## Processes and Factors of Social Exclusion in Arrival Cities: Attitudes towards Syrians under Temporary Protection in Tarlabaşı, Istanbul

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### Abstract

There have been fierce discussions on the causes of global mobility/migration and its effects on national security and belonging as well as struggles that migrants' have had to face in arrival countries, while little has been said about how residents of arrival cities have been reacted to the effects of global mobility. Lacking of studies that evaluate the migration issue from the side of receiver societies seems result in one-sided policies that put the pressure on migrants in addressing ever-increasing discrimination and exclusion practices cities. The aim of this paper is to look from "the eyes of receiver societies" to determine existing / potential struggles that result in social exclusion practices at local level, where all social tensions become observable. To provide evidence, 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2016 in Tarlabaşı Istanbul (a metropolitan urban area that has received considerable amount of Syrian immigrants since 2011). The main argument is, regardless of ethnic, cultural and religious similarities and discourses of brotherhood; Syrian immigrants are more likely to be excluded in the long term as their duration of stay increases and as they engage urban economy (labor market, redistribution mechanisms), network relations and everyday lives of native residents.

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# Göçmen Ağırlayan Kentlerde Sosyal Dışlanma Süreci ve Etmenleri: Istanbul Tarlabaşı'ndaki Geçici Koruma Altındaki Suriyelilere Yönelik Tutumlar

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## Öz

Küresel hareketlilik ve göç, bu süreçlerin ulusal güvenlik, aidiyet ve toplumsal ilişkiler üzerine etkileri ile beraber göçmenlerin gittikleri ülkelerde yüzleşmek durumunda kaldıkları problemlere değinen çalışmalara literatürde sıkça yer verilirken; göçmenleri rızayla veya zorla ağırlamak durumunda kalan toplumların bu küresel hareketliliğe karşı tepkileri ve görüşlerine yönelik çalışmalar eksik kalmıştır. Söz konusu eksiklik, kentlerde giderek artan sosyal dışlanma ve ayrımcılık süreçlerinin önlenmesinde, sorumluluğun büyük kısmını göçmenlere yükleyen tek taraflı politikalar üretilmesine neden olmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, küresel göçün kentsel etkilerini, göçmenleri misafir eden toplumların gözünden yerel ölçekte (özellikle mahalle ölçeğinde, günlük ilişkiler odağında) değerlendirerek, sosyal dışlanma pratiklerine neden olan mevcut / potansiyel gerilimleri ortaya koymaktadır. Tartışma, 2011 yılından itibaren Suriyeli göçmenlerin ağırlıklı olarak geldiği İstanbul Tarlabaşı'nda, 2016 yılında gerçekleştirilen 40 adet yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakat bulguları ve güncel kentsel tartışmalar ışığında yürütülmüştür. Çalışmanın temel argümanı, etnik, kültürel, dini benzerliklere ve kardeşlik söylemlerine rağmen; Suriye göçmenlerin kentte kalış sürelerinin arttıkça, kent ekonomisine (yani iş gücü piyasasına, yeniden dağıtım mekanizmalarına) toplumsal ağlara ve günlük toplumsal ilişkilere dahil oldukça, uzun vadede daha çok ayrımcılık ve dışlanma pratiklerine maruz kalmalarıdır.

## Introduction

The international mobility of labor and capital, migration patterns of refugees/people subjected to forced displacement as well as the economic, social, political and spatial impacts of these mobilities in final destinations have occupied the agendas of various disciplines including international studies, sociology, urban planning etc. In recent years, due to the politic struggles and on-going civil wars in Middle East, the massive influx of middle eastern communities to west (especially to Europe), triggered fierce policy debates in migrant/refugee receiver countries. At the first place, these policy debates have revolved around taking urgent precautions to prevent illegal and irregular migration flows, managing international and internal mobility of migrants/refugees with proper registration & legal control mechanisms and meeting the vital needs of migrants in destined localities. Following the initial aims, ensuring the integration (and even assimilation) of migrants/refugees to host society's socio-cultural norms, language and customs, job market and network relations largely occupies the migrant agenda of the countries. Recent practices in European Union and Turkey have shown us that such a one-sided migrant-oriented perspective that put the pressure on migrants' shoulders are ineffective to address the on-going societal tensions, discrimination and exclusion of new comers both in short and long term. For that reason, achieving a perfect balance in migration & integration policies is highly desired both for keeping host societies' social order as unchanged as possible while recognizing and protecting immigrants' identity (without strictly assimilating them. In that sense, massive influx from Syria to European countries (and all others) which is widely known as "Syrian Refugee Crisis" is a perfect test for countries.

The effects and immediate consequences of Syrian Refugee Crisis have been widely studied by different scholars all over the world and mostly focused on European Countries. According to UNHCR(.org), since 2010 approximately 13 million Syrians have been displaced and more than 50% of them have been migrated to neighboring countries including Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan as well as European countries. Turkey ranks first among other countries by hosting 3.583.434 registered Syrians by May 2018. Syrian immigrants in Turkey mostly prefer to live (especially) in metropolitan cities while only 6% of them prefer to live in camps (GIGM.gov.tr). When discussing Turkey's role in "Syrian Refugee Crisis" it is worth here to note that, Syrians, who have escaped from their home and come to Turkey, have not granted the "refugee" status. By Law on Foreigners and International Protection (Law No. 6458)(2013) Syrians, who apply to competent authorities to be registered, are granted "temporary protection status". As indicated in the Law "Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection". By Law, it is clear that Syrian newcomers in Turkey are not refugees or conditional refugees (unlike European case).

Moreover, based on Temporary Protection Regulation (2014) "persons benefiting from temporary protection shall not be deemed as having been directly acquired one of the international protection statuses (refugee, conditional refugee) as defined in the Law". For that reason, I will not use the term "Syrian Refugees" to stick to legislative status of Syrians in Turkey. Moreover, to refer to both registered and unregistered Syrians, I will call use the term as "Syrian immigrants" throughout the paper.

Although Turkey is at the center of Syrian migration flows, studies concerning Turkey have become quite limited and Turkey's role in receiving and protecting migrants have seemed to be underestimated. As a second critique of general tendency literature and policy making processes, it is likely to claim that the socio-cultural, economic and spatial consequences of the Crisis "from the eyes of host societies" have been neglected. Thirdly, the adoption of top-down and particularistic approaches taking into account macro-level data in policy making and lacking of studies focusing on local dimension of the crisis and the problems/tensions taking place in neighborhoods (where the interaction between inhabitants and immigrants is quite observable) prevent us to fully grasp the consequences of Refugee crisis and the increasing practices of exclusion, discrimination and xenophobia against new comers. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the literature through looking Syrian Refugee Crisis from the eyes of Turkish citizens and analyzing societal effects of the arrival of new comers in Tarlabaşı District, Istanbul, with a special focus on local practices of social exclusion. Focusing on native residents' perspective will allow us to trace and understand the roots of micro-geographies of social exclusion. To understand the local factors of social exclusion against immigrants, the findings of 40 semi-structured interviews (that were conducted between April-June, 2016 in Tarlabaşı) were evaluated in findings part.

Tarlabaşı offers appealing information to understand how the process of "hosting" immigrants is turning out to be the process of "excluding" immigrants. It is true that cultural, religious and kinship relations facilitate the welcoming process of immigrants in the earlier phases of arrival. However, in the long run, socio-economic concerns are becoming more determinant (i.e. fear of losing jobs and poverty, loss of security and trust.) in (re)shaping social relations. This brings us to the main argument of the study that is "despite ethnic and cultural similarities with natives and discourses of brotherhood, immigrants are more likely to subject to social exclusion practices, as their duration of stay increases and as they engage in job & housing market, social networks and daily relations". To say, what has been changing attitudes towards immigrants is not only about "time". With the influx of Syrians, the expanding population in a deprived neighborhood lacking of proper public services, housing stock and job opportunities negatively affect natives' attitudes towards immigrants as Syrians become "inhabitants" rather than "temporary guests". However, this argument is not a fact or universal statement that is valid in every migrant-receiver

neighborhood/city/country. Instead, it is a statement that perfectly covers the recent practices in Tarlabaşı and the discussions around it could be taken into account in tracing exclusion practices in different geographical and sociological contexts.

The outline of the study is as follows. In Section 2, literature on social exclusion and the terms' relations with the notions of social justice and integration are reviewed. Again in this section, factors and forms of social exclusion practices against immigrants are examined in two categories as structural and conditional factors. In Section 3, Tarlabaşı District is briefly introduced and social exclusion practices in Tarlabaşı were discussed with reference to the findings of conducted interviews. In the final section, a summary of main findings is drawn and some remarks are provided for future studies.

**Rethinking Social Justice, Social Exclusion and Integration in The Era of Refugee Crisis**

The way in which immigrants are attached to the dominant social order in immigrated cities, their inclusion in the daily life and labor market, their processes of protecting their own identities and the social relations they establish are the determining factors of the social adjustment processes of immigrants. This process, which is not unilaterally related to immigrants, is of great concern to societies hosting immigrants and their attitudes are decisive in the process. In that matter, while the construction of a mutual relationship on a healthy, tolerant and respectful basis pointing out the processes of social justice, social integration and inclusion; increasing discrimination, social unrests signal the processes of social exclusion.

Social justice discussions constitute great importance in drawing out the social exclusion practices. In lexical terms, social justice means the justice in redistribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2001). Although the term is inspired from various disciplines including philosophy, psychology and dates back to ancient times (Aristotle, Spinoza etc.), the discussions on social justice have evolved around the limited scope of economic determinism in which the injustices are mostly defined by numbers (poverty and unemployment rate etc.) as injustices in income redistribution, wealth and resources allocation (Adaman ve Keyder, 2006). However, the understanding of social justice and poverty depending on economic indicators has begun to lose its meaning in theory & practice with increasing social and political tensions especially after 1970s. Basing on this argument, Harvey (1973) and Lefebvre (1991) adopted a Marxist approach in defining social justice and claim that the term is not just a matter of political economy but also the processes of social inequality, social exclusion and socio-spatial segregation that are becoming increasingly important to understand neoliberal urban processes. Recently, Adaman and Keyder (2006) consider the broader dimensions of injustices in cities and state that to achieve social justice, the mechanisms

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of redistribution, recognition and participation should be redesigned equally and accessible for everyone. Otherwise, injustices may lead to various forms of exclusion and marginalization at the end.

Following the definitions of social justice, social exclusion can be defined in multiple ways as a process (Hodgkinson and Pouw, 2017; Lightman and Gingrich, 2018; Pantea, 2014; Ragazou, 2015; Vidojević, 2017) - such as disaffiliation (Castel, 1991 cited in Silver, 2006) or as a fact (a continuum)- such as social disqualification (Paugam, 1991). In terms of process, Silver (2006) defines social exclusion as a process in which the level of participation, access and solidarity decreases so as the degree of social cohesion and integration which can be observed both in individual and societal level. Similarly, European Commission (2004) defines the term as a process "whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty" and from accessing to job market and public services as well as to community and/or institutional networks which in turn makes these groups less powerful in decision-making processes and even in taking control over decisions affecting their daily life. It is worth to note here that, although the term is highly associated with poverty and disadvantage; individuals may be exposed to different levels/forms of exclusion. To say that, not only poor or low income groups but also high income groups can be excluded in given circumstances. Thus, as Touraine (1991, as cited in Silver 2006) points out, "exclusion is an issue of being in or out, rather than up and down". In such a broad framework, it is not easy to define the origins and outcomes of social exclusion. The motives behind practices of social exclusion as well as the outcomes differ according to time, space and social structures of societies and thus, both dimensions can be studied under different theoretical basis. In literature, the processes/practices of social exclusion are mostly discussed in 4 forms: economic, spatial, cultural and political (Adaman ve Keyder, 2006; Apăteanu and Tatar, 2017; Barnes, 2002; Dufy, 1995; Markoç and Çınar, 2018; Sapancalı, 2003).

Economic exclusion can be expressed as a lack of stability and a permanent position in the labor market, poverty that originates from unemployment and dispossession, inability to access public and private services, and inability to reach income and credit opportunities (Adaman ve Keyder, 2006). Concentration of public & private services and agglomeration of job opportunities and investments in some specific locations, ethnic clustering, location choices of income groups with respect to affordability concerns (in)directly affect spatial segregation and thus exclusion.

Cultural exclusion can be defined as the exclusion of some groups with respect to their ethnic ethnicity, religion, ethnic ties and associations, distinct lifestyles, pleasures, habits, traditions and experiences, by dominant cultural groups,in the area in a way to prevent/limit newcomers' engagement to social networks and daily practices. Political exclusion stands out as an ideological exclusion based on ideological conflicts that negatively affect the freedom of expression,

participation in political life, establishment of representative mechanisms with strong political engagement for those groups lack of political and economic power (Adaman ve Keyder, 2006).

Exclusion practices differ with respect to the dynamics of the given geography, time and the facts of the given society. If these main four categories mentioned above are to be used to define exclusion practices in some specific contexts, it is worth to keep in mind that these processes are not mutually exclusive, instead they are intertwined. For example, Syrian immigrants are not only exposed to cultural exclusion with respect to language barriers and ethnic customs, but also to economic exclusion in which they are not welcomed in job market as potential rivals. Their cultural and economic exclusion trigger Syrians spatial exclusion that ends up with the formation of Syrian neighborhoods that have limited interaction with the surrounding. Basing on these motives, Syrians' grassroots organizations or solidarity initiatives are barely recognized by public authorities & by native community.

- ***Factors of Social Exclusion Against Immigrants***

Putting forward the factors behind the social exclusion against immigrants is vital to analyze social effects of immigration and to guide decision-makers in this matter. Factors of exclusion could be examined under two categories as structural and conditional, that provide a comprehensive coverage of the recent practices of exclusion. Structural factors refer to chronic socio-economic and ethno-cultural problems such as chronic poverty, historic ethnic struggles that are less likely to be solved with immediate precautions & policies. On the other hand, conditional factors represent short-term problem areas such as rapid changing political discourses, negative attitudes of media (in a way to trigger security concerns in society etc.) that may easily manipulate public opinion. Conditional factors of exclusion are more likely to be prevented/solved by tailor-made policies and social engineering.

*Structural factors*

Structural factors refer to chronic social, cultural and economic problems (such as historic ethnic struggles, chronic poverty etc.) that have become ever visible in neoliberal era when the socio-economic disparities and social segregation became ever deepened as the results of competitive and capital-oriented economic, social & spatial policies. Besides as Peace (2001) argues, factors or processes "over which individuals have limited control" may be called as structural factors, as well. In broader sense, structural factors can be grouped in two as socio-economic and ethno-cultural factors. To begin with the former, we may claim that those who have struggled by chronic poverty, chronic socio-economic disadvantage in reaching job market & public services and those

who alienated from community both socially and spatially are more likely to be excluded by others who relatively more "power", "assets" and "competences". With respect to migrants' positions in host countries, income & education level, social status in the social strata, positions in network relations, the level of political representation seem to be the determining factors that forms the basis of economic exclusion in neoliberal era (Appleton-Dyer and Field, 2014; Kramer et al., 2011; Peace, 2001).

Secondly, in a similar vein with chronic poverty and disadvantage, chronic ethnic and cultural struggles, (such as long lasting ethnic clashes between Kurds and Romany groups) language barriers may result in hostility and xenophobia against new comers who have a different ethnic, religious or cultural identity (Barclay et al., 2003; Centre d'Estudis Africans, 2003; Robinson et al., 2005). Such ethno-cultural struggles may arise from long-lasting cultural tensions between groups as well as from short term crisis like civil wars, political movements and uneven migration flows.

*Conditional factors*

Conditional factors refer to on-going and immediate tensions arising from competitive processes in local job market, negative attitudes of media, security or identity concerns which are exposed to rapid change in given socio-economic conjuncture. When compared to structural ones, conditional factors seem relatively easy to be addressed and managed. Nevertheless, they cannot be examined without their organic connections with structural factors. For example, one would be mistaken if he/she discusses the fierce competition among natives and immigrants to reach scarce jobs opportunities in local job market without referring to global competition and inequalities in neoliberal era in terms of fair and just redistribution.

To begin with competitive processes, we may claim that immigrants may often be perceived as burdens to host countries' national economy (Batsaikhan et al. 2018; Gheasi and Nijkamp, 2017) and they are blamed for the decreasing quality of public services (Balkan et al., 2018) since public authorities struggle to meet the needs and expectations of expanding population. It is also believed that, needs and expectations of immigrants may change service priorities in a way to prioritize services for immigrants (Casey et al., 2004; Wren, 2004). Immigrants may also be seen as potential rivals in job market in which job opportunities are getting scarce when compared to increasing population (Hugo, 2005). Moreover, since immigrants are more likely to accept low wage jobs with flexible working hours without proper social insurance so as to survive in a new geography; native labor class may blame immigrants for worsening working conditions, regardless of how immigrants are contributing to the local economy (Helbling and Kriesi, 2014; Hugo, 2005). Such negative attitudes towards immigrants/refugees become ever observable especially during economic crisis and recession periods. As European Social Survey (Round 7,

2014) results put forward 59.4% of European respondents stated that "immigration is bad for the economy"; while 46.3% and 62.1% of the respondents, respectively, claimed that "country's cultural life undermined by immigrants" and "immigrants make country worse place to live" which is actually revealing the reflection of European countries against immigrants in a period economic crisis (2008). Such figures give one the idea of how immigrants and immigration is negatively perceived by host societies.

If such fears and negative attitudes cannot be conquered with to-the-point employment policies (quota systems or regulations on work permits etc.) with special efforts to protect natives' rights and privileges at the first place; exclusion of immigrants may become inevitable (Casey et al., 2004; Centre d'Estudis Africans, 2003; Robinson, 2012). Thus, policies and regulations play a crucial role in managing the exclusion process. Citizens' minds are often confused about the immigrants' future in their countries when legislative framework of the given country poorly defines the conditions/duration of stay, the conditions of entry-exit, requirements for naturalization process, immigrants' rights to sheltering, health and education services as well as immigrants' rights in legal and public affairs (Centre d'Estudis Africans, 2003; Penrose, 2002). Such unclear points in legislation may lead to social unrests in society and stimulate negative attitudes towards immigrants.

Host societies' attitudes towards immigrants are also quite interrelated with issues of security and identity (De Mello, 2018; Schmidbaur, 2017). The fear of losing national or local identity, the fear of losing traditional habits, norms and the way living determine settled inhabitants' choice over whether to include/welcome immigrants or exclude/marginalize them from daily social networks and community relations. The main reason of such an attitude may be to preserve local order and peaceful atmosphere within the neighborhood. If the level of interaction between host community and immigrants is quite limited, then it is more likely to observe cultural polarization which may lead to the exclusion practices at the end. The most common policy set in addressing increasing problems regarding the protection of identities, norms and values seems to be "integration policies". Integration can be interpreted as the adoption of host society's language, culture, norms, traditions, daily life, as well as its institutional structure, public affairs, legal framework and economic structure by immigrants without losing/neglecting their own cultural and ethnic identities (Appleton, 2011; Emerson, 2011; Syrett ve Sepulveda, 2012). Integration policies would be perfect tools to fight social exclusion, only if they are designed two sided (natives-immigrants) and anti-assimilative.

As the last factor of exclusion, one should refer to the role of media in molding public opinion against immigrants. Various studies put forward that, media reporting of migration and immigrant-related issues is often one-way and sided (Karataş, 2015; Lemos, 2004; Schmidbaur, 2017). That is, media reporting is mostly focusing on the negative sides the process such as

increasing crimes, social unrests (through neglecting immigrants' contributions to economic growth, innovative technologies, social solidarity and peace etc.) in a way to reinforce biases against immigrants. Sided and biased media reporting may result, social exclusion which obstruct all the efforts to achieve community cohesion (Craig et al., 2004; Lemos, 2004).

In the next section, structural and conditions factors of exclusion that briefly introduced here would be used as the framing discussion in evaluating the exclusion process in Tarlabaşı, Istanbul. However, at the first place it is important to introduce Tarlabaşı with respect to its demographic, socio-cultural and economic characteristics.

## Case Study: Tarlabaşı, Istanbul

- ***Contextual Setting of Tarlabaşı and Methods Used***

Tarlabaşı is a very well known area in Istanbul with a long history of settlement. Tarlabaşı is not an administrative unit, to say, it is composed of 9 neighborhoods (Bostan, Bülbül, Çukur, Hüseyin Ağa, Kalyoncu Kulluk, Kamerhatun, Şehit Muhtar, Sururi Mehmet Efendi, Yenişehir) with an overall population of 25152 (TUIK, 2017). However, despite its history and the transformations that took place in its development, Tarlabaşı is now known as a deprived neighborhood hosting various diverse groups, including low income and poverty groups, ethnic groups and immigrants (Kurdish, Romani, African and Syrian populations as the majority), illegal workers etc. which are actually referred as marginal groups in the society. Tarlabaşı has a bad reputation for being the center of crime, theft, as well as illegal production and trade. Despite such a bad reputation, Tarlabaşı is still attracting interregional and international immigrants through offering an affordable life at the very center of Istanbul (app. 7-10 minutes to Istiklal Street by walking).
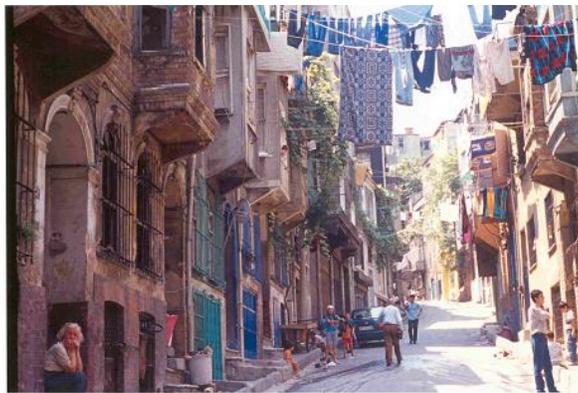


**Figure 1** Street view – Tarlabaşı
Source: dunyabulteni, april 2018

Tarlabaşı offers a bunch of information to put forward how the process of "hosting" immigrants is turning out to be the process of "excluding" after a five-year practice of living together. Since the first waves of crisis, Tarlabaşı has received a considerable amount of Syrian immigrants. According to official records (GIGM, 2018), Istanbul ranks first in Turkey by hosting 563.133 Syrian immigrants who are officially registered (%15, 80 of total Syrian immigrants in Turkey- 3.562.523). However, we have limited information about the mobility of Syrians within cities and that is mostly unofficial. Thus, basing on the declarations of neighborhood mukhtars and research institutes in Tarlabaşı, it is estimated that Beyoğlu District is hosting around 10.000 Syrian immigrants in which Tarlabaşı has one of the highest share by hosting around 3000-5000 in its 9 neighborhood, by 2017.

Based on unofficial records, we may say %11,9 - %19,9 of the overall population of Tarlabaşı is composed of Syrian immigrants. Therefore, it is very likely to expect severe alterations in social pattern & relations in Tarlabaşı with the arrival of Syrian immigrants.

To get a greater insight of changes in social relations in Tarlabaşı, 40 semi-structures interviews were conducted between April - June, 2016. Respondents were asked 11 semi-structured questions that try to find out respondents' reactions to Syrian Refugee Crisis and its effects in Turkey, how they perceived and reacted to the settlement of Syrians in their neighborhood, how social life and solidarity networks in the neighborhood have been affected by Syrian influx, how they get in contact and interact with Syrian new comers, how they defined and evaluated the five-year experience of living together and the problems/struggles that they were subjected to. It is also aimed to understand whether any opinions/views have changed or not since the first day of Syrian settlement in Tarlabaşı up to now or not. If anything has changed, how is it changed and why?

Moreover, without any bias and manipulation respondents were asked whether they faced/observed/experienced the structural and conditional factors outlined above. For example, regarding immigrants' contribution to local economy, respondents were asked to choose the proper wording for the following statement: Syrian immigrants contribute to / threat to local economy. With respect to wording choice made, respondents were asked about their experiences in this matter and used as quotations in findings part.

When conducting interviews, random sampling was preferred and a special attention devoted to achieve a balance in terms of gender, age, occupation, level of education etc. so as to increase the level of just representation (Table 1). Priority is given to residents who have settled Tarlabaşı long before the arrival of Syrians to understand the first reactions against Syrians and what has been changed in 5 years in public perception.

The aim of semi-structured interviews was not to get the exact information about attitudes towards immigrants, rather, they were designed to have a general background about how immigrants are perceived, included or excluded.

**Table 1** Descriptive Information of Respondents

| | | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-59 | 60-74 | 75+ | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | **F** | 6 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 5 | 40 |
| | **%** | 15 | 27,5 | 25 | 20 | 12,5 | 100 |
| **Gender** | | **Women** | **Men** | | | | |
| | **F** | 18 | 22 | | | | 40 |
| | **%** | 45 | 55 | | | | 100 |
| **Education** | | **Not attended** | **Primary** | **High School** | **University** | **Graduate** | |
| | **F** | 8 | 16 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 40 |
| | **%** | 20 | 40 | 25 | 12,5 | 2,5 | 100 |
| **Employment** | | **Unemployed** | **Employed** | | | | |
| | **F** | 12 | 28 | | | | 40 |
| | **%** | 30 | 70 | | | | 100 |

**Factors of Social Exclusion Against Syrian Immigrants in Tarlabaşı**

Tarlabaşı District provided a broad framework to trace the roots of social exclusion against Syrians which in turn can be taken into account to understand the factors of exclusion in different geographies. In this section, through referring to factors of exclusion that were discussed under two dimensions as structural and conditional, I tried to figure out how Syrian immigrant influx to Tarlabaşı altered/ affected social relations, job market dynamics and everyday interaction between different groups in society with respect to 40 semi-structured interviews conducted in the area.

Before getting into the factors of exclusion in Tarlabaşı, it is worth to evaluate public opinion with respect to five-year-old experience of hosting Syrian immigrants. For the first days/weeks days of Syrian settlement in the area, there seemed to be a mix of both positive and negative views on Syrian immigrants in Tarlabaşı.

16 respondents (out of 40) stated that they "welcomed" Syrians at the first days of their arrival. They pointed out that they did not feel any "unhappiness" or "discontentedness" with the

appearance of Syrians in their neighborhoods. The main reason behind such welcoming attitudes seemed quite humanitarian as explained in following two quotes;

*"They were escaping from the war, we were the only neighbors to help them. They did not have food, clothes, anywhere to sleep. We helped them without asking anything in return. It's the mission of humanity, it should be."* (woman, 35 years old, married)

*"You're asking what we have done when Syrians come? We did our best to comfort them, to provide food and sheltering for them. Why we did that? Because they are human as we are and they are our religious and cultural fellows. We had to help them."* (man, 48 years old, married)

Besides humanitarian concerns, ethnic, cultural and religious similarities seemed to help natives to host and welcome immigrants when they first arrived. Especially women residents of Tarlabaşı were quite happy to host Syrian immigrants and covering their basic needs with the spirit of solidarity. Some supportive arguments of can be found in the quotation below;

*"In earlier days, they were 3-4 people, in time, their families have come. They started to live in rooms with very bad conditions, even which we never thought to live in. After witnessing these, we (referring to her friends) and several families collected money and helped them. We also provided space for them to perform the salaat. They are our religion-brothers."* (woman, 34 years old, married)

However, there were opposite views, too. Especially Romany groups, old natives, former in-migrants who have moved from northern cities of Turkey were not quite happy with the appearance of Syrian immigrants in their neighborhoods (in total 24 out of 40 respondents). When they were asked about their "unhappiness" and "discontentedness", they referred to ethno-cultural problems such as language barriers, long-lasting ethnic conflicts over decades (ie. conflicts between Romany and Kurdish populations), cultural differences in terms of national values, norms and daily habits etc. The quotes such as "*How could we get along with Syrians without knowing their language?*" "*They cannot understand Turkish, so they must leave the neighborhood and then the country*" "*We did not invite them, who invited them?*" "*We do not want them*" "*We cannot live together*" "*We cannot accept their living style*" "*We have different cultures*" were repeated several times within the interviews.

Recently, it is likely to argue that the 5 years of "living together" practice/experience has seemed to change the positive and welcoming attitudes towards Syrian immigrants. The humanitarian and charitable practices, positive discourses on brotherhood, neighboring, cultural and ethnic similarities have seemed to lose their determining position in shaping social relations in Tarlabaşı.

In other words, humanitarian and cultural discourses are not as important as in the first days of Syrian settlement in Tarlabaşı. Syrian immigrants' engagement to job market, housing and some benefits & rights to access public services have led to increasing discontent and biases against them. When 16 respondents (out of 40), who stated that they were quite open and welcoming for Syrians when they first arrived, were asked about their opinions for Syrians after 5 years and 11 of them directly stated that "they have changed their minds". The overall trend in Tarlabaşı to blame Syrians for worsening economic conditions, less qualified public services and loss of security and social trust seemed quite widely accepted.

Increasing biases, discrimination and exclusion against Syrian immigrants could be discussed under two headings as structural and conditional factors (as outlined above). To begin with structural ones, ethno-cultural factors seemed quite influential. That is, Romany groups still argue for their long-lasting conflicts with Kurdish population regardless of individual relations and cultural exchanges occurred within 5 years within the same neighborhood. 17 respondents out 40 declared language barriers, cultural and ethnic differences affecting daily social relations as problems that they cannot easily intervene in and solve.

In terms of socio-economic factors, 33 of 40 interviewees mentioned their fears chronic socio-economic disadvantages. Since Syrians settled in Tarlabaşı also lack of proper income and financial assets (as the majority of natives) to positively contribute to local economy as potential consumers or potential entrepreneurs; natives believe that with an expanding population with limited assets they could not escape from chronic poverty and disadvantage (please see the quotation below).

*"I was born in a poor family and I couldn't attend school. Since I'm not qualified, I work as an hodman with a wage lower than substance level. There is no job for everyone in this neighborhood and I have to stick to this job no matter what. And now we have Syrians who are also poor. We fight each other to survive because this system does not offer us anything. Our faith is poverty and no one sees us."* (man, 27 years old, single)

Besides chronic poverty and socio-economic disadvantages, interviewees also mentioned the unstable economic progress which is quite open to externalities. They fear to lose their jobs and social aids with a sudden economic crisis/recession. They also fear that, under unstable working conditions, Syrian immigrants are perfect rivals for them, since they work for lower wages for longer hours. 7 out of 40 interviewees declared that, even with the minor effects of economic fluctuations, employers chose to work with Syrian immigrants (instead of them) to decrease their costs, regardless of how illegal to employ immigrants.

Such fears/views lead us to the fact that competition among natives and immigrants in local job market and accessing public services have become fierce. Through discussing increasing competitiveness that shape local relations, we may touch upon conditional factors that shape attitudes towards Syrians in Tarlabaşı. To start with competitive processes in job market, 24 out of 28 respondents, who are employed and active in local job market, claimed that Syrian immigrants are "stealing their jobs" since they admit to work for longer hours with lower wages and they do not ask for social security. Respondents claim that they either have to work under worsening conditions and accept lower wages and flexible working hours or they will be unemployed (17 out of 28). Respondents also claim that employers do not hesitate to replace them with Syrian workers to lower the labor costs and maximize their profit. We may trace the roots of these fears in the quotation below;

*"For years, we are facing the question of "Can we survive this month and pay the bills?".We are poor and it seems that we are getting poorer everyday. Everything gets expensive but our wages are stable. Even worse, Syrian immigrants stole our jobs since they are ready to work like 24 hours a day for less money than we get. We hope that they will turn back and we will get back our jobs"* (man, 42 years old, married)

With respect to changing conditions in housing and job market, 36 of 40 respondents blame Syrian immigrants for increasing housing rents. It is claimed that housing rents have increased around % 30-35 with the settlement of Syrians, due to scarcity of housing stock at the very center of Beyoğlu. As one of the respondents (women, 24 years old, single) claimed *"even two-room houses with very bad infrastructure and heating have become as expensive as a luxury house in suburbs"*.

Similar concerns are also likely to be observed in terms of the quality of public services, the amount of public expenditures and social aids allocated to natives. The majority of interviewees (23 out of 40) declared that once Syrian immigrants become settled inhabitants, the quality and quantity of public services would likely fall and the priorities in providing public services will accordingly change to respond the needs of immigrants. 32 of 40 residents declared their dissatisfaction with municipalities' social aid system designed for the coverage of basic needs of immigrants. Respondents claim that, "their taxes" are redistributed among Syrians without their permission.

*"I think that, (Beyoğlu) municipality does not care about our problems. We are forced to live in a neighborhood which is highly deprived in terms of infrastructure. Why do they collect taxes? For Syrians? It is not nice to see how well Syrian immigrants are treated in our own neighborhoods. We also demand the same."* (man, 49 years old, married)

Respondents are also unhappy with the changes in social patterns and daily relations in Tarlabaşı with Syrian influx. It is a common idea that with the arrival of Syrians, the pattern of social relations, social order, network relations and use of public spaces have changed negatively (30 out of 40). Moreover "defending woman's honor" was repeatedly mentioned by male residents (10 of 12 married men), as the main motive behind less use of public spaces within neighborhood. They claim that, they do not want their wives to go out without them or without any person that they can trust, due to their mistrust against newcomers.

Views of political figures, immigrant policies and media and press declarations have a significant role in the shaping the perception of Syrian immigrants. According to the majority of residents (22 of 40), privileges and opportunities granted for immigrants by central and local authorities are not likely to end in near future. Interviewees seemed quite confused about the future of Syrian immigrants in their neighborhoods, due to political uncertainty in migration policies. The quote below summarize the concerns of interviewees over the future of Syrian immigrants in their neighborhoods.

*"…For sure, they are our brothers and they need help. However, if they will settle permanently in Turkey, government should locate them in proper houses in some special locations, not in our neighborhoods. But first of all, we need to know that will they return to Syria or stay in Turkey. Because it affects our daily lives."* (woman, 36 years old, married)


**Discussion and Concluding Remarks**

This study focused on Syrian Immigrant Crisis and how it is perceived at local level through determining local daily relations and processes of social exclusion. The main argument is, regardless of ethnic, cultural and religious similarities and discourses of brotherhood; Syrian immigrants are more likely to be excluded in the long term as their duration of stay increases and as they engage urban economy (labor market, redistribution mechanisms), network relations and everyday lives of native residents. To put forward such exclusionary practices, 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted in Tarlabaşı, Istanbul. According to findings, despite the divisions in residents' view on whether to welcome or exclude Syrian immigrants in the first days of crisis; 5 years of living practice eroded such welcoming views which were mostly based on ethnic, cultural and religious similarities as well as charitable purposes.

It is true that cultural, religious and kinship relations facilitate the welcoming process of immigrants in the earlier phases of arrival. However, in the long run, socio-economic concerns are becoming more determinant (i.e. fear of losing jobs and poverty, loss of security and trust.) in (re)shaping social relations. It is highly affirmable to say that, due to given concerns of the future of Syrian immigrants in neighborhoods, the quality and coverage of public services and

social aids, unstable nature of economic progress, increasing competition over scare resources and job opportunities result in the intolerance and hostility and in the long term lead to social exclusion practices against immigrants. Of course, the given factors of exclusion may be totally different/opposite in different geographical contexts. With respect to huge differences in terms of geography, context, scale and history; any argument regarding exclusion/inclusion of immigrants is context-depended and cannot be easily falsified or justified. For example, in Europe there is a bunch of studies (Aas ve Bosworth, 2013; Mahoney and Siyambalapitiya, 2017; Roodman, 2014; Syrett ve Sepulveda, 2012) claiming that "as refugees integrate in daily life and contribute to national/local economy they are more likely to be welcomed". On the other hand, there are also various studies claiming that "immigrants are often described as potential opponents in the labor market, a potential burden for public services and are subject to more exclusionary practices over time (Camarota ve Zeigler, 2013; Rowthorn, 2008; Boustan et al. 2010; Kaczmarczyk, 2013). For Tarlabaşı case, the latter argument seemed be observed.

To deal with social exclusion, this study bears some important remarks for policy makers. First of all, immigration policies regarding entry/exit conditions, residence/work permits, rights to public services and the coverage of temporary protection status, the processes of naturalization have to be properly determined. Otherwise, the concerns on the future of Syrians, whether they should be regarded as temporary guests or permanent inhabitants will negatively affect attitudes towards Syrians. Moreover, to address increasing concerns on Syrians' position and rights in job market, employment policies should be revised to erode misunderstandings and to protect Turkish workers right. In terms of planning and policies of local governments, social aid mechanisms should be fairly designed so as not to aggrieve both Syrian and Turkish beneficiaries, housing problem should be addressed, spaces of encounter should be designed to foster interaction among native and immigrant groups.

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