

Forced displacement and access to the labour market: The case of Gaziantep

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This report entails an overview and analysis of the location of forced migrant labour in the specific case of Gaziantep which is a good case of an export-based growth neoliberal city in Turkey. As of June 2020, there are 448.891¹ Syrian refugees reside in Gaziantep and they amount to 21.6%² in Gaziantep. Gaziantep, bordering with Syria, has to some extent recently developed an infrastructure around Syrian refugees with the arrival of Syrians, including businesses mainly in textile, logistics, footwear and plastic sectors established by Syrian refugees, and adopted an economic integration model through businesses established by Syrians and is also a city where national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) actively work around the settlement process of refugees. There are various displaced groups reside in Gaziantep for instance, the Armenians, the Jews, Iraqis, Kurds and Syrians. While some of these displaced people work in informal economy, for instance in Gaziantep where the agricultural labour wage is at the lowest, there is a high concentration of Syrian and Iraqi workers, others establish small and medium scale of businesses. Displaced people in Gaziantep, especially Syrians, are heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, generation, social class, etc. There are Kurdish, Turkmen, Arab, Shi, Dom, Abdal, Armenian, Yazidis, Assyrian Syrian nationals; Palestinian and Iranian refugees coming from Syria; working-, middle- and upper-class Syrians and Iraqis; and Syrians from diverse religious backgrounds, including Christians and Muslim Alawites and Sunnis, settled in various cities of Turkey. This of course necessitates a scrutinization of the location of the displaced and particularly forced migrant labor in interaction with class dynamics as well as the variegated legal regimes (carried out with actors of various scale) that shape this interaction. The fragmented legal geography of rights and the local and international institutional actors these draw into the picture are crucial for understanding this interplay. The report aims to answer the questions of how different forms of migrants are located in labour market and different forms of what? of the city; how different local, national and international institutions including the presence of European institutions do correlate the picture of different legal registers; how the wealth is generated; how are different discursive and institutional sources pulled in; how do forced migrants become part of the labour? In what terms and conditions?

Keywords: forced displacement; labour market; displaced people; Gaziantep; Turkey

Introduction

Gaziantep, bordering with Syria, is an economic centre for Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey, and thus is ideally located to become a local industrial and commercial centre. It plays an important role in the Turkish economy with its industrial and commercial infrastructure; the city acts as a bridge between important regions due to its geographical location in a

¹ For DCMM's recent statistics on demographics of Syrians under temporary protection in cities and at camps, see <https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27> (Accessed 14 May 2020).

² Ibid.

commercial center.³ At the export of Gaziantep on country-basis; Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria rank at the first three rows.⁴ The city has to some extent recently developed an infrastructure around Syrian refugees with the arrival of Syrians, and economic relations between Aleppo and Gaziantep have increased more. Gaziantep is the second city after Istanbul and in the Southeast of Turkey that has the highest number of Syrian refugees in Turkey. One of the main reasons why Gaziantep has a good number of Syrian refugee population is related to their aspiration of remaining close to Syria and carrying on the cross-border trade relationship. Over 445,000 Syrian refugees live in Gaziantep and many of them have decided to start their own businesses; even though 80% of those were unofficial in 2016.⁵ The Syrian Economic Forum (SEF), an organization based in Gaziantep which aims to work to strengthen and enforce the Syrian economy to support democratic life and sustainable development among the Syrian population⁶, which estimated the number of companies founded or co-founded by Syrians in fact to be over 10,000 when the informal sector is included.⁷ According to the Deputy Executive Director of SEF, in Gaziantep alone, 1,250 Syrian companies are registered with the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce and Industry.⁸

The presence of Syrians has not only contributed to the economic growth of Turkey, they have also filled labour needs of the sector. The Syrian workforce has been in high demand in sectors facing labour shortages and the number of informally employed forced displaced people has increased. Prior to the refugee flow, approximately half of the labour force in Gaziantep had been already employed informally. With the arrival of Syrians, the number of informally employed workers have dramatically increased.⁹ Displaced people in Gaziantep, especially Syrians, are heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, generation, social class, etc. There are Kurdish, Turkmen, Arab, Shi, Dom, Abdal, Armenian, Yazidis, Assyrian Syrian nationals; Palestinian and Iranian refugees coming from Syria; working-, middle- and upper-class Syrians and Iraqis; and Syrians from diverse religious backgrounds, including Christians and Muslim Alawites and Sunnis, settled in various cities of Turkey. This of course necessitates a scrutinization of the location of the displaced and particularly forced migrant labor in interaction with class dynamics as well as the variegated legal regimes (carried out with actors of various scale) that shape this interaction. The fragmented legal geography of rights and the local and international institutional actors these draw into the picture are crucial for understanding this interplay. Through reviewing the available literature on displaced people in the labour market in Turkey, policy regulations and case studies, the report aims to answer the questions of how different forms of migrants are located in labour market and different forms of what? of the city; how different local, national and international institutions including the presence of European institutions do correlate the picture of different legal registers; how the wealth is generated; how are different discursive and institutional sources pulled in; how do forced migrants become part of the labour? In what terms and

³ Serap Gültekin (2011), 'Gaziantep: Executive Summary Economic Sectoral Review & Cluster Selection', SME Networking Project, September 2011, <http://www.smenetworking.gov.tr/userfiles/pdf/ekonomikanalizler/ExecutiveSummaryEconomicSectoralReviewGaziantepFinal.pdf>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Syrian entrepreneurs strengthen economy of Turkey's Gaziantep, TRT World, 20 February 2018, <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/syrian-entrepreneurs-strengthen-economy-of-turkey-s-gaziantep-15360>

⁶ Syrian Economic Forum (SEF) <https://www.syrianef.org/home/>

⁷ Luana Sarmini-Buonaccorsi (2018), 'Syrian entrepreneurs thrive in Turkey', Oman Daily Observer, 16 May 2018, <https://www.omanobserver.om/syrian-entrepreneurs-thrive-in-turkey/>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Sebestyen, G.; Dyjas, B. and Kuyumcu, M. I. (2018) 'Establishing the Formal Economic Identity of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Case of Gaziantep', *Journal of Turkish Social Sciences Research*, 3(2): 71- 87.

conditions? It aims to entail an overview and analysis of the location of forced migrant labour in the specific case of Gaziantep which is a good case of an export-based growth neoliberal city in Turkey.

This report is divided into the following sections. First, it sets out an overview of Gaziantep in terms of the labour market. Second, it outlines the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey. The reasons of focusing on the Syrian community are that they consist of the majority of informal workers in Gaziantep, and they also contribute to the labour market through establishing businesses. Third, using secondary sources, it explores the experiences of forced migrants in the labour market including their working conditions, social capital, class, their entrepreneurial activities. and the role of NGOs and INGOs in the settlement process of refugees in Gaziantep.

An overview of Gaziantep and the labour market

Gaziantep, a sprawling industrial city located southeast of the Anatolia Region in Turkey, represents an important case of an export-based growth neoliberal city for numerous reasons. First, the city has been positioned as a gateway to regional markets in terms of regional capacity, employment capacity and export potential, as it is one of the most important production centres in many sectors of industry in Turkey economically growing during the last decade. According to the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce, manufacturing industry stands out as one of the most powerful aspects of Gaziantep among other economic units including industries mainly in textile, food, metal and machinery, chemical, plastic, shoes, leather and processed leather products, wood products and furniture, and manufacturing of paper products, and by supporting its industry with international fairs it organises, it increases production power to higher levels. Gaziantep was home to a significant proportion of industrial investments, ranking fourth in Turkey.¹⁰ As a result of being a famous trade city on the Silk Road, Gaziantep has a prosperous private sector and regional as well as international trade networks. Due to the long-standing historical and economic relations between Aleppo and Gaziantep as these cities were part of the same region under the Ottoman empire, economic relations between Turkey and Syria have increased after the Syrian civil war. One of the main reasons for Syrian refugees to prefer to live in Gaziantep is being close to Syria and expanding the cross-border trade relationship between Aleppo and Gaziantep.

Second, there are various internally displaced groups reside in Gaziantep for instance, the Armenians, the Jews, Iraqis, Kurds and Syrians. While some of these displaced people work in informal economy, for instance in Gaziantep where the agricultural labour wage is at the lowest, there is a high concentration of Syrian and Iraqi workers, others establish small and medium scale of businesses. A recent report published by the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), Syrian refugees established 778 businesses in the first half of 2018; 7,243 businesses have been established by Syrians in the last seven years.¹¹ The report also indicates that 13 per cent of newly established companies in Turkey have a Syrian partner.¹²

Third, the economic growth is likely related to informal market activities as approximately half of the labour force in Gaziantep had been already employed informally prior to the refugee flow.¹³ In

¹⁰ Sebestyen, G.; Dyjas, B. and Kuyumcu, M. I. (2018) 'Establishing the Formal Economic Identity of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Case of Gaziantep', *Journal of Turkish Social Sciences Research*, 3(2): 71- 87.

¹¹ The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV)'s report on Syrian businesses, 2 July 2018, http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/15305181213.TEPAV_Suriye_Sermayeli_Sirketler_Bulteni____Mayis_2018.pdf.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tumen, S. (2016). 'The economic impact of Syrian Refugees on host countries: Quasi-Experimental evidence from Turkey. *American Economic Review*, 106(5), 456-46; Sebestyen, G.; Dyjas, B. and Kuyumcu, M. I. (2018)

Turkey, firms often rely on some form of undeclared labour which can take the form of waged labour, self-employment, 'paid favours' or family work.¹⁴ According to Turkish Statistical Institute¹⁵, one in every three Turkish workers is employed informally meaning that they are working under precarious conditions without social security. According to recent statistics by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, in June 2018 in Gaziantep 34% of Turkish employees were working informally.¹⁶ Between 2009 and 2017, the informal labour force of Turkish citizens has clearly declined.¹⁷ With the outbreak of the conflict, the Syrian workforce has been in high demand in sectors facing labour shortages and the number of informally employed forced displaced people has increased. Syrians mostly access informal markets due to accessing work permits being difficult, lack of language skills and low levels of education. According to a survey conducted by the Turkish Red Crescent in 2019 represents that 20.7% of the Syrian workers in education are employed in irregular jobs and 92% of those Syrians employed in the agricultural sector.¹⁸ In fact, according to a report published by the Crisis Group, as of January 2018, an estimated 750,000–950,000 Syrians currently work in the informal sector.¹⁹ However, according to the Interior Minister of Turkey, only around 76,443 work permits have been issued by 2019.²⁰ As a result of being forced to work in the informal economy, Syrians experience exploitation; they are overworked, underpaid and have no social security or pension rights.²¹ The arrival of refugee workers allowed businesses in Gaziantep to employ refugees informally and reduce labour costs. The difficulties of being granted to work permit refugees end up accepting lower wages and not having social security.

Fourth, Gaziantep has the second highest number of Syrian refugees in Turkey. As of June 2020, there are 448.891²² Syrian refugees reside in Gaziantep and they amount to 21.6%²³ in Gaziantep. With the arrival of Syrians, Gaziantep has to some extent recently developed an infrastructure around Syrian refugees, including businesses mainly in textile, logistics, footwear and plastic sectors established by Syrian refugees, and adopted an economic integration model through businesses established by Syrians. According to the International Crisis Group's recent report, as of December 2017, there were about 8,000 registered Syrian businesses in Turkey and about 10,000 unregistered enterprises.²⁴ According to a study conducted by Building Markets, Syrian enterprises employ on average 9.4 Syrians, the majority

'Establishing the Formal Economic Identity of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Case of Gaziantep', *Journal of Turkish Social Sciences Research*, 3(2): 71- 87.

¹⁴ Korkmaz, E. E. (2017). How do Syrian refugee workers challenge supply chain management in the Turkish garment industry?, *Working Paper 133*, International Migration Institute, University of Oxford.; Sebestyen, G.; Dyjas, B. and Kuyumcu, M. I. (2018) 'Establishing the Formal Economic Identity of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Case of Gaziantep', *Journal of Turkish Social Sciences Research*, 3(2): 71- 87.

¹⁵ Turkish Statistical Institute, Labour Force Statistics, March 2019, <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=30683>

¹⁶ Atasu-Topcuoglu, R. (2019) 'Syrian Refugee Entrepreneurs in Turkey: Integration and the Use of Immigrant Capital in the Informal Economy', *Social Inclusion*, 7(4): 200-21.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/MnE_Livelihoods_Survey_Findings_03042019.pdf

¹⁹ 'Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions', International Crisis Group, Report No: 248, 29 January 2018, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/248-turkeys-syrian-refugees-defusing-metropolitan-tensions>

²⁰ <https://t24.com.tr/haber/suleyman-soylu-bu-gune-kadar-76-bin-443-suriyeliye-vatandaslik-verdik,791996> ²¹ Simsek, D. (2018) 'Integration processes of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Class-based integration', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fey057/5139595>.

²² For DCMM's recent statistics on demographics of Syrians under temporary protection in cities and at camps, see <https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27> (Accessed 14 May 2020).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ 'Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions', International Crisis Group, Report No: 248, 29 January 2018, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/248-turkeys-syrian-refugees-defusing-metropolitan-tensions>

of whom previously worked in the informal sector.²⁵ A recent report published by The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), Syrian refugees established 778 businesses in the first half of 2018 and 473 of these businesses are based in Istanbul; 7,243 businesses have been established by Syrians in the last seven years.²⁶ The report also indicates that 13 per cent of newly established companies in Turkey have a Syrian partner.²⁷ Syrian entrepreneurs have been visible in the manufacturing, textile, catering and service sectors, as well as in trading, and their businesses have been supported by the Gaziantep municipality through easing procedures for Syrians' opening manufacturing businesses in the organised industry district called GATEM.²⁸

Fifth, Gaziantep is also a city where national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) actively work around the settlement process of refugees. Gaziantep has adopted an economic integration model through businesses established by Syrians and is also a city where national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) actively work around refugee integration (Simsek 2018). While government bodies, such as the Turkish Red Crescent, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) provide basic services with the help of national and international NGOs. The services have been implemented for refugees by national NGOs includes, but not limited to, money assistance, outreach monitoring and 'integration' programs. The Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM), provide several basic services including legal, social and medical counselling; 'social cohesion'²⁹ activities; psycho-social services and protection programs.³⁰ Similar to ASAM, Kamer Foundation also fulfil the basic needs of refugee women, such as legal consultancy, health and vocational courses.³¹ In addition to those national NGOs, there is a small number of local organizations have been taking an active role in raising social awareness regarding refugees through the projects they have been implementing. One of these local organizations is Kırkayak Kültür, was established in 2011, which conducts field research in and around Gaziantep area and run social cohesion projects, including social, cultural and art activities to help empowering of socially and culturally disadvantaged groups, such as Dom displaced communities from Syria in Turkey and Middle East countries, at risk.³² Apart from Kırkayak Kültür which have rights-based approach, there are also value-based associations in Gaziantep, such as Bülbülzade Foundation which provide educational facilities, language classes, vocational courses, financial supports as well as Arabic newspaper and radio broadcasts for Syrians.³³ Some of these local organizations receive grants from the European Union and donations from international organizations for instance, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Danske Diakonhjem (DEACON), and GIZ (Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), and conduct joint projects with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

²⁵ 'Another Side to the Story: A Market Assessment of Syrian SMEs in Turkey', Building Markets, June 2017. <https://buildingmarkets.org/sites/default/files/pdmreports/anotherstidetothe-story-a-market-assessment-of-syrian-smes-in-turkey.pdf>.

²⁶ The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV)'s report on Syrian businesses, 2 July 2018, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/15305181213.TEPAVSuriyeSermayeliSirketlerBulteniMayis2018.pdf>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Atasu-Topcuoglu, R. (2019) 'Syrian Refugee Entrepreneurs in Turkey: Integration and the Use of Immigrant Capital in the Informal Economy', *Social Inclusion*, 7(4): 200-21.

²⁹ 'Social cohesion' is used instead of 'integration' Turkish authorities and related organizations

³⁰ Kalaylioglu, Y. (2017) 'Field note: Civil Society Organisations in the Refugee Reception in Gaziantep and Izmir', (November 2017), https://lajeh.hypotheses.org/955#_ftn5

³¹ Kamer Foundation, <https://www.kamer.org.tr/eng/>

³² Kırkayak Kültür, <http://www.kirkayak.org/>

³³ Kalaylioglu, Y. (2017) 'Field note: Civil Society Organisations in the Refugee Reception in Gaziantep and Izmir', (November 2017), <https://lajeh.hypotheses.org/955#ftn5>.

(UNICEF).³⁴ These local NGOs have been cooperating with Gaziantep municipality in providing services for refugees. The municipality has also been influential in responding the needs of refugees through establishing centres in the refugee neighbourhoods.

Besides national NGOs, there are many INGOs operating on Turkey come from Western countries, including Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark and are funded by their government or the European Union to run projects aiming the ‘integration’ of refugees and keep them in Turkey.³⁵ At the beginning of the displaced Syrians movement to Turkey, INGOs offered humanitarian aid, such as shelter, food, clothes inside Turkey. For instance, UK based Care International provides humanitarian aid to the refugees in Gaziantep. As the number of Syrians in Turkey increased and long term needs to be met, they have started to diversify their projects and focus more on projects supporting livelihood, child and youth activities, and socio-cultural and psycho-social support.³⁶ The main services INGOs implement cover registration, legal assistance and repatriation, education and language, and livelihood. Most of their projects are aimed to support integration and livelihood of refugees. However, some of these INGOs, such as International Medical Corps, Mercy Corps, and DanChurchAid were closed by the Turkish government due to them being cooperating with Syrian Kurds, and providing them with humanitarian aid, especially in and around Kobani (Aras and Duman 2018: 480). The next session follows the discussion of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Syrian refugees in Turkey

Turkey has been receiving refugees displaced by the on-going war in Syria since 2011. Despite the number of Syrian refugees settled in Turkey standing at over 3,5 million, Turkey has yet to introduce an effective right-based policy covering all inclusion domains. Since the crisis in Syria began, Turkey adopted an “open door” policy for Syrians, opening refugee camps in the provinces of southeast Turkey alone. Turkey is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Additional Protocol on the status of refugees in Turkey, however Turkey applies a geographical limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention. In line with the geographical limitation, asylum rights are limited only to Europeans whereas Syrians who have fled to Turkey are not recognized as “refugees”.

In October 2011, the Turkish government adopted a Temporary Protection (TP) regime for all Syrians, ensuring nonrefoulement protection, humanitarian assistance and no limit on the duration of stay in Turkey. The rights of Syrian nationals in Turkey include a lawful stay in Turkey until the conflict ends in Syria and access to health, education, social assistance and the labour market. Access to the labour market has been stated as a granted right for Syrians in the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in 2014 and the implementation has been left to the Ministry of Social Security and Work. In January 2016, Turkey issued a new regulation allowing registered Syrian refugees to apply for work permits. However, accessing work permits is difficult and depends upon employers’ willingness to offer contracts of employment and for refugees to have held Turkish identification documents for at least six months. In fact, as stated in the previous section, according to the Interior Minister of Turkey, only around 76,443 work permits have been issued by 2019.³⁷ According to a report published by the Crisis Group, as of January 2018, an estimated 750,000–950,000 Syrians currently work in the informal

³⁴ Aras, B. and Duman, Y. (2019) ‘INGOs’ Assistance to Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Opportunities and Challenges’, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 21:4, 478-491.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ ‘Süleyman Soylu: Bu güne kadar 76 bin 443 Suriyeliye vatandaşlık verdik’, T24, 7 January 2019, <https://t24.com.tr/haber/suleyman-soylu-bu-gune-kadar-76-bin-443-suriyeliye-vatandaslik-verdik.791996>

sector.³⁸ According to a study conducted by Building Markets, Syrian enterprises employ on average 9.4 Syrians, the majority of whom previously worked in the informal sector.³⁹ This clearly shows that the majority of Syrians are working in an informal economy without social security, faced with exploitation around the lack of safe working conditions, overworked and underpaid, which causes the exclusion of many refugees from wider society.

As of June 2020, the number of Syrian refugees in Turkey reached 3,581,636 million⁴⁰ (excluding the unregistered), 63,137⁴¹ whom prefer to reside in towns and cities rather than in camps, including the border cities and metropolitan areas, where they experience limited access to accommodation, social services and job opportunities. The rising number of Syrian nationals living in cities opens up discussions around issues of permanency, economic stabilization, political representation and accessibility of public services, for both the refugees and wider society.⁴² Syrians in Turkey are heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, generation, social class, etc. There are Kurdish, Turkmen, Arab, Shi, Dom, Abdal, Armenian, Yazidis, Assyrian Syrian nationals; Palestinian and Iranian refugees coming from Syria; working-, middle- and upper-class Syrians; and Syrians from diverse religious backgrounds, including Christians and Muslim Alawites and Sunnis, settled in various cities of Turkey. According to research conducted by Erdogan (2014) on the social acceptance of Syrians in Turkey, Syrians are represented as a burden to the country, criminals, murderers and rapists; this shape public perception of them and increases the level of discrimination that Syrians face in the society.⁴³ The rising number of Syrian nationals living in cities opens discussions around issues of permanency, economic stabilization, political representation and accessibility of public services both for the refugees and wider society.

While a small proportion of Syrian refugees are supported within camps, there are also those who have successfully settled on their own and contribute to the local economy. Syrians also enter the labour market by establishing businesses. A recent report published by The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), Syrian refugees established 778 businesses in the first half of 2018 and 473 of these businesses are based in Istanbul; 7,243 businesses have been established by Syrians in the last seven years.⁴⁴ The report also indicates that 13 per cent of newly established companies in Turkey have a Syrian partner.¹² There is a working permit for Syrians in Turkey, but they cannot easily become a citizen of Turkey. According to the International Crisis Group's recent report, as of December 2017, there were about 10,000 unregistered enterprises.⁴⁵ These businesses are established in Istanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep, Hatay, Şanlıurfa, Mardin and Kilis and numerous Syrian businesspeople contribute

³⁸ 'Turkey's Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions', International Crisis Group, Report No: 248, 29 January 2018, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/248-turkeys-syrian-refugees-defusing-metropolitan-tensions>.

³⁹ 'Another Side to the Story: A Market Assessment of Syrian SMEs in Turkey', Building Markets, June 2017. <https://buildingmarkets.org/sites/default/files/pdmreports/anotherstidetotheoryamarketassessmentofsyriansmesinturkey.pdf>.

⁴⁰ For DCMM's recent statistics on demographics of Syrians under temporary protection in cities and at camps, see http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik <https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Simsek, D. (2018) 'Integration processes of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Class-based integration', Journal of Refugee Studies, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fey057/5139595>.

⁴³ Erdogan, M. (2014) "Syrians in Turkey: Social Acceptance and Integration Research", Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Centre (HUGO) Report, <http://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hugo/dosyalar/TurkiyedekiSuriyelilerSyrians%20in%20Turkey-Rapor-TR-EN-19022015.pdf>.

⁴⁴ The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV)'s report on Syrian businesses, 2 July 2018, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/files/15305181213.TEPAVSuriyeSermayeliSirketlerBulteniMayis2018.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

to the Turkish economy by investing their capital in Turkey.⁴⁶ There are other fundamental rights for Syrians; however, especially regarding work permits, there are visible barriers to full participation within the formal economy. However, the way to be an entrepreneur is not prevented in Turkey, which is different from many European countries.⁴⁷ In Europe, there are barriers for refugees trying to establish businesses. For instance, refugees suffer more from barriers in establishing business than other immigrants in Belgium.⁴⁸ Turkey therefore implements a self-sufficient model for refugees.⁴⁹

With the mass movement of Syrians from Turkey to Europe since the summer of 2015, the EU's response to Syrian migration has moved towards stopping the flows of refugees and irregular migrants. The number of refugees arriving in Europe and seeking international protection increased from 542,680 in 2014 to 1,255,640 in 2015.⁵⁰ After a new wave of refugees arrived in Europe in the summer of 2015, the EU collaborated with Turkey to control and reduce the flow of refugees arriving in Europe. On 18 March 2016, the EU agreed with Turkey upon a "one in, one out" deal.⁵¹ In exchange, the EU committed to: a) re-energise Turkey's accession process by establishing structured and more frequent high level dialogue with Turkey and opening new negotiation chapters; b) accelerate the lifting of visa requirements for Turkish citizens in the Schengen zone by October 2016; and c) provide an initial six billion Euros to improve the situation of Syrians in Turkey.⁵² As part of the deal, through the cash payment programme to alleviate the worst cases of poverty refugee households have been receiving monthly payments of TL120 under a scheme administered by the World Food Programme and the Turkish Red Crescent. Following a year of implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement of 18 March 2016, the number of refugees crossing to Europe and the loss of lives declined, according to the fifth report on the progress made in the implementation of the EU- Turkey Statement.⁵³ The European Commission stated that daily crossings have gone down from 10,000 in a single day in October 2015 to an average of around 43 in 2017.⁵⁴

Even though daily crossings dropped 97% between 2015 and 2017, the EU-Turkey Statement has been receiving criticism from human rights organizations and rights-based NGOs for regarding Turkey as a "safe third country" and not ensuring the safety of refugees. The EU has five criteria for a country to be considered as a 'safe third country': i) the life and liberty of asylum claimants and refugees will not be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; ii) there is no risk of serious harm as defined in Directive 2011/95/EU; iii) the principle of non-refoulement is respected; iv) the prohibition of removal, in violation of the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is respected; and e) the possibility

⁴⁶ Orhan, O., and Gundogar, S. (2015) "Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey", Orsam Report no.195, Ankara: Orsam.

⁴⁷ Simsek, D. (2018) 'Integration processes of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Class-based integration', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fev057/5139595>.

⁴⁸ Wauters, B. and Lambrecht, J. (2008) 'Barriers to Refugee Entrepreneurship in Belgium: Towards an Explanatory Model', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 34(6): 895-915.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Asylum in the EU Member States, "Record Number of over 1.2 Million First Time Asylum Seekers Registered in 2015", at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf>.

⁵¹ Ahmet İçduygu and Şule Toktaş, "After the EU- Turkey Refugee Deal: A Perspective from Turkey", Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, at <https://www.clingendael.nl/publication/after-eu-turkey-refugee-deal-perspective-turkey>.

⁵² İçduygu, A. and Şimşek, D. (2017) "Bargaining over Refugees: Turkey's View", *Beyond Migration and Asylum Crisis: Options and Lessons for Europe*, Italy, Aspen Italia Views, pp. 85- 91.

⁵³ European Commission, "Fifth Report on the Progress Made in the Implementation of the EU-Turkey Statement", at <https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170302fifthreportontheprogressmadeintheimplementationoftheeuturkeystatementen.pdf>.

⁵⁴ European Commission, EU-Turkey Statement one year on, at https://ec.europa.eu/homeaffairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/eu_turkey_statement_17032017_en.pdf.

exists to request refugee status and, if found to be a refugee, to be accorded Refugee Convention Protection.⁵⁵ The EU has presumed Turkey as a “safe third country” regardless of whether Turkey fits all five of the above criteria. Although, Turkey does not provide “refugee status” to people coming from a non-European country due to the geographical limitation, and does not recognize the rights of refugees mentioned in the Convention, the presumption of Turkey as a “safe-third country” is mainly based on ensuring non-refoulement protection and access to fundamental rights. According to the Statement, Turkey needs to ensure access to effective asylum procedures for all persons in need of international protection.⁵⁶ There are also claims of unlawful practices which are carried out against the principles of the LFIP in a deportation centre for irregular migrants.⁵⁷ Apart from ensuring access to effective asylum procedures, according to the Statement, Turkey also needs to guarantee that the rights of all refugees need to be safeguarded in line with the Refugee Convention.⁵⁸ However, research illustrate that many Syrians have experienced struggles to access the labour market, education, health care and housing that are essential for refugees, and which need to be guaranteed.⁵⁹ The EU has also received criticism for not providing safe and legal ways for asylum seekers to reach other European countries for family reunification, relocation or humanitarian visas. It is stated that thousands of asylum seekers in Greece are trapped in deplorable and volatile conditions, with many denied access to adequate asylum procedures by human rights and humanitarian aid organisations.⁶⁰ The EU should offer humane reception conditions to people who are in need of help, improve the situation of asylum seekers in the Greek islands, transfer them to mainland Greece for their cases to be processed rather than return them to Turkey, and take its fair share of responsibility.

On 2 July 2016, the Turkish President announced that millions of Syrians living in Turkey would be granted citizenship. Granting full citizenship is an important development but it is not clear whether it would include all Syrians under temporary protection. According to the Ministry of Interior of Turkey, the number of the Syrians granted Turkish citizenship as of March 8, 2019 was 79,894 people. As of November 2018, the number of Syrian babies born already in Turkey (during the last 8 years) was 405,521. The Deputy Prime Minister said that: “Citizenship will be granted initially based on criteria such as employment, education level, wealth, and urgency of one’s situation.”⁶¹ Although Turkey has taken important steps towards the integration of Syrian refugees into Turkey, more needs to be done, especially on the current status of Syrians. The authorities should provide a clear legal provision on the status of Syrians and should have an inclusive definition of citizenship.⁶² Not extending the citizenship to all Syrians also highlights selectivity on their integration that discriminates between Syrians in terms of their social class, profession and skills.

⁵⁵ Art.38, para.1, APD; Refworld, Section 12: The Safe Third Country Concept, pp.2-3, at <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=4bab55e22>

⁵⁶ European Commission-Press release, “Six Principles for Further Developing EU-Turkey Cooperation in Tackling the Migration Crisis”, at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-830_en.htm,

⁵⁷ Orcun Ulusoy, “Turkey as a Safe Third Country?”, at <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/researchsubject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2016/03/turkeysafe-third>

⁵⁸ European Commission-Press release, “Six principles for further developing EU-Turkey cooperation in tackling the migration crisis”, at https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_16_830.

⁵⁹ Simsek, D. (2018) ‘Integration processes of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Class-based integration’, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fey057/5139595>;
Simsek, D. (2019) ‘Transnational activities of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Hindering or supporting integration’, *International Migration*, 57(2): 268- 282.

⁶⁰ “Greece: Asylum Seekers in Abysmal Conditions on Islands”, at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/greece-asylum-seekers-in-abysmal-conditions-onislands/>,

⁶¹ DW: ‘Syrian refugees express mixed feelings over Turkish citizenship offer’, 14 July 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/syrian-refugees-express-mixed-feelings-overturkish-citizenship-offer/a-19399783>

⁶² Simsek, D. (2018) ‘Integration processes of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Class-based integration’, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fey057/5139595>.

The settlement and the labour market experience of forced migrants in Gaziantep

Research on the settlement and the labour market experience of forced migrants in Gaziantep is mainly focus on the working conditions of Syrian refugees as they are the ones who are mostly employed in the informal labour market. As a result of being forced to work in the informal economy, Syrians experience exploitation; they are overworked, underpaid and have no social security or pension rights. Struggling to enter into the labour market and not having economic resources have a bad influence on refugees' access to affordable housing and education.⁶³ As stated in the previous section, many Syrians in Gaziantep they are mainly informally employed in textile, logistics, footwear and plastic sectors. The reality for most Syrians in Turkey remains that they work in an informal economy without social security, faced with exploitation and lack safe working conditions. They are overworked and underpaid, with no social security or pension rights. Syrians primarily work in the largely informal agricultural and textile sectors, and with few safety protections. According to figures from the Worker Health and Safety Council⁶⁴ (İşçi Sağlığı ve İş Güvenliği Meclisi), 108 refugees lost their lives in work-related accidents in 2018. In turn, Syrians' low socio-economic status leads to their relative exclusion from wider Turkish society.⁶⁵ Syrians who work in the informal market face difficulties building bridges with the Turkish working class, due to competition over employment opportunities.

The Turkish labour market also poses high exploitation risks for children, given the widespread phenomenon of child labour in areas such as agriculture, textile factories, as well as restaurants in various cities of Turkey.⁶⁶ Kaya and Kırac (2016) argue that at least one child work in almost every third Syrian household in Istanbul.⁶⁷ According to a United Metal Workers Union report, the textile sector employs approximately 19% of underage workers. 29% of these underage workers are Syrian children under the age of 15. In fact, the majority of school-aged Syrian children are working instead of attending school.⁶⁸ Kaya and Kırac's (2016: 28) research shows that "Half of Syrians sending their children to work (26,6 percent) stated that their children work in textile sector (clothing, shoes, etc.) while the others work in service sector (small shops, catering, cafes, restaurants), construction sector and industrial sector (furniture factories, automobile factories, etc.)."⁶⁹ In Gaziantep, many Syrians are informally employed in small workshops that act as subcontractors for larger factories to produce shoes and clothes that are sold across Turkey, the Middle East and Europe. Working conditions can be

⁶³ Simsek, D. (2019) 'Transnational activities of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Hindering or supporting integration', *International Migration*, 57(2): 268- 282.

⁶⁴ Worker Health and Safety Council, 2018, <http://isigmeclisi.org/>

⁶⁵ Simsek, D. (2018) 'Integration processes of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Class-based integration', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fey057/5139595>.

⁶⁶ Education and Protection Programme for Vulnerable Syrian and Host Community School-aged Children, in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhoodenlargement/sites/near/files/eutfmadadactiondocumentforregionaleducation_30062017.pdf

⁶⁷ Kaya, A. and Kırac, A. (2016) 'Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul', *Support to Life*, April, <http://openaccess.bilgi.edu.tr:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11411/823/Vulnerability%20assessment%20of%20Syrian%20refugees%20in%20istanbul%20April%202016.pdf?sequence>.

⁶⁸ Suriyeli Sığınmacıların Türkiye'de Emek Piyasasına Dahil Olma Süreçleri ve Etkileri, *Birleşik Metal-İş*, 2017, <http://www.birlesikmetal.org/kitap/gocmen2017.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Kaya, A. and Kırac, A. (2016) 'Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Istanbul', *Support to Life*, April 2016, <http://openaccess.bilgi.edu.tr:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11411/823/Vulnerability%20assessment%20of%20Syrian%20refugees%20in%20istanbul%20April%202016.pdf?sequence>.

dangerous and pay is far below Turkey's minimum wage of TL480 per week. Children in workshops say the rate for young adults is TL160 per week, with the smallest children receiving just TL50.⁷⁰

While many Syrians experience difficulties in accessing certain rights that are crucial for integration, those who are wealthier do not experience such difficulties. The settlement processes and the experiences of Syrians who engage in entrepreneurial activities in accessing to the labour market is easier compare to the ones who are employed in the informal labour market. Syrians who establish businesses construct social bridges with members of the receiving society through their businesses and engage in socio-cultural activities, thus making their integration processes smoother than those who do not have ready economic resources.⁷¹ The social aspect of settlement process also reflects the role of class, as the Syrians who work longer hours and do not have access to employment construct fewer social connections with members of the receiving society due to being isolated.⁷² Research shows that the experiences of refugees in accessing to the labour market is are highly affected by their class and ethnic background as a result of Turkey's neoliberal migration policy.⁷³ Although it has been highlighted that "the government is becoming more likely to demographically instrumentalize Sunni-Muslim-Arabs to counter balance the ethnonationalist and centrifugal claims of the Kurds"⁷⁴, ethnicity is not a striking dynamic in accessing to the labour market among refugees in Gaziantep.

It can be stated that the presence of INGOs and NGOs is very visible in providing services, such as psyho-social support, food, clothes, legal assistance, education and language which contributes to refugees' access to the formal labour market in the long term. Gaziantep is an important case in understanding a broader view of forced migrant labour in Turkey and the failure of Turkey's neoliberal migration policy. Although, there are various displaced groups reside in Gaziantep for instance, the Armenians, the Jews, Iraqis, Kurds and Syrians, this report mainly focuses on the experiences of Syrian refugees in accessing to the labour market due to lack of information and reliable data on the labour market practices of other displaced groups in Gaziantep. In summary, Turkey's refugee policy favours those skilled contributors to the economy and those refugees with access to financial capital. The Turkish government has pursued a neoliberal approach to the settlement of Syrian refugees, where their economic utility has come to form the main entry point for accessing rights, and this can clearly be seen in the case of Gaziantep. Current policies, therefore, undermine Syrian refugees' access to fundamental rights by making such rights directly conditional to Turkey's economic gain.

⁷⁰ Laura Pitel (2017) 'A day on the factory floor with a young Syrian refugee', *Financial Times*, September 2017,

<https://www.ft.com/content/abd615a4-76d7-11e7-a3e8-60495fe6ca71>

⁷¹ Simsek, D. (2018) 'Integration processes of Syrian refugees in Turkey: Class-based integration', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/jrs/fey057/5139595>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.; Kaya, A. (2016) 'Syrian Refugees and Cultural Intimacy in Istanbul: "I feel safe here!"', *EUI Working Paper RSCAS 2016/59*,

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7f69/70b9dae7f84032e58f0b8447c456ea07424f.pdf?_ga=2.2464436.523849175.1592574584-439281574.1592574584

⁷⁴ Kaya, A. (2016) 'Syrian Refugees and Cultural Intimacy in Istanbul: "I feel safe here!"', *EUI Working Paper RSCAS 2016/59*,

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7f69/70b9dae7f84032e58f0b8447c456ea07424f.pdf?_ga=2.2464436.523849175.1592574584-439281574.1592574584