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## “Walls”, The Ancient Issue of Humanity: Challenge of Social Work With “The Other”

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### Abstract

The settled one marginalizes the newcomer and defines the existing problem through them. The first reaction against the other is to set boundaries by building a wall. In the second stage, reached after the walls are formed, there is now the inside and outside of the wall. Then, for the settled, the inside is identified with the good, and the outside with the bad. The starting point of this study is the settled society building walls between newcomers and themselves, and through this, othering them. Therefore, this study aims to show the processes and forms of othering of refugees and immigrants in Turkey. In line with the aforementioned purpose, the phenomenon of othering is examined through the (immigrant) “Natashas” and (refugee) Syrians. In this context, for a two-way practice, it is emphasized that the social worker should not only have a strong social inclusion policy for immigrants, but also raise the awareness of the settled society about othering.

### Keywords

Social Work, Other, Walls, Social Exclusion, Social Inclusion

### Introduction

The other has been the subject of numerous scientific studies in different contexts within social sciences. This study includes the concepts of ‘other’ and ‘othering’, based on two social examples, one of which has been experienced recently and the other is still ongoing. The existence and the negative characterization of the other and their social inclusion are discussed. The first of these examples is the ‘Natasha’ crisis in the Black Sea region, and the second is the ‘Syrians’. Both examples are handled with processes and forms of othering.

In the examples we mentioned, although the experience with the Natashas has ended, the attitude developed towards the other has become a generalized and habitual attitude and there is a possibility that it will be applied to another ‘other’ as well. For this reason, when the place where the settled is accepted as correct and superior when defining the problem, similar problems can arise with another ‘other’ at different times. As a mat-

ter of fact, similar reactions emerged with the arrival of Syrians. Whether the subject is immigrants like in the example of Natashas or refugees like in the example of Syrians, the process of othering does not pose a problem as an approach on its own. However, this approach is the first cause of other wide-ranging problems in terms of its indicators and results, and therefore, the problem of othering is the subject of this study. After all, these processes are not only mental processes, but also active processes that direct the enactment of immigration law and other related laws, the legitimation of violence, and the determination of foreign policy (Said, 2008, p. 347).

In this article, the role assigned to social work and social workers as a “bridge architecture” is inspired by using Deniz Ülke Arıboğan’s book, *Duvar: Tarih Geri Dönüyor* (2018, p. 27). The term is discussed in a different context in the book mentioned, but it is used in this study as it fits the role assigned to social work. Just as bridges connect two sides, social workers also need to adopt a two-sided working method for both residents and newcomers. In this context, social work; as a requirement of the role assigned to it, should include the elimination of the existing prejudice of the resident against the ‘other’, into its field of work. Otherwise, persistent prejudices pose a danger with of the possibility of negatively affecting the relationships between the settled person with different ‘others’ that they may encounter.

In this study, we aim to make othering, which is not obvious at first glance, visible by examining the examples of Natashas and Syrians. In addition, other aims of this study are to emphasize the need for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of othering and the resulting ostracism, and also the need to “interpret the ones who exclude” (Dedeoğlu & Gökmen, 2011). In studies on refugees and/or immigrants within the scope of social work, the problems caused by refugees and/or immigrants are generally emphasized (Akbaş, 2019). However, the issue needs to be evaluated by looking at both sides - the residents and the newcomers.

## The Other and Its History

It can be said that ‘the other’ consists of all persons and objects other than the subject and is created through the perspective of ‘I’. Self-awareness, which can be considered the beginning of being human, is actually possible with the existence of another or the other. In fact, it has been related to self-consciousness since the beginning of the existence of humanity (Şengül, 2007, p. 98). As Hegel said, “First of all (in an individual) self-consciousness must emerge, and in order for self-consciousness to emerge, man must confront the other in terms of nature and other individuals.” (Ozcan, 2016, p. 255). It is only possible to talk about sociality and social relationships when the other is encountered (Gasset, 2014). The distinction between the native self and the foreign other strengthens the identity of the ‘me’ (Koçyiğit, 2017).

Although the tale of ‘me’ and ‘the other’ started with one affirming the existence of the other, then the other ceased to be another or nature. In this case, it is possible to talk about the existence of a symbolic other. Instead of ‘me and the other’, there is now ‘us and the other’ as an element that also constitutes society, and differences begin to emerge according to ‘us’, not according to ‘me’. After the individual accepts themselves as a part of society, the idea of the ‘other’ is formed in their mind and their personal ‘I’ disappears in the social self. Afterwards, individuals construct differences not based on themselves, but according to the society they live in (Şengül, 2007, p. 98). In other words, othering stems from the social (we) and psychological (I) need for an outsider (Morrison, 2019).

The native or the resident starts to define themselves through the ‘foreigner’, that is, the symbolic other. In this process, everything that is unfamiliar is subjected to othering. Thus, the dominant power or the settled, who defines the ‘other’, will “try to define a set of differences as inherently bad, irrational, abnormal, insane, sick, primitive, monstrous, dangerous—that is, the other.” (Selçuk, 2012, p. 81). It can also be added that ‘others’ are threatening, incomprehensible and immoral to this list, which characterizes these hierarchical differences (Morrison, 2019). The stranger is seen as unpredictable and frightening by the resident precisely because they are unknown, unlike the familiar people with whom they interact. These are the concerns that occur because “strangers are among us” so that the fiction of me and the other can produce spurious fears (Bauman, 2018).

The sense of self and us is formed by what the ‘other’ has and contains. In other words, the construction of the other is essentially the construction of ‘I’ and ‘us’. Thus, the differences are determined according to the ‘other’ (Şengül, 2007, p. 98). As a result, although the other varies according to time, othering can be encountered everywhere people exist. Differences, on the other hand, are stated on the basis of negative features and include prejudices. It can be said that in this two-sided construction process, there is not only description but also domination (Said, 2008, p. 346). Even the descriptions of othering include classification in terms of value and status (Morrison, 2019). The border between me/us and the other, which has been defined and thus determined, has been indubitably drawn (Ünal, 2014).

In ancient Greece, the foreigner was called “barbarian”. The Greeks gave this name to those who did not speak their language; the outsiders, that is, ‘the other’, and this name included everyone who was not Greek. The concept of barbarians, in addition to being an intermediary for the national identity and solidarity of Greeks, also provided the legitimization of slavery (Yalazi, 2020). The name “Acem” (Persian) is also in the same line and refers to all others who are not Arabs. Just like the Greeks, the ‘others’ of the Arabs were their neighbors, and these two words included all the people they came into contact with except themselves. Because Acem (TDVIA, 1988) generally refers to everyone who is not Arab, and specifically means Persian, the neighbors of Arabs, it also implies a reference to

the cultural and political superiority of Arabs.

In summary, otherness is not just about being different. “As soon as differences begin to make one claim superiority over another” (Şengül, 2007, p. 113), the otherness and othering come into play with all its negativity. In addition, othering does not remain an abstract attitude, it is only a matter of time before it turns into marginalization and concrete behaviors (Ünal, 2014). Thus, categories that directly affect the practice such as “us and those who have a right to benefit from welfare and those who don’t”, “accepted immigrants or not accepted immigrants”, “immigrant worker, foreign worker” (Atasü-Topçuoğlu, 2019), and “guest worker” used for Turkish employees in Germany, are formed.

For example, in Germany, where the most Turkish in Europe live, words such as *ausländer* (foreigner) and *fremde* (stranger), which contain the fear of the unknown, are used. There are more than twenty words describing foreigners in the German language, among which the words *ausländer* and *fremde* (foreign) do not refer to Europeans, but mostly to “Turkish people, Muslims, Middle Easterners, or people of African descent”. In addition, the words used are not neutral with their etymological meanings. *Fremde* is derived from the identifier, *fram* and it has an opposite meaning to what is known and trusted, in relation to distance and leaving a place (Gedik, 2010). In the cultural context, the representation of Muslim or Turkish women in literature, cinema and social sciences becomes the embodiment of the other, the opposite of the free Western woman. In this way, the woman becomes the other as an object, waiting to be rescued as a victim crushed by her own culture (Ewing, 2006). The enslaved barbarians (Yalazi, 2020) created a cheap labor force, as they were the economic powerhouse of Greek-Hellenic cities. Although there are many mechanisms that lead to othering in a society, economy and culture are the leading ones (Dursun, 2014).

What is fixed in othering, or in other words, what is determinant and descriptive, corresponds to the settled and becomes obvious with the instinct to preserve the status quo, that is, the current situation and power, and it is assumed that there is a social homogeneity (Habermas, 2015). As a result, by focusing on the different one, these differences are equated with deficiency, and moreover, with worthlessness. Thus, the groundwork is prepared for normalizing all kinds of behavior towards the other. “The normalization here is the emergence of a structure in which all kinds of behaviors and injustices to be applied to the marginalized individual are accepted as normal” (Bolgün, 2016, p. 220).

## The Wall as a Boundary Line

The border is sociological in both territorial and sociopolitical aspects and derives its importance and function from the people it favors. As a matter of fact, it becomes the main tool of almost every kind of social, political, ideological, etc., categorization. Demarcation has been done since ancient times. Individuals, communities, and political

organizations have drawn various boundaries to define themselves (Tekin, 2012, p. 158). Therefore, drawing boundaries means defining 'us' on the one hand and 'other' on the other.

The first fences and walls that people built were to create shelter. Another reason for the invention of walls was the need for protection from both natural conditions and other inhabitants of nature, animals and other people. The wall has formed the boundary line between people and 'the other', which threatens the 'self' and 'us'. In this context, the other can be nature, another person, another community, or lifestyle. Individuals can give names to these communities as part of a larger collective unit, and they can build boundaries and walls. The boundaries are drawn sometimes for a city and sometimes for a community (Patel & Moore, 2019).

Borders and their more concrete forms, border-walls, are perceived as the access point for various threats to 'us', especially those embodied in the figure of the dangerous outsider. Therefore, dichotomous expressions such as inside/outside, trust/fear, friend/enemy, us/them or us/stranger reinforce the boundaries in social perception more. It is seen that the borders and walls play an important role in building the sense of 'us' rather than ownership and security (Tekin, 2020, p. 95). The wall is an element that defines the boundaries of the property. In this context, according to Rousseau (Günay, 2010, p. 67), a person's evaluation of his own situation occurs in a neighborhood relationship. The presence of the neighbor or the other necessitates the protection of the property and therefore the need for a wall. Along with walls and boundaries drawn for protection, a legal and political system is created to protect property. The system in question benefits the property owners, in other words, those who build the wall.

In Islamic civilization, the wall has functioned to define and protect privacy. The high walls built around the households in different parts of the Islamic world, especially in Anatolia, ensured that the residents of the house could move freely in the courtyard without concerns about their privacy being violated. After the invention of walls for individual purposes that ensured the protection of the privacy of households, fortress walls began to be built to protect larger communities. As the communities grew, a need for city walls emerged. The wall was a substitute for an armed sentry to keep out possible attacks (Mumford, 2007). With this function, the wall created a collective structure that contributed to non-cooperation, and moreover, hostility.

The perception of borders that develops with the wall manifests itself as state borders between countries. While the walls provided the control over entrances and exits in times of peace, they had a defensive function in times of war. The Great Wall of China, which can be easily seen from space, is the most well-known of the defensive walls. City or castle walls are examples of walls that allow controlled entrances and exits. The Berlin Wall, on the other hand, has a symbolic importance as a wall separating the two worlds after World

War II. The Berlin Wall, which separated West Germany and East Germany, declared the end of the Cold War period with its collapse in 1990. This wall, which is an inner border and a wall of shame, has been described as the Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart. Although there have been different manifestations of domination over another community in history, the Berlin Wall has been a concrete example of this (Yıldırım, 2020). With this phenomenon, which started right after the fall of the Berlin Wall and continued increasingly at the beginning of the third millennium, we are witnessing nation-states building walls on their borders in many parts of the world. W. Brown explains this exclusionary policy as follows:

Aiming to protect societies that are officially deemed free, legitimate, and secular from intrusion, exploitation, or attacks, these walls are constructed by suspending the law and they inevitably produce a defensive, narrow-minded, nationalist, and militarized collective ethos and subjectivity. Instead of an open society they aim to defend, these walls create an increasingly closed and restrained collective identity. This is why the new walls not only fail to resurrect the eroded nation-state sovereignty, which is the reason that gave rise to them, they also contribute to the emergence of new xenophobia and parochialism in a post national age (Brown, 2011, p. 49-50).

However, at the current stage, besides concrete walls it is necessary to also talk about abstract walls that cannot be seen, but whose effects can be felt. Cyber walls, sanction walls, walls against democracy, visa walls, and customs walls (Arıboğan, 2018) are some of the examples of these new generation walls. Compared to visible concrete walls, these postmodern walls have the potential to deeply affect many areas such as daily life, inflation, employment, production, travel, education, and politics. In this context, with reference to the new generation walls, even the communication itself “turns into a communication wall, leading people to defend themselves and turn to themselves rather than opening up to the outside world” in some cases, and this situation actually causes “everyone to withdraw into themselves, on what creates their difference, that is, their own unique identity” (Selçuk, 2012, p. 94).

Even though the wall has fulfilled the functions of keeping the other out and protecting the ones inside throughout history, it is an undeniable fact that “walls were also being built against a despised culture and civilization. Some of the factors that determine the psychology of locals are exclusion and contempt (Arıboğan, 2018, p. 79) as well as fear.

## The Other's Immorality or Evil

The other can exist through different criteria of the dominant. First of all, in the most evident area, it became possible to construct 'the other' through race. In America and Europe, there is black versus white, and the other in terms of gender is women versus men. Religions have become the other for each other, the East against the West, the East has become the other in the face of the West, and the rural has become the other in the face of the urban. In these dualities, there is a hierarchy between the one who defines the other and the defined other, and the one who defines is the superior one. Moreover, all hierarchies are fictitious; they exist not because they are there, but because they are seen as such (Harari, 2016). In this part of the study, the acceptance of the settled and the dominant as moral or good, the outsider and the other as immoral or bad is based on two main examples.

In fact, revealing the difference between us and the other through the concept of morality is not a new phenomenon. All communities have created derogatory discourses along with othering, and they have attempted to impose their own truth on others (Morrison, 2019). In the dichotomy of good man-bad man in ancient times, bad features were attributed to all other non-Hellenic/non-Greek societies through the concept of barbarians, which represents the other of the Greek (Yalazi, 2020). It can be said that the image of otherness contains a deficiency (Ersöz & Uslu, 2012).

The aim of moral sentences is to co-ordinate the behavior of the parties in a binding manner. What is meant by binding is that individuals are part of a community where they know their obligations and know what they expect from each other. Moral sentences/norms can be persuasive when they can be justified. These justifications are interpretations that give persuasive powers to moral norms, and they also control public action. Apart from determining how individuals will behave in society, these norms can also contain reasons for consensus and alliance in any conflict, in situations that are thought to damage the solidarity of society (Habermas, 2015), or about the immorality of those who are considered outsiders, that is, the others.

For Easterners, the West has always remained an example whose technique can be pursued but whose morality or immorality cannot be followed. What supporters of progress agree on is that the technology and scientific progress of the West can be imitated, but its culture and religion should not be taken as an example (Başdemir, 2014). The only issue that the parties cannot be sure of is the morals of Western society. In this context, we can also talk about a West that the East has created to present itself to the world (Koçyiğit, 2017).

From the perspective of the West, it is possible to talk about a similar prejudice about the East. Edward Said's book on Orientalism describes the subject in strong language. The image of the East in the West includes a list of complex sets of ideas about the Orient



(Oriental tyranny, glamor, cruelty, lust). It is seen in the book that the image of the Western in the minds of the Easterners is similar to the image of the Eastern in the mind of the Westerners. It is understood that Orientalism (Ersöz & Uslu, 2012) functions as the West's policy of marginalizing the East and justifying their superiority against the East that they have created. The situation is clearly illustrated by Edward Said's excerpts from Harold W. Glidden's article:

It is a notable fact that while the Arab value system demands absolute solidarity within the group, it at the same time encourages among its members a kind of rivalry that is destructive of that very solidarity"; in Arab society only "success counts" and "the end justifies the means"... "the art of subterfuge is highly developed in Arab life, as well as in Islam itself"; ... if "Westerners consider peace to be high on the scale of values", this is not true of Arabs. "In fact," we are told, "in Arab tribal society (where Arab values originated), strife, not peace, was the normal state of affairs because raiding was one of the two main supports of the economy (Said, 2008, p. 14).

What is written in the above passage, which has been shortened due to its length, is very familiar. Because, if we replace the word "Arabs" with the word "Westerners" in the text, the image of Western in the mind of the East is described. Therefore, constructing and vilifying the other appears to be a reciprocal psychosocial process. In other words, "The discussions about the concepts of 'us and the other' show the existential crises of the East and the West" (Koçyigit, 2017, p. 155). People who are marginalized are put in the category of evil, dangerous or weak, by being assumed to lack any good attributes. Thus, the stranger that we encounter cease to be a healthy person in our minds and become a tainted, disregarded, in short, disgraced individual. Because of all this, othering is also a form of stigmatization (Goffman, 2014, p. 31).

The stigmatized people, who are not seen as acceptable from this perspective, are subjected to various discrimination by the normal ones, and this makes their lives difficult. In particular, the forms of stigmatization towards refugees, immigrants and outsiders are closely related to the moral codes of the settled. Because morality is defined by legislators and the ones who keep the order. Being exposed to distorted, prejudiced expectations and humiliating behaviors is the result of othering and stigmatization (Özmen & Erdem, 2018).

The types of othering can be summarized as social exclusion, dehumanization-degradation, attributing negative features, political labeling, comparison between groups, exaggerating the quantitative importance of the outgroup, leaving the group to fend for itself, ignoring the basic characteristics and customs of the dominant group, isolating the outgroup, and showing them as alone and weak (Polat & Kaya, 2017).

### *“Natasha, the Unfaithful Woman”*

The 1990s, when the USSR collapsed, was the period when Turkey’s place in migration traffic changed and started to become a receiving country from being a sending country. While conducting studies on the quantity of migration to Turkey, the experiences of immigrants and their relationship with society have not been given much attention. The issue of social exclusion in Turkey has been discussed in the context of issues related to poverty. However, it has been determined that social exclusion is based on factors other than poverty, and one of them is religious beliefs. For this reason, while social exclusion based on poverty can be understood within the processes of redistribution, people can also be excluded due to social prejudices other than their economic situation. Social exclusion is a multidimensional and dynamic process, which is why it is not only related to the immigration regimes in the countries, but also to local society’s perception of the foreigner. In other words, it is needed to interpret the stories of those who exclude, as well as those who are excluded (Dedeoğlu & Ekiz Gökmen, 2011).

If we continue with the examples in Turkey, the discourse that non-Muslim women have a different understanding of morality than Muslim women has been exaggerated and the other has been painted as immoral. The clearest example of this was experienced in the case of the Natashas.

Due to the economic crises experienced after the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), many Russians started to work abroad. One of the countries they migrated to is Turkey, one of Russia’s closest neighbors. The trade that emerged as a result of bringing and taking commercial goods from Russia to Turkey and vice versa is called “suitcase trade”, in terms of frequency of the movement, it is called “shuttle migration”. The main participants of this trade are Russian women, and Russian markets had begun to be established in the cities they settled in (Deniz, 2018). In time, Russian women were called “Natasha”. This word, which refers to “imported” prostitution, has become synonymous with prostitution. As a result, it has become common to stigmatize every foreign blonde Slavic woman as “Natasha” (Dilli & Özmen, 2017) even though it contradicts the facts. However, (Üstübcü, 2009) statistical data on the nationalities of women deported for prostitution proves the opposite of the popularly accepted ‘Russian Natasha’ generalization. In spite of this, women immigrants who come from Russia are exposed to harassment because they are stigmatized even if they work in other jobs.

Russian women’s -who entered the country through the Sarp Border Gate- attempts at trade later changed in size. Marriages and relationships between men and women have caused social trauma in the Black Sea region. These traumas, which destroyed hundreds of families, left everlasting effects on the people of the region. Orhan Tekeoğlu, who made a movie about the Natashas called *İfakat*, told about his observations in an interview about the movie with *Yeni Asır* newspaper. He added that during the filming they could not

find a Russian woman to act in the film even as extras in the Black Sea region, and that according to his findings, until the mid-2000s, great efforts have been made to bring Russian women abroad, especially from the Black Sea region (Tekeoğlu, 2014a).

As expressed in the verses of musician Erkan Ocaklı's song "Natasha", "Oh Natasha Natasha/ You put us on fire /Led us astray /Natasha, daughter of the infidel", Natashas were seen as tempting (Beller-Hann, 1995) and the settled one has not questioned his own sense of honor and his view of women, especially non-Muslim women, whose appearance and clothing styles are different. This negative image of Russian women, which is built on their sexuality, the fact that they are stigmatized with the name "Natasha", the emergence of an expression such as "visiting a Russian" shows that they are perceived as immoral (Deniz, 2018). These words of an old man; "The Russians occupied Trabzon twice in history. First by soldiers in 1916, then by women 80 years later. Soldiers ruined our city, and women corrupted our chemistry," (Tekeoğlu, 2014b, p. 6) reflects the general view of the public. However, othering through this labeling and stigmatization does not remain abstract, it gives birth to other problems. The lives and freedoms of people who are stigmatized are affected, which causes human rights violations by imprisoning them within the boundaries in which they are defined (Dilli & Özmen, 2017).

The "immoral" and "deviant" outsider women were blamed as the sole reason of all the negativities experienced as a result of migration, and the morality and honor of the men in the Black Sea region who had relationships with the Natashas were never questioned. The impact of migration on local society has produced a number of conflicts; men/women, foreigners/native people, Muslims/Christians, morality/immorality. Even local women saw themselves as victims of foreign women's actions (Beller-Hann, 1995). In a study investigating the problems of women working abroad, one of the issues they face is sexual harassment. In this study, carried out in Turkey, China, and Japan, only one Russian female participant in Turkey expressed her negative experiences about the subject. She stated that Turkish men sometimes treat her as a "Natasha", which is used as a nickname for prostitutes, and she added that for women of other nationalities, sexual harassment was not a cause for concern (Napier & Taylor, 2002). Studies also point out that the perception of Natasha about these women pushes them into prostitution (Coşkun, 2014).

Generalizations about Russian women create more extreme and broader prejudices, also serve to confirm the widespread view of the local people that Christians and Westerners are immoral. In this emerging situation, women were classified into two categories; natives and foreigners, and morality was attributed to the former and immorality to the latter. Turkish female singers who do the same job - such as singing in a place where alcohol is served - can be seen as artists who only do their job and are considered different from easy foreign women. In addition to these situations, the othering also helped

strengthen the Muslim-Turkish identity in the region (Beller-Hann, 1995). It should be added that the problems experienced by immigrant women are also problems arising from social gender inequality (Kartal & Başçı, 2014). Through the context of Russian women, age-old moral codes and traditional gender relations in society have been reshaped (Beller-Hann, 1995). This situation results in expecting certain behavioral patterns from women. Thus, those who act against the defined roles can be marginalized and stigmatized much more easily.

The outcomes of what was experienced became clearer after these women had abandoned the region. What remains of them are broken families and destroyed homes. However, it was not only the locals who were harmed by this situation. As Tekeoğlu underlined, “Russian women have suffered the most. Tragic situations inevitably occurred when the lives of these women, who had higher education and could speak more than one language, coincided with those of low-educated and mostly married Turkish men.” (Tekeoğlu, 2014a). Although the reason women prefer transnational marriages is assumed to be for self-empowerment, Russian women marrying Turkish men can be evaluated in a different way, and it can be interpreted as a social protection behavior aiming to change the image of Russian immigrant women due to the “Natasha” label and prevent the possibility of sexual harassment and rape (Deniz, 2018).

### *Arab Spring Turning into Winter*

The Arab Spring refers to the anti-regime protests that took place in many Middle Eastern countries. The protests in the Syrian branch of the Arab Spring turned into a civil war and after a while and millions of Syrians had to migrate from their country. Refugee entry into Turkey from Syria, Turkey’s border neighbor, started in April 2011. Incoming refugees were placed in camps, but when the camps were not sufficient, options other than camps emerged. Syrian refugees and settled residents living in different cities started to develop negative perceptions about each other. Despite the religious unity between them, cultural differences were apparent. There are opinions among the settled people that Syrian immigrants are beggars and prone to crime, and that the marriage of refugee women with Turkish men poses a danger to Turkish families. Regarding such judgments from settled residents, Oyman (2016), who cites Mazlumder’s Report on Syrian Women Refugees Living Out of the Camps, states that “they are also despised by the society for the fear among the settled women that their husbands will be stolen by ‘Syrian women’” (p. 113). Syrian women are accused by settled women of taking their husbands away from them, are exposed to othering, and are described as “evil women” (Sevlü, 2020). However, the fact that most of the Syrian brides in these marriages are at a young age indicates child abuse (ORSAM, 2015). In summary, these marriages victimize not only local women, but also the refugee women.

In addition, Syrian refugees are generally held responsible for rent increases (Sevli, 2020). However, the moral aspect of settled landlords using this crisis for their own benefit is not discussed. Rental increases (ORSAM, 2015) provide a gain for the settled landlords. Those who are negatively affected are the ones with low incomes among the settled population.

Although the public and NGO services for Syrians living in Turkey under temporary protection are praised by the international community, social exclusion, the subject of this study, has been detected in various field studies. For example, Güneş-Aslan and Güngör's (2019) study on the problems faced by Syrian refugees living in Istanbul focused on related issues. In addition to problems such as not speaking Turkish, facing some obstacles during official procedures, having problems with subsistence, shelter, health, education, adapting, and not being able to receive social support, 18% of the participants complained about ill-treatment from society and 29% of them complained about exclusionary behaviors from society (p. 1613). It is seen that the problem of Syrian refugees in Turkey is primarily a matter of social adaptation (ORSAM, 2015). In addition, prejudice in society that the immigrants are prone to committing crimes creates stigmatizing stereotypes and false representations reinforce the prejudices (Özdemir, 2017).

In the context of othering, which cannot be considered separately from the economic context, there is a widespread belief that the high unemployment rate, along with the cheap labor force of the Syrians, reduces the chances of settled people finding a job with a livable wage. This situation causes negative attitudes towards Syrians" (Polat & Kaya, 2017, p. 46). Although the general perception is that Syrians take away job opportunities from settled residents, in reality, Syrians have both positive and negative effects on the economy (ORSAM, 2015). When problems such as unemployment are associated with immigrants or refugees, there is a misconception that economic problems will end by excluding the 'other' (Güneş, 2013).

In another study, Syrian men are marginalized in the context of masculinity and nationalism. As the study puts it, "it has been determined that binary oppositions are created on the basis of nationalism and masculinity, and hierarchy is created through interpretations." In the same study, while "we, men" were idealized on the basis of masculinity and placed at the top of the hierarchy, "the other men" were marginalized and excluded from the normative definition of masculinity and placed at the bottom of the hierarchy "because they ran away." (Güney & Konak, 2016, p. 505). In this way, native men have set a symbolic border between themselves and the refugee men, idealized their own masculinity, and marginalized refugees by constructing the idea of masculinity through their own perspectives. As a result nationalism is one of the ways to define others. Because nationalism includes the notion of a homogeneous society and the exclusion of those who do not conform to this affinity (Güney & Konak, 2016). Othering can also be done

through existing political discourse or the media.

The media strengthens the othering process in social perception with news reports, the way they describe the events and the language they use, even if their source is real events (Alp, 2018). Labels such as “Syrian thief, Syrian beggar, Syrian neighborhood” in the news about Syrian refugees make it easier to associate negative characteristics with Syrians and legitimizes labeling Syrians as ‘the other’ (Polat & Kaya, 2017, p. 46). In another study, it was observed that the language of the news in the media caused refugees to be seen as a threat (Bulgurcuoğlu & Aykotalp, 2021). The belief that refugees will cause social problems strengthens the perception of them as a threat (Ersoy & Ala, 2019). Making references to the migration crisis and immigrants in television programs, news, and newspaper headlines (Bauman, 2018) creates the image of the other. The image of the other drawn with these lines shows that the settled is convinced of the immorality of the outsider. This conviction sees this ill-treatment of the other as a justified reaction.

### *Refugees and Migrants as the Other in the Context of Social Work and Social Inclusion*

The other is sometimes at an intersection of disadvantages. Combinations like the other and the poor, the other women and poverty contain an intersectionality that reinforces the negative circumstances of the other. In this context, intersectionality (Erbektaş, 2020) presents the interaction between factors such as patriarchal codes, religion, poverty, and gender in society and helps to reveal the discriminations experienced by the other. This situation results in the outsider –refugee or immigrant– having to experience both their own problems and the problems of the country and society they live in at the same time.

Being not familiar with the language and culture of the place they migrated to, the devaluation of the jobs they have, and the fact that the settled see them as rivals to their livelihoods, spouses, and jobs marginalizes the outsiders, and it causes them not to want them in their country or city and makes them hostile towards the other in the next stage. Outsiders are stuck between the present inadequate social programs and the settled society that does not want immigrants/refugees to stay or to receive services (Sheafor & Horejsi 2014, p. 613). The “bridge architecture”, which is the role assigned to social work within the scope of this article, not only mediates the social inclusion of the other, but also includes an application that contains studies to be carried out on the settled residents.

Calling immigrants ‘foreigners’ emphasizes that they are different from the existing ‘We’, that is, they are the ‘Other’ and presents them as a problem. This situation leads to negative attitudes towards immigrants and to see them as a cause of moral degradation and increased crimes in society. Robert Miles, in his work called Racism, emphasizing that the ‘other’ and othering are the result of an interaction based on migration, and describing migration as a situation that is caused by production, trade, and war and that

brings different people together sheds light on the subject from another point of view (as cited in “Ersöz & Uslu, 2012).

Turkey used to be an emigrant country until recently, but it has become a receiving country and a transit point for immigrants. This situation has gradually increased the number of immigrants (Ünal, 2014). In terms of immigrants or refugees, in addition to the experience Turkey has gained throughout history due to its geostrategic location, the immigration practices of the Islamic civilization that emerged in Anatolia are good examples of social inclusion. The successful social services provided to those who came from Syria have been repeatedly praised by the presidents of different countries and by the UNHCR inspection committees at the UN plenary meetings. Foreigners and International Protection Law (FIPL) no. 6458 which entered into force on 04.11.2013, adopting a migration policy that focuses on harmony and supporting this policy with its legislations and institutions, Turkey has presented a solid example of the bridge architecture discourse. However, the problems about othering and exclusion became more evident when refugees started to leave the camps and take part in society.

Social inclusion emerges as a result of social exclusion. Social exclusion, in the simplest sense, is the obstacles the others encounter in society, and it is the situation of being cast out of society due to these obstacles. The concept of social exclusion is a dynamic concept and “Failure to meet the needs in economic, social, cultural and other areas makes it difficult for others to participate in these areas in society or even completely prevents them... Being deprived in any area paves the way for the exclusion of others from society, starting from that area” (Çakır, 2002, p. 83). Although the main factors that lead to social exclusion are poverty, disability, and old age, it is also necessary to talk about more complex factors. In fact, since these factors interact with each other, it is necessary to take into account that a few of them, such as religion, language, gender, citizenship status, and race intersect with each other. Social exclusion, with its non-stationarity structure, shapes the institutional, social, economic, and political processes, and as a phenomenon affected by these factors helps to recognize and reinforce the dominant position of the settled society (Sevli, 2020).

Social inclusion is defined as “integrating individuals or groups who are faced with social exclusion with the society by removing the factors that may prevent them from taking part in socioeconomic life and by bringing their quality of life to a decent level in the society” (Genç & Çat, 2013, p. 365). However, this concept is perceived in a narrower framework as bringing disadvantaged individuals to the business life as a labor force, in other words, solving their unemployment and ensuring their integration (Erdoğan & Gökbayrak, 2006). However, it is necessary to take this concept out of this narrow framework and to handle it on different levels such as ideological, social, and institutional. The first step to social inclusion is tolerating differences. Tolerance, as the first and

simplest principle of social inclusion, provides a proper basis for diverse, rich, flexible, and variable social rules. However, tolerance implies a hierarchical superiority for the tolerant and does not put any responsibility on them. For this reason, it is an insufficient and incomplete step for social inclusion. The next step goes beyond tolerance and holds social inclusion responsible for protecting human dignity. This honor cannot be harmed by differences and creates an ethic of social inclusion for this responsibility. In this context, the general framework of these ethics consists of principles of respect for individuals, human characteristics, diversity in society, responsibility for the social inclusion of the others, and endorsement of social justice (Bullock et al., 2015, p. 2-9).

The priority of social inclusion, which is protecting human dignity, is also one of the core values of social work. When social work is considered in terms of individuals and groups in its field of interest, both academically and professionally, it is closely related to people who have been excluded from society for various reasons, in short, the others. The social work profession has a duty in line with the definition of social inclusion, such as, to combat the othering of these groups and reshape the situation in which they are trapped in as a result of exclusion. For this reason, it is important to evaluate social exclusion from a social work point of view (Cilga, 2009). Because social work is now being defined as a profession that has developed its own unique concepts and practices regarding all forms of social exclusion. Migration is one of the fundamental phenomena that creates the need for social work. The main goal in the process that started with the settlement house movement is the adaptation and acculturation of immigrants. The increasing labor migration to Europe has changed the direction of these adaptation policies and practices from assimilation to integration, from acculturation to cultural exchange. In the 2000s, social inclusion gained importance (Akbaş, 2019).

The migration branch of social work consists of four themes. These are demography, service delivery, physical and mental health, and macro level systemic problems. In the literature, there is a vast knowledge covering various topics in the field of migration. Although it is a positive development to focus on the sociological aspects of migration in addition to approaching it in its political context, the studies that include cultural context should be more widespread. Otherwise, a holistic assessment of immigrants and refugees cannot be made. In addition, the lack of cultural factors affects both the education and practice of social work (Shier et al., 2011). Social workers who carry out the practices must have a good grasp of the cultures of both the settled people and the outsiders. When there is no cultural competence that helps to know the culture and semantic world of the individuals who are provided with social services, prejudices may intervene during the practice. For this reason, cultural competence is one of the responsibilities of social workers towards service recipients (Aslan, 2018). It can be said that a new paradigm that makes room for different cultures in social work (Akbaş, 2019) and sees the other as a potentiality rather than a problem, should gain importance.



## Conclusion and Suggestions

The issue of refugees and immigrants, which is discussed through the feature of otherness, should not be perceived as an approach that sees only those who come from outside -refugees and immigrants- as a problem, and that claims that it is only outsiders who need to adapt and change. On the contrary, social work for outsiders necessitates a two-sided approach that considers outsiders on one side and settled society on the other.

It is necessary to diversify the work to be carried out with the settled society, such as organizing activities and projects in which the public can participate directly or indirectly, mediating between state and civil society, mobilizing non-governmental organizations, shaping the attitudes and views of the settled society towards immigrants, and analyzing the socio-cultural structure.

Policies regarding the discourse of hospitality evaluate actions understood as benevolence and lead the society to fall into the error of expecting gratitude from the other/immigrant/refugee. For this reason, there is a need to develop a perspective on immigrants/refugees, because immigrants and refugees can be exposed to social exclusion, discrimination, and racism. As a result, they face problems such as poverty and unregistered employment (Ünal, 2014). Also, it has been understood that the perception of hospitality, temporariness, and temporary protection status do not help the integration of Syrians with the native people in Turkey. The states' aim of social adaptation, which reinforces the perception of temporariness, is shaped from the moment the immigrants enter the country. Not to mention the fact that it increases the importance of the multidimensional and mutual integration process, which concerns both the immigrant and the receiving society. It should also be possible to state by looking at the settled that the immigrants increase cultural richness by creating cultural diversity with the aspect that concerns the settled (Koçan & Kırloğlu, 2020). Based on the view that diversity is richness, the still existent standardizing practices should be filtered critically.

The medical paradigm has a problem-oriented approach to the issue of migration and immigrants. However, this paradigm prevents seeing the fact that immigrants can contribute to the society they live in. For this reason, there is a need for a solution-oriented approach rather than a problem-oriented one (Akbaş, 2019).

In the context of social work, social inclusion continues through the argument of the individual's adaptation to society. This situation leads to the suppression of the excluded other's culture and the group in question to remain silent and to hide their identities by pretending to be from the society they live in. This, in fact, is a preferred outcome for the government in power, which wants others to be in line with the majority that is defined as normal, and to be controlled (Alp, 2018, p. 25).

In social work, activities with refugees and immigrants can be carried out at micro, mezzo, and macro levels. One of the studies carried out at the micro level in particular consists of increasing the participatory behavior of refugees and immigrants (Akbaş, 2019). However, changing the social perception seems more efficient than trying to adapt the individuals to the society one by one.

Social work should resort to “planning the social services with a perspective and understanding that views the differences in culture, values, and social norms as richness” (Oyman, 2016, p. 133), away from generalizations at the level of intervention, and at the stage of academic knowledge production. In this way, understanding the other and learning from them begins with allowing the other to speak first. At this stage, the duty of social work to be a tool for the other to express themselves and to be understood more accurately by the settled society comes into play. Thus, increasing communication and interaction is an effective tool in eliminating the mutual prejudices.

There is also the fight against demagoguery within a set of actions that social workers can take. The unfair labeling of all groups of people can be fought with social media posts, letters to newspapers, speaking to public officers, and giving speeches in public spaces, and personal interactions (Healy, 2017). The social inclusion discourse of social work must include the removal of walls, in addition to the adaptation of those outside the wall. For this reason, instead of assimilation policies, policies of mutual harmony and social inclusion should be applied to refugees and immigrants (Akbaş, 2019).

Like social exclusion, social inclusion also expresses a similar process. Thus, it does not seem possible to achieve social inclusion with short-term solutions. Political arrangements made in this direction are a long but possible process that can be achieved gradually with projects to increase the awareness of society.

The increase in contact between the settled and the outsider will help them to get to know each other. It is also important to promote projects and social inclusion campaigns that engage immigrants and refugees (Healy, 2017) in participatory efforts along with their neighbors. Such projects will reduce fear and help create an inclusive society.

Social workers also have a responsibility to be aware of the underlying meanings of the expressions they use that might empower the power groups even more, and not to reproduce othering/exclusionary concepts. It is of great importance to take care that the language used in the identification, description, and solutions to problems are not a language that reproduces othering. When looked at carefully, othering is also a label, a fact that cannot be ignored. Because language determines the normal, the abnormal, and marginalizes and stigmatizes those who are not in the majority due to their differences (Cankurtaran & Beydili, 2016).

The state of being immoral provides a space for the descriptor that can be filled with negativity. In addition, it also takes on the mission of legitimizing the labeling of the other and the mistreatment of outsider/immigrant. This legitimation of othering turns it into “mechanisms that make these people vulnerable to labor exploitation and abuse,” as in the example of Russian women (Deniz, 2018). It is necessary to realize and show that othering gives birth to stigmatization and along with it, some negative attitudes and behaviors.


Social work should be careful not to become an instrument of such negative legitimation by being mindful of the language it uses. This duty of being mindful is of great importance not only for the other, the refugee, but also for the professional ethics and ontology of social work.

Since the mainstream approaches within social work were insufficient to solve the problems of people who were marginalized due to their differences, different solutions were needed, and this situation created the anti-discrimination practice. Anti-discrimination practices should be considered as an option for social work in migration studies, in understanding and preventing othering and discrimination, which are common in daily life but not noticed straight away (Cankurtaran & Beydili, 2016). Because direct or indirect discrimination can show itself in social work practices in which differences are ignored.

The reflection of othering on social work takes place in the form of social injustice. In social work, discrimination of the marginalized other can turn into a problem that causes human rights violations. It should be noted that the challenge of promoting just, humane, and hospitable refugee and immigration policies is a global problem for social work (Healy, 2017), but not a problem specific to Turkey.

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