*Demographic Information of Non-Syrian Interviewees*

District	Hometown	Gender	Marital Status	Age	Employment	Time of Living in Turkey
[Missing data]	Afghanistan village of Pakistan	Male	engaged	20	car-washer	4 years
Kağıthane	next to the Indian borders	Male	single	31	furniture shop	2 years
Küçükçekmece	Palestine	Male	married	46	research institute	4 years
Mecidiyeköy	Mogadishu	Male	single	24	student	3 years
Beşiktaş	Bushehr	Male	single	24	student	1,5 years
Fatih	Turkmenistan	Male	single	24	student-waiter	5,5 years
Şişli	Lebap	Male	single	23	office boy	3 years
Beyoğlu	Tehran	Male	single	30	film maker	9 years

**Level of education.** Secondly we examined education levels, which for Syrian refugees are composed mostly of uncompleted. In spite of this, the qualified job owners and the self-employed have mostly continued studying or have a high level of education. Considering the Syrians in the business sector, the majority of those who have a certain level of education or worked in qualified jobs back in Syria are not able to work in their own fields in Turkey. In particular, students can be seen continuing their education and people working to become self-employed or qualified.

Highly-educated people from Syria are generally known to mostly prefer going to Europe through Turkey. However, we have met some highly-educated people who had made or started their own jobs still living in Turkey. The average time living in Turkey has been calculated as four years, with periods as short as three months being observed. In the case of Yıldırım, an electrical engineer from Damascus who currently co-owns a hotel in Istanbul, he had worked in a managerial position in Syria. Traveling to Istanbul several times for business before the war was a characteristic of his journeys. He had also lived in a Scandinavian country for a while before this. Meanwhile, being in Istanbul, France, or Eastern Europe countries several times for business or for living before the war is also apparent for the other qualified job owners. Furthermore, we also understand Syrians are unable to work in their own educational fields, which we will discuss later in work-related problems.

In our sample, non-Syrian refugees have better education levels than the Syrian refugees. Non-Syrians are more likely to continue their education, not the Syrian refugees. Except for one case in our sample, all non-Syrian interviewees have good education levels. The one exception is Mehdi, a 20-year-old man from Afghanistan. He came to Turkey four years ago when he was 16. He underlined his reason for migrating to be the ongoing war in his country. He talked about many people joining the Taliban and said that Syrians are among them. Mehdi was in the military service for three years. He stated being afraid and unable to stay there anymore. He had not

been going to school, although his father wanted him to when he was in Afghanistan. He had worked informally as a construction worker while still there. As such, education level does not correlate with a higher salary.

As mentioned above, the non-Syrian students in our sample have tended to continue their education. Even as students, funding themselves economically could be observed. However, academic standing is not only seen from students. In the case of Ibrahim, we see a migrant whose academic standing affects his employment status. Ibrahim is from Palestine and came to Turkey four years ago. He stayed in prison for 20 years in Israel because he was a leader in the revolution against the Palestinian occupation. He was 40 years old when exchanges between Israeli and Palestinian prisons began. However, they did not let him return to Palestine. He had to choose between three countries: Qatar, Syria, or Turkey. Although he had friends in Qatar and Syria, he chose Turkey. His interest in Turkey comes from his Israeli friends in prison where he learned more about Turkey's political conditions and history. He came to Turkey right after he was released, studying international studies and also getting a master's degree in it. He now is working on his PhD in political science at Marmara University. He works at a research institute in Turkey and researches the conflict between Israel and Palestine. He also goes to conferences and gives speeches. His income comes from the research and his retirement in Palestine. In his reply to the question about his living conditions, he said his family is wealthy and he had sold his share of the land in Palestine and made some trade. Consequently, we can say that Turkey also gets highly qualified migrants whose level of education leads to high employment status.

**Language.** Overall, language is accepted as a significant part of the integration process. The interviewees' expressions can be stated on this point of view. Those who encounter language barriers want to go back to Syria or to another country. Orhan, who can only speak a few words of Turkish, and Yıldırım, a co-owner of a hotel in Istanbul, describe Turkish as an extremely difficult language. Yıldırım added that he wants to go back to Aleppo after the war. Although Aras, a 24-year-old musician, expressed not experiencing language as a handicap, he defines Istanbul as an international city and being fluent in English with a little Turkish is enough for him. In spite of this, Dündar contextualized the language issue from a gender perspective, saying women face this problem more than men. Consequently, knowing English due to a high level of education leads to dissolving the language handicap. Altogether, those who do not encounter language as a problem seems to be more integrated and assembled.

Additionally, our non-Syrian sample encounters more of a learning process with the Turkish language. Being younger and continuing education are noticed to influence the language learning process. Except for Ibrahim, who is from Palestine, every interviewee

mentioned having a good level of Turkish or continuing to learn it. Furthermore, Pers, an Iranian who came to Turkey a year and a half ago because of his father's job and who is continuing his education in industrial engineering at an Iranian university, is learning Turkish and states this to have significantly improved his communication with the locals. Additionally, we have detected another exciting occurrence in one case. Kasım is a 24-year-old male migrant from the capital city of Somalia. He had lived an ordinary life in Mogadishu for 13 years. He left Mogadishu because the war was getting worse, even though they had not experienced bad circumstances to make them move. He did not see any conditions of war until on the way to the airport in Mogadishu. They left by plane to Kenya with all of his family members but on different days. He does not remember the paper work because of his excitement as a child. After arriving in Eastleigh, a suburb of Nairobi, they stayed in a hotel for a while until they rented a house. Even though there was a place called Little Mogadishu where most of the Somalis live, they did not live there. His family did not even want him going there because of the high crime rate. He explained that people who lived there were not registered because they had come on foot, and even though the Somalis were victims, they had been blamed for these crimes. They stayed in Eastleigh for only a month and then found a house in another district "where they could live." After resettling, he and his siblings went to a course where they could learn English and catch up on their classes. It took seven months to start school. He had no problems adapting to school in Kenya, and he also was learning Swahili. On the other hand, they talked in different languages at home, and he said his mother did not know much Swahili. He underlined the fact that he had never faced discrimination for being a foreigner in Kenya. He came to Turkey for his education. He explained that he wanted to leave his family and study somewhere else. He decided to come to Turkey because he had gone to a Turkish high-school in Kenya. He has taken language courses here and already took all his exams but one. He has many friends from different nationalities, but his closest friends are Kenyan because he had lived with them. This case shows Turkish language education to have expanded to Africa and Asia.

All in all language is not perceived as an enormous problem by our non-Syrian sample as much as by the Syrian refugees. The reasons may be their networks, employment conditions, or willingness to live in Turkey. As mentioned before, language learning is an aspect of employment that affects migrants' integration process. Networks greatly impact the way Syrians find work. On the other hand, non-Syrian interviewees have followed a different pattern in finding work from the Syrians, due to their non-existent networks. Moreover, the variety of work impacts the language learning process, as also mentioned previously. Aside from this, we have also analyzed willingness to live in Turkey to also have an effect on learning the language of the host country. Those who want to stay in Turkey permanently try to get involved in society, while those here temporarily do not focus on integrating by learning Turkish.



**Importance of relationship with employer.** A substantial number of Syrian interviewees mentioned their relationship with the employer. Employers provide support by helping to rent a living space and registering children in school. In Dündar's case, he had been paying 1,200 TL for a 3-room flat. Now he pays 700 TL for a 4-room flat thanks to help from his boss, who helped him to find his current flat for a reasonable rent, bought all his furniture for him, and still provides monthly support for his children's educational needs. Also, his experience and current living conditions in Istanbul are directly related to his boss's help. The interviewee stated that his boss is sentimental about working with Syrians. In the case of Selim, the support from his employer is obvious. Selim likewise rented his house with the help of his employer. As he tells, landlords were not willing to rent their houses to Syrian people. Additionally, the boss registered Kerim's daughter in school. All things considered, his employer quite obviously helped. Mainly, the relationship with the employer can be stated on the surface as essential for Syrian refugees. We did not encounter the same work relations in the non-Syrian interviews as we did in the Syrian cases.

### **Work as a Social Integration Process and Its Related Challenges**

The main point we have inferred is that work becomes a social integration process for the refugees and is seen as a way of socializing that brings the refugees out of an isolated environment. In the case of Irem, she is usually busy with taking care of her daughter and brother-in-law's children while everyone works; she thus explained that she mostly lives in an isolated environment. Being a member of society, the host country's language becomes a condition of integration. Language differences are a barrier in this process. We saw in our sample that those who do not speak Turkish live in an isolated environment and cannot get involve in society directly. Furthermore, language is partially learned through work experiences. Still more than a few face language as a handicap.

Informal work conditions have a major effect on stimulating discrimination. De facto refugees encounter discrimination and xenophobia in everyday life –both in and away from their place of work. Orhan, who finished his studies in Istanbul and is 23 years old, currently works in an architectural office. However, his salary is significantly lower than his coworkers, and his work hours are not limited like the others. He generally has to stay at the office until the job is done, which can be as late as 9 or 10 pm every night. He says that he does not have social security and has been unable to get a work permit. Thus, he considers going to Egypt for better work opportunities. He mentions the language barrier experienced here has a drastic negative effect on his life. Also, he says that Syrians repeatedly encounter unwelcoming behavior. For example, landlords directly said they do not want Syrians while searching for flats to rent, and a policeman told him to go back to Aleppo when he went to the police station for his appointment. This demonstrates not only the existence of individual discrimination against refugees,

but also institutional discrimination to a substantial degree. Therefore, institutions in particular and other components of society have to be better informed about refugees' circumstances. Furthermore, the problem of aggressive behavior has been mentioned more than once. Kandemir stated not having experienced any personal hate himself, but he does know several people who have faced such aggressive behaviors. Regarding an incident he witnessed, he states, "I was once on a minibus and there was another Syrian man that I didn't know. All of a sudden, a man started shouting, 'Where did you come from to this country? Who let you in?'"

Half of the interviewees in our sample mentioned work conditions, job accidents, and job-related issues. A part of the group experienced these problems themselves, and the other part heard it from a relative or friend. In general, the main issues can be stated as: (a) wage payments, (b) skill mismatching, (c) child labor and (d) social security-related problems. Our sample has revealed these topics through their experiences. While all these topics are crucial as outcomes of informal work conditions, we attach the greatest importance to work accidents.

**Wage payment issues.** The majority of interviewees mentioning job-related issues stated being underpaid. While talking about getting paid, most refugees mentioned discrimination at the work place. For example, Kandemir stated being unable to get his salary for several months. He also mentioned knowing some refugees who have been struggling to find work and as a result live on the streets or in tents. Their work conditions have also been specified as harsher than other workers. Discrimination among workers is clearly noticeable. As Irem reported, her husband works in a textile shop with his brother. She says they sometimes experience hard times at work, but the biggest problem is with the work hours and their pay. As she reported, he receives less money than what the boss officially reports and works six days a week for long hours. Orhan and Gizem also mentioned that, even though they work as hard as Turkish workers, they earn less. In addition, non-Syrian interviewees also face the obvious discrimination in payments like Syrians. Mehdi is a 20-year-old man from Afghanistan. He gets paid daily as a car-washer. Mehdi said he initially had received a monthly salary monthly, but he decided to change his payment intervals to daily to minimize risks, as an acquaintance in Ankara had only received one month of salary for five months of work. Likewise, Itiraf, a Pakistani who had come to Turkey two years ago due economic problems in his country, faces problems getting paid. He is a high-school graduate currently working in a furniture shop. He earns 1,500 TL but expected more at first. He claimed that his salary has been repeatedly unpaid or appropriated in large amounts, as much as 3,500 TL. He emphasized that not getting the same wage as Turkish workers despite working harder than them also affects the work environment. He wants to get his work permit to fix this problem. He also explained not having other difficulties except for one time when he was

abused. Additionally, Aman, a 23-year-old Turkmen refugee, and Hasan, a 30-year-old Iranian film maker, talked about getting paid less than Turkish workers.

**Skill mismatching.** Most of our Syrian interviewees mentioned not being able to work in their own fields of work. Demir is a 40-year-old father of 10 from Aleppo and had come to Turkey three years ago due to the circumstances of the war. They had chosen Turkey because it was cheaper than the other options (Lebanon and Jordan). He had earned 10-15,000 TL monthly while in Syria as a contractor. In Turkey he is unable to do this work so he works at a parking lot earning 1,750 TL a month. Demir also stated that his cousin, who also lives in Istanbul, had experienced a work accident. The incident happened while his cousin was delivering for the grocery shop. He got hit by a car and, instead of getting an apology from the driver, he got scolded for being there. In fact, the issue with work accidents indeed poses an issue that runs deep for our sample. Thus, this topic will be investigated further using different examples in the following sections. Continuing, Nevin, a 42-year-old woman from Damascus who had come to Turkey two years ago, explained that her husband had been a translator (Italian, English, and Arabic) back at home, but that he cannot do this work here. As a result, they usually have monetary problems. Moreover, non-Syrian interviewees also see skill mismatching, but not as often as the Syrians do. Most of the non-Syrians who had migrated to Turkey were clearly in economic trouble or wanted to increase their income, whereas the Syrians had been obliged to migrate. All in all, we detected many more examples all related skill mismatching, which has led to a great loss of qualified labor for the participants.

**Child labor.** From another perspective, child labor is also apparent in our sample. Reis, a 15-year-old, stated not having time to go to school because of having to contribute to living expenses. He has two little sisters and has been living with his family at his uncle's house in Fatih for 1.5 years. His mother stays at home to take care of his two little sisters, and his father works as a building worker. They had migrated to Kilis and then came directly to Istanbul by bus to find work. Reis had been in primary school in Aleppo but now has to work to save money. He works as an office boy at a place called İSTOC. He gets paid 150 TL weekly and takes the bus to work from Fatih. He said this work place employs many Syrian children. He feels regretful because he cannot go to school, though he wants to and wants to become a teacher. Thus, children clearly have to contribute as wage earners to earn a better living as a family in the case of Syrians.

**Work accidents.** We have detected several work accidents. These were experienced in both the sample and reference groups (Syrians and non-Syrians). Some of the cases have already been mentioned. From this perspective we will discuss two examples, beginning with the experiences of Syrians. Söz, a 23-year-old refugee, talked about

job accidents that had happened at work. Söz works at a textile mill similar to his job in Syria, where he was considered a machine user. He also works with two brothers and a cousin. He got his job with the help of his relatives. He gets the minimum salary, and was told this is quite good. He works 11 hours a day from 8 am to 7 pm. He talked about job accidents in this workplace. One of his relatives was injured while working in Istanbul; a platinum plate had crushed his relative's foot. Another relative drowned while working in the sewage system. Also, his brother had cut his finger at their current workplace and was unable to be operated on in Turkey. Thus he had to go to Syria and now he cannot use his finger. Meanwhile, talking about Turkey's living conditions, he underlined that he cannot remember the last time he saw clean hospitals like these. He is able to receive health care as he is registered in Turkey and is very thankful for that. The textile mill is in Yedikule, which is also where their home is. They live in a two-bedroom house with 12 people. In addition, he underlined women's conditions, saying that most women had become destitute during the war. In Turkey, those in Ankara have better living conditions. If he can ever return to Syria, he wants to see what remains of the places where he once lived. The major problem here seems to be issue of insurance. Obviously, all salary discrimination aside, labor power is not protected for refugees in Turkey. Getting used to these incidents has started to be accepted in society and, moreover, by the refugees themselves. From the non-Syrian point of view, the most severe work accident was mentioned by Aman, a 23-year-old man from Lebap, Turkmenistan. He came three years ago for work. He shares a flat with some friends he knows from his hometown. As he tells it, they had come to Turkey before him and settled down, and then he joined them. He is a mechanic, and when he first came here, he had worked as one, but due to a workplace accident he cannot do this anymore. He had been working in a car repair shop when a piece of metal flew into his eye. Aman had no insurance, so his bosses took him to a public hospital using a fake name and story. After his doctor insisted he tell his side of the story, he confessed to actually being an immigrant and it being a work injury. He had an emergency operation and then three more follow-up surgeries. His bosses informed him that they had paid all expenses, but after a month in the hospital, Aman realized that only his first emergency operation had been paid and the remaining expenses were on him. When he confronted his bosses about the issue, he was fired and told, "You are a foreigner. They can't do anything. Just stay away from the hospital." He hired a lawyer afterwards thanks to his new boss and with this legal help was able to reach an agreement with his previous bosses to cover the expenses. He stated still receiving treatment for his eye. Currently he works in a law firm office for minimum wage (around 1,300 TL), which he states is twice as much as he had been making in Turkmenistan. Although his overall experience in the country sounds bitter, he feels happy and grateful about his life in Turkey. When he compares the two countries, he says that life is cheaper in Turkmenistan but work conditions are harsher. Also, health services are not easy to obtain. While utilities and

basic needs are either free or low-cost, medical needs are quite expensive. This is why he regularly sends money home, so that he can help his family. As he states, his mother needs medicine regularly, mentioning that she has psychological problems due to a past incident. When she was newlywed and pregnant, she had witnessed her father set himself on fire. Her father's suicide and resulting intense fear caused her to develop an anxiety disorder. Aman says that they have tried getting help from several doctors, but have yet to be able to find sustainable help. She needs to be hospitalized twice a year and uses expensive medicines every day. He says that they had tried to make his mother retire for three years, finally managing to do so a few months ago. Her retirement salary pays for her needs, but they have nothing left to live on except Aman's help. He has no social life in Istanbul, purposefully avoiding spending his free time outside because he thinks it would be a waste of hard-earned money. He states that he had come to Turkey due to economic problems and had never considered another country. At first, he had planned to stay in Turkey for two years and go back after earning enough money, but now he does not intend to go back to Turkmenistan. Several major problems appeared to surface in this interview. First of all, he states having no social security or retirement option at work. He also mentioned that a previous workplace still owes him three months of salary. His fragile status in a foreign country apparently leaves him open to exploitation, which he has apparently experienced on several occasions. Another point he makes is that he had had no network with the locals in the city during his first period in Turkey. He and his two roommates from Turkmenistan struggled by themselves to improve their conditions in Turkey. They have not received any help in terms of their status in the country, thus they cannot defend or protect themselves when serious issues arise. These days, he says he only wants to have resolution with his medical condition and Turkish citizenship.

### **Conclusion**

Istanbul is the city with the largest refugee population in Turkey. The number of Syrians in Istanbul under temporary protection is claimed at more than half a million. Thus, examining this city not only as the host of the largest refugee population but also as a cultural encounter has become important. The process of getting involved in a society, the steps that lead to important experiences, and the mixture of cultures must be studied.

Our study is based upon interviews with Syrian refugees who have come to Istanbul compared to interviews with non-Syrian people living in Istanbul. The interviews with Syrian migrants are about their experiences on the road and integration process. Non-Syrian migrants were examined in two ways: those who had come to Turkey as a safe third country and those who stay here because of economic reasons. In addition, no connection was found for the tendency to come directly to Istanbul with educational background or marriage status.

Several findings in our study differentiate Syrians from non-Syrians. Syrian refugees differ in terms of many aspects, such as resettlement, migration route, labor market participation, and demographical profiles. Starting with an interesting finding, marital status has been found to impact refugees' experiences in getting qualified work or being self-employed. This means that single refugees feel more confident taking risks while married refugees are less so. On the other hand, marital status has also been observed to affect the purpose of migration. This is because the two most common types of reasons for migrating, educational and economic, are associated mainly with unmarried interviewees. Subsequently, we claim an efficient link to exist among marital status, age, and gender in choosing an area of work.

Furthermore, our sample of non-Syrian participants has better levels of education when compared to the Syrian refugees. Non-Syrians are more likely to continue their education. Additionally, we can say that Turkey also receives highly qualified migrants whose level of education leads to better employment statuses.

We uncovered numerous outcomes. One essential finding from the interviews is that families prefer to stay together when migration occurs due to a direct threat to one or more family members. Our sample shows that migration has been a family decision for the Syrian interviewees. On the other hand, non-Syrian migrants tend to travel by themselves, unlike the Syrian refugee population. Moreover, our findings demonstrate that an obvious reason for choosing Istanbul as a destination is it has higher chances for job opportunities. Relatives have primarily been acknowledged as an important network for getting a job, providing a living space, and adapting to the new environment. In comparison to the Syrian refugee migrants, no family networks exist among the non-Syrian settlers but one. Consequently, significant differentiations exist among Syrian and non-Syrian networks and family order based on our findings.

To continue with another finding, the language of host country is an issue when it comes to harmonizing with society. Language differences appear as a barrier in this process. Our sample demonstrates that those who do not speak Turkish cannot become directly involved in society. While language is partially learned through work experience, more than a few face language as an obstacle. Altogether, those who do not face language as a problem appear more integrated. Likewise for our non-Syrian sample, the Turkish language is more likely to appear in a learning process. Being at a young age and continuing education can be noted as effective in the language-learning process. Clearly, those who want to stay in Turkey permanently try to get involved in society. Those who are not interested in staying permanently are not focused on integrating by learning Turkish.

When it comes to the work environment, the relationship with one's employer is essentially interesting. However, this relation is more significant for Syrian

interviewees compared to the non-Syrian participants. Our findings notably demonstrate employers to mostly have positive attitudes and willingness to help. On the other hand, a great part of our interviewees mentioned unfair treatment concerning wages. While refugees experience discrimination by being otherized in various parts of their lives, this issue proves not only individual discrimination to exist towards refugees but also systematic discrimination to be substantial.

In general, the work problems seen among the employed refugees are: (a) regular salary payments, (b) skill mismatching, (c) child labor, and (d) social security-related problems. One of the most significant findings is the large issue with work accidents. Social security has been found as a topic ignored among employers. Obviously, all salary discriminations aside, labor power does not provide protection for refugees in Turkey. All in all, great differentiations are found among Syrian and non-Syrian migrants in Turkey. However, similarities are also found for work-related problems. Thus, when it comes to being otherized in Turkey, discrimination can be stated as a major fact that is experienced among a great number of refugees.

### References

- Kunz, E. F. (1973). The refugee in flight: Kinetic models and forms of displacement. *The International Migration Review*, 7(2), 125–146.
- Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management. (2016, October 6). *Geçici koruma kapsamındaki Suriyelilerin illere göre dağılımı*. Retrieved from [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713)
- T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü. (2016). *2015 Türkiye Göç Raporu* (Publication no: 35). Ankara, Turkey: Author.
- “Türkiye’nin Yabancı Haritası”. (2016, February 6). *Milliyet*. Retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/turkiye-nin-yabanci-haritasi-antalya-yerelhaber-1198968/>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2016, September 30). *Syria regional refugee response*. Retrieved from <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>