# FORCED MIGRATION AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS: ARAB-TURKISH CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF SYRIANS IN TURKEY

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# ABSTRACT

FORCED MIGRATION AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS: ARAB-TURKISH CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF SYRIANS IN TURKEY

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Keywords: Syrian immigration, intergroup relations, sectarian identity, receiving society's perception, interactions

This study aims to contribute to a narrowly studied dimension of migration and attitudes towards immigrants by looking at how sectarian differences between immigrants and members of the immigrant-receiving communities influence the relationship between these two communities. It examines how the Arab-Turkish citizens perceive Syrians in Turkey and how ethnic, cultural, and religious linkages influence their perceptions of Syrians in Turkey. Data of the study are obtained from a total of 40 semi-structured and face-to-face interviews with Arab-Turkish citizens from Mersin and Mardin. The findings of the study suggest that the respondents' sectarian affiliations influence the way they perceive Syrians. Other findings of the study suggest that, on the one side, being Arab and speaking Arabic positively influences the participants' perceptions towards Syrians. However, on the other side, respondents perceive the Syrians as outsiders depending on the level of importance attributed to their national identities.

# ÖZET

ZORUNLU GÖÇ VE GRUPLAR ARASI İLIŞKILER: TÜRKIYELI ARAP VATANDAŞLARIN TÜRKIYE'DEKI SURIYELILERE YÖNELIK ALGISI

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriyeli göçü, gruplar arası ilişkiler, mezhebî kimlik, göç alan toplumun algısı, etkileşimler

Bu çalışma göç alan toplum üyeleri ve göçmenler arasındaki mezhepsel farklılıkların bu iki grup arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl etkilediğine bakarak, göç ve göçmenlere yönelik algının az çalışılmış bir boyutuna katkı yapmayı hedeflemektedir. Araştırma Türkiyeli Arap vatandaşların Suriyelileri nasıl algıladığını ve etnik, kültürel ve dini bağlantıların onların Suriyelilere yönelik algısını nasıl etkilediğini incelemektedir. Araştırmanın verileri Mersin ve Mardin'deki Türkiyeli Arap vatandaşlarla yarı-yapılandırılmış ve yüz yüze toplam 40 görüşmeden elde edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları katılımcıların mezhebî kimliklerinin onların Suriyelilere yönelik algısını etkilediğini göstermektedir. Çalışmanın diğer bulguları bir yandan Arap olmak ve Arapça konuşmanın katılımcıların Suriyelilere yönelik algısını olumlu etkilediğini, fakat diğer yandan, katılımcıların milli kimliklerine atfettikleri önem derecesine bağlı olarak, Suriyelileri yabancı olarak gördüğünü göstermektedir.

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*To all migrants*
*who lost loved ones along the way*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Aim and Significance of the Study

Migration is a crucially important phenomenon because it increases the diversity of societies, making them more complex. Particularly, social cohesion and ethnic conflict, which are allegedly attributed to the presence of immigrants and ethnic minorities, necessitate the study of inter-group relations between immigrants and the receiving societies because of the hot debate in academia in this regard. Although some intergovernmental organizations such as UNHCR (The United Nations Refugee Agency) and IOM (International Organization for Migration) argue that migration has reached its highest level ever [1], the impact of the immigrants on their receiving societies is what constitutes a critical topic to be studied more than the number of immigrants per se.

The existing studies on the relationship between immigrants and receiving society members concentrate mostly on the United States and Western Europe due to their rapidly changing demographic composition. However, according to the UNHCR, Turkey received the most significant number of refugees worldwide and the country's ethnic and sectarian composition changed due to the Syrian presence. The number of registered Syrian people in Turkey reached 3,6 million by July 2020 (UNHCR 2019).

At first, it was thought that the existence of Syrians in Turkey was temporary. However, over time, it has been understood that Syrians have a life in Turkey, and their presence is permanent. In time, tensions between Syrian people and receiving society members also increased due to social and economic problems as well as

[1] However, this is not a very accurate argument because the number of international immigrants represents the 2,9 percent of the world population in 2003 (IOM 2003) and it increased to 3,5 percent in 2020 (IOM 2020). By taking rapidly growing global population into account, this is not a crucial increase.

changing ethnic and sectarian balances. The receiving society members' prejudices and hostilities towards Syrians intensified. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the relations between receiving society members and Syrians from the perspective of receiving society members to detect areas of contestation and conflict between the two communities. Examining the Syrian immigration from the eyes of the receiving society members helps determine the personal and contextual factors that might contribute to the emergence and persistence of solidarity between the two groups.

While the literature on intergroup relations between refugees and receiving society members have mostly focused on the attitudes and approaches of majority group members towards refugees, few studies addressed how ethnic and cultural minorities in a society perceive the newcomers. The scholarly research on intergroup relations in Turkey follows a similar pattern with the literature and concentrates on majority group members' perspectives about Syrian immigration. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by analyzing Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions towards Syrians living in Turkey.

Those who came from Syria were predominantly Arab-Sunnis who altered the ethnic and sectarian composition of the southern provinces in Turkey. In other words, the most demographically affected area from Syrian immigration is Turkey's southern provinces where a substantial number of Arab-Turkish citizens live (Çağaptay and Menekse 2014). Arabs are known to be the third-largest ethnic/language population in Turkey with 2 percent of the population. Thus, it is essential to understand how Arab-Turkish citizens perceive Syrians, and what factors influence the frequency and quality of interactions between these two communities. More specifically, this study seeks to answer whether common religious and ethnic identities contribute to the emergence and persistence of solidarity between the Arab-Turkish citizens and the Syrians. Nevertheless, many Arab-Turkish citizens in southern provinces were Alevis who were descendants of Syria's Alawi community (Deverell and Karimova 2001). Hence, the sectarian affiliations of the Arab-Turkish citizens are expected to influence the direction of the relationship between two communities. Although the scholarly literature on receiving society members' immigration attitudes looks into the effect of ethnicity, there is no study that explains how sectarian differences between refugees and members of the receiving communities influence the relationship between these two communities. Therefore, this study makes an essential contribution to the literature on migration by accounting for the role of sectarian identities of the Arab-Turkish citizens on their perceptions towards Syrians.

In explaining Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards Syrians, this study predominantly focuses on intergroup relations theories in social psychol-

ogy literature. However, it also partly touches upon the explanations of the political economy literature. Doing so makes a theoretical contribution to the literature by combining two kinds of literature on the attitudes towards migration that grow separately from one another.

The existing studies in the literature that analyzes the receiving society members' perceptions towards immigrants generally employ quantitative methodology. They also focus mostly on Western Europe and the United States. However, since developing countries received the largest number of the world's refugees, academic studies should pay attention to intergroup relations between refugees and receiving society in developing countries.

Unlike migration studies that concentrate on the Global North, in this research, the data were collected by applying qualitative field research methodology. One-on-one interviews provide a much deeper set of information about the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards Syrians. Qualitative methodology is also useful for highlighting the factors that shape how Arab-Turkish citizens approach the Syrians.

It is necessary to underline that the data which are based on the participants' opinions and feelings are restricted to a specific time and context. The participants' approach towards Syrians may change over time due to economic political and social developments.

Last but not least, this study has a policy related significance along with its theoretical and methodological contributions. Syrians are living in Turkey for approximately nine years. Their existence in Turkey seems to be permanent because they have a life in Turkey. This study underlines the main problems between receiving society members and Syrians as well as everyday difficulties that Syrians face such as discrimination in labor market, humiliation, prejudices, negative stereotypes, and the receiving society members' lack of understanding and empathy toward their suffering. Highlighting the nature of intergroup relations between two groups and receiving society members' perceptions towards Syrians would help the development of policy practice that has positive impacts on two-way mutual accommodation by refugees and receiving society members.

## 1.2 Outline of the Study

This study aims to understand the intergroup relations between Arab-Turkish citizens and displaced Syrians living in Turkey. More specifically, this study looks into how common ethnicity and religion influence Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards Syrians.

The thesis is composed of 5 chapters. Chapter 2 presents the literature review on forced migration and the relationship between immigrants and receiving society members. The literature review has three main sections. In the first section, I will introduce the main concepts and definitions within migration literature. The second section will discuss the refugee experience and the difficulties of living as a refugee. In the third section, I will firstly introduce the concept of social cohesion that refers to the two-way process of mutual accommodation by immigrants/refugees and receiving society members. Then, I will touch upon the relationship between immigrants/refugees and immigrant-receiving society members under the broad framework of intergroup relations literature. The economic determinants of the relationship between the two groups will also be presented very briefly. Lastly, a relatively under-researched area which is the perceptions and attitudes of ethnic and cultural minorities towards immigrants will be examined.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the study. I will present the method of data collection and sampling procedure and the ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Besides, the reasons behind the selection of Mersin and Mardin as the field sites will also be highlighted.

Chapter 4 is data analysis, which is consists of six subsections. Since the construction of national identity affects Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions towards Syrians, the first part will touch upon how the identities of ethnic and religious minorities are socially constructed in Turkey. The second, third, and fourth parts of the data analysis will generally focus on daily life encounters and interactions between Arab-Turkish citizens and Syrians. When discussing the quality of interactions between the two groups, Arab-Turkish participants' perceived cultural similarities and differences with the Syrians will be highlighted with a specific emphasis on common language. The last two parts will account for the perceived security and economic threats of Arab-Turkish respondents about Syrians. In each section, the recurring terms in the interviews that are considered crucial in terms of the relationship between Arab-Turkish citizens and Syrian people will be evaluated and discussed in light of relevant literature.

In chapter 5, a summary of the main findings will be provided. The study's significance, its main contributions to the existing literature, and areas for further research will also be discussed.

# 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

The majority of the refugee population (85 percent) is hosted by developing or low-income countries such as Turkey (3.6 million), Colombia (1.8 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), and Uganda (1.4 million) (UNHCR 2019). These countries' local and financial capabilities are limited to provide for the basic and social needs of refugees. Especially, when refugees are located in socio-economically deprived regions of developing countries, perceived socio-economic competition creates social tensions between refugees and receiving society members (Luecke and Schneiderheinze 2017).

As Turkey has been receiving the tremendous number of refugees fleeing from the Syrian conflict, the Turkish government faces many financial and governance challenges and the threat of the potential escalation of ethnic and religious conflict within its southern region (Young et al. 2014). The International Crisis Group's reports on Turkey's Syrian Refugees contends that the inter-communal violence between the receiving country members and the Syrian people has incrementally intensified because of cultural differences and competition for low-wage jobs. Among low-income citizens, especially those who consider themselves discriminated due to ethnic, sectarian, religious, or ideologic reasons, perceive Syrians as a threat to their economic and political interests (InternationalCrisisGroup 2016, 2018).

How do the members of the receiving community perceive immigrants with different ethnic, religious, educational, and economic backgrounds? What factors shape the attitudes and perceptions of receiving society members towards refugees? These are essential questions to be answered since the migration is influential in almost every corner of the globe. In the light of these questions on the upcoming sections, firstly, the definition of refugee and its difference from migrant is offered. After

evaluating the causes of forced migration, whether voluntary and forced migration is exclusively distinctive from each other or not, is discussed. Then, the difficulties of refugee life are introduced. The last section is devoted to explaining the relations between refugees and receiving society members within the broad framework of intergroup relations. The minority attitudes toward newcomers are specifically emphasized.

## 2.2 Forced Migration and Refugees

The term 'refugee' was firstly used to describe Protestant Huguenots who fled from France due to religious persecution by state authorities at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century because the Protestant Huguenots were viewed as a danger to the interests of the political elite who benefited from dominant medieval belief system at that time, and therefore, the homogeneity of the nation (Adelman 1999).

Forced displacement is a modern phenomenon that is brought through the evolution of the nation-state. The contemporary geopolitical system is divided between different sovereign territorial units, namely the states, and according to this system, almost everybody is under the jurisdiction of a state. The citizens are obliged to obey the rules defined by the states. In return, states regulate the social life and grant certain rights, privileges, and above all, protection to its citizens. However, if the state is unable or unwilling to fulfill its duties, especially in terms of protection, then the citizens flee from their country of origin and become stateless. Any other state does not welcome those people who are obliged to leave their homeland because they are perceived not only as a threat to their state of arrival but also to the modern geopolitical system which is based on the homogeneity of the states (Adelman 1999; Keely 1996).

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a refugee as a person who has been forcibly displaced from her/his homeland due to war or political, religious, or social reasons (Hornby 2010). The legal definition of a refugee is provided by the UNHCR in the 1951 Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. According to the 1951 Refugee Convention; "A refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political

opinion."

> "A refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (UNHCR 2010, 3).

In line with these two definitions, the scholarly research on forced migration takes account of protracted conflicts, global economic and financial crisis, fragile and failed states, development problems, and poverty, socio-economic threats, physical threats and violence, absolute compulsion as well as actual harm as the main reasons behind people's flight from their country of origin and their inability to return (Loescher 2000; Nassari 2009; Turton 2003; Van Hear 2012; Westin 1999).

A pooled time-series analysis over 20 years between 1971 and 1990 offers a more detailed analysis of the causes of forced migration and argues that they are generally grouped under three categories: root causes, proximate conditions, and intervening factors. Proximate conditions refer to political factors such as human rights violations and political violence that lead to non-voluntary refugee flows. The United Nations (UN) associated root causes with the essential triggering conditions such as economic underdevelopment and overpopulation that often emerge many years before the actual refugee migration. Intervening factors to the decision to migrate are either obstacles to migration like strict border controls, or facilitators of migration like the existence of a precedent, namely call for guest workers (Schmeidl 1997).

In addition, it is necessary to distinguish a migrant from a refugee. In this regard, the degree of volition in one's decision to leave matters. Migrants voluntarily move from their country of origin in order to improve their lives, and unlike refugees, they can safely return whenever they desire (UNHCR 2016).

Moreover, there is also a distinction between voluntary and forced migration. International Organization for Migration (IOM) clarifies that since there is almost no agreed terminology, academics, policymakers, and practitioners use the term 'drivers' of migration to qualify the movement; "whether the migration is internal or international, regular or irregular, and/or temporary or permanent; and they operate along a spectrum between voluntary and involuntary movement" (Sironi, Bauloz, and Milen 2019, 58).

In fact, the distinction between forced and voluntary migration is not straight-

forward, and it is actually a continuum [1], not a distinction because most examples of migration that seem to be voluntary are also formed by significant limitations of options such as inability to find a job or to enter somewhere (Bartram 2015, 440).

> "An individual's migration decisions along a forced-voluntary continuum is necessarily more reflective of the complexity of individual experiences, agency and contextual circumstances than binary labeling of forced or not" (Erdal and Oeppen 2018, 993).

Refugees firstly appeared as a mass phenomenon just after World War I disrupted the territorial and demographic structure of central and eastern Europe. After that, between the two world wars, after World War II and the Cold War, refugees represent not only the individual cases but also a mass phenomenon (Agamben 1995).

The termination of the bipolar world order due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War eases the repatriation of the refugees (Zlotnik 1999). However, the collapse of the bipolar system and the communist bloc also created a power vacuum that revealed previously suppressed ethnic conflicts. New established states after the Soviet Union are too weak to deal with ethnic conflicts and separatist movements (Saideman 1995).Therefore, in several regions, the forced migration movements have accelerated due to the proliferation of ethnic and civil conflict brought about by the nation-building process (Castles 2003). Notably, the 20th century is regarded as 'the age of migration' or 'century of refugees' by many scholars in the field (Adelman 1999; Keely 1996; Miller and Castles 2009; Van Hear 2012).

Refugees are not only the product of insecurity and conflict but also, they contribute to the conflict and insecurity. Consequently, since the end of the Cold War, a remarkable increase has been observed in both academic and policy interest in migration studies and refugees (Goodwin-Gill 2014, 64).The motivation behind the interest of the international community, especially developed northern countries, in refugee studies and forced migrants is associated with their growing concerns of security and the primary interest of the states and policy practitioners in supporting refugee studies is to contain and deter the refugee influxes (Chimni 2009; Van Hear 2012) to secure their economic capacity and ethnic identity (Zetter 1999).

States' support to international refugee regimes, increasing scholarly interest in forced migration, and proliferation of the refugee studies institutions —such as 'the

[1]For further information about forced, voluntary migration continuum, please see (DeWind 2007; Miller and Castles 2009; Ottonelli and Torresi 2013).

Nansen Bureau for' Russian and Armenian refugees (1921), the High Commission for Refugees from Germany (1936), the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees (1938), and the International Refugee Organization of the United Nations (1946), the UN High Commission for Refugees (1951)' (Agamben 1995) so on- occur at the same time as the refugee crisis.

### 2.3 The Refugee Experience and the Difficulties of Living as a Refugee

Ager (1999) associates the refugee experience with the personal, social, economic, cultural, and political outcomes of forced migration. For him, there are four distinct phases of refugee experience: pre-flight, flight, temporary settlement, and settlement. The economic hardship (famine and poverty), social disruption (restricted mobility, school closures, natural disasters, fragmentation of families due to violent conflict, and so on), physical violence, and political oppression generally compel people to flee from their homeland. Flight from one's homeland leads to major emotional and cognitive disorders, and fears of being repatriated or lacking the refugee status necessary for relief assistance. Not only does the settlement phase refer to the refugee life in camps, but also it reflects the self settled refugees whose number are considerably high. Finally, the resettlement phase implies the permanent settlement of pre-selected refugees. It reflects long term difficulties of refugee life, such as the adaptation of refugees to the receiving country, their relationship with the indigenous population, employment problems, and intergenerational conflicts in the family due to children's quicker adaptation to the immigrant-receiving country (Ager 1999).

The government's response in immigrant-receiving countries to the forcibly displaced persons trying to enter its borders is also a significant determinant of the refugee life. Usually, in such a situation, three possible ways exist for the possible-receiving country's government: 1. repatriation- which is nearly impossible to implement because the conflicts that end up with the forced migration are generally protracted. Since the conflict continues, repatriation is the violation of the right to live. 2.local integration in the asylum country -which is problematic due to resistance from both refugees and the local population. Lastly, 3.resettlement in a third country -which is also a quite difficult solution because resettlement countries generally refuse to admit a large number of refugees, and refugees do not prefer resettlement since their hope to return their homeland is still alive (Jacobsen 1996;

Westin 1999). In addition, a recent large analysis of the refugees for the years between 1951 and 2008 that explores the attitudes of receiving state toward forced migrants finds empirical evidence that the receiving states are pleased to accept the refugee groups and use them as a leverage against their enemies whereas the governments of immigrant-receiving countries are reluctant to welcome refugees from their allies (Moorthy and Brathwaite 2019). In other words, bearing the socio-economic costs of accepting refugees from its rival is worth for the immigrant-receiving country as long as it helps to deteriorate the international reputation of the rival government as well as politically and militarily destabilizes the rival state (Moorthy and Brathwaite 2019).

Zetter (1999) argues that, first and foremost, sustaining the stability of the country is the main objective of the governments, along with mitigating the direct and indirect costs of the refugee influx, as well as protecting the political prestige of the government in the international arena. Those interests are determined by three strategies: containment, institutional control, and burden-sharing. According to Zetter (1999), the development level is a determinant in the containment strategies of governments of immigrant-receiving countries. More clearly, developed countries apply instruments of regulation, such as the concept of quota refugees, conducting the peacekeeping operations or humanitarian intervention to prevent refugee flows, whereas the developing countries have no such ability but to place the refugees in the remote parts of the country to minimize the undesired socio-economic impact of the refugee flow on city centers.

The refugee experience is also shaped by a variety of factors, including gender and sexual orientation, age, disability, the ethnic and sectarian identities of the refugees as well as refugees' representation in the media.

Portraying women and girls as the most vulnerable victims of the conflicts and displacements, denying female agency and perceiving women as 'care for' populations reproduce power imbalances and patriarchal system (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014). In addition, if the same-sex relationships are considered illegal in the country of arrival, most probably, LGBTI refugees continue to suffer from stigmatization, even criminalization and Muslim women whose religious identity is visible are exposed to new types of discrimination like racism and Islamophobia in western countries (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2010, 2014).

Nearly half of the refugee population is composed of children, and especially, unaccompanied or separated children are under extreme risk of abuse and exploitation (UNHCR 2018). The connection between forced displacement and the issue of child recruitment by illegal military groups deserves further attention from policymakers,

academia, and the international community (Hart 2014).

Along with the traumatic and life-threatening experiences of forced migration for old refugees, it is more difficult for them to adapt to a new society compared to younger ones and life conditions in the refugee camps or host cities which only provide a minimum condition for survival also severely threaten physical and mental health (Bolzman 2014).

In terms of the proper access to the accommodation, water, food, and health services in camps and urban settlements, people with disabilities experience serious barriers such as pejorative treatment from both the members of the receiving countries and other displaced people. Besides, in terms of smaller opportunities for working and living outside the camp, young, non-disabled, educated male refugees are advantageous. In contrast, females, older, and disabled ones are discriminated (Mirza 2014).

A broader meaning of health is composed of mental, physical, and social well-being and it is related to the refugee experience from pre-flight conditions to the resettlement or return stages. Marginalization, discrimination, racial harassment, and downward social mobility negatively affect the mental health of refugees. Moreover, refugees are at risk of rapidly transmitting infectious diseases due to crowded conditions in their destination, especially in camp settings (Ager 2014).

The next section will touch upon the intergroup relations between immigrants and receiving society members.

## 2.4 Social Cohesion between Immigrants and Immigrant-Receiving Society Members

Considering the increasing number of international immigrants and displaced people around the world, the existence of academic studies that discuss how these people re-establish their lives in a different socio-political and economic context than in the one where they were born has a crucial importance. Besides, globalization, migration, and increasing ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity in the countries pave the way for a growing need to analyze and understand intergroup encounters and relations that become an indispensable part of our lives. More specifically, increasing migration trends necessitates taking the relationship between newcomers

and members of the immigrant-receiving societies into account.

What happens when people leave their country of origin and start living in another context? One of the most cited manuscripts on the intercultural encounters between migrant peoples and members of the immigrant-receiving societies highlights this question (Berry 1992). Berry (1992) defines acculturation as the initial encounters between newcomers and members of the immigrant-receiving countries result in the changes in original cultural patterns of either or both groups. He discusses the four ways of acculturation in plural societies. The first one is assimilation, which occurs when immigrants or newcomers renounce their cultural identity and choose to adapt themselves to the dominant group's identity.Contrary to assimilation, separation happens when immigrants attribute a value to keep their original culture and avoid daily interactions with the members of the dominant group. As the third way, Berry (1992) defines integration as when immigrants mostly become an integral part of the new society. However, at the same time, they maintain specific original cultural characteristics. According to Berry's conceptualization, the last way is marginalization, which refers to alienation from one's original culture and the culture of immigrant-receiving society as well as avoidance of interactions with the members of the immigrant-receiving society.

Although Berry (1992) argues that his study attempts to avoid an approach that reflects acculturation as the eventual adaptation of minorities to the mainstream culture of the dominant group, according to him, the process of acculturation leads to more change in one of the groups, this group is called as the acculturating group, and in his study, the acculturating group is immigrants. Berry also discusses the contextual factors in the country of settlement, such as attitudes of the dominant groups, immigration, and acculturation policies, as well as individual-level factors that influence psychological acculturation of the immigrants.

Berry's study sheds light on the following research on the relationship between immigrants and members of the immigrant-receiving communities. Another study discusses the meaning of integration from the perspective of refugees in 15 European Union countries, and its findings suggests that some refugees equated integration with assimilation whereas others defined it as "a process of learning to accept and be accepted by the new society" (Mestheneos and Ioannidi 2002, 306). The concept of integration here mostly refers to the adaptation of refugees to the new society and emphasizes the common dream of refugees for equal rights and opportunities, and the acceptance of cultural diversity. In the interviews, conducted by Mestheneos and Ioannidi (2002), refugees point outed the problems of integration resulted from accession to housing, employment, education and health, discrimination, racism, their

inferior social status compared to the locals as well as cultural barriers, especially in terms of their daily encounters, cultural barriers created many problems due to cultural misunderstandings.

Similarly, Ager and Strang (2004) identify housing, employment, education, and health as the crucial factors for the process of integration. They account for the meaning of the term "integration" from immigrants and members of the immigrant-receiving countries' points of view. The ability to communicate in English was seen as an indispensable factor in achieving integration to the society in the UK by refugee and non-refugee respondents. The views of the participants about integration ranged from "no trouble" that referred to "no discrimination" from the perspective of refugees and "personal safety and peace between the communities" from the perspective of non-refugees to "mixing" and "belonging". From the respondents' points of view, mixing implied respect for cultural differences and joint participation in shared activities, whereas belonging reflected well-established friendship and shared values between refugees and non-refugees and an aspiration to feel a sense of belonging in the community from both sides (Ager and Strang 2004). Afterward, Ager and Strang (2008) compile the findings of previous literature on the relationship between immigrants and members of the immigrant-receiving society. They create a conceptual framework that defines the fundamental elements of successful integration. In line with the previous studies on integration, employment, housing, health, and education emerge as the essential instruments of successful integration. However, Ager and Strang (2008) emphasize that these factors are not adequate and must be supported by social interaction and the establishment of social bonds between different communities since integration is a two-way process of change. According to Ager and Strang, only, in this way, mutual trust and a sense of personal safety and security among people that leads to social cohesion between different communities in society could emerge. Again, Ager and Strang (2008) underline the importance of the ability to speak the dominant language in immigrant-receiving society in facilitating integration. They also point out the necessity of both sides' familiarity with each other's culture. Refugees' knowledge of the national legal system, customs, traditions, and practices in the country of settlement, and non-refugees' respect to, and familiarity with refugees' culture are also essential components of two-sided integration.

Last but not least, citizenship and rights associated with it are regarded as the essential preconditions of integration. They provide the necessary ground for full and equal participation of refugees to civic life in the country of settlement (Ager and Strang 2008). Especially citizenship type of a country is an essential determinant of tolerance of ethnic minorities, including immigrants. A multicultural form of

citizenship enables minorities to maintain their cultural identity and group-specific rights. In contrast, the exclusionary form of citizenship might allow ethnic minorities to become citizens but restrict their group and identity rights (Weldon 2006).

Duman and Çelik (2019) use Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptual framework of integration to explain social cohesion between refugees and members of immigrant-receiving countries. They emphasize that "social cohesion requires the efforts from immigrant-receiving society too" (Duman and Çelik 2019, 313). Over the years, it has been understood that the term "integration" refers to a host-centered approach to the relationship between immigrants and members of the migrant-receiving countries. However, social cohesion focuses equally on immigrants and members of the migrant-receiving countries. For instance, previous studies point out the crucial importance for immigrants to speak the country's language in which they settle. However, a robust social cohesion could only be achieved when the members of immigrant-receiving countries attempt to learn the language that refugees speak or respect the culture and security needs of immigrants (Duman and Çelik 2019, 313).

Similarly, another recent study also argues that although the literature on integration pretends to refrain from a unidimensional approach that focuses only on the process of immigrants' adaptation to the settlement country, the role of immigrant-receiving societies in supporting and facilitating refugee integration is largely ignored (Phillimore 2020). For this reason, in her research on the relationship between refugees and receiving societies, Phillimore (2020) highlights the importance of five factors related to the "receiving society opportunity structures; locality, discourse, relations, structure, and support." The locality refers to "the quality and availability of local resources" in the receiving countries that determine whether refugees or immigrants could access employment, health, education, and housing. For instance, employment is regarded as a significant integration outcome (Ager and Strang 2008) and is seen as a key to reaching wider social networks, and better housing opportunities. Employment opportunities tend to be measured by looking at the country of origin, gender, language skills, and education level of refugees, but the availability of jobs in the settlement country is not taken into account. Phillimore's example of the limited employment opportunities explains the unidimensional approach to the relationship between refugees/immigrants and locals that ignores the limitations and barriers in the receiving country. Discourse is the second important factor in determining refugee integration. It is also related to the media and political discourses in the receiving country that mostly shape public opinion about the refugees in the receiving society. Hopkins puts forward politicized places hypothesis which argues that in case of a sudden demographic change, anti-immigrant attitudes are observed in the most-affected places where the media and salient national rhetoric politicize

the immigration whereas, in other conditions, demographic changes remain unnoticed and depoliticized for the local population (Hopkins 2010, 43). The third factor is relations indicate whether communities are welcoming and open or hostile to the refugees and, this factor, accordingly, determines the relationship between refugees and locals. Philimore (2020) argues that refugees who are exposed to xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes in their new settlements also suffer from mental health problems. In contrast, more positive social interactions could be observed in countries where civil society and local governments work to improve refugees' living standards. The fourth factor is the structure that refers to the immigration and citizenship policies and practices as well as migration governance in the immigrant-receiving countries. Exclusionary citizenship does not enable minorities to retain their cultural orientations and group identity. In contrast, multiculturalist citizenship allows people to maintain their culture and specific group rights. Lastly, the fifth factor, identified by Philimore (2020), that characterizes refugees' situation and their relationship with the local inhabitants is initiatives and support that refers to third parties' efforts to facilitate refugee integration. Social networks and specific integration programs at regional or national levels would be influential in supporting refugee integration (Phillimore 2020, 12).

Some studies perceive that the existence of refugees negatively affects the members of immigrant-receiving communities. For instance, Maystadt and Verwimp (2009) expect that the refugees coming from Burundi and Rwanda negatively affect the local population's economic situation in the region of Kagera in Tanzania. They reach the conclusion that some people, for instance, farmers, benefit from refugee existence due to cheap labor. In contrast, agricultural workers suffer from the existence of refugees due to increasing labor market competition . Similarly, another study argues that "The refugee presence in western Tanzania negatively affected local access to environmental resources such as firewood and water" (Whitaker 1999, 6). Baez (2011) argues that the existence of refugees harms the health of local children, and he discusses the negative effects of refugees on the receiving country as follows:

> "Massive population shocks such as those triggered by most civil conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa can influence the well-being of permanent residents in many ways. The risks, on the one hand, include disease outbreaks, food, and land scarcity, unsafe drinking water, wage competition, overburdened school, and health care facilities, environmental degradation, and increased criminality" (Baez 2011, 391).

However, as discussed before in detail, the structural factors that are beyond the control of refugees such as the situation of local and national economies, immigration and integration policies, political and media discourses in the receiving countries shape the public opinion about refugees and relationship between refugees and members of the resettlement country. Therefore, the argument that associates increasing levels of criminality, competition over material resources and social services, and environmental problems with refugees' existence are all about perceptions and biases.

Two different literature on people's attitudes toward immigration develops separately from each other: social psychology and political economy (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014, 225). Social psychology literature discusses the interaction between immigrants and under the broad framework of intergroup relations. It focuses on "the role of group-related characteristics", "perceived threats to national identity", and "stereotyping". In contrast, political economy literature is based on material self-interest calculations of citizens in immigrant-receiving countries (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014, 226).This study aims to marry these two kinds of literature, but focusing predominantly on socio-psychology literature in explaining the perceptions of Arab-Turkish citizens on Syrians in Turkey. Socio-psychology literature encompasses both cultural and economic factors (for instance, realistic group conflict theory) in explaining the relationship between different groups. In this way, it sheds light on political-economic explanations. Therefore, the main focus is on socio-psychological explanations, but since this study also benefits from political-economic explanations, a small section examines the economic factors that shape the receiving society members' opinions about immigrants. The proceeding section is devoted to discussing theoretical arguments of intergroup relations to explain the relationship between immigrants and receiving society members.

## 2.5 Socio-psychological Explanations

In this section, in order to account for intergroup relations between immigrants/refugees and receiving community members, firstly, theories explaining why prejudice happens, the power of group membership, and the formation of intergroup biases will be introduced. Then, theories about the elimination/reduction of negative out-group stereotypes will be highlighted. In socio-psychology and conflict resolution literature, Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a cornerstone theory that explains

the formation of group boundaries, in-group favoritism, and out-group bias. Social Identity Theory (SIT), argues that people have the disposition to consolidate a sense of dignity and self-esteem, which could be achieved by engaging in group-oriented behavior and discrediting the other groups (Tajfel 1982). "Even if this makes one's own group worse off, there is again in self-esteem if the other group is made even worse off, the logic goes" (Hale 2017, 44). Group identity positively contributes to individual identity by providing an individual with an emotional attachment to a group that inhibits the feeling of being excluded and group identity also leads to a sense of immunity from physical threats (Ross 1993, 19). Accordingly, the rationale behind the people's loyalty and commitment to the group is that they see the advantages of acting in a group and regard the group as a provider of security, safety, status, and prestige (Druckman 1994). "The capacity for out-group aggression has evolved along with an ability for increased in-group cooperation" (Bilgelow 1973 cited in Ross 1993, 19).

When the group boundaries are clear and group membership is determined on the basis of cultural and ethnic homogeneity, for example, in the European Union context, social identity theory explains xenophobia and prejudice against immigrants who are perceived as the challengers of the hierarchical structure of the society and a culturally and ethnically distinct group competing with the in-group members for the limited and valuable resources because strong in-group identification leads to rejection of out-group members (Licata, Sanchez-Mazas, and Green 2011, 905). Similarly, in the American context, individuals with American identity display anti-immigration attitudes because they believe that "immigrants are members of an out-group that they believe do not have an American identity or they do not represent what it means to be a group member" (Mangum and Block 2018, 2). Foreignness is described as "the status of being an actual or perceived outsider to a given political community (typically a nation-state)" and refugees are regarded as foreigners (Achiume 2013, 331). Xenophobia is fear from foreigners, and even xenophobia is not defined in international law. It includes discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, color, descent, gender, and disability(Refworld 2009, 7). The support for anti-immigration policies and receiving society members' xenophobic attitudes toward immigrants reflects people's unwillingness to share the advantages and prestige of group membership, especially citizenship, with out-group members. The support for anti-immigration policies and receiving society members' xenophobic attitudes toward immigrants reflects people's unwillingness to share the advantages and prestige of group membership, especially citizenship, with out-group members.

"Stereotypes are consensual beliefs about the attributes of people belonging to

a social category" (Koenig and Eagly 2019, 205), and two models explain the formation of stereotypes are; 1. Social Role Model argues that stereotypes arise from "the observed role behavior of members of social groups" (Koenig and Eagly 2019, 207). 2. Stereotype Content Model states that stereotypes are related to one's group status, and high group status connotes stereotype of competence, whereas low group status associates with the stereotype of incompetence. In addition, a group's cooperative relations with other groups generate high warmth, and competitive relations with other groups lead to a lack of warmth (Koenig and Eagly 2019, 208). Stereotype Content Model is utilized to account for the stereotypes of the receiving society members about the immigrants in Germany. The immigrants who came recently, from the conflictual regions, without legal documents and Muslims, were placed in the lower levels in warmth and competence scale. They were stereotyped more negatively than legal, labor immigrants. This would have been related to people's perceived threat from refugees such as competition in the labor market and housing, fear from increasing taxes due to public spending for refugees, cultural distinctiveness, and increasing crime rates (Froehlich and Schulte 2019). Consequently, stereotypes and prejudices resulting from group membership and impermeable group boundaries are essential predictors of anti-immigration attitudes.

Concerning inter-individual relations, intergroup relations tend to be more competitive or less cooperative, and prejudice is more of a characteristic of intergroup relations rather than inter-individual relations (Insko et al. 1992, 272). The competition-oriented nature of intergroup relations is well explained through Sherif's Realistic Group Conflict Theory, which is another sine qua non in literature.

> "According to realistic group conflict theory, out-group rejection (ethnocentrism and/or prejudice) flows from intergroup conflict over "real" issues such as territory, jobs, power, and economic benefit" (Insko et al. 1992, 272).

Ethnocentrism is a belief that one's own culture is in the center of all reality, and this centrality assumption is strongly related to racism, xenophobia, denigrating outgroups, and impermeability of group boundaries (Bennett 1993, 30).

Kinder and Kam (2010) write a book on ethnocentrism and its influence on American public opinion. They find that ethnocentrism is an influential factor in American public opinion about immigration, peace and security, and citizenship. In chapter six, they discuss the relationship between ethnocentrism and American public opinion toward immigration in detail. They argue that perceived and real differ-

ences between immigrants and receiving society members in terms of religion, dress, ethnicity, language trigger ethnocentrism, and increase support for anti-immigrant policies.

Ethnic competition theory originates from social identity theory and realistic group conflict theory. It argues that the size of outgroup matters in terms of economic and cultural competition between groups because larger outgroups are perceived as more dangerous to the cultural values and economic interests. Moreover, ethnic competition theory suggests that members of certain groups are much more inclined to perceive ethnic threats and display anti-immigration attitudes than others, such as low skilled workers. Individuals with low socio-economic status perceive more ethnic threat because individual competition hypothesis argues that individual traits are also influential determinants of immigration attitudes (Schneider 2008). Opposition to immigration and anti-immigration attitudes are joint in older, less-educated, more conservative segments of the population and people who have authoritarian tendencies and social dominance orientation[2] (Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007).

Integrated threat theory combines four types of threats in order to understand the effect of perceived threats in inter-group relations. 1. the symbolic threat arises out of perceived cultural, ideological, moral differences between groups. 2. realistic threat emerges due to material self-interest calculations of ingroup members 3. Threats resulting from intergroup anxiety refer to people's fear of the negative consequences of inter-group interactions. 4. Threats resulting from negative stereotypes arise "when outgroup members are stereotyped as aggressive, untrustworthy, or unintelligent" (Stephan et al. 2002, 1244), ingroup members might have felt threatened and refrain from contact with them (Stephan et al. 2002). Having been inspired by integrated theory, Landmann, Gaschler, and Rohmann (2019) analyze the role of threat in people's immigration attitudes in Germany in the face of refugee migration. They identify six types of perceived threats among receiving society members. In line with the integrated threat theory, symbolic threats refer to concerns about the maintenance of German culture, as well as perceived cultural differences with the refugees triggers the perceived threat. Realistic threat refers to concerns about competition in the labor and housing market and welfare system in Germany. Safety threat indicates people's concerns about public safety and increased crime rates, and they associate these safety concerns with the existence of refugees. Cohesion threat implies people's disturbance about potential conflicts between ingroup members who adopt pro- and anti-migration positions and the formation of parallel societies

[2]Social dominance orientation refers to group hierarchy and dominance, whereas authoritarianism indicates conformity to authority and tradition (Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007, 34).

that are composed of refugees that are eventually believed to destabilize the social order. Prejudice threat points out people's discontent with extremist right-wing parties' increasing popularity, increasing levels of xenophobia, and racist attitudes due to refugee existence. The altruistic threat emerges because members of the receiving society are troubled with the social welfare services that refugees benefit from. Therefore, it could be argued that the opposition to immigration derives from perceived threats.

People's threat perception is associated with enemy imaging, which is a dynamic of group membership and people's identity needs because to establish or defend group identity. People are inclined to attribute positive and distinctive features as well as superiority to their group while they tend to denigrate out-groups by using stereotypes (Stein 2001; Woehrle and Coy 2000). "Securitization and stigmatization of migration and Islam in the west" through the discourses of ethnocultural and extreme right-wing political elites and intellectuals as well as associating immigrants with increasing crime rates, terrorism, unemployment, and poverty (Kaya 2012, 399) is an example of enemy imaging and increase the people's perceived threats about immigrants. There are theories on the reduction or elimination of inter-group prejudices as well. Intergroup contact theory argues that interaction between people helps to reduce the prejudice and sequentially leads to the stages of 'learning about the outgroup, changing behavior, generating affective ties, and ingroup reappraisal' (Pettigrew 1998, 80). People's negative stereotypes about each other, and racial animosity, which are thought to be resulted from ignorance, break down through their interaction. Mclaren (2003) studies public opinion about immigrants in the Western European context through the 1997 Eurobarometer survey and finds that intimate contact between immigrants and receiving society members decreases people's willingness to expel legal immigrants. Similarly, another study that focuses on Americans' and Mexicans' attitudes toward one another finds that the quality of contact, if it is voluntary, positive, and equal status condition is met, plays an important role in reducing prejudice (Stephan, Diaz-Loving, and Duran 2000).

However, certain conditions must be met for the inter-group contact to be influential in reducing prejudices and changing stereotypes such as "equal status contact; intimate, not causal contact; contact situation includes cooperation but not coordination; an authority or social climate that supports inter-group contact" and so on (Abu-Nimer 1999, 2,3). For instance, Hangartner and his colleagues analyze the receving society members' attitudes about migration in Greek islands close to the Turkish coast, and they find that contact does not reduce tensions for every context. Since contact happened in the absence of cooperative environment and the potential for friendship is impossible because receiving society members are aware that

refugees in Greek islands leave the islands to reach Athens. Therefore, "residents of islands that experience large and sudden influxes of refugees become more hostile toward asylum seekers, immigrants, and Muslims. They are more likely to support and lobby for more restrictive asylum policies than natives in similar islands that receive fewer or no asylum seekers" (Hangartner et al. 2019, 453).

Furthermore, the cultural similarity-attraction hypothesis by Byrne (1971) cited in (Van Oudenhoven, Ward, and Masgoret 2006, 643) points out that people tend to like those who they perceive to be similar to them, and perceived similarity might help reduce insecurity in inter-group relations. Ethnic minority groups who were perceived to have similar characteristics in terms of culture and physical appearance with receiving society felt less discrimination than the other ethnic groups who were seen as different (Dion and Kawakami 1996).

Lastly, Common Ingroup Identity Model argues that through group re-categorization, out-group prejudice and intergroup conflict can decrease. The formation of group boundaries and people's perceptions about the categorization of groups as "us" and "them" are discussed previously in this chapter under the framework of Social Identity Theory and ethnocentrism. If the preceptions of people on group boundaries are transformed from "us" and "them" to a more inclusive "we", inter-group bias can be reduced. Through the formation of a common ingroup identity, people perceive the former out-group members as members of in-group. People feel themselves as a part of superordinate identity that encompasses all groups (Gaertner, Dovidio, and Bachman 1996; Gaertner et al. 1993).

For instance, a recent quantitative study that analyzes receiving society members' perceptions about Syrians in Turkey finds that emphasizing Sunni and Muslim identity of Syrians which is a common in-group identity for both groups reduce prejudice and negative attitudes of Turkish respondents directed towards Syrians (Lazarev and Sharma 2017).

## 2.6 Economic Explanations

Economic explanations of public opinion on migration are based on material self-interest calculations of the people.

The factor proportion model, which makes a connection between individual eco-

nomic interests and their preferences on immigration policy, argues that the receiving society members' labor market skills are a strong predictor of their immigration policy opinions. More clearly, low-skilled laborers prefer more restrictionist policies against immigrants due to immigrants' pressure on the wages of low-skilled jobs (Scheve and Slaughter 2001).

One of the most cited research on the literature which analyzes individual attitudes toward immigrants on the cross-country level uses Factor Proportion Theory and also mentions non-economic factors in explaining the receiving society members' reactions against the immigrants. According to this research, economic factors have a key and more robust role in shaping people's opinions about immigration. This research finds empirical support that the level of individual skill in high per capita GDP countries is positively correlated with pro-migrant attitudes. In low per capita GDP countries, high-skilled workers display hostile behaviors toward migrants. Furthermore, in terms of non-economic factors, immigrants are thought to increase the crime rates, and they are perceived as a threat to cultural and national identities by locals (Mayda 2006).

Nevertheless, Factor Proportion Theory which is based on labor market competition does not consistently explain people's immigration attitudes every time because Hainmueller and his colleagues find that US workers with different skills are inclined to support high-skilled immigrants whereas they are opposed to low-skilled immigrants (Hainmueller, Hiscox, and Margalit 2015). Similarly, the findings of another study indicate that American people prefer well-educated, experienced, and high-status professionals by taking their contribution to the national economy and taxes into account (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015).

Consequently, general findings of the literature indicate that dynamics of group membership such as intergroup prejudices, enemy imaging, perception of threat, and perceived differences about outgroup members trigger opposition to immigration. Moreover, material self-interest calculations of the receiving society members such as competition in the labor market and perceived contribution/ burden of skilled immigrants to the national economy of resettlement country play an essential role in people's immigration attitudes.

While the literature on public opinion about immigration has mostly focused on the perception of majority group members in the receiving society, few studies have addressed the question of how minority groups perceive immigrants. The last section will touch upon intergroup relations between immigrants and minorities in the receiving society.

## 2.7 Minority Groups in the Host Communities and Immigrants

Scholarly research on the effects of refugee existence on host communities is generally inclined to investigate the local community's situation and reactions from the lens of the dominant majority group. However, since many societies around the world become more and more heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity, culture, and religion, the research on inter-group relations should pay attention to inter-minority interactions, and more specifically, the attitudes of minorities in the host community toward immigrants as well.

In this regard, considering the current trend of refugee flows, recent studies on intergroup relations pay attention to minority attitudes and feelings toward immigrants.

Generally, members of the majority group prefer to adopt assimilation strategies toward refugees, especially when there is a big difference between locals and newcomers in terms of culture; the dominant group feels threatened. In comparison to members of the majority group, minority group members are more inclined to adopt a multiculturalist approach towards newcomers (Arends-Tóth and Vijver 2003; Breugelmans and Van De Vijver 2004; Callens, Valentová, and Meuleman 2014). Group Empathy Theory might suggest a plausible explanation regarding the relative tolerance of disadvantaged minority groups toward immigrants, even if they are in direct competition over resources and rights.

> "Group Emphaty Theory posits that minority group members find it easier to cognitively imagine themselves in the position of a person being unfairly treated due solely to their race/ethnicity, even when that person is from a different racial/ethnic group" (Sirin, Villalobos, and Valentino 2016, 895).

Another study on group empathy explores the effects of demographic factors like gender, age, education, race/ethnicity on the development of group empathy and the influence of this group empathy on political attitudes and political behaviors of Anglos, African-Americans, and Latinos (Sirin, Valentino, and Villalobos 2017). Empirical results support their previous findings regarding Group Empathy Theory (Sirin, Villalobos, and Valentino 2016; Sirin, Valentino, and Villalobos 2014). Due to their disadvantaged positions in the society, minority groups (African Americans and Latinos) display a higher level of empathy towards immigrants than Anglos.

Even if their political and material interests are threatened, minorities are in favor of pro-immigration policies and protection of civil liberties. In addition, group empathy is positively correlated with age, female gender, and level of education, and it powerfully predicts the policy views on immigration and national security (Sirin, Valentino, and Villalobos 2017).

Similarly, socio-demographic factors can shape the attitudes of majority group members toward immigrants: women, younger, more educated, those who perceive more opportunities in life and those who live in districts with a small number of immigrants are more tolerant and embrace multiculturalist approach toward immigrants (Callens, Valentová, and Meuleman 2014).

In parallel with the arguments of Group Empathy Theory Mustafa and Richards (2019) find empirical support that minorities' personal histories and experiences of abuse, harassment, and discrimination lead them to make empathy with immigrants from developing countries. Besides, compared to majority groups, settled-minorities display more favorable attitudes toward newcomers. However, Mustafa and Richards (2018) ground their findings with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1982) by analyzing the attitudes of European Muslims toward different immigrant groups. They find that European Muslims strongly support Muslim immigration because of the belief that an increase in the size of one's group contributes to its distinctiveness and salience from other groups.

Another dimension that influences the relationship between refugees and the host community is ethnicity. Ethnic group membership and a sense of belonging to an ethnic group that transcends the boundaries of the states are influential in the refugees' decision of destination. Ethnic linkages are inclined to be regionally concentrated. Therefore, refugees prefer to choose to flee geographically proximate countries with ethnic and cultural linkages (Rüegger and Bohnet 2018).

Furthermore, in terms of minority groups in the host community, co-ethnic refugee groups' existence strengthens their group position and political bargaining power. In contrast, it poses a challenge to the other groups in society (Rüegger 2019).

In an ever-increasingly interconnected world, in-group-out-group boundaries are blurred because countries with a long-time migration history are composed of individuals with mixed origins and second, third or even fourth generation immigrants (Sarrasin et al. 2018).

Generally, older the experience of migration, the further the ties between natives and individuals with an immigrant background. Like natives, those with an immigration background but well-integrated ones are more likely to perceive the

newcomers as a threat. Second or third-generation immigrants are more tolerant and more willing to embrace multiculturalism toward newcomers (Callens, Valentová, and Meuleman 2014; Sarrasin et al. 2018). They are inclined to display more inclusive attitudes towards culturally similar groups (Van der Zwan, Bles, and Lubbers 2017).

Lastly, a fresh and more comprehensive study evaluates the attitudes of minority populations towards immigrants by taking minority population's perceptions of both threat and solidarity into account. According to this research, identification of host country and competition in labor market foster inter-minority hostility by increasing the threat perception whereas the common experience of discrimination by political authorities or in daily life strengthens the sense of solidarity and culminate in positive behaviors towards newcomers(Meeusen, Abts, and Meuleman 2019).

To sum up, in this section, the main concepts in the migration literature are introduced. Then, the relationship between immigrants and receiving society members is discussed. Highlighting the perceptions and attitudes of receiving society members under the broad framework of intergroup relations is considered to be effective in understanding areas of conflict and contestation between the two groups. Besides, the political-economic explanations of receiving society members' approach towards immigrants are also briefly discussed.

Nevertheless, inter-minority relations and, more specifically, the attitudes of minority populations towards newcomers is a relatively limited research area that needs to be expanded. The existing studies on this field generally concentrate on the United States and the Western European countries, especially Belgium and the Netherlands, due to their rapidly changing ethnic and cultural composition. However, Turkey also deserves to be taken into account because Turkey received the maximum number of refugees following the Syrian crisis. The ethnic composition of the country has been altered. After that, the intercommunal violence between different groups in society has incrementally intensified. In parallel with the general trend, the studies on intergroup relations regarding Turkey generally focus on the Kurdish issue. Departing from relatively limited inter-minority relations literature, this study seeks to understand how common ethnicity and religion influence Arab-Turkish citizens perceptions towards Syrians. The aim of this study is not only to contribute to existing literature but also to affect the policymaking in a positive manner that would be beneficial for the interests of relevant groups and their peaceful coexistence.

# 3. METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

Qualitative research is a way to make sense of the empirical world and it produces descriptive data about people's written, spoken, and unspoken words as well as their observable behaviors (Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault 2015*b*). A plausible overview of qualitative research is provided by Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015*b*). They argue that qualitative researchers engage in the way in which people think and act in their daily lives and aims to understand the people from their own perspective. Moreover, Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015*b*) point out the flexible nature of qualitative research by claiming that it is neither a refined nor a standardized but a flexible approach that is based on vague research questions which could take form during the course of the study, and contrary to the deductive logic of inference in quantitative research, theories could be derived from the data-at-hand during the process of data analysis in qualitative studies.

This study aims to analyze how the Arab-Turkish citizens perceive Syrians in Turkey and how ethnic, cultural, and religious linkages influence their perceptions of Syrians in Turkey. This study adopts an interpretist position and rather than aiming to offer certain conclusions about people's general attitudes toward refugees, it is concerned with understanding the attitudes of Arab-Turkish citizens toward Syrians in two cities of Turkey (namely, Mersin and Mardin) by taking the social structure that shapes the activities and daily lives of Arab-Turkish citizens into account (Marsh and Furlong 2002).To this end, this study equally puts an emphasis on Arab-Turkish citizens' socio-demographic factors, such as sectarian affiliation, educational background, economic status, age, gender, and their family histories as well as structural or contextual factors of Arab-Turkish people's settlements, such as the level of economic development, employment opportunities, and the number

of immigrants, in explaining inter-group relations and the impact of immigrants on the attitudes and perceptions because since the world is socially constructed, the social structures have an influence on the activities that they shape and the agents' views on what they are doing (Marsh and Furlong 2002).

The research on migration and attitudes towards migration mostly focuses on the United States, Canada, and Western Europe because these countries are ethnically diverse. In addition, since the foreign-born population and their immediate descendants constitute a significant proportion of the population in these countries, the quantitative data, i.e. public opinion surveys, are also available that enable researchers to conduct large-n studies which are suitable to capture the general patterns in people's attitudes toward immigration and local-immigrant relations over time and across space. However, the rapid increase in the number of foreign-born people -90 percent of whom are Syrian- in Turkey is a recent event. The limited data on Syrians in Turkey do not concentrate on the relationship between the two communities. Besides, the aim of the study is not to establish a causal linkage between different variables but to clarify a case study (Mahoney and Goertz 2006). Therefore, it is a single case analysis; it exclusively focuses on the relationship between the Arab-Turkish citizens and the Syrians to trace the former's ethnic and religious linkages with the Syrians and aims to understand how it influences the Arab-Turkish citizens' perception of Syrians.

Although quantitative studies are useful in terms of external validity, theoretical generalization or the universal applicability of the empirical results have secondary importance in this study. Instead, by using a qualitative method, the main aim is to describe a social phenomenon and help to define how people understand their world. With this aim, this study is mainly concerned with how Arab-Turkish citizens perceive Syrians and what kinds of factors influence the frequency and quality of interactions between these two communities.

In the subsequent sections, the appropriate methodology to answer the research question will be highlighted in detail. To do that, firstly the data collection technique, then, the appropriate selection sample design and the selection of the participants will be discussed. After that, the reasons behind the selection of Mersin and Mardin as the fields will be clarified. Lastly, the ethical considerations and limitations of this study will be highlighted in detail.

## 3.2 Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interviews

In this study, a qualitative fieldwork methodology is employed, and data are collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Focusing on the influence of group-related characteristics of the participants and contextual factors that form the interviewees' perceptions of refugees requires to conduct field research.

The qualitative data are useful in different ways. Especially in terms of forced migration, in-depth interviews create awareness about the difficulties of living as a refugee as well as the effects of long-time persecution, violence, famine, and poverty; personal narratives and life stories of the victims of forced migration helpful to improve the stereotyped image of the refugees in the eyes of the society and researcher (Eastmond 2007). Besides, the fieldwork methodology enables the researcher to get to know the participants personally and learn about the inner life of the people, their moral values, thoughts, sufferings, and their struggles. In this way, interviews could provide a much deeper set of information about the actions and attitudes of not only the respondents but also their immediate family members and friends.

The primary data collection technique in this research is based on both interviewing the research subjects, ask them to talk about an issue, event or set of behaviors as well as observing the personal and contextual factors that shape the participants' views and behaviors (Read 2010). Therefore, the inferential leverage of the qualitative fieldwork methodology is relatively high compared to survey data because the researcher does not only depend on the response that the subject of the research provides her, but she observes the environment where the interview takes place, whether the participant is manipulating her, and whether the interviewee hesitates to respond to some questions (Mosley 2013).

The open-ended, in-depth interviews are particularly useful for studying the political behaviors of minorities and group identity because through asking "why" and "how" questions, this methodology is an appropriate way for the researcher to reconsider the established concepts and define new ones about group identity and the terms associated with it (Rogers 2013).In the next section, the sampling choice and selection of the participants will be discussed.

### 3.3 Mersin and Mardin As the Fields

This study aims to look into the Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards displaced Syrians living in Turkey and examines whether common ethnic

and religious ties contributes the emergence and persistence of solidarity between the Arab-Turkish citizens and the Syrians. Therefore, an originally specified target group which is the Arab-Turkish community is determined before going into the field. The cities that consist of a considerable number of Arab-Turkish citizens and Syrian people should have been chosen in parallel with the purpose of the study. Furthermore, this study also aims to account for the influence of the sectarian differences of the Arab-Turkish community on their perceptions of Syrians. For this reason, the sectarian identities of the participants have a crucial role in the selection of an appropriate sample.

Arabs are known to be the third-largest ethnic/language population in Turkey with 2 percent of the population and they are mainly clustered around the south-eastern region of the country. Mersin and Mardin were chosen because approximately 10 percent of the population is composed of Syrians in both cities. These two cities are also known to be the settlements of Arab-Turkish people.

For the sake of a healthy comparison between these two cities, the ratio of Syrian people proportional to the population of the cities was aimed to be held constant at a certain level (at 10 percent) for both cities.[1] The aim is to hold both cities' socio-economic characteristics constant except the participants' sectarian identities to understand how Arab-Turkish respondents' sectarian identities effect their perceptions towards Syrians. However, socio-economic characteristics of the Arab-Turkish population in these two cities differ from each other. In other words, Arab-Turkish people living in Mersin and Mardin have different socio-economic characteristics.

Firstly, since the sectarian identities of Arab-Alevi population matter as I discussed in the previous paragraphs, the overwhelming majority of the participants from Mersin are Arab-Alevi people whereas all respondents from Mardin are Arab-Sunni people. According to an expert on the history and sociological characteristics of the Arab-Alevi population, Adana, Mersin, Tarsus, and Hatay provinces are intensely populated by Arab-Alevi citizens. Mersin is the only city that meets the condition of including 10 percent of Syrians and a considerable number of Arab-Alevi people. Hatay would be chosen as a field because according to the informants and Arab-Alevi respondents in Mersin, Hatay has a considerable number of Arab-Alevi population but the statistics from Directorate General of Migration Management (2020) shows that approximately 27 percent of Hatay's population is composed of Syrians.

Secondly, although there is no question that asks the political affiliation of the

[1] *Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management,* Statistics Temporary Protection, July 2020, https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27

respondents, it has been observed from the place of the interview and the discourses of the respondents that Arab-Alevi people, in general, vote for CHP and Arab-Sunni people mostly vote for AKP. Therefore, the respondents living in Mersin and Mardin have different political preferences as well.

Lastly, there is a considerable gap between the socio-economic development levels of Mersin and Mardin. The social and economic development index (SEDI) rankings compare the cities in Turkey on the basis of certain social (demographic, employment, education, health, infrastructure, other welfare) and economic (manufacturing, construction, agriculture, financial) variables. According to SEDI rankings Mersin is located in the second degree developed provinces group whereas Mardin is located in the fifth degree developed provinces group which includes the least developed cities in the country in terms of social and economic factors (Ozaslan, Dincer, and Ozgur 2006). Another current study that ranks the cities in Turkey with respect to their innovativeness, entrepreneurship, and human capital indicators produce similar results in terms of the socio-economic disparity between Mersin and Mardin (Sungur and Zararci 2018). Therefore, Mersin and Mardin differ from each other in terms of their social and economic development levels.

As stated above, the purpose is holding other characteristics constant except the sectarian identities of the participants in Mersin and Mardin to understand how sectarian identities of the Arab-Turkish citizens influence their perceptions and attitudes towards Syrians. However, this is nearly impossible. For instance, Gaziantep would have chosen instead of Mardin because compared to Mardin, Gaziantep is a more economically developed city like Mardin. However, it would be harder to find Sunni-Arab participant in Gaziantep.

In the next part, I will discuss sampling technique and participants of this study in detail.

## 3.4 Sampling and Participants

The type of conclusions that will be reached through data analysis mainly depends on the appropriate sampling choice (Leech 2002, 683). The target population that refers to the sample frame should be determined accordingly with the purpose of the research (Leech 2002, 670). Therefore, the sampling choice must be in parallel with the special content of the research question and the ambitions of the research

(Lynch 2013).

A random sampling technique that is based on a representative sample is advantageous in terms of external validity and generalizability of the study across the population of the cases. However, as I discussed before, generalizability is the secondary aim of this study and compared to, for instance, survey research, the interviews are generally based on smaller samples, but provide deeper information from the respondents and their inferential leverage in terms of data analysis is higher.

In this study, Arab-Turkish citizens are the subject of interest and the sample is drawn from Muslim Arab-Turkish community in Mersin and Mardin belonging to Alevi and Sunni sectarian identities because the aim is to analyze whether common religious and ethnic identities contribute to the emergence and persistence of solidarity between the Arab-Turkish citizens and the Syrians. Besides, the sectarian affiliation of the respondents is expected to influence the direction of the relationship between the two communities. Therefore, the sample is composed of both Arab-Alevi and Arab-Sunni Turkish citizens.

A snowball sampling technique is utilized when the unit of analysis is a difficult-to-reach population (Atkinson and Flint 2001). People living in Turkey are mostly sensitive about revealing their ethnic identities to a foreigner due to confidentiality purposes. Since the 1960 census, no data are available on citizens' ethnic origins (Çağaptay and Menekse 2014). "Start with one person or a small number of people, win their trust, and ask them to introduce you to others" (Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault 2015*a*, 47) describes the snowball technique. Especially, the Arab-Alevi community is known to be a private and closed-off community and snowball sampling is the most appropriate choice to reach the participants from an isolated community because the references from the previous interviewees and gatekeepers create a reputable and reliable image for the researcher. I benefited from the network of my thesis advisor to reach the Arab-Turkish community. Communicating with one person vouched for me with the others and this process continued like a chain and the sample expanded like a snowball. Therefore, the snowball technique is very useful in terms of the formation of a relationship between the respondents and the researcher that is based on mutual trust and credibility because the researcher's first engagement with the participants is ensured by the so-called gatekeepers who control the access to the site and have a long-standing trust and friendly relationships with the target population. Through the interviews, four gatekeepers helped the researcher to reach Arab-Turkish citizens and during the fieldwork process, some participants will be reached among the acquaintances of initial interview participants who expressed their willingness to participate upon the request of a referee.

Aside from their ethnic identity, the participants of this study are heterogeneous in terms of their economic status, education level, occupations, age, gender, and social background. Moreover, all the respondents in Mardin are Arab-Sunni people whereas almost all the interviewees consist of Arab-Alevi citizens in Mersin except a mother and her daughter, but they were also originally from Mardin and they were living in Mersin for 16 years. 42 interviews were conducted at the end of January 2020 and the beginning of February 2020 with 20 Mersin residents, 20 Mardin residents, and 3 informants. [2]

Table 3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the Participants from Mersin

| Nicknames | Sex | Age | Education | Occupation | Time Spent in Mersin |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | F | 26 | University dropout | Waitress | Since birth |
| Participant 2 | M | 33 | University | Works at the Mediterranean Exporter Unions | 4 years |
| Participant 3 | M | 52 | University | previously instructor at university, now financial advisor | Since birth |
| Participant 4 | M | 45 | High school | Mukhtar (Village Headman) | Since birth |
| Participant 5 | M | 55 | High school | Municipal Police | Since birth |
| Participant 6 | M | 36 | University | Chairman in Department of Culture in Akdeniz Municipality | Since birth |
| Participant 7 | F | 21 | University student | Student | 16 years |
| Participant 8 | F | 47 | Primary school | Cleaner | 16 years |
| Participant 9 | F | 47 | University | Instructor at public training center, NGO volunteer | Since birth |
| Participant 10 | M | 49 | Ph.D. graduate | Professor at Mersin University | 24 years |
| Participant 11 | M | app. 55 | High school | Mukhtar (Village Headman) | Since birth |
| Participant 12 | F | 41 | Primary school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 13 | F | 56 | Primary school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 14 | F | 42 | Primary school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 15 | F | 36 | Primary school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 16 | F | 47 | High school | Vegetable Seller | Since birth |
| Participant 17 | F | app. 50 | Primary school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 18 | F | app. 45 | Primary school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 19 | F | 45 | University | Politician | Since birth |
| Participant 20 | F | 31 | University | Small Restaurant Owner and Politician | 14 years |

Table 3.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of the Participants from Mardin

| Nicknames | Sex | Age | Education | Occupation | Time Spent in Mardin |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 | M | 47 | University | High level state officer | Since birth |
| Participant 2 | M | 49 | High school | Shopkeeper | Since birth |
| Participant 3 | F | 43 | University | Shopkeeper | Since birth |
| Participant 4 | M | 64 | High school | Optician | Since birth |
| Participant 5 | F | 40 | High school | Security officer at Artuklu University | Since birth |
| Participant 6 | F | 32 | Primary school | Housewife | 10 |
| Participant 7 | M | 49 | Primary school | Grocer | 45 |
| Participant 8 | M | 33 | University | Works at Mardin Municipality | Since birth except university years |
| Participant 9 | M | 26 | High school | Works in jewelry | 4 |
| Participant 10 | F | app 50 | Primary school | Housewife | 27 |
| Participant 11 | M | 30 | Ph.D. student | Research Assistant | Since birth except university years |
| Participant 12 | M | 57 | No school | does not work | Since birth |
| Participant 13 | M | 28 | High school | Unemployed | Since birth |
| Participant 14 | F | 36 | No school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 15 | F | 47 | No school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 16 | F | 51 | No school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 17 | F | 47 | No school | Housewife | Since birth |
| Participant 18 | M | 54 | Primary school | Jeweler | 25-30 years |
| Participant 19 | F | 50+ | University | TOBB Women Entrepreneurs Council Provincial Representative | Since birth except university years |
| Participant 20 | F | 50+ | University | Owner of a beauty salon | Since birth except university years |

[2]The informants are experts on these two cities' demography and sociology. Two informants are from Mardin and one informant is from Mersin.

## 3.5 Ethical Considerations

During the interviews, the respondents were expected to answer the questions about their demographic characteristics, ethnic, religious, and cultural identities as well as their perceived cultural similarities/differences with Syrian people. Asking that much intimate and personal questions about one's life leads to a huge moral obligation to keep the obtained data confidential (Lawrence Neuman 2014, 469). Therefore, before starting the interview, the purpose and method of the study were clearly explained to the participants. The interviewees were reminded that they have a right to withdraw from the interview whenever they want, that they were not obliged to answer the questions that they were not comfortable with, and they were also guaranteed that the personal information of the respondents that they shared during the interview would never be publicized. All these points are explicitly stated in the Informed Consent form that is attached to the appendix and before starting the interviews, the participants were asked to sign the Informed Consent that has three components: "information, comprehension, and voluntarism" (Curran 2006, 202). Those who did not want to sign the Informed Consent form put their initials instead of their signature or stated their willingness to participate in the study orally in the voice records. In short, the identities of the participants remained anonymous in this study. The interview data will be kept protected and encoded in the personal computer of the researcher for 5 years and will never be shared with third parties. Briefly, the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents are respected.

The interviews took place in a safe and quiet place that was mutually agreed upon by the participants and the researcher. The place of interviews were generally the workplace or home environments of the respondents. Therefore, the place of interviews was chosen to make the participants feel comfortable and safe. Additionally, Sabancı University Ethics Council (SUREC) analyzed the aims and the scope of the study, and the necessary ethical approval was provided by SUREC that is attached to the appendix. Hence, the potential ethical considerations with respect to research on the human subject are minimized in this study. [3]

## 3.6 Limitations

[3]For further information about the ethical treatment of the human subject and the institutional review board (IRB) process, please see (Brooks 2013).

In terms of reliability, positivist scholars also criticize the effect of the positionality of the researcher that refers to what is called "the interviewer effect" on the research output and for them, the researchers' positionality leads to a measurement error or a quantifiable bias, but the positionality of the researcher would pave the way for a more collaborative relationship between the researcher and the interviewees that would contribute to the quality of theoretical knowledge at the end (MacLean 2013). The respondents, especially parents, perceived me as a young student, not a researcher, who sought help for her homework. They told me the difficulties that their children were also facing in the school environment. In general, they approached with an empathy and provided sincere answers.

Whether the researcher asks true questions, whether the questions are asked in a right way, whether the respondents provide real answers, or the questions that are asked by the researcher during the interview is understood truly by the interviewees are the issues related to the internal validity of the research (Mosley 2013, 21). Regarding this study, participants pretended not to understand the question about identity, or they are simply unwilling to answer the identity question.

As discussed in the previous sections, generalization or universal applicability of the empirical findings that are related to external validity has secondary importance. The main aim is to understand how people we study make a sense of the social phenomena.

Another limitation results from the research design of the study. It has been understood after the fieldwork that in both Mersin and Mardin, different ethnic and religious groups live together and the frequency of contact between these groups is considerably important. Therefore, Kurds, Christian Arabs, and Turks would be included in the sample in terms of the robustness check. [4] Analyzing the intergroup relations from the perspectives of all ethnic and religious groups reciprocally provides a more detailed and comprehensive analysis. Another limitation is that the age of participants is unevenly distributed in the sample and clustered between 40 and 50. The number of female respondents overweighed the number of males in Mersin and the reason is explained before in this chapter

[4] Arab-Sunni respondents in Mardin mostly pointed out that they have good and friendly relations with Kurds, but some sociological studies provide the contrary evidence (Biner 2007). Similarly, Arab-Alevi respondents in Mersin argued that they have "internalized" the Kurds and have a kinship relationship with the Christian Arabs in Mersin. Whether the members of the aforementioned groups have similar views about their interactions with the Arab-Turkish community is an important issue to be accounted for.

# 4. DATA ANALYSIS

## 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain both cultural and economic factors that affect the Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards displaced Syrians living in Turkey. Specifically, this study examines the impact of common ethnic and religious ties on the emergence and persistence of positive attitudes between Arab-Turkish citizens and the Syrians, and the areas of contestation and conflict between the two communities.

In order to collect the data, I conducted 40 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Arab-Turkish citizens in Mersin and Mardin. The respondents in Mersin consist of Alevi Arabs, except a Mardinite mother and her daughter who were living in Mersin for 16 years, whereas the participants in Mardin are composed of Sunni Arabs and the sectarian identity of the participants is expected to become an important determinant of the Arab-Turkish community's perceptions and attitudes towards Syrians. Therefore, in the first part, I will discuss how identities of ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey are socially constructed with a top-down political and social engineering process since the construction of national identity influences Arab-Turkish people's attitudes towards the new-comers—an argument which will be analyzed in the proceeding sections.

In the second part, I will touch upon the frequency and quality of encounters between the Arab-Turkish community and Syrian people along with the participants' general perceptions of Syrians in Turkey. The third part will discuss how speaking common language affects the relationship between Arab-Turkish citizens and Syrians and whether Arabic is helpful to create a sense of solidarity between the two groups. In the fourth part, I will discuss whether the Arab-Turkish community practice Arab

customs and traditions in their daily lives and shed light on the perceived cultural similarities and differences between the Arab-Turkish community and Syrian people. The second, third and fourth sections of data analysis concentrate on daily life encounters and interactions between these two communities.

Since the literature on intergroup relations identify the perceived threats are as influential factors in determining public opinion about refugees, the last two parts specifically touch upon perceived threats of Arab-Turkish respondents about Syrians. The fifth part will put an emphasis on the security-related concerns of the Arab-Turkish community with respect to the existence of Syrian people in their cities. In the last part, I will point out the economic determinants of Arab-Turkish people's attitudes towards Syrians and provide an overview of the findings.

## 4.2 Identity of the Participants

I interviewed the people who self-identified as Arab. Some participants, mainly from Mardin, have an Arabic mother and a Kurdish father or vice-versa. I asked which identity they felt they belong to and if they responded to me that "I am an Arab", they were included in the sample of this study.

Turkey stopped collecting data on its citizens' ethnic identities. The last national consensus that reported the ethnic composition of the country was 1960 census (Çağaptay and Menekse 2014). "Turkishness is perceived to be a legal and political status" that is assigned to Turkish citizens regardless of their ethnic identities (Yeğen 2004). Therefore, Turkishness is constructed to be an umbrella term that encompasses all citizens. However, it has been understood that citizenship is not the only qualifier for Turkishness. Being a Turkish subject and being of Turkish race historically had its privileges, for instance, to be admitted to the Military Veterinary School or to become a state employee (Yeğen 2004, 56). For this reason, the ethnic identity of Turkish citizens is a sensitive issue. Directly asking people their ethnicity might prevent the formation of trust between the researcher and the participants. Therefore, the question about the identity of participants in the interviews firstly emphasized the pre-acceptance of their Turkish citizenship. Then, the identity question asks the ethnic origins of the participants. This question aims to understand to what extend the interviewees feel that they belong to their ethnic identity groups.

Although construction of national identity and Turkish nationalism, which is a

top-down social and political engineering project is beyond the scope of this study, I will briefly touch upon it in this section in order to make a sense of the participants' sensitivity about the question that asks their identity and their tendency to emphasize their Turkishness strongly. Furthermore, the Turkish national identity's social construction on the basis of Turkish ethnicity and Sunni Islam affects people's attitudes toward Syrians that will be discussed in the proceeding sections.

Before I start interviewing, the participants asked me why I cared about their ethnic origins and why I was looking only for Arab-Turkish people. Most of the time, they tried to convince me that they might have different ethnic origins, but this is not a defect or a bad thing since they are loyal to Turkish citizenship and identity. A 28-years old, unemployed, high-school graduate man explained his commitment to Turkishness by saying that, "Being Turkish has a precedence [over my identities], and I believe that being Arab is not a fault". The Article 66 of the Constitution of Republic of Turkey states that "Everyone bound to the Turkish State through the bond of citizenship is a Turk". At first glance, it sounds like a civic form of citizenship inclusive for all citizens, but instead, it emphasizes ethnic uniformity (Kurban 2003).

Regardless of their residency, almost all participants emphasized that they were loyal to Turkish nationalism and prioritized being a Turkish citizen above their religious and ethnic identities. To give a more concrete example, a 41 years-old Arab-Alevi housewife described her identity as follows: "If I am living under the Turkish flag, I am Turkish. So, it has precedence over all my identities. I might be an Arab, but since I am a Turkish citizen, I am Turkish". A 49 years-old man from Mardin who owns a grocery store emphasized the same points: "If we are living in Turkey, rather than being an Arab, Turkishness comes first". In a similar vein, a 64 years-old optician in Mardin disregarded his ethnic origins and emphasized his Turkishness by saying that "My mom is Arab, my father is Kurd, but I am Turkish".

Arab-Turkish respondents' prioritization of being a Turkish citizen could be explained with the formation of Turkish citizenship. Turkish citizenship has put an emphasis on citizens' duties to the state rather than rights of the citizens and citizens are expected "to put the public good before individual interest, his/her service for society before individual freedom, his/her national identity before difference, and his/her acceptance of cultural homogeneity before pluralism" (Keyman and İçduygu 2003, 56). Therefore, when talking about differences in terms of ethnicity and language, Arab-Turkish interviewees expressed their loyalty to the national identity and the Turkish language. A 45-years old Arab-Alevi woman politician in Mersin talked about her dedication to Turkish citizenship as follows:

> Our Arab-Alevi people are prone to speak Turkish, and they are willing to learn Turkish by adopting Turkish identity. I mean, we are saying that regardless of our ethnic identity, we are all the citizens of the Republic of Turkey. Nobody is a citizen of the republic much more than me; nobody could support the republic's value as much as I do. My grandfather is a war of independence veteran who sacrifices his blood for this homeland. (January 25, 2020, Mersin).

Another participant expressed her ideas about differences in language between different cultural communities in Turkey and Turkish citizenship as:

> We all have an identity of the Turkish Republic. We are all Turkish. We only differentiate in terms of the language we speak. I speak Arabic among Arabs, Kurdish among Kurds, but my essence and origin is Turkish. I am a Turkish citizen. Since I have a Turkish identity card, I am Turkish. However, our languages are different. If you go to China, you speak the Chinese language. Are you Chinese? No! You are a Turkish who speak the Chinese language. This is the same; we are Turkish (A 43-years old woman who owns a jewelry store, January 31, 2020, Mardin).

A woman from Mardin who works as a security officer at Mardin Artuklu University prioritized her national identity over her ethnicity as follows:

> Being an Arab is not essential for me. We are living together with our Syriac and Kurdish neighbors. My grandfather has Syriac neighbors and we got along with them in a friendly way. In this neighborhood, people are mostly Kurds and we also get along with them in a friendly way. There is no racism among us. For me, being a Turkish citizen comes first.

When talking about their identity, some respondents who self-identified as believers emphasized the importance of religion as an integral part of their identity and they believed that religion unites different people in Turkey because "The Kemalist rhetoric of homogenizing nationalism" adopts a retrospective narrative that emphasizes the unifying feature of Muslim origins of the nation in keeping it together in the face of the western imperial powers (Kaya 2013). Non-Muslim minorities were excluded from "the community inside". In contrast, ethnic and cultural minorities such as Kurds, Alevis, Arabs, Circassians, and Lazes were regarded as a 'single organic cultural unit' that would be main social basis of the nation (İçduygu and Kaygusuz

2004, 36). Today's AKP government exhibits continuity with the Early Republican Era by adapting an exclusionary conception of Turkish nationalism based on ethnicity and religion (Bakiner 2013). Therefore, the nationalist policies and citizenship discourses of the state have reflections in the respondents' answers.

A 56-years old Arab-Alevi woman expressed the unifying feature of religion: "We all are humans created by God; we [referring to the Arab-Alevi community in Turkey] do not have any discrimination on race. We speak both Arabic and Turkish at home". (January 27, 2020, Mersin). Similarly, a 28-years old man in Mardin pointed out the importance of common religion when talking about different ethnic groups in Turkey as "We [he referred to different communities in Turkey including Arabs] do not have any difference. We [he referred to Arabs] do not discriminate against individuals. Thank God that all of us are Muslims, and we are living together in this country". (February 2, 2020).

Turkish nationalism is based on the violent suppression and the forced assimilation of culturally distinct groups through expelling them from the country or the ruling elites of the country forcibly suppress those who remain by imposing hard restrictions on their certain rights such as freedom of religion, education in the mother tongue, etc. to forge a homogenous national community (Goalwin 2017).

In order to cope with the state's homogenizing policies, ethnocultural minorities develop different strategies such as disguising their identity in public and adopting the discourse of the nation's constitutive element (Kaya 2013, 301). The characteristics of the ethno-cultural groups and their experiences also shaped the way in which they have developed their identities and political participation mechanisms. Arab-Alevi Turkish citizens and Arab-Sunni Turkish citizens are different ethnocultural minorities, and they experienced state's homogenizing policies differently from each other.

It could be argued that Arab-Sunni citizens historically have smoother relations with the state compared to Arab-Alevis. Kurds and Alevis resisted the state's assimilationist policies and achieved to maintain their distinctive identities. However, other ethnic and cultural minorities accepted Turkishness and become assimilated ( Ergil 2000 cited in Kurban 2003, 184).

I observed that five respondents in Mardin adopted ethnicity-based Turkish nationalism. A 57-years old male participant said that he applied for the army recruiting office to be a voluntary soldier in the Operation Olive Branch. Another 33-years old male respondent expressed his Turkish nationalism as follows:

> I have an Arab origin, and Turkish nationalism is essential for me. I mean that I studied in a region like Karadeniz, but I am much more nationalist than my friends. Nationalism neither is an empty word, nor it is related to violence. If you are useful for your country, you could help a person or make someone become an admirer of your country; this is important. Our religion bans us from discriminating among people. Everyone is equal (a 30 years old man, works in the municipality, January 30, 2020, Mardin).

Biner (2007) conducted a fieldwork in Mardin to analyze the reactions of different ethnic and religios minorities towards the nomination of Mardin by the Turkish Ministry of Culture to be considered as a World Heritage Site. The aim of the state was to reconstruct the city's historical and cultural image which were damaged during the emergency law in 1990s because of arbitrary actions of military and police against citizens, deaths, injuries, and human rights violations in the region. She also looks into different forms of power relations between the state and its subjects in Mardin through fieldwork. She argued that

> "According to local Arabs, they were loyalists because they were 'conscious citizens' (bilinçli vatandaşlar). As was explained to me, this consciousness required them not only to refuse an alliance with separatist groups, but also to keep the Pandora's Box of the city closed and not to give its secrets away (Biner 2007, 38)".

Biner (2007) also pointed out that the state always favored Arabs against Kurds in Mardin. Accordingly, when I asked whether they demand specific political and cultural rights, two respondents in Mardin said that "They are happy about their position. Kurds demand rights". One respondent expressed his gratitude to state in terms of rights as:

> May God be pleased with our state that we do not have any problems in terms of rights. We do not have such distinction like I am Arab, s/he is Kurdish, s/he is Turkish because we are all one people. We are all Turkish. There is no such thing as 'I am Arab, I am Kurdish'. First and foremost, I am Turkish. Of course, at first, I am Muslim, then, I am Turkish. We are Turkish.

Contrary to Sunni-Arabs, Alevis have always been included the others of Turkish national identity. Three sets of others of the Turkish national identity that have

emerged in the 20th century are explained by Kadioglu (2007). The first set of others is non-Muslims, such as Armenians and Greeks. The second set of others are non-Turkish Muslims who were perceived as different due to their languages, sects, and ethnicities. Arabs, Kurds, Alevis are in this category and the third other was the backward representations of the Ottoman past. In line with Kadıoğlu's conceptualization of three sets of others in Turkey, Çelik, Bilali, and Iqbal (2017) provide a comprehensive map of othering in Turkey along different identity lines based on ethnicity, sect, and ideology. They argue that othering based on ethnicity leads to polarization and clashes between Turks and Kurds. Othering on the basis of sect results with the Alevi-Sunni divide and discrimination against Alevis. Lastly, othering based on ideology causes the polarization between AKP supporters and opponents. Similarly, another study argues that some groups are exposed to much more otherization than others, such as Kurds, Alevi Arabs and Jews (Parla 2011, 462).

According to a research that focuses on minorities in Turkey, Arab-Alevi people who are also called as Nusairis mostly settled in the southern Turkey and have family ties with Alevis living in Syria. Furthermore, Arab-Alevi citizens of Turkey have uneasy relations with Sunnis and the state. Especially in 1960s, the educated ones were invited to resettle in Syria by the Syrian government because they were expected to support the Baath Party (Deverell and Karimova 2001). Arab-Alevi citizens have been exposed to serious discrimination.

I observed that at the beginning of the interviews, especially some Arab-Alevi participants felt insecure about my knowledge of their identity. I reached the participants of this study through the personal networks of my thesis advisor and these people have previously well-established trust relations with the Arab-Turkish community. Luckily, I firstly interviewed a local notable who was an Alevi spiritual leader and through his reference, I reached the members of the Arab-Alevi community that is known to be private and closed-off. Two village-headmen of different neighborhoods, known as mukhtars in the local government system of Turkey, whom I interviewed specifically emphasized that without a reference from their religious leader, I would not have been able to reach the members of Arab-Alevi community or they would not have provided me with sincere answers.

The closeness of Arab-Alevi community and the hesitation of Arab-Alevi respondents in talking about identity-related questions and their effort to demonstrate their loyalty to Turkish state originate from the fact that they suffer from state condoned discrimination and their population is small (Deverell and Karimova 2001). I interviewed with two Arab-Alevi notables whose ancestors are religious notables.

They expressed their community's loyalty to the state and Turkish nationalism as follows:

> For example, Arab-Alevi people from Turkey do not support Arab nationalism. We are loyal to Turkish nationalism. I mean that there are some principles of the republic and we comply with these principles in our lives. Therefore, we are totally against racism such as 'I am Arab, he is Kurdish'. We do not want racism to be triggered. (a 52-years old man, works as a financial advisor, January 24, 2020, Mersin).

Another religious notable expressed Arab-Alevi community's compliance with the state as:

> Arab Alevi community has long been integrated to Turkey. We have a deep past here. We are not new here, but of course, we accommodate ourselves to Republic of Turkey and the structure that has been established after republic. (a 49-years old man, works as a professor at Mersin University, January 27, 2020, Mersin).

Although most of the Arab-Alevi respondents argued that they prioritized Turkish citizenship, I observed that they maintained their group identity and valued and practiced their original culture and traditions. Unlike Arab-Sunni respondents in Mardin, I also observed that all Arab-Alevi participants knew each other. They were organized under the umbrella of Kilikya Nehir Foundation, which is the representative of Arab-Alevi culture and belief. It regularly organizes cultural and religious events to maintain Arab-Alevi culture. All Arab-Alevi respondents were informed about the activities of the Kilikya Nehir Foundation.

Moreover, one of the former Arab-Alevi participants I interviewed helped me reach more female respondents and invited me to a special meeting that regularly takes place between female relatives and close friends. In that meeting, I observed that traditional Arab dishes were served. Women mostly talked Arabic with each other. In that meeting, I interviewed seven women. They mentioned that they regularly practiced their religious rituals, maintained Arab-Alevi culture, and transmitted it to the next generations. Besides, they were proud of Arab-Alevi beliefs and culture. For them, unlike other groups in Turkey, Arab-Alevi culture is respectful to all other communities, diverse beliefs, and opinions. A young Arab-Alevi male respondent explained the characteristics of their culture as follows:

> For instance, in the Arab Alevi community, some people are sectarian fanatics. Some are politically engaged and support Turkish national identity by saying that "we are not Arab, but we are Turk". However, some adopt Arab Alevi culture, learn and practice it in their daily lives. Some do not approve of all of these ideological positions. Nevertheless, all can coexist peacefully, which is not the case for the other communities in Turkey. I mean in our community (meaning, the Arab-Alevi community in Turkey), diversity prevails, and that enriches us. For instance, the members of the same family vote for the same political party. However, in Arab-Alevi families, people could have different political preferences. The diversity among us is much more than other communities in Turkey.

Similarly, a young, Arab-Alevi female respondent praised Arab-Alevi culture as follows:

> Nusairis [Arab-Alevis] are moderate in terms of, for example, intermarriages. Our people [Nusairis] also oppose at first [to the intermarriages] due to the concerns related to clash of cultures but they are much more moderate [compared to other communities] in terms of friendships, marriages, fellowships between cultures. I have Kurdish friends and Arab-Jewish friends, but even my friends sometimes have problems [in terms of inter-ethnic, intercultural relationships], I could not go to their houses.

As it could be understood from the quotes above, Arab-Alevi participants in Mersin attached a great significance to the respect towards diversities. I think, this is because of their painful experiences of otherization and discrimination. They perceived that their culture, compared to others, is more inclusive and respectful towards diversities.

All in all, it could be argued that Arab-Alevi participants attached importance to show their loyalty to the state. On the other side, the most of Arab-Sunni respondents adopted Turkish nationalism and the discourses of the state. However, all participants perceive Turkish citizenship as an overarching identity that provided power and prestige. Turkish citizenship makes them members of the same group.

### 4.3 Social Interactions between Syrians and Arab-Turkish Citizens

The participants of this study are Arab-Turkish citizens from different socio-economic backgrounds. The sample constitutes individuals from different education level, age, gender, economic status, and occupations. Regardless of these differences, all interviewees reported that they often encountered Syrian people in their daily lives.

> Syrians are living in my neighborhood; all of my sewing students at the Public Education Center are Syrian women. My friend who could not speak Arabic has a store, and I communicate with Syrian clients of my friend in Arabic. Eventually, we interact with Syrians in every part of our lives. (a 47-years old Arab-Alevi woman, works as a teacher at Public Education Center, January 27, 2020, Mersin)

Arab-Turkish citizens get into contact with Syrians, mostly in their neighborhood and on the streets. I observed that, in Mersin, especially in Mezitli and Silifke Street, Syrians were shopkeepers, artisans, street vendors, and small restaurants. They mostly employed Syrian people. Besides, I went to Adanalıoğlu in Mersin where agricultural production is the main source of income. I witnessed poor living conditions of Syrian people who served as seasonal agricultural laborers. They lived in an isolated place outside of the neighborhood. The local governor of Adanalıoğlu told me that landlords dispersed them after a violent incident between Arab-Alevi residents and Syrians in April 2017. The tents where they stayed were lack of necessary supplies such as electricity, heating, and sanitation. They did not have clothes that are suitable for winter conditions.

In Mardin, Syrians were shopkeepers in the old-town. Some small café shops and restaurants belonged to the Syrian people. They were selling souvenirs for tourists in their shops. I realized that unlike receiving society members' workplaces, Syrians' restaurants and stores were open until the late hours of the night. Besides, they were also working as cheap laborers. I saw some underage Syrian children who worked in the coffeehouses.

I visited a socioeconomically deprived neighborhood in Mardin where many Syrians were living together with the receiving society members. However, I realized that, generally, the houses of Syrians and receiving society members were segregated. I saw some small stores, a bakery and a grocery store that belonged to the Syrians. A woman resident of the neighborhood who introduced me to the participants and helped me to conduct my interviews in that low-income neighborhood told me that Syrian people preferred Syrian shops when they were buying something. I have conducted nine interviews in that low-income neighborhood. I realized that the

residents of this neighborhood negatively perceived the Syrians. They mostly emphasized their economic concerns. They complained about the competition in the labor market and the deterioration of their economic status due to Syrians' existence. They said that they were also unemployed, but Syrians had more opportunities in access to social and welfare services. They believed Syrians were positively discriminated by the state. Besides, Syrians were perceived as "immoral, dirty, uncivilized, and lazy people" by the residents of this low-income neighborhood. However, there was an exception who was a housewife whose upstairs neighbor was Syrian. She told me that she had a warm and friendly relationship with her Syrian neighbor. She refrained from making any negative comments about the Syrians This shows that the economic factors determine the perceptions of receiving society members about the Syrians, but intergroup contact is also an influential factor in reducing prejudices. I will again touch upon how little contact between Syrians and receiving society members influenced the perception of Arab-Turkish citizens about the Syrians in detail later on in this chapter.

Among the participants who have school kids told me that they interacted with Syrian families of their children's friends at the school environment and actually, those who have school kids argued that most of the time, they served a translator between the teacher and Syrian families due to their knowledge of Arabic. Arab-Turkish respondents who work at Mersin University and Mardin Artuklu University point outed the ever-increasing number of Syrian students in the last eight years Similarly, due to their Arabic knowledge, Syrian students firstly consult them in case of any problem. Some Arab-Alevi people in Mersin employ Syrians in agricultural production. An Arab-Sunni woman born in Mardin but was living in Mersin for the past 16 years said that she had many Syrian neighbors and was working in the house of a young Syrian couple as a cleaner.

Mersin is a more economically developed city compared to Mardin. According to Mersin Agro Food Sector Report published by Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2016 the agriculture, industry, and tourism are developed in Mersin. Therefore, Syrians are able to find more employment opportunities in Mersin. Especially, agricultural production in Mersin has an essential place in Turkey's economy (*Mersin Agro Food Sector Report* 2016). Therefore, a significant number of Syrian people are employed in agricultural production. Furthermore, according to the Economic Report 2013, which is prepared by the Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the number of Syrian companies operated in Mersin has dramatically increased after the Syrian crisis. An expert on Mersin's demography and sociology who is also one of the participants in this study argued that "When the civil war erupted in Syria, firstly, the owners of capital came to Mersin and made investments.

They were wealthy. Syrian owners of capital stayed at luxurious hotels upon their arrival. Then, they bought beach houses". [She studied Tourism and Hotel Management at Mersin University, and when the war erupted in Syria, she was working part time in hotels. After that, she had an extensive experience in different levels of local governments]. She argued that when she was working in a hotel, a Syrian businessperson who was the representative of a worldwide known brand in Syria before the civil war came to her and made a job offer to her to work with him in his new enterprise in Mersin. Nevertheless, nobody, including the experts on Mardin's demography and sociology mentioned the existence of a rich part among Syrian population in Mardin. Arab-Turkish respondents said that among Syrians, those who had relatives, friends and network in Mardin migrated to Mardin and they became shopkeepers in old town and Yenişehir. Besides, the unemployment rate in Mardin is higher than Mersin. Two informants who are experts on Mardin's economy and demography argued that Mardin's employment opportunities were already limited for the members of immigrant society. Therefore, according to them, Syrians could also barely find employment opportunities.

The participants of this research, in general, were aware of the diversity within the Syrian people. Arab-Turkish respondents specifically emphasized that just like all other communities of the world, there are good and bad people among Syrians as well. Especially those who were working and living in the urban areas pointed out different socio-economic characteristics of Syrians, such as level of education, gender, and economic status. Besides, the participants pointed out that mostly Sunni Arabs migrated to Turkey. The interviewees from Mardin argued that a limited number of Kurds and non-Muslims came to Mardin, but non-Muslims quickly found a way to go to Europe. Again, Arab-Turkish participants of this study underlined that they do not discriminate Syrians on the basis of their religion or ethnicity.

In the sample of this study, respondents had different perceptions about the Syrians. I observed that four participants adopted the most respectful and tolerant approach towards Syrians. They did not express any negative opinion about Syrian migration. Three of them were from Mersin and one of them was from Mardin. These three people in Mersin who adopted an empathic approach towards Syrians had been working with the Syrians on several occasions. They had a chance of getting Syrians to know more closely than any other participant. A 55 years old man said that he was working as municipal police in Akdeniz Municipality in Mersin before he became retired, but for the last six years, he had been working in Social Services Department of the municipality to provide counseling and assistance to Syrians as well as to facilitate communication between refugees and local government due to his knowledge of Arabic. When I asked his opinions about Syrians, he

responded to me as follows:

> If there is a problem at your home, where will you go? You will have recourse to your neighbor, of course, because they are your neighbors. There is no one else that you can go to! How can one argue that a society or ethnicity is inherently bad? There is no such thing as an evil ethnic identity. There are bad-hearted people. There are, of course, malicious people among Syrians and when they come together with evil-minded people here, bad things happen, problems emerge (January 25, 2020, Mersin).

He also worked to improve the conditions of Syrian street children by talking to their families, helping them, and ensuring Syrian children's access to free education. He said that they had organized social cohesion events such as theatre, cinema, and dinner at Mersin University for the children of Syrians and receiving society members. When talking about the difficulties that Syrians experienced in Mersin, he indicated the significance of language in terms of Syrians' access to their basic needs, their everyday communications with receiving society members, and their integration to the labor market. His opinions about the role of language in Syrians' integration to the receiving society as follows:

> Syrians need to learn Turkish; they should have known about the legal system in this country. Language is the most significant barrier, but this is a two-sided problem. Our Turkish citizens also do not want to learn Arabic because they see Syrians as outsiders. Their perception is that Syrians came to our country, and they have to speak Turkish, but people should try to learn Arabic and touch Syrian people's lives. Contact is indispensable for peace and love (January 25, 2020).

As it could be inferred from his expression, unlike the common perception about integration that sees it as the adaptation of refugees to the receiving society, his understanding of integration is a two-way process of mutual accommodation by Syrians and receiving society members.

As this example shows, the prejudices and stereotypes resulting from ignorance and lack of information about out-group in inter-group relations could be reduced or eliminated through the interaction of the groups (Abu-Nimer 1999). Another example is a 47-years old Arab-Alevi woman who works as a craft teacher in Public Education Center. She also works voluntarily in a women's rights association. She had Syrian students at Public Education Center. She said that they had many Syrian

students at the Public Education Center under the framework of integration projects that aimed to provide vocational training with Syrians to create more employment opportunities for them.

> The integration projects aim to touch Syrian people's lives and create employment opportunities for them to improve their living conditions. However, these integration projects have been abused for private gain. The project coordinators do not care whether Syrian people are learning something or not. People who could not speak an Arabic word and have a lack of empathy teach Syrians. There are translators in classrooms, but Syrian women hesitate to contact men translators. Therefore, I try to do my best to help them and to find a way to solve their problems. We should be aware that they did not willingly come here but they were forced to leave. For this reason, we have to develop a culture of coexistence. For instance, at the end of my sewing course for Syrian women that lasted 3 months, I continued to teach Turkish citizens. I brought my Turkish students with some Syrian women who wanted to continue the course together. I witnessed that my Turkish citizens' perception about Syrians has changed. At first, they believed that 'All Syrians are bad'. They now come to the point that 'There are good and bad persons among all people' (January 26, 2020).

This Arab-Alevi woman participant was aware of the role of interaction and contact between Syrians and receiving society members in reducing previously held prejudices. She contributed to the improvement of the Syrian people's images in the eyes of her Turkish students. I asked her how she could develop such a tolerant and respectful stance towards Syrians. She expressed her story of discrimination as follows:

> When I was a child, we have maintained our distinctive cultural and religious identity at home, but the Turkish ethnic identity imposed on us. Our families also complied with this imposition. They warned us to speak Turkish but not Arabic in public places and my aunt said that "if you talk Arabic, people will blame you, be like others." Gradually, with an increasing level of education, I came to an understanding that the way I live, and talk is not a defect. My husband is a Kurd. After our marriage, I was included in my husband's environment and started to interact with Kurdish friends. Although I criticize some points, I was impressed by the Kurdish struggle for their language and cultural rights. My husband is a Kurdish-Alevi and leftist politician. I saw two different environments with him. One is composed of people favoring the existing system and adopting a moderate approach, whereas the other consists of people who were against the system and supported rights and

> liberties.Witnessing my husband's suffering has completely changed my perspective and personality. Then, I was not appointed to the squad as a teacher because of my Arab-Alevi identity. I was forced to reveal my identity and I said, "I am not Turkish" in the interview. I felt like I was discriminated. There were many things that we ignored but as long as we ignored, they imposed these things on us. This was so painful but after that, I never deny my culture. Although I am not a believer, I believed that those who believe could freely explain, learn and practice their religious rituals. Language should not be prohibited and all citizens should be treated equally regardless of their identities (January 26, 2020, Mersin).

The person's closer contact with Syrians is meaningful in this case too but this woman is also committed to human rights. She had an understanding of the power and inequality relationships due to her experience of discrimination on the basis of her religious and ethnic identity. Group Empathy Theory argues that if a person is unfairly treated due to her ethnic/ religious identity, she puts herself on other discriminated people's shoes and develops an understanding and empathy towards other unfairly treated people (Sirin, Valentino, and Villalobos 2014). The painful experiences of the past helped this woman to approach Syrians in a tolerant and sensitive way.

Another example in Mersin was an Arab-Alevi political activist woman who was respectful towards Syrians' and other ethnic groups' rights and identities. In the past, she worked as an alderman in Akdeniz Municipality in Mersin. Therefore, she was quite knowledgeable about Mersin's demographic and economic characteristics. She worked for the empowerment and political inclusion of stigmatized groups such as women, refugees, and Kurds. She is a political activist and a volunteer in one of the women's rights NGOs. She has a small restaurant in Mersin. She also worked to improve the living standards of Syrians. She said that:

> We, as NGO voluntaries, evaluate the Syrian migration as an issue of human rights. Unlike most of the people, we adopt a rights-based approach towards Syrians. Therefore, we help them, try to improve their living conditions in Mersin. I taught Turkish to Syrian children. When I was an alderman at Akdeniz Municipality, I worked for improving the conditions of Syrian agricultural workers in Adanalıoğlu. I believe that interpersonal contact ise useful to change people's previously held prejudices. The main issue is to increase interpersonal contact between Syrians and the receiving society members (January 23, 2020, Mersin).

As it could be inferred from the quotation above, people's engagement with civil society and voluntary work increase their respect for human rights and marginalized groups.

In Mardin, one participant adopted a respectful and positive approach towards Syrian people. Like the other three examples in Mersin that I discussed above, she also did not express any negative opinion about Syrian people. Instead, she said that she understood the difficulties of being a refugee. She underlined that people's common stereotypes and prejudices about Syrians resulted from the pollution of information. She is a businessperson; she is also The Union of Chambers and Commodity (TOBB)Women Entrepreneurs Council Provincial Representative. Like two women participants in Mersin that I mentioned above, she also works in civil society to defend women's rights and improve the living standards of people with disabilities. She is also among the administrative staff of Mardin Women's Education and Employment Association. Besides, she was among the founders of the Turkish Women Union in Mardin. She expressed her opinions about Syrians as follows:

> Common language, ethnicity, and religion unite Syrian people and older residents of Mardin but unfortunately, social media disseminates unfounded news stating that 'the existence of Syrians deteriorates the economic condition of Turkish people'. In social and mainstream media, Syrians are accused of the country's poor economic conditions and adverse effects of the economic crisis on people. Some people believe this news and turn against Syrians. Besides, there is a common misconception among people that the state granted Syrians Turkish citizenship. No, among Syrians, only those who have relatives or blood ties in Turkey granted citizenship. For instance, my husband's aunt. Her father is Turkish. These people could obtain Turkish citizenship, but contrary to common belief, it is not that easy to obtain Turkish citizenship. It is a lengthy legal process. The mainstream media does not reflect reality (January 31, 2020, Mardin).

Unlike other respondents, people who had close communication with Syrians informed about the existing legal regulations about the Syrians and their socio-economic conditions in Turkey.

Although the mean age of the sample was 43.5, the sample includes young respondents too. Three young participants in Mersin whose ages were 21, 26, and 33 respectively displayed empathy and understanding towards Syrians. These three participants perceived more opportunities in life due to their education level and

age. Two of them are working. The other one is a university student who was originally from Mardin but lives in Mersin. They were aware of the difficulties that Syrians experienced. Their common argument was that "Syrians will stay here because they have a life here. Therefore, economic, legal, and social regulations must be done accordingly". These three people's stance towards Syrians shows that the respondents' traits such as the level of education, economic status, life satisfaction level, and their level of contact with the Syrians partly shape their attitudes toward immigrants (Callens, Valentová, and Meuleman 2014). I said partly, because two young respondents in Mardin who have bachelor's degrees and ages of 30 and 33 expressed their concerns with Syrians' presence. They pointed out the cultural backwardness of Syrians. They perceived Syrians as a threat to the national economy. Although they were aware that Syrians have a permanent settlement in Turkey, according to them, well-qualified and educated Syrians will be granted Turkish citizenship. The political economy literature on people's immigration attitudes states that regardless of their qualification level in the labor market are inclined to support high-skilled immigrants who are well-educated, experienced, and high-status professionals because they believed that well-qualified immigrants could contribute to the national economy. These two young people adopted ethnicity-based Turkish nationalism. Their socioeconomic status and age did not mediate their nationalist sentiments and xenophobic feelings towards immigrants.

Almost all Arab-Turkish citizens argued that they regularly encountered with Syrians except a housewife from Mardin who stayed in a low-income neighborhood where a large number of Syrians have settled. She claimed the following: "I do not prefer to go outside, I only get into contact with my close relatives, therefore, I have never encountered with my Syrian neighbors".

Actually, as I previously discussed my observations about in that socioeconomically deprived neighborhood where Syrians and receiving community members lived together, the residents, in general, expressed negative opinions about the Syrians. They were inclined to emphasize economic concerns more. "Syrians came here and deprived us from our jobs. Employers preferred to hire them instead of us. The state economically supports them, we are also in need of help". was a common discourse among participants from that low-income neighborhood.

Aside from that, especially the interviewees from Mardin pointed out the kinship relationship between Syrians and themselves. They argue that since Mardin is a border town, interactions and intermarriages between two societies are considerably high, that their friends and relatives have lived in Syria, and the two communities around the border have regularly visited each other.

> I often encounter with Syrians. We communicate with them. Previously, I mean before the war in Syria, I usually went for a ride to Syria for one-day, we have friends in Syria. For instance, I went in the morning and turned back at 3 or 4 pm before the border gate closed (a 49 years-old man, shopkeeper, January 31, 2020, Mardin).

As it could be inferred from the Mardinite shopkeeper's statement above, unlike the respondents in Mersin, almost all participants from Mardin had at least one Syrian relative who migrated to Mardin after the Syrian crisis. Nevertheless, Mardin is a border city and participants in Mardin argued that before the civil war, border crossing was common. Arab-Turkish citizens in Mardin also said that before the civil war erupted in Syria, they went to Syria for shopping because Syria is a welfare state and Arab-Turkish citizens were able to buy the cheapest provisions and oil from Syria. A participant in Mardin explained the geographical proximity between Syria and Turkey as "We went to eat lunch in Kamışlı [a village in Syria]. Then, we returned to Mardin. Entry and exit were free. Syrians also came to Mardin for shopping. We were intertwined." Another woman respondent in Mardin indicated free entrance between two countries and kinship relations between Syrians and residents of Mardin as follows:

> When the borders were drawn, my husband's aunt stayed in the Syrian side of the border because her husband's family lived in Kamışlı but my mother in law stayed in this side. There are many examples like this. When the borders were drawn, families were divided. For instance, Murathan Mungan's family, half of his family is in Turkey and the other half is in Syria. Before the Syrian civil war, went to Syria for shopping because the products were really cheap (January 31, 2020, Mardin).

Almost all participants in Mardin had a Syrian relative who migrated to Mardin after the Syrian civil war.

> My grandfather migrated to Turkey in the time of war and the brother of my grandfather went to Syria because he thought that since Syrians are Arabs, their culture would be similar to us. Afterward, when the war erupted in Syria, they came to Turkey and we host them at our home (January 31, 2020, Mardin).

In fact, as discussed previously in the literature review, existing ethnocultural networks with the receiving society are influential in immigrants' destination decisions

(Rüegger and Bohnet 2018). Social networks such as kinship, friendship, and shared origin direct migrants to choose particular destinations because existing contacts help immigrants to find a job, financial assistance, and other kinds of support (King 2012). For instance, Syrians, predominantly originating from Aleppo, have chosen to migrate to Istanbul due to already-existing historical, ethnocultural, social and religious networks. These already-existing networks lead to strong feelings of attachment to Istanbul among Sunni-Arab Syrians (Kaya 2017). In a similar vein, as it could be understood from the quotes above, Mardin has historical, social, and ethnocultural linkages with Syria. Participants from Mardin underlined already-existing kinship and friendship between Syrians in Mardin. Consequently, in line with the literature, it could be argued that already-existing social networks between two communities in Mardin positively affects the participants perceptions towards Syrians. Besides, being Sunni-Arab, which is a common in-group identity for both groups might have reduced the prejudice against Syrians among participants from Mardin.

The existence of refugees pleased their co-ethnics because it increases their bid for power whereas it challenges the other groups in the country of arrival (Rüegger 2019).The respondents from Mersin were predominantly Arab-Alevis who have close historical and economic connections with Syrian Alawites. According to them, Syrians who migrated to Turkey were fighting with their relatives and friends in Syria. Furthermore, ethnic and sectarian power politics in Turkey increases widespread Alevi concerns about Sunnification of the society and trigger their hostilities towards Syrians (InternationalCrisisGroup 2016).

In terms of cross-border communication before the Syrian civil war, two participants in Mersin who played an active role in local governance argued that a small number of Syrians came to Mersin for holiday, They argued that Syrians had business investments in Mersin but they did not observe any relationship between residents of Mersin and Syrians before the civil war.

The migration perceptions of ethnic minorities with a previous migration background might differ from the perceptions of other ethnic minorities who do not have migration experience and majority group members toward immigrants due to their own or their family's migration experience (Heath et al. 2020). They embrace more tolerant attitudes towards forcibly displaced Syrians. In the sample of this study, there are two women participants who mentioned about their family's painful past experience of migration and discrimination. One of them was from Mardin expressed her empathy with Syrians as;

> My mom's family came from Beirut to Turkey as a refugee. Syrians also escaped from war and came here. Since my family experienced the same difficulties, I do not have any problem with the Syrians. (a 43-years old woman, shopkeeper, January 30, 2020, Mardin).

Another one was from Mersin. She told me her ancestors' painful migration experience from Syria to Samandağ [in Hatay]. Her family, then, came from Hatay to Mersin. She specifically underlined their past experiences of discrimination. She said that;

> As you know, we [Arab-Alevi community] have suffered from oppression and misery for a long time. Therefore, we would love to be in solidarity with oppressed peoples because we have experienced the same difficulties. Yes, their society, their culture [Sunni people] might have done wrong to us, but we do not prefer to behave in the same manner. However, of course, some Arab- Alevi people do not want Syrians to live in their cities. For instance, as I said before, my grandfather migrated from Samandağ and people in Samandağ, although they do not humiliate or discriminate Syrians, afraid of the clash of cultures (a 26-years old female waitress, January 23, 2020, Mersin).

These two quotes support Group Empathy Theory which states that people's personal experiences of discrimination, abuse and harassment increase their sensitivity and empathy towards vulnerable groups (Sirin, Valentino, and Villalobos 2014, 895).

When the interviewees were asked about the positive developments between Syrians and the members of immigrant receiving community, most of the time, those who adopted negative attitudes toward Syrians among the respondents said that they help Syrians only for their humanitarian concerns. They said that they felt pity for Syrian people because Syrians escaped from war and were forced to leave their homes. However, in return, they emphasized that they did not see any kindness and gratitude from Syrians. They expected Syrians to behave like the guests, but they complained that Syrians behaved more like a host. A male shopkeeper in Mardin expressed his opinions about the existence of Syrians as follows:

> They suppose that they are hosts as if they were here for decades. They started to stake claim on everything. For instance, when we go to the hospital, there is no one but Syrians in corridors. They demand priority. When you are looking for a job, let's say a restaurant owner is looking for a waiter. She/he prefers to employ Syrians because they work for a very cheap wage. Our youth remains unemployed. We have problems

> in this kind of issues. Our citizens cannot stand anymore (January 30, 2020, Mardin).

When asked about the existence of Syrians, another 57-years old male participant stated that "Humanitarianism should have limits and hospitality should have an end." These two participants quoted above saw themselves as hosts and they regarded Syrians as the guests. Another male participant in Mardin defined Syrians as guests and expected them to act accordingly. He said that:

> People of Mardin are very helpful and hospitable. They did not judge anyone by saying that 'why did you come here'. There is not a problem between Syrians and people of Mardin because of Turkish hospitality that we inherited it from Ottoman tradition. However, one day, I was in a hospital. As you know, Syrian people have free access to healthcare. I saw that a Syrian man was quarreling with the doctor. He did not want to wait. He said that 'The state provides me with some rights. I am also paying taxes and your wage is payed through the taxes. You have to examine me.' I intervened. I said that 'You are a Syrian. I am not humiliating you, but the state provides you with free health care and medicine. I am paying but you are not, and I am a Turkish citizen. Watch your boundaries!' (a 30-years old man, works as a research assistant at Mardin Artuklu University, January 31, 2020, Mardin).

Another female participant in Mersin who is an Arab-Alevi politician highlighted why Syrians are regarded as guests as follows:

> The settled Turkish nomads of this region did not like Arabs at first. They started to accept Arabs when Kurds came here. When Syrians came, they accepted both Arabs and Kurds. They started to act together with Arabs and Kurds, and they display a defense against Syrians. There is a phobia of immigrants in this country. Nevertheless, we could not classify Syrians. They are not refugees. If they have a refugee status, they would have certain rights, but the state opened the borders by calling them 'guests' (a 45 years old Arab-Alevi woman politician, (January 25, 2020, Mersin).

In line with her arguments, İçduygu and Millet (2016) argue that the government in Turkey called Syrians as 'guests' and the term did not entail any legal rights but indicates 'short and temporary stay'. The participants' discourses that attached the relationship of host and guest to their relationship with the Syrians is associated

with the state's policy of presenting them to the Turkish public as "guests". Actually, the initial arrival of Syrian people was regarded as a temporary phenomenon by the public and Syrians were seen as guests by public but especially after 2014-2015, with the over-increasing number of Syrians, Turkish society realize that most of the Syrians will stay in Turkey and their positive feelings towards began to fade (Akar and Erdoğdu 2019).

The Turkish state did not imply a policy towards Syrians based on a discourse of rights, but instead the policy of Turkish state towards Syrians rests on generosity (Özden 2013). This type of a policy paves the way for inequality between Syrians and members of the immigrant-receiving community. Such a policy seems to create a perception that "Although we do not have any legal responsibility, we, nevertheless, help Syrians because we are generous". Therefore, the participants put themselves in a superior position to the Syrians. They expected the Syrians to be grateful to themselves.

Although there is no question in the interviews that asks people's party preferences, I observed that some of the Sunni Arabs living in Mardin are inclined to adopt the incumbent party's policy discourses toward Syrian people and the Middle East. For example, a male participant in Mardin who self-identified as religious argued that "Since Turkey is a regional power and Turkish people are merciful and hospitable, we are doing our best to help the people who are forced to live their homelands, and our religion also commands us to do so". Another male participant in Mardin who also self-identified as religious stated that "When Prophet Mohammad and his supporters were forced to migrate, people of Medina helped them. Therefore, we should help Syrians". Another male participant in Mardin indicated the importance of the Ottoman heritage of hospitality in preventing possible violent conflicts between Syrians and people of Mardin. He also said that "The reality is that in Mardin, there are some people who opposes the AKP [incumbent party]. They are questioning why the president accepted Syrians to Turkey. However, in genereal, we, as the locals of Mardin do not think as such. We are brothers by religion". There is, of course, more than favoring for the policies of the incumbent party in these arguments. These people draw a symbolic boundary to separate in-groups and out groups. By characterizing the out-group members as vulnerable people who are in need of assistance, and themselves as merciful, hospitable people who help the victims although they are not obliged to, they create a power asymmetry between Syrians and themselves. They put themselves in a superior position than Syrians.

Among Arab-Turkish citizens from Mardin, two women in Mardin who hosted their Syrian relatives at their home displayed much more negative and intolerant

attitudes towards Syrians than the others. Similarly, the local inhabitants of low-income neighborhoods who have a considerable number of Syrian neighbors also display xenophobic attitudes toward Syrians because in low-income neighborhoods, Syrians and Arab-Turkish people live together and these neighborhoods have a high level of unemployment and poverty. Although the social contact between the immigrants and the local is expected to decrease the prejudices of the local inhabitants "the contact is useful only when ingroups and outgroups share equal status and common goals, find themselves in a cooperative rather than competitive environment, and operate under a well-defined set of norms or regulations" (Hangartner et al. 2019, 444). Arab Turkish residents of low-income neighborhoods said that even if they have relatives among Syrians, they try to keep away from their Syrian neighbors. Moreover, Arab-Turkish citizens who live side by side with the Syrian people in low-income neighborhoods argued that Syrian people are an isolated community. They only communicate among themselves and they support each other.

Arab-Turkish citizens, in general, and those who adopted Turkish nationalism, in particular, referred to the unreliableness of the Syrian people. This unreliability would not only come from Syrians' qualities as people but also because of the social distance between the groups: "I know people of Mardin/Mersin because they are among us, but I could not tell you who the Syrian people are" is a common discourse. They believe that one day, in an unexpected moment, Syrians might stab 'Turks' in the back. This is a form of 'us vs. them' thinking and leads to scapegoating and vilifying Syrians.

Besides, Arab-Turkish respondents who embraced an ethnicity-based Turkish nationalism in Mardin wanted Syrian young people to go back to Syria and fight. Interestingly, this same argument is widely supported by the Turkish nationalists in Turkey, who argue that Turks would stay and defend their country if same happened to them. Five respondents in Mardin said that "I would have fought to defend my country". In terms of their socio-economic status and age, these four people were different from each other. All of them are men. All of them said that they adopted Turkish nationalism. Therefore, it is reasonable that they shared the same opinion with the Turkish nationalists.

Generally, Arab-Turkish participants who perceived Syrians as a threat to their economic situation and cultural values shared these common beliefs that Syrians deprive them of their jobs, and Syrians damage the economy in their city. They perceived that the state was reluctant in protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of Turkish citizens whereas it provided Syrians with social services and social assistance ranging from monthly net stipend to free healthcare

and education services. Moreover, they also believed that even rich Syrians who had their own business do not pay taxes. The residents of low-income neighbors associated their poverty with the existence of Syrians. They also argued that their previous good relations with their neighbors were ruined by Syrians because according to their perceptions, Syrians are immoral, dirty, and ungrateful people and they bring nothing but harm.

## 4.4 Language

The question about the Arabic language in the interviews refers to the participants' self-declared ability to speak Arabic in daily activities. All interviewees described Arabic as their mother tongue and all of them can speak Arabic at home when communicating with their family members, but a very limited number of respondents can read and write in Arabic. The participants of this study, regardless of their sectarian identity, were in favor of education in Arabic in schools. However, instead of supporting education in the mother tongue, they generally tended to see Arabic as an elective course. Besides, all interviewees pointed out the importance of speaking Turkish by underlining that they used both languages in their daily lives. These can be interpreted as a supporting argument that most of the participants saw Turkish identity as an overarching identity and their Arab identity under this national identity. That is, even though they were in favor of protecting their ethnic Arab identity, that protection request had it limitations.

Employment, housing, education and health are defined as the fundamental factors that facilitate the refugee life (Ager and Strang 2008). Language acquisition is perceived to be very crucial for immigrants in terms of meeting their basic needs, their everyday communications with locals, and their integration to the labor market in the host society (Remennick 2003). Green (2017) highlights the problems, such as limited interactions with locals, constrained transportation options, isolation from the society that Syrian refugees in Germany experience due to language barriers. She specifically emphasizes Syrians' inability to access health care services due to language barriers. However, according to Arab-Turkish participants of this study, Syrians in Mersin/Mardin did not experience the same problems that result from language barriers. They argued that the existence of an Arabic-speaking community facilitates Syrians' life.

Previous studies in social cohesion literature point out the effect of the existence of other migrants and co-ethnics of new immigrants on newcomers' social, economic, and cultural integration to the host community. In this context, since Syrians did not speak Turkish upon their arrival, the existence of Arab-Turkish citizens mitigate problems in social interactions and communication. Speaking the same language contributes to the positive contact and friendship between two groups (Beißert, Gönültaş, and Mulvey 2020). One of the respondents explained the effect of her knowledge of Arabic language on her relationship with Syrians as follows:

> Many Syrians are around me for 5 years. We speak the same language. Therefore, I helped them to find a place to live. I became an intermediary and translator in the communication between potential householders and Syrians (a 47-years old woman, does not work, February 2, 2020, Mardin).

Arab-Turkish respondents living in Mardin pointed out the geographical proximity and cultural similarity between the two countries. They argued that the language which is spoken in Mardin and Syria are quite similar.

> Since Syria is close to Mardin geographically, we have kinship relations with Syrians and their Arabic is very similar to the Arabic spoken in Mardin. We can understand each other very well and when we speak, I feel like I am speaking with a person from my neighborhood (a 47 years-old man, high-ranking civil servant) (Mardin).

The participants of this study, especially, Arab-Turkish people who have Syrian employers, argued that they have a chance to improve their Arabic because of their business dealings with Syrians.

> My mother tongue is Arabic. My children can understand Arabic, but my husband could not speak Arabic as much as I do although he is also coming from an Arab family, he is my uncle's son. However, he employed a Syrian 6 or 7 months ago, and after that, he improved his Arabic. Right now, he can speak Arabic very well! (a 42-years old woman does not work, January 27, 2020, Mersin).

According to Arab-Turkish citizens, Syrians are also satisfied with the existence of Arabs in Turkey because it facilitates their adaptation to economic and social

life. Arab-Turkish citizens stated that they help Syrians to access to health and education services, and housing that requires a knowledge of the Turkish language.

> I have many Syrian neighbors, I also encounter with Syrians at the bus stop every day, and we greet each other. Besides, I am currently employed by a young Syrian couple who are so kind to me. We communicate in Arabic with my Syrian acquaintances and that makes them very happy. It is important for my Syrian acquaintances to know somebody who can speak Arabic because they need assistance to find a house for instance, or to get familiar with the place that they live, or to enquire about an address. Especially, my Syrian employers provide me with a fringe benefit to prevent me to quit the job because my ability to speak Arabic pleases them so much (a 46- years-old woman, works as a cleaner, January 26, 2020, Mersin).

Undoubtedly, speaking the same language with Arab-Turkish citizens facilitates the life for Syrians and enables quick access to resources and the labor market that support integration.

Since the first years of the Turkish Republic, the purification of language issues has been politicized and securitized by political elite due to the perception that linguistic heterogeneity would eventually result in a national disaster by triggering divisive forces, and political elites relate national unity and loyalty to linguistic assimilation (Bayar 2011). The assimilationist and intolerant attitude of the Turkish state towards non-Turkish speaking communities in Turkey (Bayar 2011, 25) has reflections in Arab-Turkish citizens' comments about linguistic rights for non-Turkish speaking groups.

Although sharing the same language and ethnicity with Arab-Turkish citizens in Turkey, Syrian Arabs continue to become targets of nativist attitudes from their co-ethnic local inhabitants. Syrians who do not speak Turkish are not seen as fitted in well with the daily life and culture in Turkey by Arab Turkish citizens. I interviewed with a village headman in his workplace. When I first entered his office, he was working with a postman and he wrote a message in a little piece of paper stating that "I will talk to you as soon as the postman leaves the office because he blacklists people's identities". In his office, there were some Turkish flags and two pictures of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Besides, there was a book of Orhan Şaik Gökyay who is a nationalist poet. His opinions about the Turkish language and Syrians can be detected in the quote below:

> Syrians need to learn Turkish; they should have known about the legal system in this country. Language is the greatest barrier for their integration to Turkish society, and I am not obliged to speak Arabic with them. If you come to Turkey, you have to learn and speak Turkish because the official language in this country is Turkish (January 24, 2020 Mersin).

As it could be inferred from the quote, he adopted Turkish nationalism and attached superiority to the Turkish language. He expected Syrians to learn Turkish if they will continue to live in Turkey. Obviously, he did not want to talk Arabic with Syrians. This would be because of his fear of revealing his identity.

## 4.5 Participants' Perceived Cultural Similarities and Differences with Syrians

Since existent research on public opinion toward immigrants tends to focus more on the United States and Europe, it analyzes to what extent people are willing to accept people, who are culturally different, especially the Muslims. In this study, differently from the other studies, I aim to highlight whether common ethnicity and religion have a unifying effect between Syrians and Arab-Turkish citizens by accounting for the sectarian differences as well. Sectarian identity would be regarded as an important determinant of the opinions of Arab-Turkish citizens on the existence of Syrians.

For instance, the respondents of the International Alert and the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) survey perceived a large number of Sunni Syrian presence as a threat to Lebanese sectarian balance (Alert 2015). In fact, how sectarian affiliations influence the intergroup relations between immigrants and receiving society members is an under-researched area. Limited number of studies on this issue concentrates on Lebanon due to its delicate sectarian balance (Itani and Grebowski 2013).

The xenophobia means "the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners", and xenophobic attitudes include discrimination against people on the basis of their identities, and the targets of xenophobia are generally immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and minority groups (Bermanis, Canetti-Nisim, and Pedahzur 2004, 169). Among members of the immigrant-receiving community, those who are subjected to assimilation policies, derogatory and discriminatory attitudes from political elites, and

majority element of the population are expected to be more tolerant and moderate toward newcomers (Meeusen, Abts, and Meuleman 2019). Although Arab-Alevi citizens were the target of xenophobic attitudes and discriminatory behaviors due to their religious beliefs, they do not embrace a multiculturalist approach toward Syrians.

An Arab-Alevi village headman who is disturbed from the existence of Sunni Syrians in Mersin argued that

> Our culture is similar to the culture of Turks. We are Turkish citizens. My family settled in Mersin in 1840. Although our neighborhood is predominantly composed of Arab-originated people, we are descended from Eti Turks. Syrian people are not like us. We do not have any kind of similarities at all. They are religious fanatics and they do not like Alevis (a 55 years-old village headman, January 24, 2020, Mersin).

Mostly, Arab-Alevi respondents specifically emphasize that they do not see any kind of similarity between them and Syrians in terms of common ethnicity. They are bothered by the sectarian nature of war in Syria. Most of them claimed that they were the descendants of Syrian Alevis and in the past, their ancestors were exposed to violence and discrimination by Sunni Arabs in Syria. Hence, it could be argued that the common ethnicity alone does not glue Syrians and Arab-Alevis but sectarian divisions divide them apart because although Arab-Alevi participants emphasized their Syrian origins, they did not see any similarity with Sunni-Syrians. According to their perception, the relatives of Arab-Alevi community are fighting with Sunni-Arabs in Syria. I asked the respondents whether Alevi-Syrians migrated to Turkey following the Syrian civil war. A village headman in Mersin said that mostly Sunni-Arabs came and settled in Mersin and he knew only one or two Syrian-Alevi families. Another Arab-Alevi participant replied my question as follows:

> A limited number of Alevi-Syrians came here. I have scarcely seen Alevi-Syrians because Alevis in Syria have a thought that 'With the exception of Syria, there is no country in the World that accepts Alevis' but I mean Syrian Alevis, we adopted Republic of Turkey and thank God, we are patriots. However, Syrian Alevis have no place to go and they are aware of that. Therefore, they stay in Syria (January 24, 2020, Mersin).

An Arab-Alevi respondent who also actively took part in local government and was knowledgable about Mersin's demography said that:

> Most of the Syrians who came here are Sunni-Arabs. Reasonably, no Alevi people escaped from Assad regime. The conflict did not escalate in Damascus and Halab but it intensified in the regions where Sunni people lived such as Idlib, Afrin. For example in Adanalıoğlu, there are Sunni Syrians coming from Idlib and Afrin (January 24, 2020, Mersin).

Another Arab-Alevi participant strictly emphasized their differences with the Syrians resulting from sectarian affiliations as follows:

> You can think that both Syrians and your community are Arabs, but I am an Alevi, they are Sunnis and these two groups are chopping each other in Syria, but this is not a problem for me as long as Syrians do not see our sectarian differences as a problem. If Syrians bring with themselves their hostilities and hatred, a violent conflict between the two groups becomes indispensable. However, we are well aware that Syrians are forced to leave their homeland and unwillingly settled here, and we are ready to embrace them. I am totally against discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or sect. It is ridiculous to be an Arab nationalist just because you are an Arab. We look at Turkish nationalism and shape our lives according to the principles of the republic, we are totally against discrimination on the basis of ethnicity (January 24, 2020, Mersin).

Unlike most of the Sunni Arabs living in Mardin who mentioned about the affinity and cultural similarity between them and Syrians, Arab-Alevis claim that Syrians' culture and lifestyles are completely different from theirs. Consequently, it could be argued that Arab-Alevi respondents saw Sunni Syrians as a threat to their security due to their affinity with Alevi-Syrians and long-lasting Sunni-Alevi divide.

Among Arab-Turkish people, those who have returned to Turkey after staying in a foreign country for many years, who were assimilated through the nationalist policies of the state tend to emphasize the similarities between their Arabic culture and Turkish culture. Two participants who were originally from Mardin stayed in a foreign country for years. These people were reluctant to talk about their ethnicity and culture, they were unwilling to join the interview. Nevertheless, they accepted to talk with me upon the request of a referee who undertook a gatekeeper role. The old one did not allow me to record the interview, and expectedly they displayed negative attitudes toward Syrians.

> Our culture [refers to Arab-Turkish citizens] is similar to Turkish culture and tradition. We [referring to his family] are Turk. We are Turkish citizens. I speak both Arabic and Turkish. Our culture [referring to

> Arabic culture] does not differ from Turkish culture. However, we do not have any kind of similarity between Syrians since they live in an isolated community, we do not regularly communicate. (a 54 years-old man, jeweler, January 30, 2020, Mardin).

Similarly, as I mentioned before, two village head men (mukhtar) said that I would not have been reached to Arab-Alevi community without having a reference from one of their religious notables. I interviewed them in the mukhtar's office. One of them did not allow me to record his voice. This might be because the interview took place on Friday while he was working, and his office was crowded. He did not want to reveal his Arab-Alevi identity in front of people. I have already mentioned previously his fear of being blacklisted by a postman due to his identity in this chapter.

As discussed before, generally, Sunni-Arab respondents in Mardin emphasized the cultural similarity and kinship relations between Syrians and Arabs who are living in Mardin. However, this does not mean that they were supportive of Syrian immigration. They, generally, emphasized their superiority to Syrians. same time, they were sometimes inclined to point out the superiority of their culture. A teacher from Mardin who was not able to be appointed and now, owns a jewelry store said that;

> Our side, I mean Arabs who came from Beirut came from Europe because geographically and culturally, Beirut is closer to Europe. Accordingly, the lifestyles and dressing style of those who came from Beirut is different from Syrians but apart from that, the culture of people who came from Syria is similar to our culture [she means Arab culture in Mardin]. However, we could not have an agreement with the Syrians in many aspects, but we should continue to live together because neither could we exclude Syrians nor reject their existence because this is our state and nation, and they demand to take shelter here. There are not many things to do (January 31, 2020, Mersin).

It could be inferred from the quote above that this participant thought her group superior. Social Identity Theory argues that in-group favoritism and a perception of group superiority result from people's disposition to consolidate a self-esteem by engaging in a group-oriented behavior and discrediting the other groups (Tajfel 1982). In general, Arab-Turkish respondents from both cities attached superiority to Turkish citizens. Syrians were perceived as lazy, dirty, ungrateful, and uncivilized people. Majority of the participants opposed giving citizenship to Syrians.

### 4.6 Security-Related Concerns of Arab-Turkish Community

"The process in which migration discourse shifts toward an emphasis on security has been referred to as the securitization of migration" (Ibrahim 2005, 167). Migration is politically constructed by emphasizing the alleged destabilizing effects of immigrants on the public order, cultural security, and security of the internal market in the receiving countries have been emphasized through the security discourses of political elites and mainstream media (Huysmans 2000). The securitization of migration leads to the perceived cultural differences between refugee outsiders and the local community (Huysmans 2006).

Since the migration studies largely concentrate on the United States and Western Europe, and the immigrants are generally Muslims who are culturally distinct from the western public, Kaya points out that especially the events such as the Iranian Revolution, the Palestinian Intifadas, the Afghanistan War, September 11 attacks leads to securitization and stigmatization of immigrants with a Muslim background in the eyes of the western public (Kaya 2012). I argue that there is an analogy between the securitization of Muslim migration in the west and Arab-Alevi people's security-related concerns about the Syrian people. The collective memory and traumas of Arab-Alevi citizens result in the securitization and stigmatization of Syrians from the perspective of Arab-Alevis.

Arab-Alevi participants of this study generally pointed out their security concerns about the existence of Sunni Syrians in their cities. According to the Arab-Alevi participants, the existence of Syrians destabilizes public order. They explicitly emphasized the sectarian nature of war in Syria by claiming that they feel threatened by the possibility of Sunni Syrians' gathering in a sudden moment of anger and attacking them (Alevi Arabs).

Arab-Alevi participants argued that their ancestors escaped from the massacres by Sunni people in Syria. Besides, Arab-Alevi people implicitly stated that they are bothered by the Sunni attacks against their fellow Alevis in Syria. For this reason, Arab-Alevi citizens feel insecure about the existence of Syrians.

> The advantage is that they talk Arabic. Hence, they do not have any problem with their employers. On the other side, the civil war in Syria is a sectarian war. Therefore, the senses of solidarity and coherence never emerge between the two communities because our community is an Arab Alevi community, and those who came from Syria are Sunni

> people. Hence, the Arab Alevi community has security concerns about the existence of Sunni Syrians. I mean it has been so long since a violent conflict has prevailed in the Middle East between Sunnis and Alevis, and the Arab Alevi community is afraid of being slaughtered by Sunnis. They are frightened by the possibility of Sunnis to proclaim Jihad all of a sudden and kill all Alevis with their choppers. These security concerns prevent the possibility of peaceful coexistence and social cohesion. For this reason, being Arab alone could not be a unifying element between these two communities, there is a sectarian dimension of the relationship (a 33 years-old Arab Alevi woman politician, owner of a restaurant, Mersin).

The security fears created by the Sunni-Alevi conflict and violent discrimination against Alevi people throughout history further group polarization and hostility toward Sunni Syrians because the power of security threats mobilizes social groups against each other and might escalate into a violent conflict. The security threats lead to out-group derogation and in-group cohesion and eventually end up with intergroup conflict (McDoom 2012). The groups' fear of physical safety and cultural hegemony along with the political memories and myths increase the polarization between them and set one group against another (Lake and Rothchild 1998, 4)

Almost all Arab-Alevi participants in Mersin mentioned a large-scale violent incident between Arab-Alevi inhabitants of Adanalıoğlu [a district in Mersin] and Syrian agricultural workers. The incident took place on April 2017. The two groups attacked each other with sticks and stones and according to the narratives of Arab-Alevi respondents, and Arab-Alevis from other villages in the region came together to help their Arab-Alevi fellows in Adanalıoğlu. The incident found a place in the mainstream media, too, but the media sources provide different explanations about the origin of the conflict. According to them, it was the local inhabitants who first attacked the Syrians [1]. Arab-Alevi respondents also told different stories about the reason for the conflict. Some argued that the fight broke out over money issues. The others claimed that Syrian young boys harassed a local girl, and the local inhabitants got very angry. The security forces and local governors intervened to calm the local inhabitants down and in order to prevent undesired incidents between Syrians and locals, the Syrian tents were evacuated and one of the village headmen told me that Syrians were sent to the refugee camp in Gaziantep. He also said that since Syrians could not earn enough money to live on, they gradually returned to Mersin

[1] "Suriyeli Vatandaşlar Ile Mahalle Sakinleri Arasında Gerginlik," *Hurriyet*, April 18, 2017, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/son-dakika-mersinde-tehlikeli-gerginlik-sopalarla-geldiler-40430053, [Accessed 26 June 2020], "Suriyeliler Adanalıoğlu'dan tahliye ediliyor," *Evrensel*, April 18, 2017, https://www.evrensel.net/haber/316331/suriyeliler-adanaliogludan-tahliye-ediliyor, [Accessed 26 June 2020].

in a small group but he strongly specified that although local inhabitants of Mersin hired them again as the agricultural workers because they need labor force in their fields, they never let Syrians live side by side again, and scattered Syrians in the fields.

This specific incident contributed to the polarization between Syrians and Arab-Alevi people in Mersin along sectarian lines. Almost all participants I have interviewed in Mersin mentioned the violent conflict in Adanalıoğlu and especially the landlords argued that among Syrians there are many terrorists, and they are silent now due to their troubled position. An Arab-Alevi woman whose family currently hires Syrians as the agricultural workers expressed her hesitation and mistrust with respect to their Syrian workers as follows:

> Unfortunately, now, in our fields in Adanalıoğlu [she refers to her field and her family's field], there is no Turkish agricultural worker. All of them are Syrians. I do not decide whether this is bad or not (a 47-years old woman, working as a vegetable seller, January 27, 2020, Mersin).

Aside from the sectarian nature of the problematic relationship between local inhabitants and Syrians, Arab-Turkish community who embrace an ethnicity-based Turkish nationalism, who live together with Syrians in low-income neighborhoods, and those who host their Syrian relatives at their home generally associate the increasing number of Syrians with the increase in the crime rates in their cities. According to their perception, the incidences of rape, theft, violence, and immorality originate from Syrian people. However, nobody except those who witnessed the violent conflict in Adanalıoğlu sees a Syrian who commits a disgraceful crime, but the participants relied on the rumors and the information that they heard from the mainstream media.

## 4.7 Arab-Turkish Citizens' Perceptions about the Political Economy of Syrian Migration

Public opinion toward immigration is partly affected by material self-interest calculations of the members of the host community. Another important determinant of public opinion toward migration is cultural factors. This part will discuss the

economic factors.

In the interviews, respondents were asked about their opinions on the positive and negative sides of the Syrian immigration to Turkey. Almost all participants from the cities of Mardin and Mersin expressed their economic concerns about the existence of Syrians in their city. Therefore, it could be argued that Arab-Turkish people with different sectarian identities and from different socio-economic backgrounds share similar economic concerns about Syrian immigration.

More clearly, Arab-Turkish citizens tended to see Syrians as a fiscal and economic burden on Turkey's economy and most of them predominantly emphasized the perceived negative effects of the Syrian immigration on youth unemployment. The participants of this study expressed their discomfort with the increasing supply of low-skilled labor that reduces the wages and employment opportunities for the native low-skilled labor force. A respondent expressed his opinions about the economic effects of Syrian immigration as follows:

> The existence of Syrians here negatively affects us. For example, in our store, Syrian employees are working. If you need a worker, Syrian works for nearly half of a price that Turks are working for. This harms the Turkish public. The grocery, jewelry, and etcetera privileges those who offer cheaper labor force, and Turks are negatively affected [by this] (a 25 years old man, works in a jewelry store, January 30, 2020, Mardin).

When I was interviewing a housewife, his husband intervened and said that;

> While they (Syrians) have dual citizenship, we could not be employed without having a nepotistic network. For instance, when the Directorate General of Migration Management needs to hire somebody, Syrians are chosen for the open positions, but we, the Turkish citizens are unemployed. Instead of fighting for their homeland, Syrian youth screw around parks, have hubble-bubble. (a 36-years old man works as a contract employee in the hospital, February 2, 2020, Mardin).

The interviewees were generally inclined to take the size of Turkey's population and economy into account when they were talking about the economic effects of the existence of Syrians. According to the Arab-Turkish respondents, the gradual increase in the cost of living in Turkey, limited economic growth, and development prevent Turkey to cope with the costs of refugee flows and they believe that the existence of Syrians imposes economic burdens on their shoulders. Accordingly,

Arab-Turkish citizens blame Syrians about the deterioration in the living standards of local inhabitants.

> Turkey is already a very crowded country. Recently, we have trouble coping with the high cost of living. Our youth [youth population in Turkey] remain unemployed, because Syrians are working for very cheap prices (a 51 years-old woman, does not work, February 2, 2020, Mardin).

Besides, Arab-Turkish citizens complained about the scope of social services and social assistance that is provided to Syrians by the central government. The participants of this study, regardless of their sectarian identity, mostly believe that unlike Syrians, local inhabitants regularly pay taxes, but Syrians are in a much more advantageous position in terms of accessing health and education services as well as accessing employment opportunities. An optician in Mardin complained about the alleged benefits and privileges for Syrians provided by the state as follows:

> Syrians enjoy the freedom and privileges that Turkish citizens could not have. I regularly pay various taxes for my store. However, Syrians do not pay tax when they are starting a business. They benefit from discounted prices for medicines, but I need to pay social security contributions to enjoy the same privilege. If a Syrian violates traffic rules, they do not get a traffic penalty ticket, but I do (a 64-years old man, optician, January 31, 2020, Mardin).

The quotation above indicates common myths about Syrians living in Turkey. Similarly, the respondents from the Arab-Alevi community, especially religious notables, put an emphasis on the discrimination against Alevis when evaluating the economic effects of the existence of Syrians. They pointed out that Alevi citizens regularly pay taxes and fulfill their civic duties without any objection, but in return, the state does not provide them with certain rights and services whereas Syrians freely benefit from the socio-economic assistance ranging from education, health care, monthly stipend, etc. which is provided by the state. A professor at Mersin University summarized the economic effects of Syrians in Mersin and other cities in the region by emphasizing the situation of Alevi community as follows:

> The central government has a quite weird approach. I mean the real citizens of Turkey are paying taxes, fulfilling military service, doing everything, but Syrians enjoy social and welfare services that are provided by the central government. Of course, these people are victims of war

> and positive discrimination is acceptable, but I think current practices exceed the acceptable limit. There is such a perception that Syrians get financial incentives for having children, they have free access to health services, but Turkish citizens do not benefit from these privileges. For instance, on the one side, there are victims of delayed pension age, on the other side, according to rumors, the government spends 40 billion dollars for Syrians. All these factors negatively affect local inhabitants' perceptions of Syrians. When you are cutting the livelihood of one side and transfer it to the other side, problems emerge between two parties. Nevertheless, as you know, we, Alevis got used to it because we regularly pay taxes, fulfill military service, do everything but do not benefit from certain rights, such as religious freedoms. The Religious Affairs Administration has all discretion. There is discrimination. I mean if you do not collect taxes but provide services to Syrians, or you provide services to the other side (Syrians) by the taxes that you collect from Alevis this would create a problem between the two communities. For example, the state constructs mosques, we [the Alevis] do not have any objection to this. On the contrary, we are saying, "collect the taxes from everyone, but meet everybody's needs through these taxes." Mersin is an economically developed city compared to Adana, Antep, Hatay, etcetera. Therefore, Syrians in Mersin can go to shopping malls, do shopping, and consume luxurious products. However, the other cities that I mentioned just before seriously suffer from the existence of Syrians because income level is already low and there are problems between local inhabitants and Syrians with respect to the allocation of resources. Sexual harassments, affairs of honor, clashes over job opportunities, then, become the pretexts of disputes. (a 49-years old man, works as a professor at Mersin University, January 27, 2020, Mersin).

The professor's arguments also reflect false facts about Syrians in Turkey. The state does not pay a salary to the Syrians. The European Union funds social and welfare services that are provided to the Syrians. Besides, every business owner in Turkey, including Syrians, must pay taxes. Although Syrians and Arab-Turkish respondents speak the same language, their ignorance about above-mentioned false facts demonstrate that there was a little or no contact of any sort between these two communities (*Suriyelilerle İlgili Doğru Bilinen Yanlışlar* 2020). People's stereotypes and prejudices result from lack of contact (Pettigrew 1998). Consequently, lack of contact and ignorance about the Syrians appear to be an important factor of Arab-Turkish citizens' negative perceptions towards Syrian people. Because, among the respondents, people who are working closely with refugees on different occasions were well-informed about the existing legal procedures about Syrians and their socio-economic conditions in Turkey.

When the participants are asked about the negative sides of the existence of Syrian

people in their city, as I explained before, almost all respondents complained about the economic costs of hosting Syrians, deterioration in their living standards, the competition in the labor market, and youth unemployment. However, paradoxically, some of the Arab-Turkish respondents who are small business owners and landlords express their happiness with the supply of cheap labor by Syrians in terms of the positive sides of the existence of Syrians.

The wife of a landlord from Mersin talks about their Syrian workers as:

> There are positive sides to having Syrians here. They contribute to the labor force because it was really hard for our husbands to find agricultural workers. Previously, people who came from Urfa had worked but the number of people coming from Urfa dramatically decreased in recent years. Now, Syrians came and save us, we can easily find people to employ as an agricultural worker. this is the positive side. (a 42-years old, Arab-Alevi woman, does not work, January 27, 2020, Mersin).

Another respondent from Mardin talks about the supply of cheap labor by Syrians as follows:

> There is a positive side of having Syrians in Turkey For instance, I would like my home to be painted. A Turkish painter demands 100 TL whereas Syrians paint it for 50 TL. In addition, I need to provide insurance for Turkish workers whereas there is no such necessity for Syrian workers. (a 64-years old man, optician, January 31, 2020, Mardin).

Better-educated, middle-class Arab-Turkish participants are aware of the extremely disadvantaged working conditions of Syrians as well. A research assistant at Mardin Artuklu University compared Syrians' chance of employment in Mardin and Istanbul and he expressed his concerns about working conditions of Syrians as follows:

> The only problem related to the existence of Syrians in Mardin is that they are working for less than a minimum wage and they are uninsured. Besides, employees do not prefer Turkish citizens anymore. A few numbers of Syrians open restaurants here in Mardin but it is nearly impossible for these restaurants to be permanent because Arab cuisine is common in Mardin, and there is nothing new in the restaurants of Syrians. However, this is not the case for Istanbul. Arab restaurants are opened in Aksaray and Fatih and became very popular. Istanbul's pop-

> ulation is 16 million and Syrian restaurants find demand, but this is not the case for Mardin (a 30 years-old man, works as a research assistant at Mardin Artuklu University, January 31, 2020, Mardin).

Lastly, Arab-Alevi participants in Mersin mention the previous immigration experiences of Mersin when Kurds were forced to live their cities in the 1990s and after the earthquake in Van. They said that just like the Syrians are doing now, in the past, Kurds migrated to Mersin and joined the labor force. According to the perception of Arab-Alevi respondents, youth and low skilled workers were hurt by the supply of cheap labor. However, again, they argue that they could accept the Kurds because they are the children and citizens of the same country. One of the respondents compare the effects of the immigration of Kurds with the immigration of Syrians as follows:

> I could not talk on behalf of our neighborhood [Karacailyas Mahallesi] because the number of Syrians is close to none here, but when I talk to local governors, they told me that the youth population of the host community suffers from job losses. 30 years ago, local inhabitants, I mean once upon a time in Mersin, Arabs had all employment opportunities, then, people who migrate from the east started to work and they had all job opportunities. Right now, the same applies to Syrians. They started to work because they have to, but our youth feel no necessity to work. Since Syrians have to work to live, they work well, and get the job opportunities from our youth's hands. (a 36-years old man, works as a chairman in the Department of Culture in Akdeniz Municipality, January 27, 2020, Mersin).

In the last section, I will provide an overview of the findings.

## 4.8 Discussion

To sum up, Mersin and Mardin were different in terms of the economic development level. The characteristics of the participants in these cities were also different. I mostly interviewed middle-class people in Mersin. In contrast, half of the respondents in Mardin were individuals of lower socioeconomic status.

As the data show, alongside non-economic factors, people's attitudes and percep-

tions towards forcibly displaced Syrians are affected by their material self-interest calculations. Especially, as the factor proportion theory predicts, low-skilled Arab-Turkish citizens whose economic situation and education level are below average display xenophobic attitudes towards Syrians due to the perceived competition in the labor market (Scheve and Slaughter 2001). However, I could argue that in the low-income neighborhood where I conducted nine interviews, as I discussed, the segregation of Syrians and Arab-Turkish participants' houses and lack of contact trigger xenophobic attitudes and prejudices because negative stereotypes result from ignorance about out-groups. On the other hand, high-skilled and better-educated people displayed a relatively tolerant approach toward Syrian immigration, depending on their sectarian identity. They are inclined to take the extremely disadvantaged working conditions of Syrians into account as well. I argue that high-skilled workers did not see Syrians as a threat to their labor market position. Besides, education might have been influential in increasing their empathy towards immigrants because all educated participants indicated Syrians' disadvantaged working conditions.

Language appears to be the most influential glue between the Syrians and Arab-Turkish people. Speaking the same language contributes to their interactions and creates a sense of solidarity between the two communities. Regardless of their sectarian identity, Arab-Turkish citizens, in general, argued that they improve their Arabic, and Syrians are happy for the chance of speaking Arabic with them.

The respondents in Mardin often emphasized that they have Syrian relatives who migrated to Mardin. Unlike Arab-Turkish citizens in Mersin, the participants in Mardin pointed out the close relations and high-level cultural similarity between them and Syrians except those living side-by-side with the Syrians in a low-income neighborhood. This finding is essential to show that the respondents' personal traits and the contextual factors shape the direction of the relationship between the two communities. Besides, cross-border communication between Mardin and Syria before the war positively influences the perceptions of respondents in Mardin towards Syrians because the two communities were familiar to each other before the Syrian immigration.

On the other side, two experts on Mersin's demography and sociology argued that although some Syrian businesspersons had investments in Mersin, and they came to Mersin for summer holidays, two communities did not have any sort of contact before the Syrian war. Besides, the respondents in Mersin were predominantly Arab-Alevis. On the contrary, majority of the Syrians in Mersin were Arab-Sunnis. In general, Arab-Alevi participants perceived the presence of Syrians as a threat to their security because of the Sunni-Alevi conflict and violent discrimination against

Alevi people throughout history. The sectarian differences and perceived security threats negatively affect the participants' perceptions of Syrians.

In general, in-group-out-group boundaries were demarcated based on the national identities of the participants. In other words, in-group members are those who have Turkish citizenship. Syrians perceived as outsiders.

Nevertheless, Among the Arab-Turkish community, people who are working closely with refugees, working in human rights NGOs, engaging with the local politics displayed the multiculturalist approach towards refugees, they support two-sided integration, and they believe that economic, social and cultural rights for everyone contribute to the peaceful coexistence and development of democracy.

# 5. CONCLUSION

Many societies around the world started to become ethnically and culturally heterogeneous due to technological developments, the growth of industrial capitalism, development of communication systems that provide social, cultural, and political integration of an ever large number of people (Saideman 1995). Therefore, as the countries are becoming more diverse, intergroup encounters become an indispensable part of our lives. Accordingly, the number of studies in the literature that analyzes inter-group relations has also proliferated. There is a vast literature on intergroup relations that discusses the relationship between majority and minority groups. The existing studies also pay attention to how the majority group members perceive immigrants/refugees. However, there has been little academic research that analyzes the way in which ethnic and religious minorities in a society perceive newcomers. The existing studies on minority-minority relations concentrate mostly on the United States and Western Europe. However, developing or middle-income countries receive the largest number of refugee population (UNHCR 2016). This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by analyzing Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions towards Syrians in Turkey because Turkey received the largest number of Syrian people following the Syrian Crisis.

The research on migration and attitudes towards immigrants mostly concentrate on Global North. There are studies in the literature that look into how ethnicity affects the receiving society members' perceptions about immigrants but very little is known about how sectarian differences between refugees and receiving society members influence the perception of receiving society members on refugees. To date, the literature on migration does not offer a clear answer to the question of how sectarian differences between refugees and members of the immigrant-receiving communities influence the relationship between these two communities. The limited number of existing studies on sectarian differences between refugees and receiving society members concentrate on Lebanon due to its delicate sectarian balance and highly fragmented system. However, Syrian people who migrated to Turkey were predominantly Arab-Sunnis. They altered Turkey's southern provinces' ethnic and

sectarian composition where a significant number of Arab-Alevi citizens live. Thus, how sectarian identities of Turkish citizens influence their perceptions towards Syrians is a crucial question to be answered.

In order to analyze Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions towards Syrians, qualitative research methodology is utilized in this study. 40 semi-structured face to face interviews were conducted with 20 Arab-Turkish participants from both Mersin and Mardin to understand how their perceived ethnic and religious similarities and differences influence their perceptions towards Syrian people. Besides, three informants who are experts on the history, demography and sociological characteristics of Mersin/Mardin provided information about the city and characteristics of Syrians in these cities. The interview is composed of 23 open-ended questions that aims to clarify Arab-Turkish citizens demographic and cultural characteristics, their social interactions with and their general perceptions on Syrians in Turkey. More specifically, this study aims to understand whether common ethnicity and religion positively affect the relationship between Arab-Turkish citizens and Syrians. Moreover, the Arab-Turkish participants of this study consist of both Sunni and Alevi people. Therefore, and more importantly, this study explicates how sectarian identities of the Arab-Turkish respondents affect their approaches towards Syrians as well. In this way, it makes a unique contribution to the literature on migration and attitudes towards immigrants by highlighting the sectarian nature of the relationship. Lastly, this study also highlights the areas of contestation and conflict as well as solidarity between the two communities.

Two lines of research on the relationship between immigrants and immigrant-receiving society members developed separately from one another. Although this study predominantly relies on social psychological explanations of receiving society members' perceptions towards immigrants, it also partly benefits from political-economic factors. In this way, it makes a theoretical contribution to the study of immigration from the perspective of receiving society members by marrying these two kinds of literature.

In terms of cultural similarities between the two groups, language appears to be the most crucial glue between Arab-Turkish respondents and Syrian people. Regardless of the city and sectarian identity, all participants underlined that Syrians, in general, did not experience language difficulties in terms of integration within their new settlements due to the existence of an Arabic-speaking community. The literature on the integration of refugees defines the fundamental areas as employment, housing, education, and health (Ager and Strang 2008). In the case of Syrian people in Mersin and Mardin, Arab-Turkish citizens claimed that they helped Syrians

access health, housing, and employment opportunities. Arab-Turkish participants argued that they also improved their Arabic by speaking with Syrians. Speaking the same language seems to contribute to the interactions between Syrians and Arab-Turkish citizens. This finding is striking and supports the arguments of the Common In-group Identity Model because being Arab and speaking Arabic language lead to friendly relations between the two groups and have a positive effect on Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions towards Syrians. According to the Common In-group Identity Model, if the members of two distinct groups are induced to perceive themselves as the part of a same, superordinate identity, the "us and them" distinction transformed to a more inclusive "we" category (Lazarev and Sharma 2017).

Social networks such as kinship, friendship, and shared origin as well as already-existing historical, ethnocultural, social and religious networks between Mardin and Syria, in general, positively influences the perceptions of Arab-Turkish citizens in Mardin towards Syrians. The majority of the Arab-Turkish interviewees living in Mardin said that they have at least one Syrian relative. They argued that before the Syrian civil war, they regularly went to Syria for one-day for shopping, visiting their Syrian friends, and hanging out. According to Arab-Turkish respondents in Mardin, after the civil war, Syrians who had a network such as relatives and friends in Mardin came and settled. This argument is in line with the previous studies analyzing flight-patterns of refugees because ethnic and cultural linkages matter in refugees' preferences of a new destination (Rüegger and Bohnet 2018). Besides, the similarity-attraction hypothesis, to a certain extent, could explain why the participants in Mardin perceived Syrians in a relatively positive way. The similarity attraction hypothesis states that we tend to have positive perceptions about those we think are similar to us or our group (Van Oudenhoven, Ward, and Masgoret 2006). Nevertheless, it should be noted that perceived cultural similarities and kinship do not necessarily make Arab-Turkish participants in Mardin supportive of Syrians. They still inclined to underline the superiority of their culture. They also made an in-group-out-group distinction on the basis of Turkish citizenship.

Unlike Mardin, the participants in Mersin did not mention previously established kinship and friendship relations between Syrians and themselves. In terms of the relationship between respondents in Mersin and Syrians before the war, two people who were knowledgeable about Mersin's sociology and demography argued that a limited number of Syrians came to Mersin during their summer holidays. However, there was no prior interaction between residents of Mersin and Syrians before the Syrian conflict. Although Arab-Alevi respondents in Mersin claimed that their descendants were Syrian-Alevis, they did not see any kind of cultural linkage or affinity between themselves and Syrians in Mersin. Almost no Arab-Alevi Syrian

came to Mersin. "the Arabic speaking Alevi communities of southern Turkey are ethnically part of Syria's Alawi (Nusayri) community" (Van Bruinessen 1996, 7) and the participants perceived that Syrians who came to Turkey were in conflict with their relatives.

One of the main findings of this study is that the respondents' sectarian affiliations influence the way they perceive Syrians. More clearly, most of the Arab-Alevi participants in Mersin did not see any similarity between their culture and culture of the Syrian people in Mersin. They argued that being Arab did not make them similar. Arab-Alevi interviewees in Mersin perceived the existence of a large number of Syrians as a threat to their security due to the long-lasting Alevi-Sunni divide and discrimination against Alevis. This study makes a unique contribution to the scholarly research on immigration attitudes by paying attention to sectarian differences of immigrants and receiving society members.

Expectedly, among Arab-Turkish participants, those who were working closely with refugees in different occasions displayed the most respectful approach towards Syrians in the sample. An Arab-Alevi female participant provides vocational training for Syrian people in the Public Education Center. Another Arab-Alevi female interviewee worked voluntarily for the refugee children in an NGO that supports refugee rights. A male Arab-Alevi participant worked in Social Services Department of the municipality to provide counseling and assistance for Syrians in Mersin. Lastly, a female participant in Mardin worked voluntarily for human rights NGOs, she had an experience in local governance, and she helped some Syrian families and children who came to Mardin after the Syrian conflict as well. Almost all Arab-Turkish respondents in both cities wanted Syrians to return to Syria. They opposed granting citizenship rights to the Syrians except for these four people. The abovementioned four in interviewees developed empathy and understanding towards Syrians because they got to know Syrians personally and witnessed their daily struggles.

The mean age of the sample is 43,5, but there are a few numbers of young respondents. Three young people aged 21, 26, and 33 expressed their relatively positive feelings and opinions about Syrians. They said that they felt empathy towards Syrians and tried to understand Syrians' situation. These three young people have received a university education. They see more opportunities in life. Besides, a female participant in Mersin and a male participant in Mardin who had a bachelor's degree and in an economically advantageous position compared to the other participants also have a tolerant and empathetic stance towards Syrians. This is partly in line with the literature on public opinion about immigration, which states

that the level of education, economic status, life satisfaction level, gender, and age shape people's attitudes towards immigrants. It is partly because this study did not find any meaningful effect of gender on the participants' perceptions towards Syrians. Moreover, two young participants who had a master's degree in Mardin tended to associate security and economic threats with the Syrians' existence. They emphasized that they were nationalists. Being young and well-educated did not mediate their ethnocentric approach and nationalist tendencies.

The similarity attraction hypothesis and intergroup contact theory did not completely explain the respondents' attitudes and perceptions towards displaced Syrians in Turkey. However, it could be argued that contact is useful in reducing or eliminating prejudices at an individual level. Besides, being Arab which is a common in-group identity for Syrians and Arab-Turkish participants leads to a closer relationship between the two groups and, to a certain extent, reduces the participants' prejudices towards Syrians. Especially, Arab-Sunni identity is more influential in reducing prejudice among participants from Mardin. Nevertheless, in general, Arab-Turkish participants in both cities, including those who indicated their cultural similarity with the Syrians, divided the Syrians and Turkish citizens along with the national identity. In the eyes of the respondents, there was a social hierarchy between the Syrians and themselves. Syrian people are perceived as a threat to security, labor market, and employment opportunities of Turkish citizens because they were regarded outsiders to a given political community, which is Turkey. The majority of the Arab-Turkish participants of this study identify themselves more with their national identity, and their ethnic identity comes later. Turkish citizenship is an overarching identity for them. They perceived themselves as the owners of the country, and the Syrians were guests. In line with the assumptions of social identity theory, they were unwilling to share the advantages of group membership with the perceived outsiders. They did not want Syrians to enjoy the benefits of having Turkish citizenship. It could be argued that their perceived superiority to Syrians mostly results from having Turkish citizenship.

In addition to its theoretical contribution, this study has a policy related significance as well. Syrian presence in Turkey seems to be permanent. Therefore, highlighting the opportunities and barriers of coexistence between the two groups as well as underlining everyday difficulties faced by Syrians such as lack of understanding and empathy towards their suffering, humiliation, discrimination in labor market could contribute social policy making.

Recommendations for further research would be to analyze in detail to immigrants' and receiving society members' perceptions towards each other reciprocally.

Since social cohesion is a two-way adaptation by immigrants and receiving society members, the perspective of immigrants about receiving society members provide a more insightful analysis.

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# APPENDIX A

## Approval form of Sabancı University Research Ethics Council (SUREC)

Sabancı Üniversitesi

**Sabancı University Research Ethics Council (SUREC)**

**Date:** November 2019

**To:** Prof. Ayşe Betül Çelik / Principal Investigator; Zeyno Keçecioğlu / CO-Investigator
**From:** Prof. Mehmet Yıldız, Chair of the Research Ethics Committee

**Protocol Number: FASS-2019-75**
**Protocol Name:** Forced Migration and Intergroup Relations: Arab-Turkish Citizens' Perception of Syrians in Turkey

**Subject:** SUREC Approval
**Official Approval Date:** Dec 26th, 2019

Sabancı University Research Ethics Council has approved the above named and numbered protocol through expedited review. You are responsible for promptly reporting to the SUREC:

- any severe adverse effects
- any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others;
- any proposed changes in the research activity

Enclosed you can find the below noted approved documents.

☒ Protocol Application

☒ Informed Consent Form

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via phone at 216-483 9010 or via e-mail at meyildiz@sabanciuniv.edu

Best Regards,

Prof. Mehmet Yıldız
Chair of the Ethics Committee

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FRG-A410-01-03

**SABANCI UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COUNCIL**
**APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH STUDY**

| **For SUREC Use Only** | |
|---|---|
| Protocol No: **FASS-2019-75** | Approval Date: Dec 26th, 2019 |
| Modification Requested Date: | Modification Approval Date: |

1. **Title:** Forced Migration and Intergroup Relations: Arab-Turkish Citizens' Perception of Syrians in Turkey

**2. Principal Investigator(s)** (The Principal Investigator must be a faculty member or equivalent); **Co-Investigator (s)** (The Co-Investigator must be Master's or Phd Student)

| **Principal Investigator**<br>Prof. Ayşe Betül Çelik / Thesis Advisor | **E-mail**<br>bcelik@sabanciuniv.edu | **Phone**<br>0216 483 92 98 |
|---|---|---|
| **Co-Investigator**<br>Zeyno Keçecioğlu / MA Student | zkececioglu@sabanciuniv.edu | 0537 052 59 65 |

Note: This application must be submitted by the Principal Investigator, who assumes full responsibility for compliance with this research study.

**3. Programme:** Political Science Master Program
This research is aimed to gathering information for the thesis research of Zeyno Kececioğlu who is the student of Political Science Master Program, under the responsibility of Dr. Ayse Betul Celik from Sabancı University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Please answer all questions below:

**4. Will this be funded by an external sponsor?** ☐Yes ☒No

If yes, list sponsor/funding agency:
Proposal Number:

**5. Proposed Start Date** (actual date may not precede SUREC approval date)
(tentative, maybe later) January 2020

**6. Describe the purpose of the research**

The objectives of the proposed research program can be outlined as follows:

This study aims to investigate and analyze Arab-Turkish citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards forcibly displaced Syrians living in Turkey. The aim of this study is not limited to contributing the existing literature on intergroup relations and how the Syrians are affected by forced migration, but this research also unpacks the way local and migrant communities live peacefully or not with each other.

In this research, the direction of the relationship between Arab-Turkish citizens and Syrians (whether it is positive or negative) will be analyzed. More clearly, this study will investigate whether ethnic ties would influence the emergence and the persistence of the sense of solidarity between the two groups, and it this study will explore the areas of contestation and conflict between Arab-Turkish citizens and Syrians as well.

**7. Describe procedures to be used and any associated risks or discomforts.**
Procedures should be specific and listed step by step.

In this research, the data will be collected by applying qualitative field research methodology. One on one interviews are conducted in face to face settings. The data of the research will be obtained through semi-structured, in-depth interviews which enable the researcher to observe the behaviors of the respondents in face-to-face settings and this will be helpful for the researcher to interpret interview data. The interview will take place in a safe and quiet environment that is mutually agreed on by both the co-investigator and the participant. The interviewees will have a right to determine the setting of the environment where they feel more comfortable and safer.

The interviews will take place in Mersin and Gaziantep with at least 15 Arab-Turkish citizens. These two cities are chosen because they host an enormous number of Syrians. Besides, Gaziantep and Mersin also encompass a relatively high level of Arab-Turkish citizens compared to other cities in Turkey. Sociological studies in Turkey show that political views of Arab-Turkish people living in Gaziantep and Mersin differ from each other. In other words, Arab-Turkish people living in Gaziantep and Mersin have different socio-political characteristics.

During the interviews, the Co-I will ask questions about demographic characteristics of the participants, their ethnic and kin links to the Syrians, their experiences of coexistence with Syrians in Turkey. The Co-I will also ask about the interviewees' stories and feelings about Syrians, their perceived cultural differences and similarities with the Syrians during the interview.

The length of the interviews is planned to be 45-60 minutes. The ethical considerations can arise in in-person interviews. Before starting the interview, all participants will be informed about the goals of the study and the researcher will kindly remind the participants that their participation in this study is voluntary and they have a right to withdraw from the interview whenever they want. The Co-I will tape, record and transcribe all the interviews and before the interview, the researcher will ask the written and/or oral permission of the interviewee to make a voice recording. In the case that participants do not prefer to sign the Consent Form, they would show their consent through writing the initials of their names on the Consent Form or they can orally express their willingness to participate to the recorder.

The identity of interviewees such as their names and other personally identifiable information will not be included in the field notes, trascripts and audio-recordings. The interview data will be kept in Co-I's and PI's protected and encoded laptop and investigators will not share the data or interview transcripts with anyone or any institution.

This study will employ a non-random sampling strategy due to theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, this research is interested in a specific population and selecting the individuals on the basis of certain characteristics (being an Arab-Turkish citizen) will contribute significant leverage in causal inference.

In order to reach potential participants, the Co-I will benefit from the network of the PI because the PI has a previous professional experience in the local NGOs that works with the refugees. The PI will make the connection between the Co-I and the local NGO workers. These NGO workers have previously well-established trust relationship with the Arab-Turkish community and Arab organizations and they will introduce the Co-I to the potential research participants. Furthermore, Elif Kalan and Tunç Karaçay who were the Sabancı University's Conflict Resolution and Crisis Management graduates and also previous students of PI are conducting mediation between the host and refugee communities under Conflictus. Conflictus is an organization that conducts projects on mediation between Syrians and locals. Conflictus that has also network among Arab-Turkish community will enable the Co-I to reach the potential subjects of the interview research. Consequently, the successful formation of a relationship of mutual trust between the Co-I and the interviewees will be ensured by PI's network who has long-standing

personal or work relationships with the potential participants of the research. In other words, the network of PI, namely the local NGO workers, Elif Kalan and Tunç Karaçay will be the gatekeepers who will channel the researcher to the potential research subjects through their existing network of trust and friendship relationship in the field. A gatekeeper is a person who controls the accession to a social role, field or setting and gatekeepers play the intermediary role between the researcher and a potential interviewee.The Co-I will gain credibility through benefiting from long-standing trust relationship of the local NGO workers with the potential interviewees. The gatekeepers will accompany the Co-I and introduce the Co-I with the participants. In this way, the participants' previous acquaintanceship with the gatekeepers will be influential to overcome the possible fear and uncertainty of the participants towards the Co-I and the study. In addition, this study will utilize snowball sampling which is a method of choosing the participants in a network. By applying snow-ball technique, this study will gradually accumulates the sample resting on the recommendations from previous interviews. Once the Co-I interviews with a person and gain his/her trust, the Co-I will ask this interviewee to indroduce the Co-I to the others. Snowball sampling will also be helpful for the Co-I to gain the trust and credibility because each subsequent interviewee will be asked to vouch for the Co-I with the others. This study does not pose any potential risk towards the participants because it seeks to analyze intergroup relations and does not intend to touch upon the conflictual issues that might disturb the participants.

**8. Describe in detail any safeguards to minimize risks or discomforts, including any measures to render the data anonymous (you will not know the identity of the research subject) or confidential (subjects' identity or personal identifying information will not be disclosed).**
Please be reminded that anonymity and confidentiality are not synonymous terms.

Although interviews encompass smaller sample than surveys, using interviews enable the researcher to reach deeper information regarding the attitudes and behaviors of respondents and open-ended questions lead to additional queries that would be beneficial for the content of the research. Therefore, a semi-structured, in-depth interview is useful for generating more points of inferential leverage.

Rather than using technological devices such as Skype, email, or online chat the researcher has a chance to build a mutual trust relationship between the informant through direct communication and the researcher can also observe the way that participants behave whether they hesitate to answer some questions. However, using affordable communication technologies will be an important facilitator for the researcher to contact the interviewees to arrange the meetings and share both the details of the research and the informed-consent documents before the meeting.

The Co-I will inform the participants about the purpose of the research being conducted and as stated in the informed consent, the interviewees are guaranteed that their personal information will be anonymous and will not be shared with any person or institution. The participants can use nick-names or don't share their names. I will use alias or numbers when referring them in the text. The interview data will be kept in the PI's and Co-I's protected and encoded laptops during five years and the PI and Co-I will meticulously keep the interview data private from other individuals and institutions.

Co-I will make aware the interviewees that their participation is voluntary and if the participants feel uncomfortable with any question they have a right to remain the question unanswered and they are free to withdraw from the interview whenever they want. In the case of withdrawal, they will be dropped from the sample.

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher will ask permission to record the voice of the participants. If the interviewees do not allow her/his voice to be recorded, the co-investigator will take notes during the interview.

In this research, the confidentiality of respondents will be guaranteed by keeping field notes separate from identifying information. To do so, this research will never name the participants in publications that result from interviews and the list of interviewees will be arranged by number and interview date.

The interview will take place in a safe and quiet environment that is mutually agreed on by both the co-investigator and the participant. The interviewees will have a right to determine the setting of the environment where they feel more comfortable and safer.

**9. Describe any financial compensation or other potential benefits to the subjects associated with this research activity.**

There is no financial compensation or other potential benefits to the subjects associated with this research activity.

**10. Does the proposed human subject research pose a financial conflict of interest to the PI.** ☐Yes ☒No If yes, please explain.

**11. Is the consent form attached?** ☒Yes ☐No If no, please justify the need to waive this requirement. (If subjects under the age of 18 are to participate in the study, a parental consent form will also be required.)

**12. Benefits and Risks: Do the potential benefits to the subjects and/or the anticipated gain in research knowledge outweigh the risks to the subjects?** Explain. (Be specific and succinct - do not "justify" the research.)

Globalization paves the way for rapid social change which implies the growth of industrial capitalism, the development of wide communication networks, expansion of mass media, the spread of literacy, and urbanization. In an era of deepening globalization, the dramatic increase in the number of international migrants affects every aspect of our daily lives. Therefore, many societies around the world started to become ethnically and culturally heterogeneous and intergroup encounters become an inescapable part of our lives. However, intergroup encounters generally result in the conflict between parties due to the perceived incompatibility of values, norms, expectations, material interests, goals, and outcomes.

As societies become more and more heterogeneous, the number of studies which focus on intergroup relations have proliferated. Nevertheless, the existing literature on intergroup relations generally focuses on the perceptions and attitudes of the dominant local group towards disadvantaged groups. In addition, the relationship between the immigrants and the dominant majority group has also been studied by various scholars. The inter-minority interactions and more specifically, the attitudes of ethnic minorities in the host communities toward immigrants is a newly emerging research arena. A limited number of studies have been conducted in this arena and existing studies on inter-minority relations are confined to the United States, Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom due to these countries' demographic diversity. However, Turkey is also needed to be considered in terms of minority-minority relations because the ethnic composition of the country has been altered by a huge number of the refugee influx into its borders following the Syrian crisis.

The extant very few studies on inter-minority relations are confined to the interaction between ethnic minorities and generally focus on countries with a long-time migration history that are composed of individuals with second, third or even fourth generation immigrants. However, forced migration is not touched upon. This study will make a unique contribution to the literature by analyzing the locals' perceptions and attitudes toward forcibly displaced persons.

Syrians are living in Turkey for approximately eight years. As long as the violent conflict continues, they will stay. Even if the conflict overs, a considerable number of the Syrians will continue to stay in Turkey since they have a life here. This study will also be

important for policymaking because it helps to understand the opportunities and barriers of coexistence between the two groups. Therefore, the potential benefits of the research outweigh the risks to the subjects and all the risks and discomforts will be minimized by ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

**13. If another institution(s) is involved in the proposed research, please list each institution , the protocol number, and SUREC approval date.** ☐Yes ☒No

**14. After reviewing the University Research Ethics Council Instruction**
http://mysu.sabanciuniv.edu/surecharitasi/tr/yonerge/irg-a410-02
**I believe this protocol to be:**

☐ Exempt from further SUREC review ☒Expedited ☐ Full Council review required.

**Applicants Signature**

**For SUREC Use Only**

Protocol No: **FASS-2019-75** Approval Date: Dec 26th, 2019
Modification Requested Date: Modification Approval Date:

**Title:** Forced Migration and Intergroup Relations: Arab-Turkish Citizens' Perception of Syrians in Turkey
**Principal Investigator:** Ayşe Betül Çelik
**Co-Investigator:** Zeyno Keçecioğlu

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**THIS SPACE FOR SUREC USE ONLY**

☐ The protocol has been determined to be exempt from SUREC review in accordance with Sabancı University Research Ethics Council procedure.
☒ The protocol has been approved through expedited review in accordance with Sabancı University Research Ethics Council procedure.
☐ The Institutional Review Board has been approved the protocol through full review review in accordance with Sabancı University Research Ethics Council procedure.

**APPROVED BY THE SABANCI UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COUNCIL**

Prof. Mehmet Yıldız
SUREC Chair

Prof. Arzu S. Wasti
SUREC Member

Assist. Prof.Asuman Büyükcan Tetik
SUREC Member

Prof. Cengiz Kaya
SUREC Member

Assist. Prof. Nedim Nomer
SUREC Member

Assist. Prof. Ogün Adebali
SUREC Member

Prof. Zafer Gedik
SUREC Member

FRG-A410-01-03

# APPENDIX B

## Consent Form

**Sabancı University**
**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

**Study Title:** Forced Migration and Intergroup Relations: Arab-Turkish Citizens' Perception of Syrians in Turkey

**Principal Investigator**: Prof. Ayşe Betül Çelik / Thesis Advisor
**Co-Investigator**: Zeyno Keçecioğlu 2nd year Master Student at Political Science

**Interviewer:** Zeyno Keçecioğlu

The purpose of this study:

This research is aimed to gathering information for the thesis research of Zeyno Kececioğlu who is the student of Political Science Master Program, under the responsibility of Dr. Ayse Betul Celik from Sabancı University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

This study aims to investigate Arab-Turkish citizens' perception of Syrians.

The specific objectives of the proposed research are summarized as follows:

To analyze whether perceived co-ethnicity and kinship influence the way Syrians with different ethnic backgrounds are perceived by Arab-Turkish citizens.

To account for whether the dual identities of Arab-Turkish citizens influence their perceptions and attitudes towards Syrians.

During the experiment you will be asked to

Answer open-ended questions about your demographic characteristics, ethnicity and kin links to the Syrians; your experiences of coexistence with the Syrians; your stories, feelings about Syrians; your perceived cultural differences and similarities with the Syrians, and your thoughts abour the current and future position of the Syrians in Turkey.

You may find the following risks or discomfort from participating in this Study:

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. Participation in this study will involve no costs or payments to you. Your responses will be confidential and identifying information such as your name and ID number will not be collected. The interview will be recorded with the voice recorder if you accept, otherwise notes will be taken. You can stop the interview at any time and can skip any questions which you do not want to answer.

If you have questions about the interview, please contact with Dr. Ayşe Betül Çelik, Faculty of Art and Social Sciences at (216) 483 9298 or by email at bcelik@sabanciuniv.edu.

If you believe that your rights have been violated in any way, please contact Prof. Mehmet Yıldız, Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at Sabancı University at (216) 300-1301or by email at meyildiz@sabanciuniv.edu.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating your consent to participate in this study.

Signature _____ Date_____

FRG-A410-01-03

# APPENDIX C

## Interview Questions

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**Participants' Demographic and Cultural Characteristics**

1. Can you introduce yourself? (your age, education level, income level, occupation, marital status, ethnicity, and so on)
2. We are all citizens of the Turkish Republic, but we may have different ethnic origins; which identity do you know/feel that you belong to? How important is this identity to you?
3. In your daily life, do you practice Arab customs and traditions?
4. How can you describe yourself in terms of your piety level? How important is religion in your life?
5. Which language do you use to communicate with your family members?

**Life in Gaziantep/Mersin:**

6. How long have you been in Gaziantep/Mersin?
7. Could you tell me a bit about the story of your family?
8. Are you in touch with Turkish-Arab community in your city, Turkey? How?

**Participants' General Perception on Syrians in Turkey**

9. As you know, Turkey has been hosting Syrian people who fled from the violent conflict, war and persecution. According to your perception, who are Syrian people? How do you define them?
10. How often and where do you encounter with Syrian people? In what format (as neighbors, family members, people you see only in the streets, etc.)?
11. How do you feel about this relationship/encounter?

**Social Interactions**

12. Have you ever personally witnessed a positive incident between Turkish citizens and Syrians in your city? (If yes, could you please describe the event, how did you feel?)
13. Have you ever personally witnessed a negative incident between Turkish citizens and Syrians in your city? (If yes, could you please describe the event, how did you feel?)
14. Could you tell me about the positive and negative sides of hosting Syrian people in your city?

**Participants' Perceived Ethnic and Cultural Similarities and Differences with Syrians**

15. What kind of similar cultural practices do you share with the Syrian people in Turkey? Do you feel they are the same people?
16. Do you feel any proximity and solidarity towards Syrian Arabs? Do you act accordingly? (e.g. do you join their organizations, help them financially/socially, etc.)

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17. Do you think Arab communities in Turkey should have the right to education in mother tongue?

**Attitudes towards Syrians' rights in Turkey**

18. Do you think that the Turkish state should confer citizenship rights to the Syrians?
19. In your opinion, should the Turkish state grant work permit to the Syrians?
20. In your opinion, is the Turkish state providing sufficient welfare services to the Syrians?
21. How does the existence of the Syrians affect the social structure and economy of the city?
22. Do you want Syrian people to remain in your city? Why or why not?
23. How would the ending of the civil war in Syria affect the condition of Syrians in Turkey?

This study aims to investigate how do Arab-Turkish citizens perceive Syrians in Turkey and how do ethnic and cultural linkages influence Arab Turkish citizens' perception on Syrians in Turkey.

FRG-A410-01-03