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The Impact of the Mass Migration of Syrian Refugees on Turkish Cities

Abstract: Currently, Türkiye is a country with the largest number of refugees in the world. Over 3.7 million of them come from Syria. At the beginning of the migration crisis which affected European Union member states, Türkiye as a transit destination provided refugees with a place at Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs). After signing the agreement with the European Union (on March, 21 2016) and with the increasing number of refugees in Türkiye, it became impossible to place all of them in refugee camps. Syrians began to migrate not only to border cities and towns, but also to Istanbul and other Turkish metropolises.

This article aims to show the impact of refugees on the situation of Istanbul and other Turkish cities. The analysis is intended to answer the following questions: how did refugees change the structure of Turkish cities? How did the migrations of the Syrian community affect the border cities of Türkiye and the metropolises in the western and central part of the country? Which socio-economic problems did the increase in the number of refugees generate in Türkiye? What kind of social problems arose in Turkish cities with the arrival of Syrian refugees?

Keywords: *migration crisis, refugees, Türkiye, migrations, cities*

Introduction

Nowadays, migrations are an important element of international order. They constitute a relevant factor influencing the domestic and foreign policy of many countries. Migration movements are often of a mass nature and can be described as a global-scale phenomenon. They currently affect almost all countries of the world. As a result of migration, states start to send, receive or transit entities for units participating in migration flows (Raczyński, 2015, p. 11). The occurrence of migration is usually influenced by an impulse, an event that prompts individuals and groups to move from one place to another. The causes of migration may involve internal socio-economic problems, armed conflicts or external incentives.

Migration can be a source of many benefits, but it can also entail numerous threats. Various effects are distinguished in the literature on this subject. The most common are positive and negative effects for the country of origin, the country receiving immigrants and for the immigrant himself. One of the effects of migration (especially in terms of societal security) of a given state/society is a variation in the population structure leading to changes in the cultural identity of the local community. In this article, the issue is addressed in relation to the population of Turkish cities and the changes that have occurred after the arrival of the refugee community as a result of the conflict that broke out in their homeland.

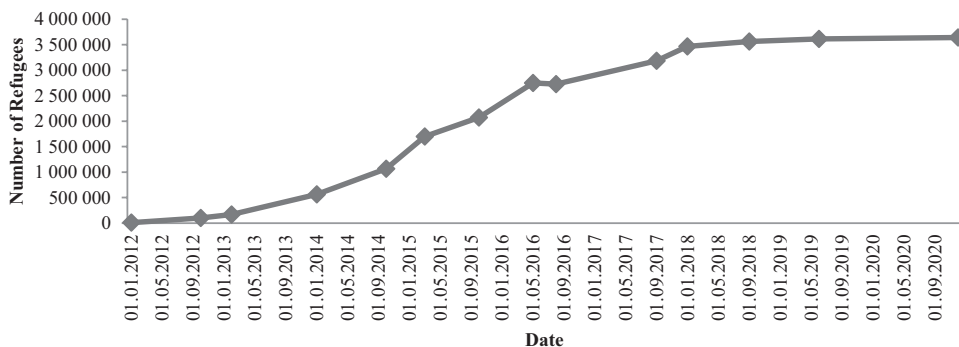
This article aims to show the impact of migrants (Syrian refugees) on the situation of Istanbul and other Turkish cities. It presents the consequences of the arrival of Syrian people to three Turkish border metropolitan cities: Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Gaziantep. These cities, due to their geographical proximity to Syria, seem to be a place where accommodation for Syrians should be easier. Another group of cities subjected to the analysis are metropolises in the western and central part of the country. The analysis takes into account data from three largest Turkish cities, i.e. Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara. The article also describes the example of Kilis, a small border town where the Syrian population is larger than the local population. This case was chosen to show the processes taking place in locations where the immigrant population exceeds the local population. The research hypothesis verified in the paper states that despite the differences between the border cities and western and central metropolises of Türkiye, the processes of assimilation and the effects of accepting Syrian refugees are similar in both cases.

In order to verify the above-mentioned hypothesis, the author analyzes the source material. It can be divided into two main categories: primary sources are reports of selected research centers (e.g. Feinstein International Center, Marmara Municipalities Union's Center for Urban Policies, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, SABR Center for Statistical Studies), secondary sources are scientific articles (mainly by Turkish authors) and press articles (e.g. from *The Guardian*, *Milyet*). The study was conducted using the methods of analysis, synthesis and comparison. The data used in the research process is both qualitative and quantitative.

Increase in the Number of Refugees in the Cities of Türkiye

After the outbreak of the armed conflict in Syria in 2011, in just a few years, the refugees from Syria have become one of the largest refugee communities in the world (Wilk, 2016, p. 21). The rapid increase in the number of Syrian refugees started in 2014 and the open-door policy of the Turkish authorities have made Türkiye the country receiving the largest number of refugees in the world by now. According to data from August 2019, the number of Syrians granted temporary protection in this country was 3 643 870 (Erdoğan, 2019, p. 6). Therefore, refugees represent a proportion of around 4.43–4.8% of Türkiye's 84 million population (TÜİK, 2021).

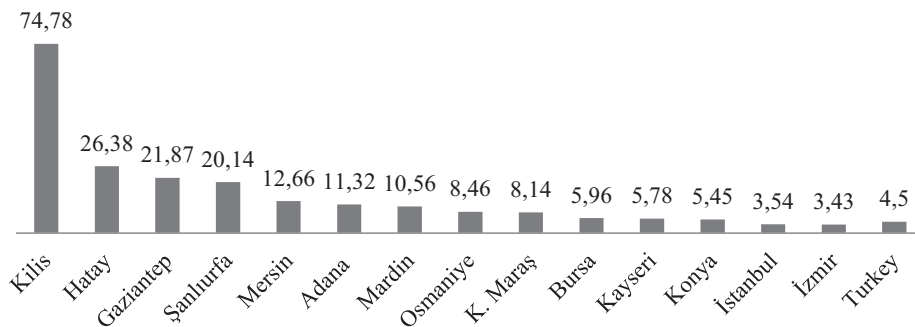
Figure 1. The Increase in the Number of Refugees in Türkiye (2012–2020)



Source of data: UNHCR – Turkey Stats.

At the end of 2014, the Syrian community accounted for approx. 2.1% of the total population of Türkiye (Ekmekci, 2017, p. 7). However, within the ten border cities (which had a population of 10 million people until 2011) the percentage was higher. Newcomers from Syria accounted for a proportion of the population ranging between 8–14% (Bagir, 2018, p. 131) in individual cities and provinces. However, this ratio increased over time. For example, in Hatay (according to the data of the Republic of Türkiye Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD)) in May 2015, refugees constituted 16% of the city’s population (Savas et. al., 2016, p. 18281). Nevertheless, in August 2021, the percentage of Syrians in the entire population of the province/city was approximately 26.3–26.4%. The exact distribution of the proportion of Syrian refugees in the population of a given province in 2021 is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Proportion of Syrian Population to the Provincial Population (%) (08.2021)



Source of data: <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>.

The enormous costs and inability to accommodate all Syrians in Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs) have led to a change in the policy of the Turkish authorities over time. Most of the refugee camps were closed. In August 2019 (out of over 3.6 million Syrians), only 1.8% (67 000) were in one of the 7 camps located in five Turkish provinces: Hatay (3), Kilis (1), Adana (1), Kahramanmaraş (1), Osmaniye (1) (Erdoğan, 2019, p. 7). It was estimated that in 2020 the number of people living in the camps dropped to less than 1% of the refugee population in Türkiye.

Therefore, most Syrians are dispersed outside the camps. They began to move around and reside in individual Turkish cities and towns. This situation changed their perception as "urban refugees", as about 96–98% (Balcioglu & Erdoğan, 2020) of them began to live in cities or in suburban areas (3 490 934) (Kavas et. al., 2019, p. 30). Today, Syrians are registered in each of the 81 Turkish provinces. Cities with the smallest population are Bayburt (25), Artvin (37) and Tunceli (56) (Kavas et. al., 2019, p. 31).

Most often, Syrian migrants settle in metropolitan areas to gain access to public services, social networks and jobs (OECD, 2018, p. 3). A significant group lives in the largest city of Türkiye, Istanbul – 555 951 (which is 3.69% of the city's population). These data, however, do not include approximately 300 000 refugees who are living in Istanbul but are registered in another Turkish province (this gives a total percentage of 5.6% of the city's population) (Erdoğan, 2019, p. 6). The other cities that accept the largest numbers of refugees are: Gaziantep (428 779 – 21.14% of the city's population), Hatay (435 955 – 27.08% of the city's population), Şanlıurfa (449 019 – 22.6% of the city's population). As can be seen in the above data, more than half of the 3.6 million refugees (2019) were registered in the largest cities in four provinces (Istanbul, Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Gaziantep).

On the other hand, the province and the city of Kilis is a place where the number of Syrian refugees exceeds the number of the local community. Kilis has a population of 142 000, whereas 105 791 people are Syrians (Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü'nü Takip Edin, 2021).

Table* 1. Number of Refugees Living in Turkish Cities / Provinces (temporary protection – in 2014, 2016, 2019, 2022)

City / Province	Number of refugees (2014)	City / Province	Number of refugees (2016)	City / Province	Number of refugees (2019)	City / Province	Number of refugees (2022**)
1. İstanbul	330 000	İstanbul	479 880	İstanbul	555 951	İstanbul	551 569
2. Gaziantep	220 000	Şanlıurfa	420 532	Şanlıurfa	449 019	Gaziantep	465 929
3. Hatay	190 000	Hatay	384 120	Hatay	435 955	Şanlıurfa	383 566
4. Şanlıurfa	170 000	Gaziantep	329 660	Gaziantep	428 779	Hatay	369 029
5. Mardin	70 000	Adana	151 421	Adana	236 901	Adana	257 530
6. Adana	50 000	Mersin	147 185	Mersin	204 253	Mersin	244 052
7. Kilis	49 000	Kilis	124 566	Bursa	169 487	Bursa	185 549
8. Mersin	45 000	Izmir	109 169	Izmir	143 008	Izmir	150 063

City / Province	Number of refugees (2014)	City / Province	Number of refugees (2016)	City / Province	Number of refugees (2019)	City / Province	Number of refugees (2022**)
9. Konya	45 000	Bursa	107 375	Kilis	116 387	Konya	123 974
10. Kahramanmaraş	44 000	Mardin	94 360	Konya	106 345	Ankara	100 140

*The table includes the 10 provinces with the largest refugee population in the given year; **Data as of the Day 15.09.2022.

Sources of data: <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>.

Syrian Refugees and Changes in Turkish Cities

Syrians, who were initially welcomed by the local community, began to be viewed negatively over time. Analyses of researchers from Kadir Has University show that the majority of Turks are not satisfied with the stay of refugees in their country (59.8% – 2019, 66.6% – 2018). Among the reasons for dissatisfaction with the stay of Syrians, the respondents indicated primarily: tendency of refugees to commit crimes, the lack of peace in the local community, growing unemployment caused by illegal labor, the destruction of national identity, the use of the state’s possibilities granting privileges to Syrian refugees, and cultural differences (Aydın et.al., 2019, p. 84). There is a significant concern among the Turks over political rights and citizenship for Syrians. According to the Syrians Barometer survey, the vast majority of Turkish respondents believe that Syrians “should not be given any political rights” (2017 – 85.6%, 2019 – 87.1%, 2020 – 83.8%, 2021 – 67, 9%) (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 15). However, as research shows, the vast majority of Syrians would like to have (double or only Turkish) citizenship (2017 – 70.2%, 2019 – 80.3%, 2020 – 72.3%, 2021 – 51.8%) (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 22). Turkish citizenship has been granted to 223,881 Syrians over the last 5 years, of which 126,786 are adults with the right to participate in elections (T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2022).

Turkish border areas are characterized by a conservative culture and attachment to tradition. Moreover, due to their geographical proximity to some Syrian cities, they share the same history (Burgen, 2019). Local authorities try to get as much as possible from historically strong ties and positive Turkish-Syrian relations and to treat refugees as guests (Weine, 2020). The local community of Gaziantep, Kilis or Hatay often knows Arabic or Kurdish, which makes communication with Syrian Arabs and Kurds easier. The process that takes place in border cities can be described as “cultural continuity” (International Crisis Group, 2018, p. 3). Tensions between the local community and refugees are not as frequent as in metropolitan areas in Western Türkiye.

Kilis is a small city in the southern region of Türkiye, located a few kilometers from the border with Syria (St.Oegger, 2014). In 2011, the city was inhabited by 87 939 people (Yirmibesoglu et. al., 2015, p. 318). Over the past few years, Kilis has experienced a radical

social, economic, cultural and spatial changes as a result of receiving of over 116 000 Syrian refugees (2019). The sudden influx of such a large number of people radically changed the model of life in this city (Pakoz, 2016). The historic district of Kilis abandoned by the Turks (where housing is not in the best condition and, therefore, the rental price is lower) is now occupied by refugees, whereas the local community moved to modern and more luxurious apartments on the outskirts of the city.

Interactions between incoming and local people are frequent, but the main obstacle for Syrians is still the lack of knowledge of Turkish (Islamoglu & Yenice, 2017, pp. 173–174). Before the refugees came to Kilis, there were distinct cultural differences between the two groups (in terms of daily habits and traditions). The distinctions were visible primarily in the following areas: working hours, leisure hours, kitchen, dressing style, wedding ceremony and condolence habits. The settlement of such a large population of Syrians in Kilis, as well the frequent contacts of both groups, meant that different elements within both cultures began to change and resemble each other.

In order to acclimatize easier, refugees brought to a new place some of their cultural codes within the area of spatial development (painting the walls of their own homes with the same colors and techniques as in Syria). Therefore, in the interviews conducted within this group, Syrians stated that local Kilis houses closely resemble typical courtyard houses in Syria (Islamoglu & Yenice, 2017, p. 174). Although refugees in Kilis do not feel integrated into the local community and they tend to rely on members of their own community, most of them feel safe in the neighborhood in which they have settled. Due to the status of Syrians and the temporary protection granted to them, they do not have the right to sit in the governing bodies of the Kilis province. Thus, they also do not have a representative in the 30-person council, which makes decisions important for residents in the field of housing, garbage disposal or water supply (Kilis Belediyesi, 2019).

Gaziantep is the city that hosts the second largest number of refugees in Türkiye (after Istanbul). As noted by Şenay Leyla Kuzu, there are many factors that explain the reasons for those Syrians who settled in Gaziantep. The author points to geographical proximity to Syria, cultural similarities, having relatives there, job opportunities, earlier visit or knowledge of the city. In addition, the vast majority of Syrians who have settled in Gaziantep come from rural areas that have helped to survive traditional of occupations such as tailoring and shoemaking, which they can do in new place of residence (Kuzu, 2020, p. 43).

Due to its economic potential, in recent years the city has also been a target of internal immigration. In order to avoid a social conflict between the Turkish population and newcomers from Syria, the city adopted a new approach based on integration. In 2012, the municipality opened the first school for Syrian students in Türkiye (IOM UN Migration, 2018). The Migration Management Department has been set up so that both groups can get the same social benefits (Burgen, 2019). All these measures were taken to improve public services for all residents. The local authorities persuaded the Turkish government to supply water more than 80 miles from the city. As a result, it was possible to deal with the crisis

with access and sufficient water in the city. The officials also developed a plan to build 50 000 new houses and hospitals.

Most Syrians in Gaziantep feel grateful to Turkish people and feel welcomed in the city. In a survey conducted by SABR Center and MDN Network in 2014, over 50% of respondents answered "no" to the question: "I face social problems with Turks" (41% – strongly denied, 13.2% – denied it), and over 20 % (20.4%) had a neutral opinion (Altengi et. al., 2015, p. 11). The Turks felt similar emotions towards the Syrians. To the question: "Have you faced problems with Syrians?" – over 60% (61.4%) of Turks answered "never". In turn, the answers "often" and "very often" were chosen by slightly more than 15% of the respondents (respectively 9.3% and 5.1%) (Altengi et. al., 2015, p. 22).

In cities such as Istanbul, Ankara or Izmir, the lack of knowledge of Turkish language limits refugees' possibilities of acculturation. Here, the differences between the Turkish and Syrian subculture are much more visible (International Crisis Group, 2018). On the other hand, the lack of interaction between the local community and refugees has a negative impact on adapting to the applicable social norms. The tendency of Syrians to concentrate in their own group is one of the factors leading to the gradual ghettoization of urban space (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Asmin Kavas defines the ghetto as that part of the city which has not been integrated or is separated from other living spaces (Kavas et. al., 2019, p. 11–14). The ghetto is a homogeneous urban area (Morawska, 2018, p. 96), created through an idiosyncratic lifestyle and socio-cultural similarity. The variables that distinguish the ghetto from other areas of the city are primarily housing segregation, area isolation, social exclusion, homogeneity of relations and density of population (Kavas et. al., 2019, p. 12). Analyses of Asmin Kavas, Omar Kadkoy, İlderya Avşar, Eren Çağdaş Bilgiç have shown that all these features appear in the areas of Istanbul studied by them, i.e. Akşemsettin (mahalle) and Ali Kuşçu (mahalle) in Fatih¹ (ilçe); İsmetpaşa (mahalle) and Zübeyde Hanım (mahalle) in Sultangazi (ilçe).

In these parts of Istanbul, Syrians have become an excluded community because they have limited access to local services. In these places, no program leading to the integration of this group was introduced. Most of the jobs are occupied by Syrians. Taking into account also the population density, it resulted in homogeneous relations. For example, daily shopping habits have been largely restricted within their group. Syrians do not communicate with Turks, and Arabic is the dominant language in their everyday life. Cultural differences are also visible in the way refugees dress and in the traditions they cultivate in their places of residence and work (Kavas et. al., 2019).

Istanbul is the city where the number of Syrian refugees is the highest in the country and about 15.7% of all Syrians are living there (Balcioglu, 2018, p. 8). However, it is more difficult to quantify the number of refugees staying in Istanbul than in other Turkish cities. Some Syrians come to the metropolis without permission even though the place of their

¹ District- ilçe, neighborhood- mahalle.

official registration is in another Turkish province. For this reason, it is not possible to clearly define their exact population within Istanbul (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 32).

Refugees are registered under temporary protection in each of Istanbul's 39 districts. The vast majority of them settle in poorer districts, inhabitants of which can be characterized by a higher level of religiosity and conservatism (Balcioglu, 2018, p. 8) (Küçükçekmece, Sultangazi, Bağcılar and Sultanbeyli districts). The number and density of Syrians in Istanbul varies between districts and their neighborhoods. Most of the refugees settled on the European side of the city. According to data from November 2016, as much as 86% (411 318) of the 478 850 Syrians stayed in the European part of Istanbul. In turn, only 14% (67,532) lived in neighborhoods on the Anatolian side (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 34).

Taking into account the distribution of refugees in the districts of Istanbul, the first three districts with the highest number of Syrian refugees are on the European side of the city – Küçükçekmece (38 278), Bağcılar (37 643) Sultangazi (31 426). Whereas, taking into account the percentage of refugees in the total population of a given district, the first places are also taken by the districts of the European part of Istanbul – Zeytinburnu (8.63%), Arnavutköy (7.55%), Başakşehir (7.48%). The district on the Anatolian side with the most Syrian refugees is Sultanbeyli (20 192). The refugee community constitutes 6.57% of the total population of the district. Sultanbeyli district ranks 9th out of 39 districts in terms of the number of refugees and 5th in the refugee rate in the overall district population (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 35). The list of districts of Istanbul with the highest number of refugees and the highest percentage of this community in the population of a given district is shown in the tables below.

Table 2. The Districts of Istanbul with the Highest Number of Refugees

District/ ilçe	Total number of inhabitants	Number of refugees	The percentage of refugees in the population of inhabitants (%)
KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE	761.064	38.278	5,02
BAĞCILAR	757.162	37.643	4,97
SULTANGAZI	521.524	31.426	6,02
FATİH	419.345	30.747	7,33
ESENYURT	742.810	29.177	3,92
BAŞAKŞEHİR	353.311	26.424	7,48
ZEYTİNBURNU	289.685	25.000	8,63
ESENLER	459.983	22.678	4,93
SULTANBEYLİ*	321.730	20.192	6,27
...
Total (39 districts)	14.657.434	478.850	3,26

Source of data: Erdoğan (2017).

Table 3. The Districts of Istanbul with the Highest Percentage of Refugees in the Population

District/ ilçe	Total number of inhabitants	Number of refugees	The percentage of refugees in the population of inhabitants (%)
ZEYTİNBURNU	289 685	25 000	8,63
ARNAVUTKÖY	236 222	17 838	7,55
BAŞAKŞEHİR	353 311	26 424	7,48
FATİH	419 345	30 747	7,33
SULTANBEYLİ*	321 730	20 192	6,27
SULTANGAZİ	521 524	31 426	6,02

Source of data: Erdoğan (2017).

The situation is somewhat different in the capital of Türkiye – Ankara. There are relatively few Syrians in the city (around 90 000). Therefore, local authorities have not launched many programs there to support social cohesion. However, also in Ankara, the refugee community is concentrated in a few neighborhoods where it constitutes a very high proportion of the general population (over 20%) (International Crisis Group, 2018, p. 4). Neighborhoods (mahalleler) such as Önder, Battalgazi and Ulubey (in Altındağ district/ ilçe) were inhabited by a traditionally homogeneous and largely conservative (nationalist) community. Such large changes in the social structure, which took place due to the concentration of a high percentage of Syrian residents, also in Ankara cause tensions in the relations of refugees with the local community (International Crisis Group, 2018, p. 4).

Consequences of the influx of Syrian refugees to Turkish cities

The settlement of such a large Syrian community in Turkish cities made it necessary to reconcile two different lifestyles. Their stay in Türkiye forced them to create living conditions in a completely new order and social environment (Biçer, 2017, p. 98). The life of refugees outside the camps, especially where their population constitutes a significant percentage of the population of the city or district, has had numerous social, economic, and cultural consequences.

First of all, such a rapid population growth placed a heavy burden on health services. The program of using free healthcare services initially covered refugees in border Turkish provinces (Amnesty International, 2014). Hospitals located in this region began to allocate approximately 30–40% of their capacity to Syrian patients. This situation caused dissatisfaction of the local community. It also influenced the creation of, among others, health centers dedicated exclusively to refugees.

Over time, housing, communal services (city cleanliness, garbage disposal), water infrastructure and public transport (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015, p. 9) were also heavily burdened

(both in border towns and those far from the border, where refugees began to settle gradually). In 2014 (shortly after a significant increase in the refugee population), the demand for apartments, as well as rent, started to increase. The local community began to increasingly blame the refugees for this situation. In a survey conducted on a representative sample of Kilis residents in 2014, as many as 93.5% of respondents believed that the arrival of Syrians caused an increase in rental prices (4.3% – believed that the arrival of refugees partially contributed to the increase in rental prices, 1% – that the arrival of refugees did not affect the rental process and 1.2% – had no opinion) (Paksoy et. al., 2015, p. 162). High rental prices forced some refugees to live in unsanitary and dangerous living conditions (al-Shihab, 2015) (e.g. in cellars and rooms with poor ventilation) (Balcioglu & Erdoğan, 2020). Some Syrians decided to live in overcrowded rooms without informing the owners about it (this discouraged some owners from renting their places to refugees). However, according to the analyses of Turkish researchers, the main reason for refusing to rent flats to newcomers from Syria (mainly in border regions) has been the “crowded channels” of access to public goods. It was the main factor generating negative attitudes towards refugees and housing segregation (Balkan et. al., 2018, p. 20–21).

The authors of the report titled “*Immigration, Housing Rents, and Residential Segregation: Evidence from Syrian Refugees in Turkey*” note that the so-called refugee effect on the increase in prices of flats works mainly in the case of higher-standard, more expensive flats. According to the researchers, such a situation may be influenced by the reluctance of the local community to live in districts with cheaper flats characterized by a larger refugee population. In this case, the local community is more likely to choose more expensive flats and generate demand pressure for districts with higher rents (Balkan et. al., 2018, p. 16).

Since 2014, in Izmir, housing rents have risen every year (from 25 TL (5 USD) to 200 TL (37 USD)), while prices for food, transport, medicine and other goods have remained almost the same. In this city, refugees settle mostly in Basmane (mahalle), Zeytinlik (mahalle), Karabağlar (ilçe), and Buca (ilçe). Rental prices in these places are not high. Refugees also have access to assistance centers and other services provided to them. In those parts of the city where most Syrians settle, the population structure has changed in recent years. In the case of Zeytinlik, an area with a significant concentration of young Syrian immigrants, the average age of the population has decreased. On the other hand, not many Syrians have settled in the Alsancak mahalle (Konak district/ilçe), which is characterized by high rental prices. The immigrant group is made up of young men who mostly share a flat and rent (around 1 200 TL – 225 USD). Also in other richer districts of Izmir the percentage of refugees in the population is small and their inhabitants are mostly representatives of the local community (Ogli, 2019, pp. 7–10).

In some Turkish cities, due to the significant increase in population, the hydrological infrastructure and access to drinking water have become a problem. In Kilis, where refugees outnumber the local population, water is collected by the dam. However, as a result of insufficient amount of rainfall (recorded in 2018), it was impossible to provide enough

drinking water for all residents. Another problem was the leaky water distribution system, which resulted in the loss of approximately 40% of drinkable water (Jaatinen, 2018). Water shortages are being felt by residents of the Öncüpınar refugee camp, in which it was decided to limit the supply. According to the agreement concluded with the local commune, the residents have access to water every other day (except for schools and social rooms in the camp, where water is available every day).

Receiving refugees generates huge costs in Turkish cities related to their access to public services. In the case of Şanlıurfa, the effects of the settlement of 480 000 new residents from Syria are noticeable not only in terms of water infrastructure (annual water consumption in the city, which in 2011 amounted to 60 million m³, whereas in 2016 it was already 80 million m³), but also sewerage, transport and social services. The city's energy charges increased from 60 million in 2011 to 90 million TRY in 2016. On the other hand, the city's transport costs rose from 35 million (2011) to 52 million (2016) (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 75). Also in the districts of Istanbul where the Syrian population exceeded 5%, the burden and costs of basic communal services (such as water, electricity, waste management) were increased. Moreover, pressure on social service infrastructure and problems resulting from rising prices in the housing market (especially victimization of refugees by the local community for rising rents) are causing tensions between the local community and refugees. Within the first group, there is a sense of injustice and Turkish people believe that social services are provided only to Syrians (Erdoğan, 2017, p. 115).

However, a significant problem in Turkish cities is not only access to benefits, but also competition on the labor market. Although most of the Syrians took the worst paid jobs (mainly in agriculture, industry and small businesses (Ekmekci, 2017), in the textile and clothing sectors, as well as in education, construction, and services) (Kirişci & Kolasin, 2019) in the face of the economic crisis, it was perceived by some members of the local community as a reason for not having their own employment. These fears are also confirmed by numerous studies (including Ximen Del Carpio and Mathis Wagnera – 2015, Oğuz Esen and Ayla Oğuş Binatlı – 2017 and Mehmet Duruel – 2017) (Esen & Binatlı 2017, p. 9–10). The conclusions from the analyses show that the illegal employment of refugees causes reduction of wages in the informal sector in Southeastern Anatolia and also displaces Turkish workers from it. For instance, in Kilis, after the arrival of the refugees, the daily wages for work fell from around 60 TRY to 20 TRY (Kirişci, 2014). It is estimated that the number of Syrians who have taken up employment in Türkiye is between 500 000 and one million. However, according to the data of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the number of Syrians who obtained a work permit in Türkiye in the following years amounted to: 2,541 in 2014; 4,019 in 2015; 13,290 in 2016; 20,966 in 2017; 34,573 in 2018; 63,789 in 2019; 62,369 in 2020; 91,500 in 2021 (T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, 2014–2021). Despite the visible increase in work permits issued to Syrians in subsequent years, estimates show that their presence in the illegal labor market is very significant (in 2017, of the 940,921 Syrians working in Türkiye, 91.6% (862,039) worked

illegally) mainly in such branches as: agriculture, production, construction, trade and the hotel industry (Pinedo Caro, 2020, p. 12).

In turn, with the increase in the number of Syrian refugees in Türkiye, there has been a vigorous economic activity within this community. As early as in 2014, bakeries, travel agencies and restaurants owned by Syrians started operating in Istanbul, Gaziantep and other Turkish cities (Kirişçi, 2014). Representatives of the Syrian community, who have become an integral part of Turkish cities and towns, contributed to the creation of over 15 000 new companies in Türkiye, employing nearly 100 000 people (Lepeska, 2019) (including Turkish citizens).

One of the phenomena that became noticeable after the arrival of Syrian refugees and began to create a conflict between the local community and immigrants, have been marriages between Turkish men and Syrian women (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015, p. 16). According to the Turkish Statistics Institute (TÜİK), 6 495 Syrian women married Turkish men in 2016 (TÜİK, 2021). Syrians are also the most numerous group of foreign women who get married with Turks (Baladi, 2017). In 2020, 14.8% of foreign brides marrying Turks were women from Syria (the next places were taken by Azerbaijani women – 10.5% and German women – 9.4%) (TÜİK, 2021). Marriages between members of both communities are especially noticeable in Kilis, Şanlıurfa, and Hatay. Official statistics do not arouse particular concern, as most marriages with Syrians are concluded in the religious tradition (therefore, they are not officially registered). This, in turn, contributes to the intensification of polygamy and even marriages with children. In Kilis, where the Syrian population exceeds the local population, marriages to more than one woman are already common (Bülbül 2016) and it is estimated that 20% of divorces are caused by marrying a Syrian bride (as second and subsequent wife) (Orhan, Gündoğar 2015: 16). According to ECPAT's "Report on the scale, scope and context of the sexual exploitation of children" in Türkiye, 1.4 million of all refugees were under the age of 15, and more than 800,000 were between the ages of 15 and 24 (Nickolds, Ballez, 2020). Therefore, there is a very high risk of refugee children being exposed to underage marriage, human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Some Syrian families decide to sell their daughters to Turkish men to cope with the difficult economic situation and lack of family resources. Some marriages between Turks and Syrians (described by Noura Nahas as "sheikh provided contracts") (Baladi, 2018) are a consequence of the difficult social situation of many Syrian women, because apart from the fact that they are refugees, they are often widowed or divorced.

Therefore, they agree to marry a Turk without any conditions (not even material conditions, which is a feature that distinguishes them from many Turkish wives). However, in many cases of such marriages, divorces occur. Such a phenomenon is influenced, among others, by different approaches to numerous matters, as well as recognition of different traditions and customs.

Conclusions

The process of migrants' adaptation to the new environment is very complex and takes place on many different levels. It is conditioned both by political factors in the host country, as well as by social, cultural and economic factors. Migrants settling in a given place must also adapt to new legal conditions, regulations, but also the existing norms and values in the new place. Apart from the fact that they are living in a culturally different community, they often have to struggle with stereotypes or changing social moods. Nevertheless, it is also the attitude of the migrant that is one of the most important factors influencing behaviors and attitudes towards migrants among the local community. Bilateral relations, often perceived as a result of the above-mentioned factors, simultaneously determine the mutual attitudes of both groups.

The arrival of Syrian refugees in Türkiye also had numerous consequences for the country and its individual provinces and cities. Refugees have significantly changed the demographic structure of many places. The negative effects have become noticeable in the healthcare system and overcrowded hospitals, or restrictions on access to drinking water for all members of a given urban space. The stay of a large number of refugees also generates huge costs for cities, e.g. in the field of energy or public transport. Problems also affected the relationship between the local community and newcomers from Syria. Taking into account the consequences that appear in the cases selected for the analysis, it should be stated that the changes taking place in Turkish cities are of a similar nature. Some of the important issues are, among others, an increase in rental prices for flats, problems with public services or the employment of refugees on the illegal labor market. All this generates a conflict with the local community.

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