

REPATRIATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TURKS AND SYRIANS LIVING IN ANKARA

ANKARA'DA YAŞAYAN TÜRKLER VE SURIYELİLERİN BAKIŞ AÇISINDAN GERİ DÖNÜŞ

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ABSTRACT

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With the events in Ankara Altındağ in August 2021, Syrians who have been in Turkey for more than ten years have pushed long-running debates concerning their return to the forefront. The purpose of this paper is to look at the push-pull factors that influence Syrians' return intentions, as well as Turkish opinions and justifications for returning. Qualitative research method was used in the research and semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with ten Syrians and ten Turks residing in the Altındağ region of Ankara. The study's findings indicate the link between return and structural variables in both Syria and Turkey. Security as a political factor in Syria is the leading push factor, while housing, education, work and living opportunities are social and economic structural factors. Living conditions in Turkey are the pull factor. Health problems emerged as an individual factor. While the views of the Turks about the return are mostly that they must definitely return, their justifications focus on cohesion rather than economic conditions. As a result, the conditions for a sustainable and successful return include the provision of reintegration conditions, and if a sustainable return cannot be achieved, re-migration to Turkey is likely.

ÖZ

Suriyelilerin 10 yılı aşan Türkiye'deki misafirlik süreci 2021 Ağustos ayında Ankara Altındağ'da yaşanan olaylarla uzun süredir süren geri dönüş tartışmalarını tekrar gündeme taşımıştır. Bu makale Suriyelilerin geri dönüş niyetlerini etkileyen itme-çekme faktörlerini ve Türklerin geri dönüşe bakış açılarını ve gerekçelendirmelerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmış ve Ankara'nın Altındağ bölgesinde ikamet eden on Suriyeli ve on Türk ile yarı yapılandırılmış yüz yüze görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları geri dönüşün hem Suriye hem de Türkiye'ye ilişkin yapısal faktörlerle ilişkisini ortaya koymaktadır. Suriye ile ilgili politik faktör olarak güvenlik öne çıkan itme faktörü iken barınma, eğitim, iş, yaşam olanakları ise sosyal ve ekonomik yapısal faktörlerdir. Türkiye'deki yaşam koşulları ise çekme faktörüdür. Sağlık sorunları ise bireysel faktör olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Türklerin geri dönüşle ilgili görüşleri ise çoğunlukla kesinlikle geri dönmeliler iken gerekçelendirmeleri ise ekonomik koşullardan çok uyum konusuna odaklanmaktadır. Sonuç olarak sürdürülebilir ve başarılı geri dönüşün koşulları yeniden entegrasyon koşullarının sağlanmasını içermekte olup, sürdürülebilir geri dönüş sağlanamazsa Türkiye'ye tekrar göç muhtemeldir.

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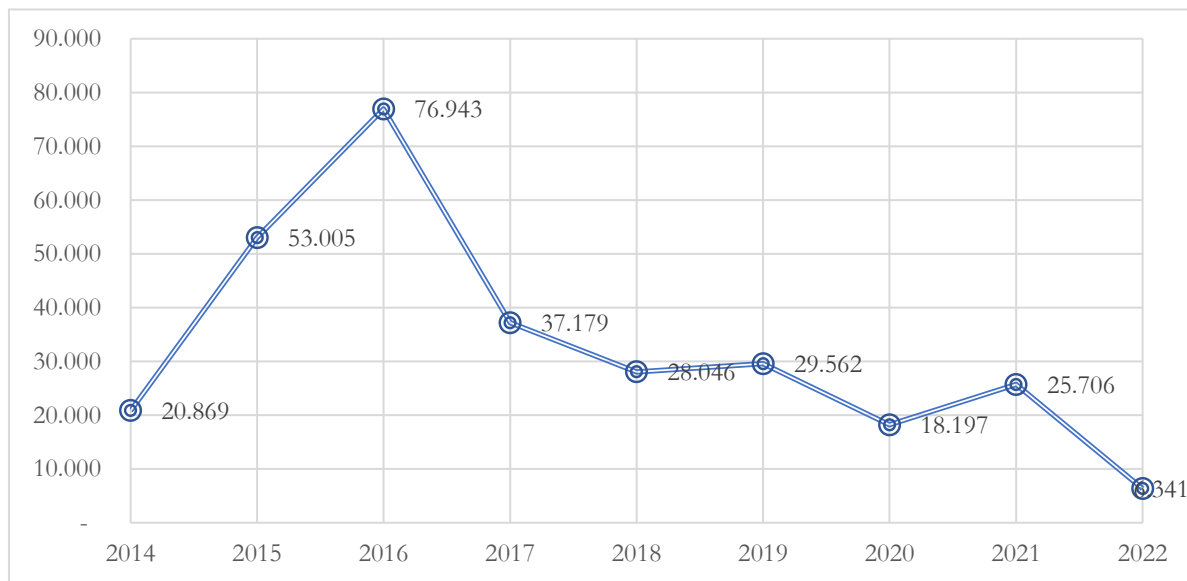
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Introduction

The crisis in Syria that began in 2011 triggered a process that resulted in millions of Syrians being internally displaced and seeking refuge in other countries. Syrians sought asylum in neighbouring countries including Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan at first. According to UNHCR figures, 3,763,652 Syrians were registered in Turkey as of May 26, 2022 (UNHCR, 2022a). 839,086 Syrian refugees live in Lebanon and 674,458 in Jordan (UNHCR, 2022a). UNHCR Supporting host country and community resilience, guaranteeing access to resources, legal job and living possibilities, refugee self-reliance, expanding resettlement, and planning for the voluntary return¹ of refugees to Syria are among the UNHCR's durable solutions for Syrians (UNHCR, 2022b).

The establishment of a safe zone in Northern Syria with the Euphrates Shield and subsequent military operations that began in 2016, as well as the return of Syrians to these regions, have long been on the agenda. The settlement types of Syrians concentrated in certain areas and districts, as well as quarrels and disagreements among themselves and with Turks, are constantly on the agenda of the press. The events that began in August 2022 in Ankara's Altındağ district, where a large number of Syrians dwell, reintroduced the topic of a return of Syrians to the agenda (Öztürk, 2022). Following the problems in Altındağ, the Ministry of Interior announced the "Combating Spatial Concentration" plan, which aims to increase social cohesion and prevent segregation. A dilution policy has been implemented in some neighbourhoods or districts in 16 provinces, with the ratio of foreign population to neighbourhood population being limited to 25%. (*Sığınmacıların yerli nüfusa oranı yüzde 25'i geçmeyecek*, 2022). With the "dilution plan" applied for this purpose, the settlements are closed to foreign registration and the asylum seekers are placed in different districts on a voluntary basis (*Sığınmacıların yerli nüfusa oranı yüzde 25'i geçmeyecek*, 2022). In this context, 800 localities in 52 provinces have been restricted to Syrian registration, including Ankara, Antalya, Aydın, Bursa, Çanakkale, Düzce, Edirne, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kırklareli, Kocaeli, Muğla, Sakarya, Tekirdağ, and Yalova. (Fırat, 2022).

UNHCR data on the resettlement of Syrians in terms of durable solutions show that this solution is ineffective and remains a relatively restricted solution when compared to the number of Syrian refugees. Within the framework of the third country resettlement programme for Syrian refugees, 2015 and 2016 had the largest number of resettlement years. In 2017, the number of people resettled was around half that the previous year. Despite the growing number of Syrian refugees, the number of persons who have been resettled has gradually dropped. The total number of Syrians resettled as of March 31, 2022 is 295,848 (UNHCR, 2022b).

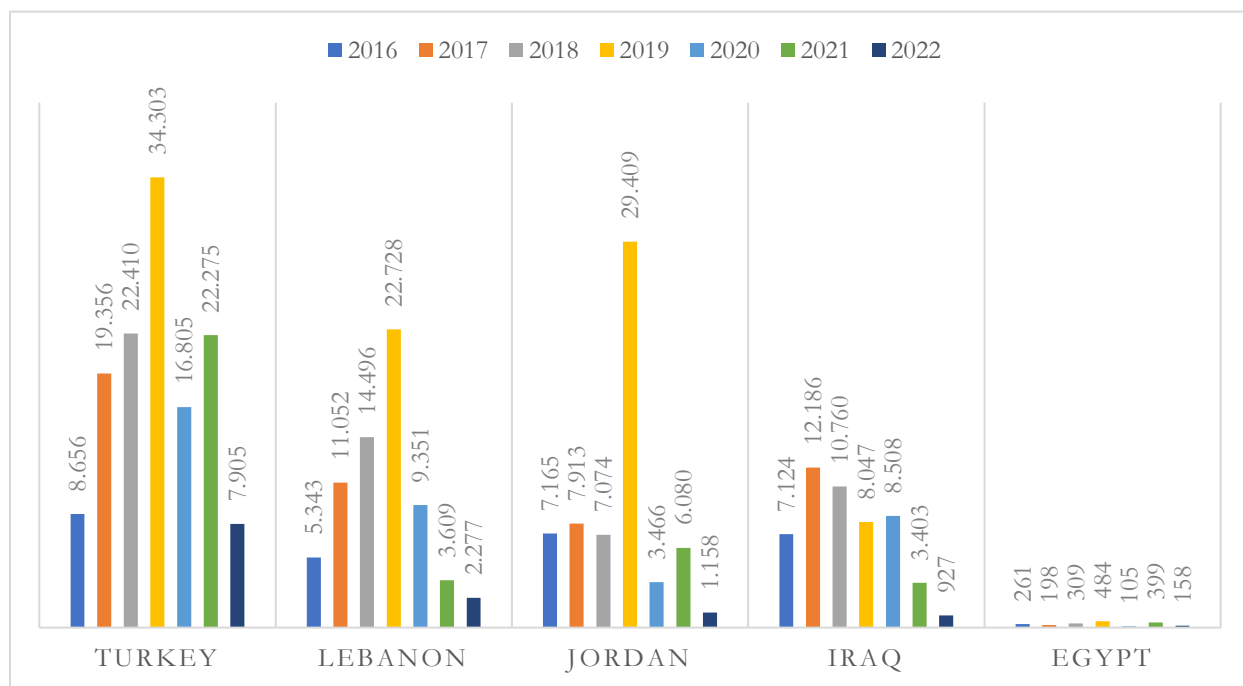


¹ In this article, the terms return and repatriation are used interchangeably.

Note. UNHCR, Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response: Durable Solutions, 26.05.2022, https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria_durable_solutions#_ga=2.71263699.2120730546.1654361887-998794430.1626099347

Figure 1. Resettlement Submissions of Syrian Refugees by Year

Apart from local integration and resettlement to a third country, which are among the durable solutions, the forced migration of Syrians has begun to be debated extensively within the context of return. According to UNHCR, about 315,000 refugees from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt had returned to Syria as of 30 April 2022 (Figure 2). 2019 was the year with the most returns, with 94,971 persons returning (Figure 2). UNHCR verifies and monitors these numbers, and it is claimed that real return figures are substantially higher (UNHCR, 2022b). Since the start of Operation Euphrates Shield, 498,593 Syrians have returned to the regions where services such as education and health are provided under the coordination of AFAD, General Directorate of Provincial Administration in regions cleared of terrorism with operations such as the Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, and Peace Spring (Caymaz et al., 2022).



Note. UNHCR, Situation Syria Regional Refugee Response: Durable Solutions, 26.05.2022, https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria_durable_solutions#_ga=2.71263699.2120730546.1654361887-998794430.1626099347

Figure 2. Refugee Returns to Syria by Year

The topic of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey returning home voluntarily is still on the table. However, there is a lack of study on this topic, and it is assumed that understanding the structural circumstances of return and the elements that will affect it from the viewpoints of Syrians and Turks is critical. Return is a complicated subject with numerous social, political, and economic aspects that needs to be addressed in a multidimensional way. The most important limitation of this research is that it was conducted only in a certain neighbourhood of Ankara and with a limited number of Syrians and Turks. This paper tries to examine push-pull factors that influence Syrians' return intention and Turks' perspectives and reasoning on return. The qualitative research method was used in the study, and semi-structured face-to-face interviews with ten Syrians and ten Turks residing in Ankara's Altındağ area were conducted. Following the introduction, the article summarises the evolution of the notion of return migration as a durable solution as well as the literature on the issue. The findings were analysed in four groups: structural factors related to Syria, structural factors related to

Turkey, individual factors and perspective of Turks. The next section includes the discussion section and the conclusion.

Return Migration as a Durable Solution

The definition of a refugee, as well as refugee's rights and state responsibilities, are all covered under the 1952 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention). Refoulement is prohibited by Article 33 of the Refugee Convention of 1952. According to the Article, no refugee whose life is in danger because of race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion can be returned to the country from which they fled (Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees, 1951).

The development of durable solutions after WWII may be separated into two periods: 1945-1985 and after 1985 (Chimni, 1999, p. 1). While resettlement was the focus from 1945 to 1985, voluntary repatriation was promoted as a permanent option from 1985 to 1993, and the notion of safe return evolved when the temporary protection system in Western Europe was formed in 1993 (Chimni, 1999, p. 1). The subject of refugees being sent back against their will was brought to light by UNHCR International Protection Division Director Dennis McNamara's "imposed return" statement in September 1996 (Chimni, 1999, p. 8). Harild et al., (2015, p. 6) discuss two sorts of returns: spontaneous and assisted. Harild et al., (2015) on the other hand, points out that refugees typically come from rural areas and live in cities in the countries where they have settled, and that if they return, they will want to return to cities rather than rural areas. According to Black and Gent (2006, p. 25), return alone is insufficient; "successful" and "sustainable" return are necessary, and Koser (2001, p. 5) claims that if a sustainable return cannot be established, irregular migrants may return to the same regions.

Durable solutions include integration, resettlement, and return. The durable solution, according to Stein (1986, p. 265), is the refugee's integration into society, reintegration into the refugee's homeland when he returns, or reintegration into the third country where he or she is resettled, which is open-ended, costly, and requires refugees to wait to become a part of society and take root. As a result, the refugee's integration process is included in these three durable solutions. Stein and Cunny (1994) draw our attention to the reintegration of returnees, the execution of development-oriented aid programmes for the rehabilitation of the homeland and the regions to be returned, and the necessity to establish integration and development programmes that take refugees' perspectives and needs into consideration.

The decision to return is influenced by several factors. Black et al. (2004) point out that the decision to return is a complex one and it is not possible to predict exactly whether the person will return voluntarily or not. İçduygu and Ayaşlı (2019, p. 4) draw attention to the fact that the best and sustainable solution for refugees, in the long run, is seen as return, but even in cases where return is encouraged by financial support by UNHCR, people do not return or return for other reasons. The elements influencing the choice to return are identified by Black et al (2004, p. 13) as the host country situation, the situation in the country of origin, personal characteristics such as age and gender, social relations, as well as incentives and disincentives. The key criteria linked with voluntary repatriation, according to Black et al. (2004, p. 1), are family status, security in the country of origin, and the availability of reintegration aid.

Stein (1986, p. 269) highlights that voluntary repatriation is "the ideal, best, preferred, most desirable solution"; nevertheless, there are issues such as intervention restrictions, impact, time constraints, and how to address the country's economic and developmental issues. There are two types of voluntary repatriation. UNHCR provides transportation and other assistance in UNHCR-organized repatriation, while refugees return individually or collectively in spontaneous repatriation without UNHCR assistance (UNHCR, 1996, p. 19). UNHCR's responsibility remains both with spontaneous and organized returns, for example where spontaneous returns occur in the event of conflict, UNHCR must provide timely, effective protection and assistance (UNHCR, 1996, p. 19).

Bloch and Atfield (2002, p. 54) conducted research on return migration with 200 Somalis residing in the UK. According to the research findings, 78.5 per cent of Somalis wished to return in some form, while 10% said they did not want to return owing to political issues and uncertainty about the region's future. Those who desire to return have also claimed that they will return if support for housing, job, and education is offered (Bloch &

Atfield, 2002). According to Harild (2015, pp. 16–17), the decision to return and remain is difficult, and individuals might choose to stay even if there are external pressures to leave the host country.

There have been few researches on the probability of Syrians residing in Turkey to return home. According to Şahin and Sönmez's (2021, p. 45) research of Syrians residing in Gaziantep province, a substantial number of Turks, Arabs, and Kurds would not want to return if they were awarded citizenship, although participants of other ethnic backgrounds would desire to return even if they were granted citizenship. Furthermore, Şahin and Sönmez (2021, p. 46) point out that 32% of the interviewees were concerned about political pressure, 31% about living circumstances, and 15% about social pressure. According to Erdoğan's (2021, p. 226) 2020 research, the rate of individuals who did not want to return to Syria in any form increased from 16.7 per cent in 2017 to 77.8 per cent in 2020. Among those who do not intend to return, 69.9 per cent said it is unsafe, 30.4 per cent said it is to gain Turkish citizenship, and 25.3 percent said it is because the war continues (Erdoğan, 2021, p. 229).

Methodology

Qualitative research aims to convey perspectives and happenings in the natural world in a comprehensive manner (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 45). In qualitative research, detailed and in-depth data is collected in order to reveal the participants' perspectives and experiences (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 51). The interview approach was used in this study to discover the factors that influence Syrians' perceptions about returning, as well as the economic and social factors that influence Turks' perceptions of the Syrians' return, and to collect extensive data on the issue of return.

Ankara, one of the three major metropolises, has been chosen to determine the perceptions of the people who live there. The geographical concentration of Syrians in metropolises draws increasing attention, and conflicts between host societies and Syrians may occur. The impact of the return will be felt most by Syrians and Turks residing in metropolises because the commute to Syria is continuous in the border districts. The events that occurred between the two communities in Ankara Altındağ in August 2021, which resulted in death, might be regarded as surpassing the bounds of acceptance. The perception of return can be analysed more clearly in neighbourhoods where there is a concentration based on district-neighbourhood, the districts in Altındağ were chosen in Ankara. The number of registered Syrians residing in Ankara is 100,433, according to the DGMM, while the overall number of persons living in the province is 5,847,758, with a proportion of registered Syrians of 1.72 per cent (*Geçici Koruma*, 2022).

According to Savran and Sat's research in 2018 (2019, p. 293), the local population of Altındağ is 371,366 people, with 41,660 Syrians. Savran and Sat (2019) estimated the "Dissimilarity Index" for Ankara Altındağ and determined that the neighbourhoods of Ulubey, Önder, and Alemdağ form a holistic settlement. Savran and Sat (2019) calculated the index value is 58, which is on the boundary between medium and high segregation. As a result, Ankara Altındağ was chosen as the sample because of the geographical concentration of Syrians. Syrians over the age of 18 residing in Ankara Altındağ and Turkish residents over the age of 18 living in the same place make up the study's population. In this context, the snowball technique was used to conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews with ten Turks and ten Syrians residing in Altındağ. The sampling was reached by intermediaries of Syrians and Turks who have gained trust among the people living in Altındağ, thus eliminating the possible hesitations of the participants. Interviews were conducted with ten Turks and ten Syrians residing in the region identified as part of the study's scope.

The Syrians interviewed range in age from 18 to 47 years old, with three singles, one widow, and six married persons. The interviewees have between one and five children. The majority of the participants have completed primary education; only one has completed high school, and one has completed university. In Turkey, just one of the participants completed high school. Participants generally receive assistance from the Red Crescent and the municipality. Employees, on the other hand, work as furniture workers, salespeople, cooks, dishwashers or collect cardboard. All of the Turks questioned are local tradespeople who work in the furniture industry, sales reps, and so on. The age range is 24-63, with five of them in the 30-40 age group. Except for one widow, all of the participants are married, and the majority of them have two or three children. Five of the participants have completed university, four have completed high school, and one has completed primary school. The number of

participants living in the same neighbourhood for 40 years or more is five. The newest settler in the neighbourhood has been living for 3 years.

The interviews were held in the Altındağ region in June 2022 in the neighbourhoods where Syrians live heavily. Ethics approval for the research was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Hacı Bayram Veli University. The data were evaluated by both researchers within the framework of themes after the participants were given codes. The qualitative data was analysed using the MAXQDA programme, which assists in the methodical study of qualitative data. A total of 20 interviews were reviewed, with various quotations picked to emphasise common themes that emerged from the interviews.

The researcher triangulation approach, which is based on the involvement of more than one researcher in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, may be utilised to assure the research's dependability (Başkale, 2016). In order to do this, a second researcher joined the study alongside the principal researcher. As a result, two researchers were involved in the process of conducting, evaluating, and interpreting the interviews, increasing the research's reliability.

Findings

The findings have been separated into two sections, principally interviews with Turks and Syrians, in order to present the findings methodically. Similar to Black's research, the outcomes of the interviews with Syrians were divided into three categories: findings relating to the place of origin and host country, and findings linked to personal aspects such as health and age. The Turks' perspectives were investigated in terms of living in the same area, neighbourhood interactions, and perceptions about return.

Structural Factors Regarding Syria

Based on Black's (2004) research, structural factors related to the host society and country of origin are grouped as economic, social, and political factors. The problem of security as a political factor in the country of origin is the one that the interviewees highlight the most. For example, when asked what their main concern about returning to Syria, one of the interviewees commented as follows:

I didn't feel secure there, and I have no desire to return. Of course, if it's safer and the conflict is over, I'd want to return (SI-6).

Other respondents voiced their concerns about safety in a variety of ways:

Right now, Syria is not a safe place for us. If it's back to its old self, we'd want to go (SI-4).

I'd prefer to return if secure housing options are available, but it appears that this will be difficult for the time being. (SI-7)

In contrast, the respondents reported various economic and social worries about returning, in addition to security issues. Living circumstances, housing, and work possibilities are among the issues that people are concerned about. As a result, security is now coupled with human security in terms of housing, working, and living environments, or, in other words, providing fundamental necessities while avoiding hazards. This incident was clearly mentioned by one of the interviewees:

They have now built dwellings for us, which we have seen and which are not particularly fit for living in. Of course, we'd prefer to go if they build nicer dwellings. I spent over half of my life in Turkey, and while I now have two homelands, I would like to return to my homeland. After the war is over, our houses are built, and we have work, I'd want to return. (SI-2).

Another participant stated, "As before, if we have a house, employment, and social life, we will return (SI-4)" to underline the significance of economic and social situations. Aside from the fact that the conflict is not ended, the possibility of access to services in Turkey, as well as the uncertainty surrounding schooling and accommodation in Syria, are causes for anxiety.

Yes, if everything returns to normal, I would like to return since it is, after all, my homeland. If it's home, job, or regular life, I'll return without hesitation. I don't know many Turks around here; our entire neighbourhood is made up of Syrians. Only our host is Turkish, and he takes good care of us. Despite all of my good intentions, if things go well in Syria, I will return without hesitation (SI-9).

Yes, Syria may be a little better than before, but when we go, we can not find a job, we will not have a school to study in, and a house to live in. We have them in Turkey. After all, the war is still not quite over (SI-4).

As a result, the components associated with the country of origin concentrate on the long-term viability and quality of concerns such as security, job, housing, education, and social life.

Individual Factors: Health and Belonging

The connection between the desire to return and personal variables is most visible in health issues. Those who have health issues for themselves or their children do not intend to return, according to the interviewers. Aside from the continuance of the treatment processes, the requirements connected to the host country, such as Turkey's safety and improved living standards, were repeated:

No, I do not want to because my treatment continues here and if I return to Syria, I will not be able to receive treatment. I have to live here until my treatment is over; I don't think I'd want to go back even if it's over, this place is so beautiful. I know it's a dream to see Syria as it used to be (SI-3).

We are happy here because Turkey is better in terms of living conditions. This is an unchangeable truth for both my children and us. We can continue my child's treatment here and we feel safer here. We came here, sought sanctuary here, and are still here. In short, we feel that we belong to Turkey. (SI-5).

With the questions of belonging, the variables associated with the return were sought to be determined. The interviewees' responses differ since I am a citizen of Turkey, Syria, and both countries. While the focus is on belonging to Syria's "motherland", it is also underlined that Turkey is the second home. On the other hand, belonging to a location where "stability and security" are important issues.

I feel like I'm supposed to be in Syria. It's like my mother, it's my home. I wish there was no war and we could stay there (SI-8).

I feel that I belong to both Syria and Turkey. It is my home, where I was born, reared, and spent most of my life. Turkey, on the other hand, welcomed us and became our second home. That's why I feel like I belong in both places (SI-9).

Where there is security, where there is stability, we feel that we belong there. That's why we are happy in Turkey. Syria is not safe in this respect. There is neither order nor security, the remnants of war are still visible everywhere. It saddens me to see my homeland like that (SI-10).

The majority of those interviewed had family in Syria. Only one individual mentioned that his mother resided in Syria and wished to return. "Of course, I would like to go back, I miss my homeland. My mother is also there" (SI-10). Except for this participant, nobody said they were thinking about returning since their relatives were in Syria. Typically, people such as grandparents, uncles, and aunts live in Syria, and communication is done by phone. No significant relationship was discovered between the intention to return and the presence of relatives in Syria. The respondents stated missing their families in Syria and complaining about their living conditions.

Structural factors regarding Turkey

The host country's conditions also have a role in the decision to return. The security concern in relation to Syria is frequently underlined in Turkey. On the other hand, adjusting to life in Turkey, children's education, employment chances, and social environment are ongoing issues in Turkey:

We live here and we are used to the living conditions here, but if Syria returns to its former state, we would like to go. Still, we are happy to be in Turkey and we feel safe. Our children are also studying, they are integrated into the school and the environment. Syria is still not safe to return (SI-1).

If safe living spaces are provided there, I would like to return, but for now, it seems very difficult. My children feel safer here and their quality of life is better. Although it was difficult at first, they were able to adapt now. My little girl has a close Turkish friend. Although her mother is prejudiced against us, she is on good terms with her daughter. He has friends here who love him. We also have Turkish neighbours and we are on good terms, we are already a quiet family. Still, I hope the war is over and we can return to our country (SI-7).

Furthermore, several interviewees raised worries about living circumstances in Turkey, such as rent.

It is nice to live in Turkey, we do not face any negativity, we just have a livelihood problem. Everything is very expensive in Turkey, rents, basic needs are things that are difficult for us to meet (SI-1).

The dislike of Syrians and prejudice is one of the most often mentioned topics by Syrian interviewers.

My one problem about being in Turkey is that people here dislike Syrians, therefore I am nervous and concerned about the future (SI-3).

Our neighbours are nice to us. We do not have much communication with the Turks, we do not get along with them very well. They are prejudiced against us (SI-10).

Furthermore, one participant stated that individuals initially acted well towards themselves, but they have recently experienced problems. This situation shows that the decrease in social acceptance and concern expressed by Erdoğan (2019, p. 12) in her research is reflected in Syrians.

When we first came to Turkey, people's behaviour towards us was very good, but it is not the same anymore. The other day, while walking on the street with my mother, a Turkish woman saw us and said, "What are you doing here, go back to Syria now, leave our country." she began to shout. If Syria was already safe, we would never have come here (SI-4).

Turkish Participants: They Must Return

Turkish respondents were questioned about their relationships with their neighbours, including whether or not they have Syrian neighbours. While four of the participants said they have no Syrian neighbours, those who said they normally have Syrian neighbours where they work, rather than in their residences. Among those who have Syrian neighbours, several responded, "They must/should absolutely return." As a result, there is no distinction between those who interact with Syrians and those who do not when it comes to the concept of repatriation.

Positive or negative changes in living conditions after Syrians settled in the neighbourhood are among the questions asked. Participants' responses to this question centre on a loss in job opportunities, an increase in rents, fear about children's futures, their experiences, attitudes, and actions, and increasing noise.

Many of my Turkish acquaintances have told me that they are having difficulty finding work, and that job options for Turks have fallen significantly as a result of Syrians' willingness to do anything for very little money (TR-8).

I am extremely disturbed by their movements and behaviours, their dressing styles, their lives, and their attitudes towards people in the market (TR-10).

The Turkish participants, on the other hand, raised concerns about criminal aspects such as a rise in fighting and theft, as well as obstacles connected to the sociocultural adaptation process because they do not speak Turkish:

...the quality has dropped. We no longer consider educational attainment. It's a shame we had to grow used to it, but there was nothing we could do about it. Those who work in the furniture industry in Syria also work in the furniture industry here. I'm scared that if we don't give work to them, they'll hurt us or our children (TR-3).

They create quite a mess. I reside on the main street, where the fighting never stops (TR-4).

Following their arrival, the number of theft events in the area began to rise, we suffer from this a lot (TR-6).

Concentration in the same areas is increasing in the places they live among themselves and this is very dangerous for Turkey, we do not feel safe at all, especially as women, when we pass through the neighbourhoods they live in (TR-2).

On the other hand, similar concerns were expressed about the emergence of problems such as work, unrest, increased crime rates, concern for the future of children, an increase in the Syrian population, and even conflict and war as a result of the continued presence of Syrians in the same neighbourhood. Only one person indicated that nothing changed when the Syrians came in the area and that they even welcomed the influx.

They have been living here for about 10 years. No, it didn't happen. Whatever was happening before, continued to happen again. Nothing was noticed because they came. The negativity persists, regardless of whether they are Turkish or Syrian; we cannot blame Syrians for the causes of these issues simply because they have settled here. I'd even go so far as to argue that there were positive developments since they filled a significant job gap (TR-1).

Only one participant indicated that Syrians fill a significant gap in the Turkish labour market, and the consequences of this must be considered. It is also among the opinions expressed that the return of Syrians should be planned correctly.

Of course, I believe that this problem should be explored more from various perspectives, but if I must voice my opinion, this is a development that is dependent on how well they adapt to the Turkish system and how Turks fill the gap in the industrial and business sectors if they leave Turkey. Approximately 2.5 million refugees work in this sector in our country, and I am unsure how we would replace the gap in the industrial system if they return. They should, in my opinion, return to their country after careful planning. As a result, this is not something that can be handled in a single day by violence or chaos (TR-7).

Discussion

Economic, social, family-related, and political concerns that may be classified as push-pull variables relating Turkey and Syria come to the fore when we evaluate the causes influencing Syrians' desire to return and remain along with the perspectives of Turks. Syrians' return plans are divided into three categories: I will return, I will return provided the following conditions are satisfied, and I will not return (Figure 3).

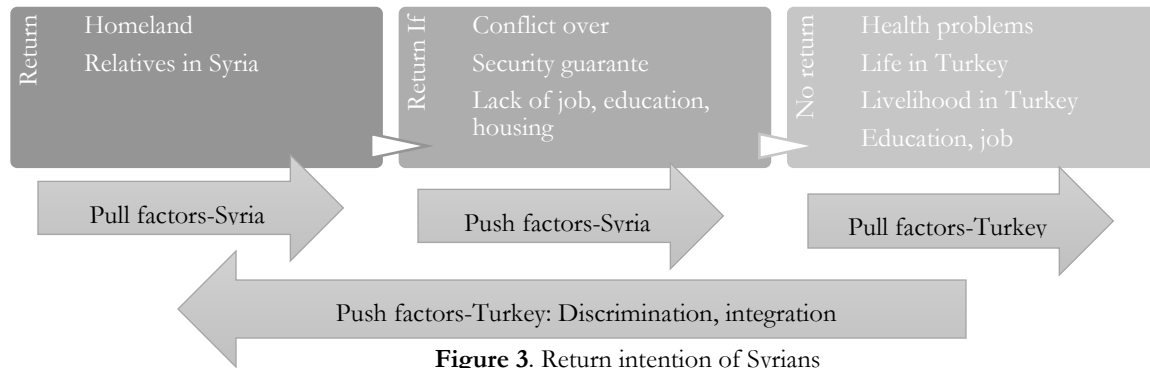


Figure 3. Return intention of Syrians

As a result, return circumstances include push factors such as a lack of security in Syria, a lack of shelter, education, health, and employment possibilities. Close family members residing in Syria, a desire for the country, and a sense of belonging are all pull factors. Adaptation to life, education, health, and career prospects are all pull factors in Turkey. The inability to adjust to the host society and prejudice are the push factors for Turkey.

The Turks responded in three ways to the subject of whether Syrians should return: they must surely return, they should return, and they return if they want to. Some of those who said that they must surely return said they should return right away, while others said that all asylum seekers, not only Syrians, must return. Only one participant stated that they should return and that the return process should be carefully planned. The answer that not only Syrians but all asylum seekers must return can be interpreted as increasing polarization in the host society in the future.

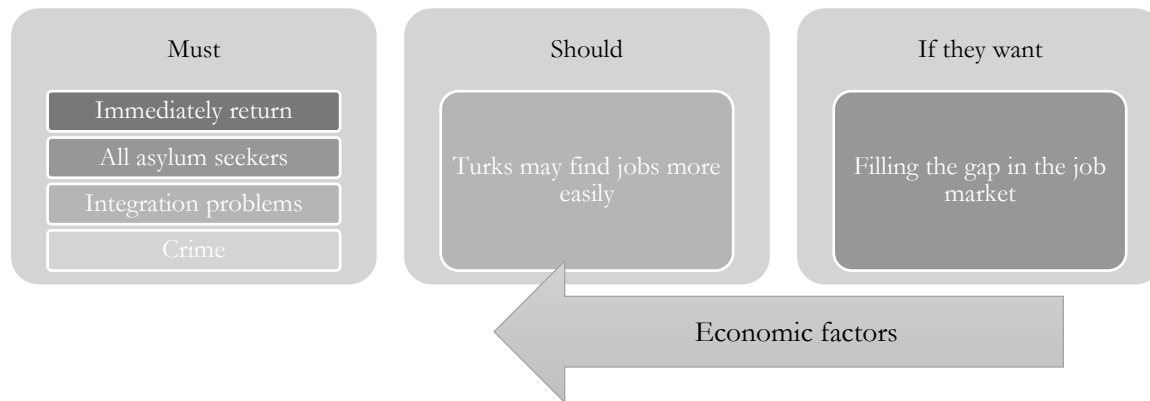


Figure 4. The Turkish Perspective on the Return to Syria

Those who believe Syrians should return should do so for a variety of reasons, including challenges with adaptation, theft, and conflicts. Those who felt it would be better if they returned, on the other hand, highlighted

that Turks would have an easier time finding work this way, citing economic issues as justification. The importance of Syrians to Turkey's economy explains the response, "Let them come back if they wish." As a result, it is reasonable to conclude that Turks' concerns about returning are mostly motivated by issues of adaptation and social instability, with economic concerns coming in second.

When the push-pull factors that determine the return conditions are examined, it is seen that these are actually structural factors and also create the conditions for a successful return. As Black and Gent (2006, p. 25) emphasize, return will fail unless the conditions for the return's success and sustainability are met. The conditions in question, on the other hand, refer to the provision of the reintegration process as stated by Stein (1986, p. 265). In addition, the success of the return is of critical importance in terms of preventing the re-migration wave. Koser (2001, p. 5) indicates that it is possible to re-migrate to the same places if sustainable returns cannot be achieved with regard to irregular migrants. It might potentially happen to Syrians if long-term repatriation criteria are not satisfied.

Conclusion

Following the events in Altındağ in August 2021, the subject of Syrian refugees returning to their homeland began to take centre stage. The presence of Syrians in host societies for more than ten years, the integration challenge, and their concentrated existence in metropolises and border cities all contribute to a reduction in acceptance and concerns. This research aimed to examine the push and pull factors affecting the Syrians' return intention, and the Turkish perspective and justification for the return of Syrians. Within the scope of the research, Altındağ district of Ankara, where Syrians are concentrated on a neighbourhood basis, was chosen. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 Syrians and 10 Turks living in the same neighbourhood.

The pull factors for people who wish to return to Syria have been identified as relatives living in Syria and a love for the motherland, according to their research findings. Under the headings I will return but and I will not return, the causes that prohibit me from returning to Syria are discussed. If the Syrian war ends, everything is restored, and homes, health, job, and education are supplied, there may be a strong desire to return. Life, job, education, and health conditions in Turkey, on the other hand, have an impact on the desire to return, and the majority of the participants do not wish to return. However, potential prejudice in Turkey might be a push factor to return. As a result, in terms of both dimensions, push-pull variables should be considered for Turkey and Syria. Stability and security, on the other hand, are the most important variables, according to the research. The question of security and accommodation, in particular, represents the shared worry of all interviewees.

Personal considerations that may influence the choice to return include health issues. Interviews with Syrians during this time, when the voluntary return of Syrians was being addressed, revealed that they believe the structural circumstances for return are not yet available. The point of view and justification of the Turks on the subject focuses on the problems of integration of Syrians, not speaking Turkish, causing unrest, fighting, noise, and the second factor is economic conditions.

The study's most significant limitation is that it was conducted with a small number of Turks and Syrians in a single place. It is suggested that further research on this topic with more participants in different provinces and concentration locations would be valuable. It is also suggested to extensively examine the social, political, and economic dimensions of this topic through both qualitative and quantitative research methods. As a result, the return of Syrians is dependent on the creation of structural conditions in order to ensure a successful and long-term return. Otherwise, as Koser remarked, it is possible for people who have returned to their own country to return to the host country.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

2021 yılı Ağustos ayında Ankara Altındağ'da yaşanan olaylar sonrası Suriyelilerin geri dönüşü konusu daha yoğun bir biçimde tartışılmaya başlanmıştır. Suriyelilerin 10 yılı geçen misafirligi, entegrasyon sorunu, metropollerde ve sınır şehirlerinde yoğunlaşan yaşamları gibi nedenler ev sahibi toplumda belirli biçimde toplumsal kabulde azalmaya ve kaygılara yol açmaktadır. Kalıcı çözümler arasında yerel entegrasyon, geri dönüş ve üçüncü ülkeye yerleştirme yer almaktadır. UNHCR verilerine göre üçüncü ülkeye yerleştirilen Suriyeli sayısı 31 Mart 2022 itibariyle 295,848'dir. Fırat Kalkanı gibi operasyonlarla birlikte bölgeye 498,593 Suriyeli geri dönmüştür. Bu araştırma Suriyelilerin geri dönüş düşüncesine ilişkin itme ve çekme faktörlerini ve Türklerin bakış açısı ile Suriyelilerin geri dönüşüne ilişkin gerekçelendirmelerini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Araştırmada, geri dönüşle ilgili detaylı veriye ulaşabilmek amacıyla nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden görüşme seçilmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında Suriyelilerin mahalle bazında yoğunlaştığı Ankara, Altındağ ilçesi seçilmiştir. Altındağ'da aynı mahallede yaşayan, 18 yaşından büyük, 10 Türk ve 10 Suriyeli olmak üzere toplam 20 kişi ile yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Nitel veriler MAXQDA programı aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir. Kalıcı çözümlerin her üçü de kendi içinde bir entegrasyon sürecini barındırmaktadır. Stein'e (1986) göre mülteciler ev sahibi topluma, üçüncü ülkeye ya da geri dönmeleri halinde köken ülkeye yeniden entegre olmak durumunda olup tüm bu süreçler maliyetlidir. Harild'a (2015) göre geri dönme kararı karmaşık bir karar olup bazı durumlarda kişiler ev sahibi ülkeye terk etme baskısı bile olsa kalmayı seçebilmektedir. Black vd.'ne (2004) göre, gönüllü geri dönüşte en önemli unsurlar aile durumu, köken ülkedeki güvenlik ve yeniden entegrasyon yardımının varlığıdır. Suriyelilerin geri dönüşle ilgili görüşleri Suriye ile ilgili yapısal faktörler, kişisel faktörler ve Türkiye ile ilgili faktörler olarak üç grupta ele alınmıştır. Suriyeliler için çekme faktörü anavatanına duyulan özlemlerle birlikte hala Suriye'de yaşayan akrabalarıdır. Belirli şartların sağlanması halinde geri dönerim ve geri dönmeme cevabını verenler ise başta güvenlik konusuna vurgu yapmıştır. Suriye'de savaş sona ererse, her şey eskisi gibi olursa, ev, iş, eğitim imkanları sağlanırsa geri dönerim diyenler çoğunluktadır. Türkiye ile ilgili faktörler kısmında iş imkanları, eğitim, yaşam kurmak, sağlık imkanları öne çıkmaktadır. Diğer taraftan muhtemel ayrımcılık durumu ise geri dönüş için itici faktör olabilir. Sonuç olarak itme-çekme faktörleri hem Türkiye hem de Suriye açısından ele alınmalıdır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, istikrar ve güvenlik geri dönüşle ilgili en önemli bileşendir. Güvenlikle birlikte barınma konusunda tüm katılımcı Suriyeliler kaygılarını ifade etmiştir. Geri dönüşle ilgili kişisel sebepler arasında en belirgin olanı kişilerin kendilerinin ya da çocuklarının devam eden tedavileri başka bir ifadeyle sağlık sorunlarıdır. Geri dönüş gönüllü veya zorunlu yardımlı ya da yardımsız da olabilir. Gönüllü geri dönüşle ilgili görüşmelerde dile getirilen husus Suriye'de geri dönüşün şartlarının hala hazır olmadığıdır. Türklerin Suriyelilerin neden geri dönmesi gerektiği sorularına cevapları ve gerekçelendirmeleri topluma entegre olmamaları Türkçe konuşmamaları, toplumda huzursuzluk, kavga ve gürültü çıkarmaları biçiminde açıklanmıştır. Bu kapsamda Türklerin gerekçelendirmelerinde öne çıkan entegrasyon konusu olup, ekonomiyle ilgili hususlar ikincildir. Bu araştırmanın kısıtlılıkları sınırlı sayıda Türk ve Suriyeli ile tek bir yerde gerçekleştirilmiş olmasıdır. Suriyelilerin geri dönüşü ile ilgili olarak ileride yapılacak araştırmaların farklı şehirlerde daha fazla katılımcı ile şehir-ilçe-mahalle bazında yoğunlaşmaları da dikkate alınarak yapılması önerilmektedir. Suriyelilerin geri dönüşü konusu Suriye ve Türkiye ile ilgili yapısal faktörlerden etkilenmektedir. Suriye'de yapısal şartların özellikle de güvenliğin sağlanması başarılı ve uzun dönemli geri dönüş için gereklidir. Aksi takdirde, Koser'in de vurguladığı gibi geri dönüş şartlarının uygun olmaması halinde köken ülkeye dönen sığınmacılar tekrar geldikleri ev sahibi ülkeye dönecektir. Suriye'ye geri dönüş konusu "yeniden entegrasyon" çerçevesinde ele alınması ve uluslararası kuruluşların da katkısı ile yürütülmesi gereken bir konudur.