

Barriers to Social Integration of Syrian Refugees in Turkish Society: Language, Culture, and Identity

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Abstract

The Syrian civil war has become one of the deadliest wars of the 21st century which resulted in tens of millions of people being displaced from their home country. Turkey currently hosts the most of displaced Syrians around the world. Overall, Turkey accepted the refugees with open arms at the start and tried incorporating a temporary protection strategy. That worked for a while but the social integration of these Turkish-Syrian people still seems far from resolved. In this paper, I will be analyzing the issues that hinders the integration of syrian refugees and normal Turks focusing more on the language culture and identity. It is the most basic requirement that a refugee has a basic understanding of Turkish if they wish to access education, employment, and public services. However, many of the refugees are unable to acquire Turkish due to limited resources as well as the day to day struggle that comes with living in poverty. Not only does the difference in culture lead to social tension, stereotypes, and misunderstandings, but identity based discrimination and racialization further isolate refugees from public life. In addition to this, the estimate for discrimination the general public has to face is relative to their education level, the employment opportunities available to them, the housing situation as well as public perception of the person making them even more vulnerable along with women and youth. This research highlights the need for policies that are inclusive and promote critical cross-border dialogues and intersections of resources supporting the need for permanent settlement. Addressing these social and structural hurdles enables Turkey to promote an integrated society that accommodates the needs of both the host community and the refugees.

Keywords: Refugee, Integration, civil war, Identity, Social, Discrimination, NGOs, Government, Strategy, Cooperation

Introduction

The 2011 outbreak of the Syrian civil war marked the beginning of one of the most significant displacement crises in the 21st century. An estimated 13 million people have been forcibly displaced and more than 3.5 million have settled in Turkey. This conflict has had profound impacts on the demographics, social structures, and economy of the country. Turkey's policy of temporary protection was initially geared towards an open-door approach; however, the Syrian conflict's endurance and the magnitude of its displaced population have invited a shift in

conversation from humanitarian assistance to social integration and coexistence. Integration encompasses far more than simply a legal framework and the allocation of services; it requires active participation in social, cultural, economic, and psychological dimensions from both the refugee and host communities. While integration enhances socio-economic and inter-group harmony, the absence of integration can result in social marginalization and heightened tensions between ethnic and national groups, leading to conflicts. Having a large culturally and linguistically distinct refugee population in Turkey has sparked social conversations around social boundaries and cultural compatibility within the nation. As of late, integration is viewed not simply as an accent on a policy problem but rather as a true test of Turkey's prospective pluralism and inclusivity. This document analyzes three primary factors that impact the integration of Syrian refugees into Turkish society: language, culture, and identity. Each matters individually and together form a web that defines the refugees' daily life and their tactical options. Access to the employment market, social life, education, and sociopolitical hierarchy is contingent upon possessing the correct vocabulary mechanism, actively allowing direct communication and opportunities that come with its proficiency (Lindley, A. 2011).

Integration becomes more elusive because of divergence in cultures. Turks and Syrians possess some regional and religious traits in common, but it is their family arrangements, gender perceptions, traditions and social values that set them apart. Tensions encapsulated by these differences bring about powerful stereotypes and bias, which often succeed in permeating the school, neighborhood, and workplace setting where people actually come into contact with one another. The integration of the public perception and sociopolitical narrative surrounding Syrians as economically competitive or culturally alien has been influenced most strongly by the lack of tangible intercultural dialogues. In the crux of the issue of "integration" lies identity. The answer to the problem is anything but simple: It is rooted in individual life stories, identities, and aspirations. Syrian refugees, and more so their children, suffer the paradox of identity: being disconnected from the home country and feeling out of place in host country. All-inclusive identity citizenship and legal framework transformations, lack prospects for meaningful citizenship, and enable these individuals to live in an ambiguous state of being inclusively exclusive. This middle ground creates a identity paradox that severely diminishes the individual's potential and worsens levels of social trust and socialized cohesion most needed in becoming a contributory citizen. On top of that, deeper socio-economic factors such as political populism, social inequality, legal frameworks, and membership create contention by deepening existing structural gaps. Women, youth, and the elderly become vulnerable as these layers first function as barriers isolating them and then intensify to form a multi-dimensional prison dictated by socioeconomic stature. Through capturing the layers of language, culture, identity and other included parts of these perspectives, the study hopes to map out exploitative approaches to inclusion driven fragmentation. It relies on empirical studies, policy documents, and qualitative research to evaluate the attempts made by the Turkish state, civil society, and international organizations alongside the challenges faced. The core argument of this paper is that although there are considerable barriers to integration, these barriers can be overcome. This can be achieved with an optimal mix of policy change, local activism, and intercultural relations (Ager, A. 2008).

Historical and Political Context

The Syrian Conflict and Refugee Crisis

The Syrian conflict that began in 2011 remains one of the most destructive humanitarian crises of contemporary history. The conflict began with peaceful protests against the dictatorship of President Bashar Al Assad. The uprising was met with a brutal and inhumane

counter response, thus the civil war began. With the civil war, many non-state actors and foreign powers intervened, turning Syria into a geopolitical battleground that was torn apart by intra-state sectarian violence, destruction, disintegration of state institutions and violence. The emergence of terrorist organizations like ISIS only worsened the situation, bringing along panic, chaos, and forced migration. The extent of displacement resulting from the war in Syria is unparalleled (Albo, E. 2018).

Over 13 million Syrians have had to flee their homes, as documented by the UNHCR data. Although many remain in the country, 6.6 million people have been able to find refuge in other countries like Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan. Turkey has received the largest share of refugees for two main reasons; it is close to Syria and it was relatively welcoming in the first years of the crisis. Moreover, since 2015, Turkey has sheltered over 3.5 million registered Syrian refugees as “temporarily protected” individuals. This status stems from Turkey’s 2014 Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR), which permits Syrians to access fundamental resources such as education and healthcare. However, it does not grant them long-term residency, refugee status under the 1951 Geneva Convention, or citizenship. This arrangement, in conjunction with the ongoing conflict in Syria, has created a complex situation for these refugees, legally and socially, as every one of them is trying to steer clear of a dull life filled with endless obstacles, and the state is attempting to put these people in a concrete framework to carry out integration work. As a result, the lives of the people and the government become more complex, and the efforts to foster integration become challenged. Turkey’s provisions provided some form of safety, and when response came global attention, many had a negative impression of how refugees live. With the help of international organizations, Turkey constructed refugee camps along its borders and began the provision of humanitarian aid. This swift approach helped economically unstable regions. The increasing inflow of refugees gradually transformed the border camps into urban and semi-urban centers, which is where over 90% of the Syrians now reside. This dispersion has caused an increase in the need for services such as healthcare, employment, housing, and education which vertical competition with Turkish citizens and the Syrian refugees for the already scarce services available. There was a point when the Turkish public was sympathetic to the plight of the Syrian refugees but this changed when they started becoming more prominent in Turkish cities (Hollified, J.F. 2014). There was a significant economic decline which made unemployment and inflation rise, leading to the belief that the Syrian refugees were being supported more than was reasonable, further adding to the economic turmoil. The discourse around the issue of refugees has become more divided along political lines. Nationalists have increasingly portrayed refugees as an attack on the indigenous population and their as alien interlopers shifting blame for domestic issues. This growing negative perception has resulted in the selective violence and social isolation of refugees, politically motivated violence and abuse of the issue during election periods. Another important factor that needs to be considered in the context of inclusive outcomes is the socio-demographic profile of Syrian refugees. Numerous studies show that around half of the Syrian refugees are below eighteen years and many of them do not have any memories of their home country because most of them were born in Turkey.

This young demographic both provides opportunities and comes with challenges. Integration barriers, like identity struggles and educational disruptions, are complex, but with the right support they can be fully integrated members of the Turkish society. Moreover, the gender dynamics of the refugee population reveal other aspects of vulnerability. Particularly uneducated women, and those heading households, face intersectional inequalities. Their limited reproductive healthcare access, higher risk of violence, and exclusion from paid work

restrict both their economic potential and societal integration. This influx of Syrian refugees is not simply an added number to the population; they change the social logic of the country, impacting national identity, economic policy, urban planning, and communal relations. Turkey has put considerable effort into including this population, but many sociocultural, political, and structural issues still hinder their long-term integration. The integration of this population poses new challenges, such as the need to prioritize strategic over emergency responses, transforming these communities from a temporary aid environment into one where identity, culture, and language integrate facilitating holistic framework integration in a host society (Atalay, Z. 2015).

Turkish Policies of Integrating Refugees

The integration policies that Turkey had for Syrian refugees underwent a considerable shift since the start of the crisis in 2011. Because of its geographic position, Turkey became the primary host country for displaced people after the onset of the conflict. In the beginning, the country provided shelter and basic humanitarian aid to the refugees. As the conflict dragged on and the number of refugees increased, Turkey transitioned from an emergency response framework to a more structured, long-term policy approach. This new method is beneficial for providing humanitarian aid, although it still struggles in terms of integrating these people into the existing Turkish culture and society (Kirsic, K. 2014).

Framework of Temporary Protection

The cornerstone of Turkey's policy around refugees is built on The Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR), which has set in place in 2014. This particular framework sought to provide basic rights and primary relief to the Syrian refugees by ensuring health services, social welfare, and education was accessible. One thing that should be noted is the fact that the status of temporary protection does not mean that there is full displacement. While TPR does provide basic rights such as the ability to work, health, and education, it does not allow for permanent residency or a path to citizenship, which will be offered in the future. The TPR's (Temporary Protection Regulation) less than permanent designation grants basic services to refugees, yet falls short in providing a pathway to permanent residency or long-term integration, thus trapping them within a legal vacuum. The lack of recognition of legal status often results in refugees facing psychosocial stress, which results in negative consequences for their mental well-being and planning for future endeavors (Kuscu, A. 2016).

Education Opportunities

Registration of over 800,000 Syrian children into Turkish schools marks an achievement in the Turkish educational system's attempt at the inclusion of these children. In an attempt to assist the Syrian Refugees the Turkish National Education Ministry had to go as far as implementing the teaching of the Turkish Language, remedial education, and the integration of refugees into the core subjects of the national curriculum – all of which eased some of the educational disruption brought about by the war. A lot of obstacles still persist however language struggle plays a huge role in any academic domain pertaining to the academic success of these children. Even with the attempts to provide language courses, many students underperform when measured against their Turkish counterparts. Refugee children have suffered trauma as a result of being displaced from their homes, exposure to violence, and bereavement. As a result, the Turkish schools' integration is more difficult due to limited psychological support services. Although the availability of primary and secondary education is improving, the prospects for pursuing higher education remain limited. There are numerous obstacles, including inadequate scholarship opportunities, language barriers, and the financial

burden of attending university, preventing many Syrian refugees from pursuing higher education. This restricted access to tertiary education may perpetuate entrenched cycles of poverty and social exclusion.

Economic Activity Participation

Since 2016, following the introduction of a regulation allowing Syrians under temporary protection to seek work permits, Turkey's economic policies regarding Syrian refugees have been shifting. Access to formally regulated employment still remains difficult. While it is possible for Syrian refugees to apply for work permits, the application process is difficult and highly controlled. Refugees need to secure employment contracts with Turkish companies, as work permits are only granted for limited sectors and areas. In addition, many employers are hesitant to give jobs to refugees because of the complex hiring processes, language difficulties, and possible legal risks. Consequently, a large number of Syrian refugees working in the informal sector. This leaves them open to abuse, poor payment, and denial of even the most basic workers' rights or social benefits. It also limits their ability to integrate economically as they are often confined to menial, unskilled positions that offer little chance for enhancement (Zetter, R. 2016). Many refugees are employed in farming, construction or even the textile industry, which are not only poorly paying, but also have substandard working conditions. Exploitation, such as wage theft, unsafe working environments, lack of labor rights, and no legal protections puts these refugees in painful situations that can do irreparable damage.

Social Dynamics and Municipal Initiatives

Municipalities, particularly in refugee-dense urban areas like Istanbul, Gaziantep, and Şanlıurfa, have taken steps toward enhancing social integration. These initiatives offer community building services and events, cultural exchange activities, and vocational training. They aim to build understanding and partnership with the Syrian populace and the host communities and to diffuse potential social strife. Municipalities also assisted with other forms of support like providing financial support, legal aid, and health services. International bodies, in conjunction with local authorities, have focused on assisting refugees in navigating the complex Turkish system and public services. Social strife and tension continues to be a major social challenge. The surge in the number of refugees has impacted public services and housing facilities, and even employment, particularly in the most affected economically neglected regions. Most Turkish people perceive the size of the refugee community as a heavy burden for the country and coupled with political discourse depicting refugees as harmful to the state's identity has worsened this situation (Sayari, S. 2016).

Legal and Political Challenges

A number of legal and political issues constrict the ability of Turkey's policies on refugees to fully integrate them into the society. Although a handful of Syrians have been granted citizenship under exceptional circumstances, most are still without any form of permanent residency or citizenship. This hinders the possibility of effective integration for them within the Turkish society by blurring the lines of owning land, engaging in politics and benefitting from public services, thus making social security investments. The debate around refugees and political considerations has taken a more radical shift. While some policymakers push for assimilation and acceptance, others conveniently lash out to refugees as a useful example proxy for explaining deepening recession and social issues. This has nurtured anti-foreigner sentiment which unjustly target and accuse refugees of increasing unemployment, crime, and weakening economy. Based on public opinion polls, it seems to suggest that Turkish citizens are becoming more and more frustrated and angry with the situation of refugees living in

Turkey and want them to return to Syria when it is safe to do so. Reliance on external funding, such as from the European Union, poses a risk on the long term sustainability of the integration programs for the refugees. Although the EU has provided aid in the form of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, there is no certainty this funding will last due to the political and economic situation in Europe and Turkey (Yaman, A. 2019).

Language Barrier

For many, the foremost important consideration in Turkey's education system for Syrian children is the language barrier. Though many Syrian students have indeed been enrolled into the Turkish educational system, a critical barrier remains- their command over the Turkish language. The majority of Syrian refugee children enter Turkey with limited or no ability to communicate in the Turkish language. As such, these children face serious obstacles in understanding lessons taught in their textbooks and interacting with their teachers and colleagues. Consequently, these children tend to lag behind in overall academic achievement. This language barrier hinders their capacity to acquire foundational knowledge in various subjects such as mathematics, science, literature, and more. Language competency is of great importance for interpersonal socialization within the classroom. Syrian children who don't speak Turkish have a hard time making friends and socializing with their peers, which leads to social isolation. This can make them feel lonely or disconnected, resulting in low self-esteem and feeling different from the other students. Trying to grasp lessons in a foreign language can be mentally damaging. Refugee children in these situations will likely get worried or frustrated if they are unable to express their needs, which makes it difficult for them to get support (Yildiz, M. 2020). Furthermore, a teacher's lack of personal attention, time, or other necessary resources will only worsen the situation for these children. There aren't enough classes available for all the students, and the ones offered by the government and NGOs do not cater to all the refugee students. A large number of children face academic failure, and without proper language support, can fall behind in their studies. The lack of support may result in them dropping out of school or failing altogether.

Employment and Economic Integration

For adult refugees, incorporating into the working world can be really tough due to a lack of language proficiency. In Turkey, employers expect staff members to speak at least some basic Turkish, especially for customer-facing positions and technical roles. Not having Turkish dictated options. Focusing solely on minimal human interaction jobs such as manual labor, farming, or simple assembly work are available. These are often low-paying positions with little chances for advancement. This leads to professionals being cut off from skilled roles due to lacking formal qualifications and the necessary soft skills. Although Refugees in Turkey are able to apply for work permits, the process is simplified only if one speaks Turkish. Refugees interact with government workers to get the relevant permits and are often at a loss if they don't speak the language. The inability to communicate in the language can cause them to be informally employed without the legal recognition which makes them open to exploitation (Tayfur, O. 2018). Assuming that a refugee is able to navigate all the barriers and gets a job, the absence of fluency in the languages spoken in the workplace can hinder their communication with their workmates and instructions pertaining to safety protocols that are essential to their life in job eco systems like construction or manufacturing.

Access to Healthcare and Social Services

Understanding Turkish is imperative for the refugees if they are to engage with the healthcare and social services on offer. Most of the refugee population suffers from access to medical care or government services, most of the time because of language barrier. As far as the

healthcare facilities are concerned, it is difficult for the refugees to communicate what their condition is, along with the rest of the procedures such as what do they want done and what do they deem is pertinent information for the health history. For refugees, and those needing specialized care like chronic disease management, psychological assistance, or trauma recovery, a misdiagnosis, treatment could be incorrectly implemented or the needed care will be unduly postponed due to the language constraints. Treatment- Following medical care, refugees need certainty that they will be able to follow through with the treatment plan provided or with the medications that have been prescribed. Inability to understand the language poses comprehension hurdles for medical instructions pertaining to dosage and possible side effects leading to non-compliance or worse compliance mistakes. Care services such as social welfare or healthcare come with the need to interact with a wide range of service providers. Proficiency in relevant languages such as Turkish greatly influences the ability to properly deal with official documents, appointments, service procedures and protocols. Lack of these results in missed appointments, incomplete forms, and failing to access services which are crucial. Mental health care, especially for people who have been through violence and myriad traumatic experiences, remains elusive due to constraining language barriers. The lack of interpreters or real mental health services offered in the patients' native language means many patients will remain unsupported and liable to develop unaddressed complicated psychological challenges (Ucar, S. 2017).

Social and Cultural Isolation

Communication is one of the primary contributors to the social isolation that the Syrian refugees in this case face when living in Turkey. Not being able to use the Turkish language inhibits the refugees from socializing with other people, making friends, or engaging in civic activities. The lack of knowledge of Turkish language acts as a constraint for the refugees to attend local events, volunteer activities, or even informal social functions. This is especially true for smaller towns where many of the refugees do not come into contact with other refugees. Thus, they are cut off from the local life and, along with other people, do not form friendships with neighbors and citizens. Those refugees who lack Turkish language skills may be subject to social discrimination in form of xenophobia by the local Turkish populace. In the absence of adequate self-defense or explanation, negative stereotyping may become commonplace among strategically positioned Turks who visually appear to be refugees and are in fact very easy to stereotype. This, in consequence, may increase social conflict and aggression directed at refugees from the host population. Social exclusion from interaction leads to feeling of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and more severe ailments (Wahlbeck, O. 2019).

In response to this problem, various language and integration strategies have been devised by the government of Turkey, NGOs, and other international bodies. With these initiatives, the goal is to help assimilate refugees into Turkish society and lessen their struggles with education, employment, healthcare, and social life. The Turkish Language Teaching Center (TÖMER) and other governmental and non-governmental organizations provide language courses to assist refugees with the Turkish language. Lessons prioritize foundational literacy, basic verbal communication, and elementary cultural appreciation. Unfortunately, limited courses are offered to all refugees, particularly those in rural settings or employed within the informal economy. Many of these courses have waiting lists that can be quite extensive, further hindering integration. Numerous local NGOs and community centers have created informal programs to assist with language learning for those refugees who require additional support. These programs often provide greater accessibility, efficiency, and flexibility, but lack the structure, certification, and funding of formal government-sponsored courses. Regardless of their shortcomings, these programs enable refugees to perform basic

communication tasks in Turkish, speak with locals, and alleviate some of the social isolation they experience. Alongside language classes, vocational training also is needed to prepare refugees for the demands of the Turkish labor market. Some international organizations or NGOs sponsor programs that give refugees specific job training which may include apprenticeships or vocational training in hospitality, carpentry, IT, etc. These programs help refugee's secure informal employment and greatly support the economy (Anastasopoulos, M. 2019).

Policy Implementation Challenges

Even with the many attempts to provide solutions to the problem of the language barrier, there are still many challenges for implementation. Language classes and other integration services for refugees are often underfunded and overstretched. Due to long waiting lists, lack of staff, or limited staff, many of these services become inaccessible to most refugee families. There is a lack of funding from the government and NGOs in order to scale these programs according to the needs of the increasing number of refugees. The availability of support services offered with language courses varies greatly depending on a person's location. Refugees located in metropolitan towns like Gaziantep and Istanbul have easier access to both integration services and language programs and worse access to those services. However, refugees located in smaller towns and rural areas have more limited access to basic training and community involvement which hinders their chances of integration. Certain cultural factors may make some refugees hesitant to join language classes. Moreover, the political context and the discourse on refugees may also deter some people from looking for assistance because they might perceive Turkish society as hostile or dangerous (Baser, B. 2017).

Cultural Differences

In Syrian culture, family is usually the most important building block of social life, which revolves around small-scale associations, often referred to as community networks. Family life is quite traditional and patriarchal in character, especially in the countryside. The man is regarded as the head of the family and the main wage earner, while the woman is expected to be more of a homemaker. The notion of family honor is prevalent and concerns the reputation of the family and its members and their actions. On the other hand, Turkish culture is more progressive, as people are still considered to be part of a family, but there is greater concern for equality of the sexes, especially in metropolitan areas. There is a greater tendency in Turkey for women to participate actively in work, education, and public life. Although some traditional family structures still exist in rural regions of Turkey, urban areas are more liberal with regard to gender roles. This shift can be quite overwhelming for Syrian refugees, particularly women. They might have to deal with the dual expectations of the less modern, more conservative roles they are used to versus the more progressive ones they encounter in Turkey. A case in point is the experience of a Syrian woman who might find it difficult to adjust to the greater freedom of movement and economic opportunities available to women in Turkey, leading to role tension and identity confusion (Beauregard, R. 2020).

Social Stratification and Control

Syrian society appears to exhibit greater social stratification regarding the social gap between the elderly and the younger generation divided by social class. There is a strong regard for social and parental authority, meaning parents, teachers, and government officials are highly respected and their opinions taken seriously. In some communities in Syria, there is a traditional focus on obeying social structures and conflicts are normally settled discreetly and privately among family rather than openly. In contrast, Turkey has more equalitarian attitudes toward social relations. In many cases, younger people, particularly at more advanced

schooling levels and in major urban centers, tend to speak much more freely with those in authority positions. There is respect in these interactions, however, it is given with far more focus on the freedom of expression and challenge to norms that govern authority. This brings a problem for Syrian refugees who see Turkish sociocultural practices as informal and disrespectful while Turkish citizens consider the sociocultural practices of Syrian refugees as very deferential and submissive (Betts, A. 2017).

Differences in Religion

Alevi Islam vs Sunni Islam

Around 80-85% of Syria's population is Sunni Muslims, with a smaller Alawite and Christian population minority. Turkey, however, has a notable percentage of Alevi Muslims (about 10-20% of the total population). A distinct sect of Islam known as Alevi differs greatly from Sunni Islam through its worship practices and its teachings and interpretation of religious texts. For many Syrian refugees, especially from the Sunni side, Alevi culture can be daunting. Other practices like not observing prayer rituals or celebrations in a certain festive manner adds to the challenge. One also has to consider possibilities of conflict or perception of Alevi Muslims by other Sunni people as prejudice bringing some forms of religious discrimination or marginalization for the refugees (Brixiova, Z. 2018).

Secularism in Religion

Despite being a Muslim country, Turkey operates under a solemn principle of secularism. The government keeps religion out of politics, in addition life is open for people of any religion for faith, making the legal and public services indifferent to matters of religion. This is in contrast to Syria, where religion is integrated in everyday life including social norms regardless of the existence of a secular government. For those who have fled a regime that combines religion and politics, the non-religious position of government policies in Turkey may be disorienting. Some may not grasp the concept of secularism and initially perceive it as devoid of acceptance or respect towards their faith. The relative freedom of opinion in the country, especially among its citizens, who openly discuss and practice religion both within and outside the confines of their homes, may be problematic for those coming from a more confined setting (Caglar, A. 2019).

Education and Parenting

Approach to Education

Within Syrian society, the educational system is more formal and policing rather than engaging. Teachers are regarded as authority figures and active/passive learning is seldom implemented in a democratic manner. There is stronger emphasis on passive learning approaches, and students are expected to bow to the hierarchy and follow rules and regulations. However, Turkey has a more progressive approach to education, with an emphasis on students. There is more focus on students being encouraged to think, create, and express themselves within classroom discussions. Formal learning at school has its merits, but Turkish schools focus on developing creativity and collaboration skills through the discussing and debating of ideas. For Syrian refugees, and especially children, adapting to this new and more hands-on approach to learning can prove to be difficult. Because of their educational background, they might be struggling with self-initiative or open-ended dialogues (Castles, S. 2009). This change in educational systems can also lead to conflict between refugee parents and educators, given that parents tend to expect more compliance with authority and less open disagreement from their children.

Parenting Approaches

More rural conservative regions of Syria are known for having more authoritarian parent styles. Reliance upon the child's obedience to elders is the first defining factor. This form of parenting is laced in deep cultural and patriarchal family honor where parents are overbearing, by controlling life choices such as marriage, career, and social behavior. Turkish parents, especially those living in urban regions, have a much democratic approach, encouraging active participation in decisions and the exploration of individual interests by and for the child. This change of expectations for parents can be stressful and contentious for Syrian refugees as parents may feel divided between the traditional family structure they know and the more liberal one they experience in Turkey. Syrian children might also feel torn between respecting their parents' authority and the more autonomous attitude that is typical of the Turkish society (Celik, K. 2018).

Social Interaction and Community Engagement

Socializing and Friendship Norms

Syrian culture specializes in family-centric social calendar, as well as community-centric events with relatives. Friendships are normally established through deep-rooted relationships and communal bonds. Syrians tend to appreciate spending time with people they know which they do in public places like cafes and parks. Unlike Syrians, people from Turkish society, especially those from bigger cities, actively seek to broaden their network. It is quite normal for Turks to meet and befriend new people in informal environments like social clubs, neighborhood parties, and even on public transport. The Turkish have a more relaxed appreciation of friendship and new acquaintances, as it is quite common to approach and talk to strangers. For Syrian refugees, trying to adjust to the casual mannerism of Turks can be difficult. They might perceive the attitude as too informal, or inappropriate the same time. In contrast, Turkish people might consider the social behaviors of Syrian refugees as too quiet or too detached. Other social interactions lacking shared understanding of social norms do pose a greater challenge to forming genuine friendships and relationships, which further add to the refugees' sense of isolation (Clark-Kazak, C.R. 2019).

Social Participation, Community Engagement, and Active Citizenship

The cultural gap applies to the activities of the community and civic engagement of the refugees as well. Those Syrians who come from an environment where community participation was often subjected to either curtailing or authoritarian rule may feel dissuaded from partaking in community or civic activities in Turkey. Moreover, the emphasis on collectivism in Syrian society, where families and social bonds dominate, is quite different from the Turks who value more individualistic cultures centered on personal achievement and self-sufficiency and self-reliance. This shift can lead to some Syrians becoming less motivated to actively engage in local participatory governance or social advocacy initiatives, which in turn may lead to greater alienation from the Turkish society. Prolonged disengagement contributes to feeling of exclusion, which makes integration increasingly challenging. Recognition of belonging and identity in terms of Turkish will be put into focus from the angle of social integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey (De Jong, G.F. 2020).

These two factors are especially important for refugees as they face the hurdle of adapting to a new nation while trying to maintain the cultural identity of their home country. Identity encapsulates one's self-image of them including their culture, religion, and individuality, while belonging refers to the affective attachment to a society, culture, or nation. For these

Syrian refugees in Turkey, these factors are shaped by their prior lived experiences, their current circumstances, and their relations with the Turkish society. While adjusting to a new life, most refugees encounter difficulties trying to resolve the conflicts between the South Syrian identity and the pressures associated with integration into Turkish society.

The Struggle for Identity: Preserving Cultural Heritage While Adapting

Tradition is a fundamental component for many Syrian refugees. When combined, it encapsulates their cultural identity, and therefore serves as a vital link to their home country. Language, food, religion, and family structure are some components that shape their identity. Gaining forcible displacement due to conflict usually comes with a sense of loss and trauma as the refugees leave behind their homes, families, and communities. Therefore, adopting a new culture while preserving their former identity enables them to maintain a sense of attachment to their past. Yet, this protection of culture can lead to a form of an identity crisis as refugees have difficulties integrating into their new surroundings. In Turkey, Syrian refugees often find themselves straddling the fence exists somewhere between the conservatism of the diaspora that clings to old ways and the need to conform to Turkish ways. The ongoing process of identity reconstruction forces many to ask: Who am I in this new country? And what does being Syrian in Turkey translates to. These questions capture the lived experience of so many refugees. For refugees, the journey of forming an identity is a complicated process where an individual struggles to maintain their self-image through certain cultural practices while also trying to fit into the social norms of the Turkish society. This results in a dual identity in which the refugees try to construct by juxtaposing his Syria identity together with the other sides of Turkey's culture. With time, however, many refugees are able to achieve a sense of belonging that is a mixture of elements from their past and their current life in Turkey (Erdogan, M. 2016).

Belonging: The Desire for Acceptance in a Host Society

As it has been indicated previously, belonging is not only about the preservation of one's identity, but also being able to feel accepted in the wider community. Social integration and emotional peace go hand in hand with mental well-being for refugees in the host country. Belonging refers to the social component that has accepted the individual as part of a wider social, cultural and political system. However, for some groups like Syrians, the circumstances in Turkey make it challenging to achieve this level of acceptance and belonging. As far as acceptance is concerned, social attitudes determine the inclusiveness level and sense of belonging to the host community in this case Turkey. Better social interactions and relationships with Turkish citizens translate to active participation in communal and social events for the refugees and increased perception of inclusion. This transformation enables the refugees to have better chances to view themselves as contributing members of the society as opposed to outsiders. Turks see refugees from a completely different perspective, being marginalized and neglected. It leads to people facing different forms of xenophobia, discrimination and prejudice. Others regard them as a burden to the economy, a threat to the culture, or a risk to security. Such negative attributes that some fractions maintain toward the refugee's influences their ability to construct a positive self-identity and integrates seamlessly into new communities (Fetzer, J.S. 2019).

Community Support and Social Networks

Even though refugees are often excluded from society, many are able to find a sense of belonging in supportive communities. For example, many Syrian refugees in Turkey have developed close-knit networks with other Syrians where they can cultivate a sense of belonging and emotional support by preserving their culture. As these refugees face the

struggles of displacement, these networks provide them with a sense of security and comfort. However, while these Syrian communities provide emotional support, they also maintain social isolation from the broader Turkish society. Refugees who spend most of their time with peers from their own community tend to lose contact and relationships with the Turkish citizens, as well as attending to societal functions, which limits their integration. Therefore, community building needs to go beyond ethnicity and nationality to foster understanding and shared encounters with the host society.

Differing Aspects of Identity and Belonging across Generations

Identity and belonging seem to differ across generations among refugees. Children and adolescent refugees are likely to confront unique difficulties compared to older cohorts. Given their relative youth, they tend to encounter more intensively the Turkish culture, language, and social norms, which can create a conflict between wanting to assimilate and an urge to cling to their Syrian identity. For younger refugees, belonging is largely derived from their interactions with peers and with their school environment (Hassan, F. 2017). For the refugee children, it's not easy to cope with the feeling of being different from their Turkish counterparts and this may result in feelings of isolation. As they attempt to merge their Syrian heritage with the need to assimilate into Turkish culture, this sense of alienation can adversely impact their self-worth and social self-image. For the older refugees, it could be different. Their sense of belonging can be more intricate and sophisticated because they have a more pronounced and established Syrian identity that is hard to change. The challenge of forging a Syrian identity while conforming to Turkish ways can be more difficult for those adults who have spent considerable time in the country that they consider home. In their case, the question of belonging may also imply the need to balance the yearning for their homeland with the new country that they reside in. The discrimination and xenophobia faced by Syrian Refugees in Turkey is systematically detrimental to their sense of belonging. Preconceived notions regarding refugees are unfair and include characterizing them as economic migrants or cultural alien to the society, which makes integration into society increasingly difficult (Lucas, R. 2019). When members of Turkish society hold negative views about refugees, these individuals may adopt such perspectives which can lead to damaging consequences for their self-esteem. In addition, social discrimination poses a threat to social relations as well as prospects for employment, education, and healthcare. For example, some services like employment, healthcare, and education can be extraordinarily difficult to attain for Syrian refugees simply because they are considered foreigners. This denial of participation in important areas of social life strengthens the perception that they are subservient citizens and denationalized from full engagement within the Turkish state, which deteriorates their sense of identity and belonging. On the contrary, positive relations from the Turkish civilians, supportive communities, as well as welcoming policies from the government can greatly improve refugees' feeling of belonging to these new countries. Those citizens who tend to view them as equals and value their efforts are more prone to adopting a hybrid identity of Turkish and Syrian heritage that emerges when nurtured with appreciating the life they experience in Turkey.

Education as a Site of Integration and Conflict

The education system certainly is a defining factor for the life of a Syrian refugee and serves as one primary avenue for integrating these individuals into Turkish society. Nonetheless, the education system can also act as a battleground for the many problems of language, culture, and even the keywords identity that Syrian students face. The educational experience of Syrian children as it is not merely an experience of acquiring education but rather a crude attempt at starting life anew in a foreign land that hardly welcomes them with open arms. In

Turkey, the barriers that face Syrian refugees are quite complex because of the numerous factors that limit access to education. One major barrier that clearly stands out is access to education which is often constrained by inadequate documentation, funds, and unstable living conditions that refugee families find themselves in. The government of Turkey has incorporated some policies such as the Temporary Protection Regulation which enable the inclusion of refugee children in the national education. Many refugees still struggle to reach the schools where they are meant to attend due to factors such as insufficient transport for those in remote areas or camps, classroom congestion, and even language barriers. Even in the instances where these children are able to enroll in school, there is the persistent issue of students not possessing the English language skills needed to enable them participate in classroom activities. For the majority of Syrian refugees, Turkish is considered an alien language which greatly hinders their ability to easily integrate into the schooling system because most children coming to Turkish schools are not able to speak any English. Not being able to communicate properly in Turkish inhibits students academically and socially as they cannot relate to their peers at school on any deeper level. Language facilitates social connections, and in its absence, refugees often feel a sense of disconnection and alienation from the rest of the school (Miller, M. 2018). Alongside the problem of language comes the clash of cultures between the Turkish students and the Syrian refugees, which can foster feelings of isolation. The school and its pedagogy, structure, and discipline are frequently foreign in nature to Syrian children. In Turkey, education is fundamentally rooted in Turkish culture, which may not be familiar to many Syrian refugee children. For example, the rigid pedagogical approach dominant in Turkey is likely difficult for refugees who are used to more open teaching styles, as was the case in Syria. Such a gap in cultures can be challenging for refugee children to help adjust and feel welcomed in their new surroundings. Additionally, the school curriculum is based on the history, culture, and national identity of the Turkish people which is likely irrelevant for refugee children trying to preserve their identity as Syrians. Refugees may feel like complete outsiders in their own classrooms because they are unable to connect with what is being taught. Furthermore, some school instruction, even if unintentionally, promotes ethnocentric nationalism and reinforce the notion that Syrians are ‘others’, thus exacerbating the gap between refugee students and Turkish students. Teachers have prime responsibility for navigating refugee children’s schooling, and therefore control the contours of the refugee experience in the school. Teachers trained in approaches of cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed care are more likely to understand the complex realities of refugee students and be able to foster inclusion in their classrooms. Unfortunately, such training is often lacking and other educators may not be aware of the effects of displacement, or the vulnerabilities that accompany being a refugee child. In under resourced contexts, with high teacher-student ratios, many educators may not be able to give the individualized attention that is needed, and refugee students are left to cope in an alien and oftentimes hostile setting (Menz, G. 2020).

These schools have the ability to focus on developing resilience to cope with their overwhelming experiences. For lots of Syrian children, school is a place where they can develop social interactions, have a sense of direction, and make new friends. It is also somewhere that they can start to merge their Syrian selves with their lives in Turkey. All this is difficult to accomplish because they might face bullying or discrimination from their Turkish classmates. This bullying makes social integration even more difficult for refugees adapting to a new environment. The social landscape in schools is influenced by the relationships refugee children have with their Turkish classmates and the more general prevailing attitudes towards refugees in society. There is likely to be some level of discrimination and intolerance in Turkish society which may extend to the school as a social

space, making it hard for a refugee child to feel accepted. If the Turkish students believe that Syrians are nothing but parasitic migrants or cultural invaders, then the students can easily become victims of social isolation and exclusion. Such experiences can have far-reaching consequences including profoundly damaging the psychological health and self-worth of the refugee children who, for all intents and purposes, seek to fit into their new society but find no place to belong to. In some places, there are success stories of integration that came as a result of education, although challenges persist. Some school teachers and administrators have attempted to cultivate an inclusive atmosphere by providing language assistance, facilitating through culture activities, and setting up cross-mentoring programs for refugees and Turkish students. Such interventions can help refugee children to develop the skills and self-esteem required to perform in school while also encouraging them to positively identify with Turkish culture. As such, education is two-fold in regard to the integration of the Syrian refugees within Turkish society. It offers a form of social advancement, as it does for most, which enables refugees to gain the appropriate information and skills needed to function within their new environment. At the same time, it can be a contested space in which these issues—differences in cultures, languages, and social marginalization—make integration difficult. Integration into an education system is possible only if considerable attention is directed towards the provision of fostering educational facilities that assist and support the integration of refugee students. This entails offering language classes, mental health services, and cultural exchange programs, with special consideration given to nurturing mutual respect and understanding between the refugees and host communities. Achieving successful integration of the Syrian refugees into the Turkish schooling system is a multifaceted collaborative effort encompassing the entire education framework, broader community participation, government action, as well as social policies. By providing both the practical and psychological support of the refugee necessities, Turkey can foster a more unified society where education serves as an integrating tool, instead of a hurdle (Pugh, M. 2017).

Employment Opportunities and Economic Integration

The rest of society and the structure's approach serves as a challenge on Turkish territory with a Syrian refugee's economy too; however, the pre-existing societal problems, such as the lack of education and social opportunities accompanying the unstable economy, make the situation worse. All of these factors in conjunction with the social problems greatly affect the labor market, thus making the lives of the refugees more complex in terms of finding meaningful work. In addition, some of the refugees who manage to survive through unskilled informal employment have no means of advancing their career or lifestyle due to deep rooted inequality paired with the struggles they face on a daily basis. One of the most significant challenges that Syrian refugees face while trying to integrate economically is the absence of educational and/or vocational training opportunities. Access to education plays a critical role in improving one's position on the employment ladder, but most refugees, especially older ones or those who have been displaced for several years, lack formal education and/or training. Even for those able to receive some education or training in Turkey, there may be a mismatch between their skill level and the existing opportunities in the market. Although many refugees informally acquire a host of skills during their time in Syria, they are often not accepted by employers in Turkey, further complicating their chances of employment. Furthermore, due to a lack of programs or through financial constraints, as well as transport obstacles, refugees face considerable problems in accessing new skills or training programs (Baser, B. 2017). Social connections are equally important with regard to the employment of the refugees. Those refugees who have access to a well-developed social network, be it among the Turks or within the Syrian community, have better opportunities to secure successful employment. Sadly, many refugees don't have these social networks which put

them at a greater disadvantage than the local workers who are able to utilize family and community connections for employment. The exclusion of refugees from the Turkish labor market as a whole makes it extremely difficult for them to access informal leads, apprenticeships, or business partnerships that could greatly bolster their chances of securing employment. Other challenges include the economic challenges many of them face because there is a complete lack of social support, job security, or welfare. Many Syrian refugees are living in crowded and squalid conditions, poverty-stricken and juggling multiple menial jobs. Economically, these individuals have little resources to improve their situation, and become trapped in a deep poverty cycle nearly impossible to escape. Furthermore, because of limited access to genuine employment, a huge number of these refugees miss out on government subsidy programs such as unemployment benefits, health care, or pensions and old-age schemes, which increases their vulnerability. The lack of welfare makes refugees more dependent on the informal economy, which provides little to no rights or protection.

Another important factor that affects refugees is the informal economy, where a lot of them end up working in. Getting a job in the informal economy may help workers in the short term, but it does have a range of dangers and challenges. The informal sector of employment carries minimal regulation, which increases the risk of worker's exploitation, unhealthy working environments, and theft of wages. In the case of informal economy refugees, there is limited access to work benefits such as paid time off, leave, insurance, and health care. They remain outside the scope of government policies meant for formal workers and other labor protection frameworks. This essentially implies that refugees actively participating in Turkey's economy through their work, derive almost no social security or legal safeguards in return. Moreover, numerous informal wage-earning refugees become victims of wage discrimination and receive lesser pay than their Turkish counterparts in the same position. Employers can exploit a refugee's legal status or missing work permits and pay less knowing that refugees have limited job options. This gap not only perpetuates economic vulnerability among refugees, but deepens feelings of injustice and animosity within the community, as well as between refugees and the locals. Even after attaining a formal job, many refugees still experience barriers to refraining from moving up the corporate ladder (Zetter, R. 2016).

Most Syrian refugees work in the agriculture and construction industries or the service sector. These are examples of low-pay, low-skill jobs with few opportunities for growth. Even if they want to escape those jobs, there are very few opportunities available which could lead to an improved economic situation over time. Moreover, cultural and language differences pose additional challenges towards professional networking and moving up the career ladder. All these challenges make it even more difficult for the refugee population to transition between different sectors of the economy, further relegating them towards low-employment industries with very few long term opportunities. There are also problems concerning discrimination that directly stem from ethnic bias that greatly limit employment opportunities available to Syrian refugees. The hostile perception towards the refugee population worsened by some degree of xenophobia and an idea that Syrians represent an economic drain tends to create hostile discrimination bias against them during hiring. Quite a few employers might believe that Syrians are far less reliable and productive than what is expected, leading to the discrimination where refugees miss out on opportunities, or are unduly offered lesser-paid jobs. Even after going through the difficult process of obtaining formal employment, many refugees still find themselves trapped in low- status jobs with significantly lower wages than their Turkish peers. However, in spite of these harsh obstacles, Syrian refugees in Turkey persist in trying to economically integrate themselves. A number of refugees have established small businesses, mostly within the Syrian community, which has helped some of them to

sustain their livelihoods and contribute to the local economy. There are some cases, albeit few and far between, where refugees have Up-Skilled and moved into different sectors of the economy. The barriers, as stated above, however, are too many for most. On the other hand, other NGOs and international bodies are taking steps towards building pathways for refugees by providing language classes, vocational courses, and assistance in self-employment which would enable them to create a more robust integrated economy (Celik, K. 2018).

The issue of economically integrating Syrian refugees is a singular, complex problem that combines providing legal access to employment and addressing the societal gaps that permit social mobility for these individuals. Having policies aimed towards helping the identification and recognition of skills and qualifications alongside providing language aid and employment inclusive policies highly enhance the prospects of the economy provided to the refugees. The integration of Syrian refugees into Turkey's society and the framework the country offers its refugees can only happen with the support of the Turkish government, businesses, as well as the society as whole.

The Influence of Media on Political Talk

The integration of Syrian refugees into Turkey's society is influenced by media and political discourse in public perception. Both media frameworks and political narratives critically shape public understanding of the refugee crisis. The overall public perception concerning the refugees, their rights, and status within Turkish context as well as policies and the social climate in relation to integration is framed by these narratives. The media functions singularly as the primary source of information about most contemporary social issues for the general public. Its portrayal can evoke either sympathy and solidarity or xenophobia and division. In Turkey the media coverage of Syrian refugees is multifaceted. To some degree, there have been media platforms which underscore the humanitarian demands of the refugees and strongly aid in media coverage. These narratives have been stressing the terrible circumstances of Syrian refugees depicting them as war and displacement of victims who deserve aid and compassion. Such representation encourages understanding the difficult situations they face and can help in the formulation of policies which enhance integration such as through education, healthcare, and employment (Kirisci, K. 2014).

Additionally, media concentrating on the negative sides of a refugee's life can worsen the divide between the refugees and the host population. Dramatized accounts of refugees as economic burdens or criminals embroiled in turmoil reinforce stereotypes and tend to view them as a danger to social equilibrium. Such coverage can also create unjustified animosity toward the general populace and become even harsher for refugees to access the labor market, education, or the community at large. Moreover, the way media covers the ethnocultural differences of the refugees and the host community also sow discord and increase polarization within the society. Besides the media's perspective, political discussions also have a profound impact on the perceptions of the public concerning refugees. For instance, in Turkey, political authorities and parties tend to approach the context of refugees in the context of national identity, security, and economic burden, thus riding public sentiments as well as the legislative agenda. At times, some political leaders have adopted the rhetoric that refugees constitute a part of the Turkish obligations towards the greater Middle Eastern region, claiming their presence is geopolitically important. This narrative may assist in portraying their presence more peacefully and may reduce conflict by portraying assimilation as a logical step in Turkey's foreign relations strategy. It attempts to put these refugees within the backdrop of Turkey's past and cultural links with this area.

In the opposite direction, certain Turkish political leaders and groups have manipulated the refugee problem to promote nationalist and anti-immigration sentiments. These political narratives oversimplify the complex issue of refugees and frame refugees as outsiders, foreigners, or pseudo- economic threats as antagonists to cultural preservation, rising unemployment, and the strain on public infrastructure. When political leaders use these terms regarding refugees, it legitimizes negative perceptions and policies that curtail access to fundamental rights and resources. This type of discourse is politically charged and risks entrenching societal divisions and increasing the gaps between the local population and the refugees, which hinders integration processes and the development of deep-rooted shared understanding and belonging. In recent years, Turkey's political debate has also embraced burden sharing, which calls for more international aid towards Turkey's efforts to host refugees. This way of framing the discussion shifts the expectation of assisting to integrate and care of the refugees toward other countries, especially European ones, alongside placing it on Turkey. The burden-sharing narrative casts the refugee crisis as one of international interest, aiming to mobilize international support for policies regarding Turkey's engagement with refugees (Rogers, D. 2016).

This approach may assist with diplomacy, but it risks aggravating nationalist sentiments, reinforcing the notion that refugees are alien guests who have no place in Turkish society. The clash between the media and the political realm works together very powerfully for or against integration. If media and political leaders portray refugees in a more empathetic, unifying way, that tends to improve the integration experience for the refugees and fosters a more welcoming attitude toward supportive policies aimed at improving the lives of refugees in Turkey. On the other hand, there is also a possibility that media and political discourse relies on stereotypes, sensationalized narratives, and divisive language. When this happens, people tend to become socially polarized, discriminative, and exclusionary, which makes it increasingly difficult for refugees to assimilate, integrate, and integrate socially, economically, and culturally into society. So, the media and political conversation in Turkey have a great deal of influence on how the refugees are integrated. Understanding negativity can limit the integration process or encourage anger and exclusion, whereas constructive political dialogue works toward social acceptance and policy assistance. Therefore, the manner in which the media depicts the refugee situation critically determines how receptive people in Turkey will be towards integrating Syrian refugees and how successful the integration processes will be.

Conclusion

Integration programs and best practices focus on helping Syrian refugees in Turkey integrate into Turkish society, fostering a sustainable livelihood and positive contributions within their communities. These programs help mitigate the numerous challenges that accompany relocation such as: discrimination, economic deprivation, social exclusion, and cultural and linguistic differences. Integration that is well managed will bring benefits to both the host country and the refugees themselves, creating social cohesion. Integration initiatives have placed great emphasis on education as a focal area. Accessible education is a key pillar in the empowerment of refugees as it enables them to take part actively in the workforce, the community and society as a whole. In Turkey, there are various programs aimed at aiding the education of Syrian children. The Ministry of National Education of Turkey (MoNE) has established several temporary education centers for Syrian children as refugees. These centers offer lessons in the language of the child and in subjects pertinent to their curriculum which are subsequently taught within the Turkish school system. This allows for educational rehabilitation as well as for integration into mainstream schooling. Moreover, language training programs are provided to the Syrian refugees so that they are able to interact and communicate

with the community. To some extent, Turkish universities have provided scholarship opportunities, as well as tuition-free access to education for Syrian students which facilitates inclusiveness and opens avenues for higher education.

Another focus area has been on the economic integration. In 2016, Turkey implemented a work permit system for refugees from Syria under a temporary protection status. This policy sought to support their integration into the labour market. Although the degree of success has differed, it constituted an important attempt toward alleviating the pervasive socio-economic discrimination against refugees in the informal economy. The system enables refugees to apply for work permits and legal employment in specific areas where there is a prevailing shortage of labor. A few local governments and NGOs have partnered with businesses to promote entrepreneurship programs aimed at Syrian refugees by training and providing microfinance loans to them. These programs help refugees become economically productive while allowing them to contribute directly to the economy, which promotes self-sufficiency. Apart from that, a number of other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been crucial in developing integration programs that lean towards targeted aspects of the refugee population's needs. These NGOs have put in place plans for attending to the psychosocial problems of refugees by providing mental health services, counseling services, and community-based activities that help in recovering from the psychological impact of displacement. Legal support, employment aid, and housing help are examples of social services that help refugees deal with the issues associated with resettlement and help them deal with their new surroundings. Regional authorities have also implemented sociocultural activities aimed at increasing interactions between refugees and local communities. These communities seek to promote understanding and tolerance in order to reduce social conflict and increase opportunities for social and cultural interaction. In particular, community sports and other activities for the locals and the refugees have been arranged to enable interaction in a neutral environment. Such activities help to foster social cohesion through the elimination of stereotypes and promotion of compassionate understanding. The development of cultural integration initiatives helps the refugees and the local communities understand each other's histories, customs, and values thereby enhancing their common identity. Additionally, there has been a shift towards the creation of public life and community inclusivity. Municipal authorities in Gaziantep and Hatay have constructed community centers within the cities for the use of the refugees where they can gain various resources, legal aid, and vocational education. These centers are designed to assist the refugees with their basic needs as well as equip them with relevant skills to thrive in Turkish society.

Awareness campaigns play a dual role in the integration effort as well; they help to influence public opinion and, at the same time, promote social cohesion. Campaigns aim at explaining the overall value of an integration policy for social climate including its economic benefits to address xenophobia and misinformation. For example, there have been campaigns centering on the contributions of refugees to the economy as well as to the local cultures has changed how a lot of people view them. The media has twofold functions supporting integration by telling positive stories of what refugees have achieved and successful models of integration. In regard to best practices, the model rests on community based approach integration which is the most outstanding as an effective strategy. Integrating refugees into communities rather than placing them in confinement refugee camps improves social cohesion and mitigates tensions. It invites refugees as active participants in the communities where they reside instead of mere outsiders looking in. This model grants refugees the ability to access important services and socialize freely with the locals which help them to build social networks, friendships and employers. Furthermore, this model creates a stronger social bond for both the refugees and the host

society to foster shared responsibility. Another best practice is the emphasized focus on empowering refugees through education and skills development. Access to both formal education and vocational training enables refugees to compete in the labor market, either through self-employment or entrepreneurship. This helps improve their standard of living, but even more so, it allows them to actively participate in the economy of Turkey. Investment in language courses, skills development programs, and even higher education initiatives have proven to enhance a refugee's chances of integration. In terms of legal frameworks, the development of clear and coherent policies concerning a refugee's work permit is a step towards the right direction. Even though most refugees continue to work in the informal sector, the capacity to work legally and have access to social security provides better protection and opportunities for economic mobility. The enhancement of the work permit system, along with the development of support frameworks for the legal navigation by the refugees, would accelerate the integration process. Finally, the collaboration between governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the local populace are important for the effective execution of integration initiatives. These stakeholders can collaborate to come up with programs that incorporate all aspects of life that are pertinent to the refugees' needs. Supporting sustainable and effective results requires a holistic approach to integration, which includes the economy, education, healthcare, and community.

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