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Vulnerable Permanency in Mass Influx

The Case of Syrians in Turkey

Ahmet İçduygu and Damla B. Aksel

Introduction

Periods of civil war and political turmoil frequently initiate population dislocations and mass refugee flows across national boundaries (Keely 2001; Huysmans, Dobson, and Prokhovnik 2006; Salehyan 2008). Naturally, neighboring countries are the ones primarily affected by these movements, as people leave their homes in search of safety elsewhere. In recent history, millions of people escaping from the conflicts in Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Iraq, Congo, and Syria have crossed their borders and moved into neighboring countries. The most recent example of this has been the Syrian civil war, which generated a massive influx of refugees who are currently residing in five nearby countries; as of late 2019, they number as follows: 3.7 million in Turkey, 924,000 in Lebanon, 657,000 in Jordan, 228,000 in Iraq, and 130,000 in Egypt, adding up to a total of more than 5.6 million Syrian refugees residing in the Middle East and North Africa (UNHCR 2019b). In addition to these huge numbers, there is also a sizable number of Syrian refugees who are settled in other countries beyond the Middle East as a spillover effect of the mass displacement in the region. For instance, the number of Syrians arriving in the twenty-eight member states of the European Union (EU) seeking international protection reached nearly one million as of 2018 (EUROSTAT 2018).

As far as the mass flows of refugees are concerned, there are huge gray areas, particularly regarding the acceptance, protections, and settlements of refugees by their targeted asylum countries (Koser and Black 1999; Lippert 1999; Nyers 2013). Although the international and national legal arrangements on the protection of refugees, based on the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Additional Protocol, are well established and working robustly in the case of individual arrivals of refugees, they are not functioning with the same efficiency in the case of mass flows of refugees. Given the difficulties associated with accommodating large numbers of refugees that arrive in a short time span, states are circumspect about the mass movement of refugees. In particular, the questions of how long refugees will remain, and the conditions and legal arrangements of their stay, pose several challenges to the receiving states. Moreover, in several countries that have adopted the international legal arrangements within certain limits, or who have not adopted them at all, the management of asylum seekers and refugee settlements remains a blurry policy area. Finally, some countries are not part of this international protection system; hence, they could avoid taking certain responsibilities for asylum seekers and refugees.

When a country experiences a mass movement of incoming refugees, one of the initial questions that is inevitably on the public agenda is, "How do we provide protection to these vulnerable people?" (Fitzpatrick 2000; Durieux and McAdam 2004). The second most frequently asked question, often from a politically sensitive point of view, is, "Will this movement lead to a permanent settlement or not?" (Fitzpatrick 2000; Ashrafi and Moghissi 2002; Kronenfeld 2008). The answers to these questions are inevitably dependent on context and inherently require a comparative perspective. It is within this context that this chapter, drawing lessons from the historical case of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan, elaborates the nature of mass flows and settlement of Syrian refugees in Turkey, debates the characteristics of protection provided to these refugees by the Turkish state, and questions the likelihood of the permanent settlement of these refugees in the country. Presently addressing the question of whether the Syrian refugees in Turkey are likely to settle permanently is very timely, since there exists a growing debate on the likelihood of the repatriation programs in the near future (İçduygu and Nimer 2019). It is also timely since the resettlement in the third countries, particularly in the developed countries of the West, still cause a high level of controversy in public and policy agendas of those countries.

After these introductory comments, the second part of the chapter engages in an analytical and theoretical framework and elaborates the literature on the determinants of permanent settlement of immigrant populations, identifying three main determinants: home country structures, host country structures, and individual factors. It will also suggest a fourth one particu-

larly relevant for refugee populations, existence, and type of protection. The third part of the chapter applies this framework to the case of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan over the last three decades as a point of comparison for the Syrian refugees in Turkey today. Focusing on the case of Syrians in Turkey, the fourth part of this chapter, in essence, argues that even in the case of Afghanistan, where the four determinants were not particularly favorable to long-term settlement of refugees, a substantial number of Afghans have become permanent settlers in the countries of refuge, Iran and Pakistan. It is argued that, given that the four determinants are more potent in the case of Syrians in Turkey, it should therefore be expected that the likelihood of permanent settlement is very high. The chapter also implicitly makes the claim that while refugees continuously live in a state of "permanent temporariness," mainly because of the nature of mass influxes to the neighboring countries of first asylum, the tendency toward becoming permanent settlers does not mean moving away from vulnerability but rather settling in a state of "vulnerable permanency." The issue of permanency versus temporariness, which is widely debated in the context of temporary labor migration, is central to the debates that cover the whole chapter, as the issue of permanency also seems to be fundamental to settlement and integration questions of refugees.

Determinants of Permanent Settlement: Implications for Refugees

The question of permanency versus temporariness has been a point of concern in various migratory settings. For instance, one of the most important features of mass labor migration is the fact that a significant proportion of temporary migrants become permanent settlers over time. Although temporary migrants becoming permanent settlers has drawn attention from students of international migration that focused on temporary labor migration (Massey and Liang 1989; İçduygu 1993; Castles 2006; Khoo, Hugo, and McDonald 2008), there has been limited research on the process in which refugees turn into permanent settlers. In this section, we first examine discussions on permanency and temporariness in the general literature on migration and then focus on the questions within the framework of mass influx of refugees.

The long-term consequences of temporary migration have been an issue of concern for policymakers and academics on migration alike, especially as a result of the temporary recruitment programs in the postwar era (Castles 2006; Massey and Liang 1989). Fashioned as strictly systematized programs for recruiting temporary migrants, the European guestworker system and the American bracero program sought to exclude migrants from much of the societal, economic, and political life in their host countries. Seeing inte-

gration as the primary promoter of permanency of persons in the host countries, host governments introduced structural impediments to integration. Such measures included limiting migrants' period of stay, allowing them restricted social and labor rights, and minimizing opportunities for family reunification (Massey and Liang 1989: 202). However, despite these initial arrangements by the governments, many temporary migrants settled in the receiving countries.

Arguing that "there [was] no such thing as a temporary worker program," Massey and Liang (1989: 223) emphasized that structural conditions mattered because as temporary migration promoted structural economic changes in host countries, the demand for foreign workers became self-perpetuating. More importantly, scholars suggested that the process of migration changed migrants' motivations and aspirations. Those who experienced migration had a higher probability of making additional trips, spreading migratory behavior through family and friendship networks, and settling in the host country. For Castles (2006: 743), who analyzed European guest worker programs of the postwar era, migrant workers became permanent settlers due to changes in their life intentions with longer stays and family reunifications as well as economic incentives in host countries. Migrants' partial integration into host country welfare systems and the emergence of rights-based discourse also made it possible for migrants to secure residence status.

Analytically, the discussions on the transformation of temporary migration into permanent settlement highlights three main processes: (1) the motivations and aspirations of migrants' changes over time; (2) despite the initial structural configurations, the process of migration itself alters the conditions related to permanency in the host countries; and (3) the socioeconomic conditions in the home country matter. Contrary to the cases of economic migration, mass influxes of refugees can be rather sudden and spontaneous, forcing host governments and the international protection institutions to make quick policy choices (Stein 1986; Jacobsen 1996: 657). While focusing on the case of refugees, this chapter introduces the fourth process that the existence and the type of protection regime matters for the possibility and conditions of permanency. As a determinant of host states' approach toward refugees, protection status has a direct effect on the opportunities that refugees might have regarding permanency or temporariness, as well as the intervening role that international organizations play between the countries and refugees. Moreover, in countries where a reliable protection regime does not exist, or the cooperation between the international regime and the sovereign state is limited, the politicization of displacement may intensify the susceptibility of the refugees.

Notwithstanding the substantial attention paid by migration literature to the conditions of permanency in cases of economic migration, the focus on refugees remains limited, especially in cases of mass influx (Stein 1986; Jacobsen 1996; Albert 2010). As a result of the 1951 Refugee Convention

Relating to the Status of Refugees and the Additional Protocol of 1967, conventional refugee regulation is based largely on a case-by-case eligibility and status determination for those who apply as asylum seekers. Attaining refugee status is a step on the road to permanency where alternative routes depend on factors related to the national and international processes. Following the granting of refugee status, three durable solutions become available for the individuals as viewed in various policy documents of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and related academic research (Stein 1986; Chimni 1998, 2004; Frelick 2007): (1) voluntary repatriation, (2) local settlement, and (3) third-country resettlement. Traditionally, only a small percentage of refugees have been resettled to third countries. Hence, Stein (1986) argued that only the first two aforementioned solutions were the realistic options for the refugees from developing countries, mainly because UN donor countries enforced durable solutions of local settlement or voluntary repatriation. Moreover, the refugee status and the right to remain in the asylum country can be revoked if conditions in the country of origin change and if the individual is no longer qualified as a refugee. The path to permanency in the host country depends on procedures related to the settlement and naturalization regime in the country of asylum.

At the present time, two conducts of refugee status determination, which are often confused with one another, exist in the refugee governance regime that is applied during times of mass influx (Albert 2010). The first type of refugee status determination (RSD) is prima facie, which is based on the UNHCR and the UN protocols of 1951 and 1967, even though the term does not appear in any international legal instruments on refugees (Albert 2010: 62). The prima facie status is granted to a group of individuals immediately following the event that causes the mobility. Since the state does not exhaust its funds for administering RSD processes, more time and resources can be utilized by the state to provide material assistance, including health services, food, or other privileges (Albert 2010: 68). The second type of RSD is temporary protection, which was codified by the European Union's Temporary Protection Directive during the Yugoslavian refugee crisis in the 1990s. Similar to the prima facie protection status, temporary protection is not a case-by-case status and is usually operationalized as a response to a mass influx. While the prima facie status is not limited to a certain period, temporary protection is limited by time–although it can be reviewable after a prescribed period of time. Different from the prima facie status where refugees can participate in one of the durable solution programs of the UNHCR cited, individuals under the temporary protection cannot locally integrate and are expected to repatriate (Albert 2010: 77–80). Initially recognized as a short-term solution to the need for protection of vulnerable populations, temporary protection also made it possible for host states to restrict asylum and impede the long-term integration of migrant populations. However, the historical case of Bosnians illustrates that refugees may in fact become per-

manent residents despite the emphasis on temporariness in this protection regime (Koser and Black 1999).

There is no doubt that the way in which initial refugee status determination operates is very crucial for the consecutive stages of protection, settlement, and integration possibilities in the hosting states. The questions of how much the policies and practices of the individual hosting states are aligned with the frameworks of the international refugee regime and how much the national policies and practices of these states are open to the options of protection, settlement, and integration are also crucial to the whole process. In addition to these legal and administrative frameworks and their applications, as noted earlier, so many various factors operating through the agency of refugees themselves and the settings of the host and origin states determine the outcomes concerning the settlement and integration possibilities. It is within this context that to elaborate the cases of the Syrian refugees in Turkey in a comparative perspective with the cases of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, this chapter benefits from the fourfold framework presented above, emphasizing the determinants of settlement in cases of mass influx (see table 6.1). The first determinants are the home country structures, which establish the measures for refugees' repatriation and reintegration, depending primarily on the duration and the magnitude of the conflict. Refugees' accessibility to housing or private property, to labor market and public services in the event of their return, are crucial determinants at the sublevel (Harild and Christensen 2010; Sert 2010; Schmeidl 2011). The second source consists of the existence and type of protection regime. The protection regime is indicated by how migrants or refugees are defined by the state-led regime, what it covers (i.e., the duration of the protection regime and the public services provided), and whether it is also safeguarded by an international protection regime that allows for burden/responsibility sharing between several states (Jacobsen 1996; Koser and Black 1999; Harild and Christensen 2010; Scalettaris 2010). The third determinant incorporates host-related factors. These include socioeconomic conditions, provision of basic needs, and the existence of a secure status in the host country, which create a hospitable environment for the longer stay of refugees. Yet as in the case of temporary labor migration, the process of migration may alter the conditions in the host countries as a result of various factors, including the politicization of the displacement or the exhaustion of resources provided by the host country (Kunz 1981; Stein 1986; Jacobsen 1996). The fourth and final determinant is the refugees' individual motives and incentives, which are subject to change over time (Castles 2006). In addition to the initial motives for flight, factors including sociodemographic characteristics of the household, ethnic and religious ties with the host community, and the conditions of socialization (participation in the labor market, welfare system, and education system) determine refugees' motives for permanency in the host country.

Table 6.1. Determinants of Permanent Settlement in Mass Influx.

Determinant	Sublevel determinants
Home country structures	*Measures for repatriation and reintegration*
	Housing *or* existence of private property
	Economy and employment
	Security and intensity of conflict
	Public services
	Accountable and responsive governance
Existence and type of protection	*Which type of status?*
	Status determination
	Coverage
	Safeguard by the international protection regime
Host country structures	*Measures for integration*
	Legal grounds for participation in the labor market
	Legal grounds for participation in the welfare system
	and/or access to aid and services
	Access to citizenship
	Politicization of the displacement
	Public opinion and public perception
Individual factors	*Motives and incentives*
	Reason for flight
	Duration of displacement and stay
	Sociodemographic characteristics of the household
	Ethnic and religious ties with the host community and previous history of migration
	Participation in the labor market
	Participation in the welfare system
	Participation in the education system
	Country of birth

Table constructed by the authors with the use of following studies: Kunz 1981; Jacobsen 1996; Koser and Black 1999; Castles 2006; Sert 2010; Harild and Christensen 2010; Schmeidl 2011; Scalettaris 2010.

A Historical Case, Mass Influx of Afghans to Pakistan and Iran, and Their Settlement: What We Already Know?

This chapter focuses on the case of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran as a comparison with the current Syrian refugees' crisis in Turkey. The Afghan case provides a comparable background due to several characteristics of the exodus: (1) a large-scale displacement, especially during the peak years when it reached a magnitude of 6.2 million; (2) the protracted conflict, which includes numerous players, necessitating a long-term displacement; (3) the arrivals of millions of refugees immensely affecting the two neighboring countries, Iran and Pakistan; (4) intense international interest (then and

now) from regional and international actors. In the following sections, we will elaborate on the ways in which these four characteristics resemble the current Syrian mass influx.

The Afghan refugee influx occurred in several waves, following a recurrent pattern of outward migration and repatriation campaigns. The process first began in April 1978 with the overthrow of the government, which was followed by the Soviet invasion of the country. In the early 1990s, the withdrawal of the Soviet Union led to a massive repatriation campaign by the UNHCR along with international assistance, eventually reaching a scale of 1.5 million Afghans returning in less than a year in 1992 (Schmeidl 2002: 10; Margesson 2007: 2). The subsequent Islamic regime introduced by Taliban after 1996 further eroded human rights in the country, causing a new outward displacement and a substantial population of internally displaced refugees. Another return movement began after the US-led invasion in October 2001, reaching 2.15 million by 2002 (Margesson 2007: 2–3), and a further phase of Afghan displacement began in 2004, with the deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan. In the years 2002–12, nearly 3.8 million people from Pakistan and nearly 1 million people from Iran returned to Afghanistan (Human Rights Watch 2013). Some of these returns have been due to voluntary repatriation, while others were the result of mass deportations and deterrence by the host governments, forcing many long-term inhabitants to repatriate. The final phase of migration from Afghanistan took place following the United States' withdrawal in 2021, which led to the fall of the Afghan government and the rise of Taliban, creating a new wave of migration towards the neighboring countries and beyond.

Today Afghanistan remains the second largest source country of refugees worldwide, with more than 2.7 million refugees residing in 82 countries. It also has one of the highest levels of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), with a population of nearly 950,000 people displaced within the borders of the country. Since the outset of the conflict, Afghanistan's two neighboring countries, Pakistan and Iran, have been the main host countries, harboring as many as 6 million in the 1990s. Despite massive returns, as of 2019 there were 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan and 3 million in Iran (of which nearly 1 million are registered) (UNHCR 2019a).

The history of protracted conflict in Afghanistan and the further waves of migration toward Pakistan and Iran since the 1970s illustrate how the conditions in the homeland had a significant role in Afghan refugees' longer stay and permanent settlement in the new host countries. According to Harild and Christensen (2011), four issues continue to create barriers to durable solutions for returned refugees in Afghanistan: (1) the lack of rights to land, property, and houses; (2) the disruptions of livelihoods or dependence on humanitarian aid; (3) inadequate or absent delivery of services; and (4) the limitations regarding accountable and responsive governance

in the homeland. As discussed by Kronenfeld (2011: 6) tens of thousands of Afghans still "daily cross back and forth into Pakistan and Iran in search of work, education, health care, and other needs." This cyclical mobility across borders and the high population of IDPs within the country reveal the government's inability to provide basic services for its population (Kronenfeld 2011; Schmeidl 2011: 8).

In terms of the type and existence of protection, the conditions of stay for the Afghan refugees have been drastically altered over a period of forty years. Pakistan, on the one hand, is not a signatory of the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol and therefore has no national legal mechanism for asylum or refugee status determination (Zieck 2008: 254). Iran, on the other hand, ratified the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol; however, these agreements were never incorporated into domestic law (Koepke 2011). Initially, both countries developed a nearly open-door policy with a certain degree of toleration toward refugees, with the support of international assistance (Schmeidl, 2011:10). The open-door approach became exhausted in the 1990s as Iran and Pakistan became reluctant to provide protection to newly arriving refugees. Since 2001, repatriation programs were buttressed by registration campaigns in the two countries in an attempt to monitor the existing population. Refugee identity cards were issued in the mid-2000s, which allowed Afghans only temporary stay and either no rights or restricted rights to work and move about freely (Margessen 2007). Along with the difficulties of reintegrating into Afghan society, the politicization of displacement by the host governments and the recurrent gap in the refugee and security regimes created tensions between the national and international actors (Schmeidl 2011). Since 2010, conditions have deteriorated for Afghan refugees: Iran has actively pursued mass deportations despite criticism from the international community (Koepke 2011), and the Pakistani government has been making declarations about mass deportation and closing down refugee camps since 2012.

In terms of the conditions in the host country, the mass influx of Afghan refugees since the 1980s led to drastic demographic transformations, especially in terms of the ethnic balance in regions in Pakistan and Iran largely populated with refugees. In Pakistan, Pashto has become the dominant language spoken in provincial capitals of Peshawar, Karachi, and Quetta, and the ethnic recomposition has often been coupled with ethnic tensions between indigenous and Afghan communities (Borthakur 2017). In Iran, the majority of the Afghans are Hazara Shias, who fled their home country due to extreme ethnic and religious persecution (Tober 2007). In both cases, although neither country favored or encouraged it, local integration has been in practice. However, refugee return has been favored for a durable solution rather than a systematic local integration (Schmeidl 2011: 11). Both Iran and Pakistan adopted restrictive policies for naturalization, permanent

settlement, and accessibility to legal employment or social integration. The policies restricting accessibility to the economic, social, or cultural rights in the host countries pushed many Afghans to return to their home country, although many stayed on.

In Pakistan, the Citizenship Act restricts migrants who arrived after 1951 from obtaining citizenship. The government has tightened its control in recent years in response to rising public and state concern over economic privileges and security. The conditions of stay for Afghans in Pakistan are currently tenuous, as the national assembly decided to allow 1.6 million registered Afghans, many of whom have been living in the country for over 30 years, to stay "at least until the end of 2015" (Craig 2014). Although more than 450,000 people voluntarily repatriated by the UNHCR's facilitation since 2016, the returns are taking place at a slower pace due to the ongoing security situation in Afghanistan (UNHCR 2019a). In Iran, the nationality law does not allow Afghans to gain citizenship or permanent residency and has severe restrictions against marriage rights. The law bans Afghan men married to Iranian women from applying for Iranian citizenship, and even the children of such marriages face barriers to citizenship (Human Rights Watch 2013). Although Afghan refugees have been permitted to work in both countries, they are limited in their employment prospects to jobs not easily filled by the native population, such as the construction industry, and often work without any legal documentation (Koepke 2011). As these examples on different policy areas illustrate, the lack of a permanent and secure status results in a situation of vulnerability for the Afghan refugees, who are often stigmatized as the source of security, drug, or health problems in their host countries (Borthakur 2017; Tober 2007).

The analyses of Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan illustrate that a fourth determinant factor, a set of individual factors, also influenced the conditions of permanency or temporariness. Schmeidl (2011: 1) argues that local integration has been practiced in Iranian and Pakistani even though governments implemented no policies favoring or encouraging it. One of the main reasons for the choice of migration to these two countries is the existence of former temporary migration patterns from Afghanistan. Even before the period of instability, Afghans had a tradition of traveling to Iran and Pakistan as pilgrims, students, merchants, or temporary workers (Koepke 2011: 1; Kronenfeld 2008: 50). Such patterns accounted for an already established population in Pakistan and Iran, making it easier for subsequent migrants from Afghanistan to settle (Kronenfeld 2008: 51). A pertinent debate in academia questions the correlation between settlement in camps and permanency. It has been argued that the return rate for non–camp residents would be higher, as they would not receive the basic needs available in camps provisioned by governmental or international humanitarian aid organizations. However, scholars such as Kronenfeld (2008) argued that,

especially in cases with a long history of displacement, settlement in the urban areas created greater possibilities for integration into the social and economic environment of the host country. Life in the cities changed the livelihood patterns and self-conceptions of refugees, making it harder for the UNHCR and the host government to keep track of them and their further repatriation (Kronenfeld, 2008: 52–54).

The case of Afghan refugees provides insights on the potential permanency or temporariness of Syrian refugees in Turkey. In Afghanistan, the lack of a reliable government and ongoing environment of security reduced the chances of a durable return by refugees. The challenges regarding the alignment of a solid international protection regime, together with the host governments' immigration systems, pushed Afghans toward vulnerability despite their long-term stay. The previous section illustrated that notwithstanding the structural restrictions, many refugees opted for alternative and often irregular outlets of stay in their host countries. This phenomenon underscores the implications of individual-level factors such as ethnic ties, socialization, and previous experiences of migration to the host country. Based on the reading of the thirty-year-old experience of displacement from Afghanistan, the next section discusses the likelihood that and the extent to which Syrian refugees' temporariness may lead to permanency in Turkey.

The Syrian Refugees in Turkey: An Overview

As of 2019, the Syrian civil war had caused the displacement of an estimated around 12 million Syrians, which is equal to half of Syria's total population. This population had fled their homes and taken refuge in neighboring countries or within Syria itself. According to the UNHCR, about 5.6 million fled to Syria's close neighbors of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, and almost 6.2 million were internally displaced within Syria. During this time, while the flow of Syrians from their home continued, there were also some returns, particularly from 2017 to 2019, to relatively secured areas of the country (Bulur 2018; Ghazal 2018). Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, Turkey has become home to an enlarging Syrian community. While the Syrian refugees are now the world's largest refugee population, Turkey has become the world's largest refugee-hosting nation, hosting 65 percent of Syrian refugees according to the UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response website in late 2019 (UNHCR 2019b).

The earliest flows of Syrians to Turkey began in April 2011, when the Syrian government started using lethal force to crack down on antigovernment protests. In fact, during the first phase of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the pace of the refugee flows was relatively slow, with some even returning. After Kofi Annan failed to broker a ceasefire in the second half of 2012, clashes

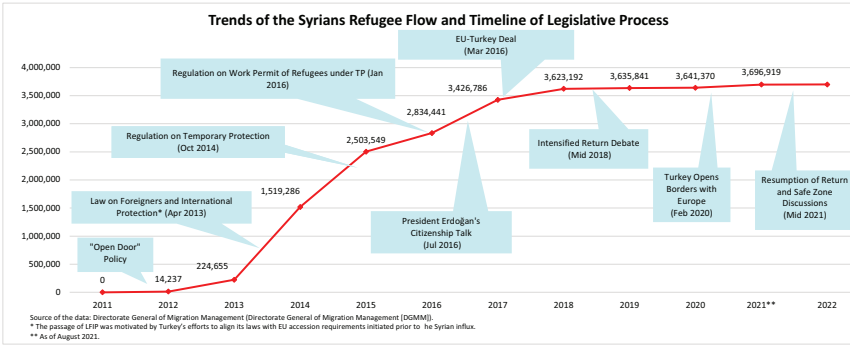

Figure 6.1. Syrian Refugees and Policy Responses in Turkey. © Ahmet İçduygu and Damla B. Aksel.

in Syria escalated, and arrivals in Turkey increased to 20,000[1] refugees per month: by the end of the year, there were over 170,000 registered refugees in Turkey. In 2013, the average monthly number of refugees arriving in the country reached 40,000. The figures related to the migration stock, and flows of Syrians in Turkey soared in the period between June 2014 and January 2015, as a result of both the significant increase in the number of refugees reaching Turkey's borders and the mass registration process by the Turkish state as it attempted to control the incoming populations. The number of registered Syrian refugees in the country reached 1.5 million in 2014 and rose to 2.5 million in 2015. As of late 2019, 3.6 million Syrian citizens live in Turkey, with only 63,000, or only 1.7 percent, of them living in the camps, and the remaining population residing in urban areas throughout the country (DGMM 2019).

From the first day of the Syrian crisis, Turkey has had an open-door policy. Syrians escaping from the civil war and entering Turkey were called "guests," not "refugees," and generously welcomed to the country. First, they were called as guests because the Turkish authorities were noticeably cautious about any possibility of their long-term or permanent stay. Second, Turkey was viciously involved in the Syrian crisis and nakedly anti-Assad in its stance: the Turkish authorities openly accused Bashar al-Assad's regime of being a dictatorship and harming its citizens while greeting refugees fleeing into the country. The country's proactive position toward the Syrian civil war was conceivably due to its direct concerns for the future of Syria, particularly related to the prospects of Kurdish and Turkmen populations there. Third, Turkey tended to substantiate its "soft power" by actively contributing to the solution for the refugee crisis of the Syrian civil war, positioning itself as an important–and highly visible–player in the region (İçduygu

2015). While Turkey has been reinforcing its involvement in Syria through military operations since 2016, it publicly declared that two operations since 2018, Operation Olive Branch and Operation Euphrates Shield, were aimed at repatriating a part of the Syrian refugees residing in its territories.

The Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Toward a Vulnerable Permanency

In situations of influx, return to the country of origin, local integration in the country of first asylum, and third-country resettlement are generally considered to resolve the precariousness of refugees. In the case of the Syrian influx to Turkey, no durable solution has been implemented, and the short-term solution has been limited to local integration in Turkey rather than full return or resettlement to a third country. In this section, we discuss the issue of permanency for Syrian refugees in Turkey by elaborating on the four aspects: (1) conditions in Syria, (2) type of protection and available outlets for permanency, (3) conditions of integration in Turkey, and (4) the motives and incentives of Syrians in Turkey.

Conditions in Syria

Before the start of the unrest in 2011, Syria was a fast-growing, lower-middle-income country. It was, however, suffering from the lack of broader economic and political inclusion and further transparency and civil liberties (Hinnebusch 2008; Perthes 2011). The country was also suffering from high levels of perceived corruption and low trust in public institutions. Added to these enabling conditions were the external factors that contributed to the onset of the conflict in the climate, the Arab Spring and a sudden shift in the regional context (Gause III 2011). In the last eight years, the conflict has caused extensive damage to Syria's physical infrastructure, including provision of water, electricity, and sanitation. Additionally, social infrastructure such as schools and healthcare centers have been severely damaged or destroyed altogether. In a World Bank (2017) study, it is estimated that, for instance, the war damaged or destroyed about a third of the housing stock and about half of medical and education facilities, which led to significant economic loss. It is also estimated that the losses in GDP between 2011 and 2016 sum to about four times the size of the Syrian GDP in 2010. The destruction of physical infrastructure and the financial losses, nevertheless, do not demonstrate the full toll of the war. Syria has become the largest forced displacement crisis in the world since World War II; as noted earlier, over half of the country's preconflict population has been forcibly displaced. Remaining civilians in the country have experienced increasingly vulnerable

living conditions in affected communities; ongoing casualties have imposed insufferable distress and psychological impacts on individuals and their families in the country. As the conflict continues, socioeconomic outcomes further deteriorate, and more Syrians tend to emigrate. And one can easily claim that the longer the conflict continues, the slower the postconflict recovery will be.

In late 2019, the situation in Syria was characterized by principally three factors: first, ISIS was substantially but not completely defeated; second, the Assad regime seemed to have won its war to stay in power and controls more than half of Syria's territory and its population; and third, while some peace talks took place in a fragile setting, serious clashes persistently continued among the stakeholders, including the Assad regime, local opposition groups, and foreign powers. Although some cautiously claim that there was a de-escalation deal that seems to mark a step toward the final phase of the Syrian civil war and crisis, many others argue that the country entered a dangerous and much more volatile phase that was going to be characterized by the key stakeholders seeking to hold on the ground and ensure their interests are protected (UK Parliament 2018; Araabi and Hilal 2016).

In short, presently, Syria is a war-torn country that is heading toward "failed state" status. Despite some major changes in the dynamics of the clashes and violence in the country, which occasionally give a positive signal toward a de-escalation process, a peaceful resolution still remains elusive, suppressing the opportunities for refugees to return. In general, the conditions for return are in line with the balance of power among actors on the ground, affected by violent clashes, the deterioration of property, and looting in Syria. Over the last eight years, although there have been reports in the media of limited instances of repatriations following temporary procurements of local security, many of these were short-lived by new and more populous entries to Turkey (Hürriyet Daily News 2015). However, since 2018 there have been increasing joint efforts by Russia and Turkey to put forward a plan to return some large numbers of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries back to their homeland, particularly to the so-called "safe zones" created by these two countries. The creation of safe zones took place in mid-2019, as a result of an agreement between Turkey and Russia following the Turkish offensive in Northern Syria. Collating information on returns remains a challenge due to different patterns of mobility of Syrians (1) within Turkey, (2) across Turkey and the neighboring countries, and (3) from Turkey to third countries (especially Europe), as well as (4) cyclical mobility to Syria as participants in the armed conflict. Against this background, Turkey's minister of interior declared that some 354,000 out of 3.6 million Syrians had returned to their homeland by 2019, and the Turkish president announced that some 371,000 Syrian refugees returned to Northern Syria from the beginning of Turkey's military operation in November

2019 to December 2019 (Al Jazeera 2019). One should note that there is a strong established view stressing that although the governments and aid agencies are already beginning to consider the repatriation of the millions of Syrian refugees, the Syrian conflict shows little or no sign of coming to end in the near future (Crisp 2018). Yet Syria today is still a divided country where conflicts are caused by different clashing domestic and international forces: Syrian government and allied Russian military, Turkish troops and allied Syrian rebels, Kurdish armed groups backed by the United States, groups supported by Iran, and ISIS. As can be deduced from the Afghan case, in the absence of a politically and economically stable environment, the repatriation programs will not be able to support the principles of voluntariness, security, and sustainability, which are necessary to build a legitimate ground for repatriation (İçduygu and Ayaşlı 2019).

Type of Protection and Available Outlets for Permanency

Turkey's policy reactions to the Syrian refugee issues have been complicated both by its expectation that the political crisis in Syria would be short-lived. The influx of Syrian refugees unexpectedly emerged as Turkey was in the midst of a major migration policy reform taking place in the context of Turkey's EU-ization process (İçduygu 2015), and consequently, the dynamics and mechanisms of these reforms have been affected by this crisis. As a result, Syrian refugees have been subject to a transitioning asylum and protection regime as policymakers try to implement broad legislative overhauls while simultaneously responding to the protracted humanitarian crisis on the ground.

Turkey is a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Additional Protocol, albeit with a geographical limitation that only grants asylum rights to Europeans. As such, a significant portion of "non-Turkish or non-Muslim" migrants arriving to Turkey since the 1980s has been irregular and defined by Turkish law as "illegal." Furthermore, almost all non-European asylum seekers are not entitled to stay in Turkey, even after gaining recognized refugee status. Rather they are provided with a temporary protection scheme during their refugee status determination period (Kiris¸çi 2003). In an attempt to take the necessary steps toward allowing immigrants into the country and treating asylum seekers and irregular migrants in accordance with the international norms, the Parliament in 2013 adopted the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), which has only been in force since April 2014. The new law established the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), which became the central authority in the governance of asylum and migration in the country (I˙çduygu and Aksel 2013).

Although the Turkish asylum system is geographically restricted, there have been prior instances of more or less permanent acceptance of refugees

under conditions of mass influx, such as those following the exodus from Bulgaria in 1989 and from Iraq in 1991. Turkish policies toward Syrians escaping the civil war were initially welcoming. The open-door policy has been accompanied by three policy elements based on a directive adopted in March 2012 to determine the conditions of management of Syrians in Turkey: (1) temporary protection, (2) nonrefoulement, and (3) optimal humanitarian assistance (Kirişçi 2014). The implementation of the LFIP further clarified the protected status of Syrians in Turkey. The law also clarified the conditions under which the temporary protection could be rescinded by the Turkish state, including the normalization of conditions in the home country, the voluntary return of refugees to their homeland, and the endangerment of Turkey's national security by individuals (Eksi 2014: 167). Following the LFIP, a new Temporary Protection (TP) Regulation came into effect in October 2014, setting out specific provisions on registration and documentation procedures in Turkey. The TP also provided refugees with the right to a lawful stay in the country until the conditions for safe return were established in Syria, regulated the TP Identification Document containing the foreigners' ID number, and granted access to social benefits and services such as health, education, and entry to the labor market.

Over the last eight years, the government's policies and discourses on the Syrian refugees in Turkey have dramatically changed (Memişoğlu and Ilgit 2017). Indeed, amendments to national immigration and asylum policies gained momentum with the arrival of Syrian refugees. Although, it had been drafted long before the arrival of Syrian refugees to the country, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection brought about major changes and provided a legal ground for Syrians to be classified as "persons under temporary protection" who were continuously and preferably referred to as "guests" (İçduygu 2015). Later, in October 2014, a clear definition of the rights and obligations of temporary protection beneficiaries was set out with the introduction of the Temporary Protection Regulation. In the early years of the conflict, the policies of the Turkish government asserted the temporariness of the refugees based on the presumption that the crisis would end and the refugees would return home.

In the summer and fall of 2015, when over one million people mostly from Syria landed on Europe's shores, fleeing war and persecution, seeking a better life for their families, and as Turkey functioned as a transit country for many of these people, the issues related to Syrian refugees in Turkey were placed high at the top of the international agenda, particularly in Europe. As this process resulted in the signing of the EU-Turkey statement, which aims at stopping the transit flows from Turkey, some policy changes toward the Syrians in Turkey were enacted. In early 2016, the government began to shift its approach toward long-term planning, implementing policies such as the introduction of the Work Permit Regulation for Syrians, the

decision to gradually phase out Temporary Education Centers with Syrian curriculums to integrate Syrian children in Turkish schools, and the establishment of Migrant Health Centers staffed by Syrian medical professionals. Again, in mid-2016, Turkish president Erdoğan unexpectedly declared that Syrian refugees living in Turkey could eventually be granted citizenship. Consequently, since early 2017, there has been a new policy concerning the naturalization of Syrians with "high qualifications" who can contribute to Turkey. It appears that as of December 2019 there were around 110,000 Syrians who have been naturalized as Turkish citizens. It also appears that although there would be further moves in this direction, mostly due to high social reactions from native communities, this would not be a policy of mass naturalization but rather one with more exceptional measures–such as providing only some selected groups of Syrians, such as highly skilled or those with high incomes, with this opportunity (Erdoğan 2017; Akçapar and şimşek 2018). Nevertheless, the policies toward naturalizations indicate that the Turkish authorities will circuitously accept the likelihood of the process in which the protracted displacement of Syrians turns into their long-term, and even permanent, settlement, at least for some portion of these displaced populations.

In late 2017 and early 2018, another contradictory shift in policy-related discourses occurred in Turkey. Possibly again being affected by the rising public reactions against Syrians in the country, President Erdoğan made the following statement: "We want our refugee brothers and sisters to return to their own land, their own homes; we cannot keep 3.5 million people here forever" (İçduygu and Nimer 2018). Later, the Turkish officials repeatedly announced that the government had a commitment to create the necessary humanitarian conditions, complete with infrastructure and superstructure facilities, in Syria so that all Syrians could return to their homes. Undoubtedly, this revealed a major change in Turkey's policy toward its massive population of displaced Syrians.

Conditions of Integration in Turkey

Turkey's long-established immigration regime remains a stringent impediment to legal integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey. The regime is based on the 1934 Law on Settlement (Kirişci 2003), which established two divergent statuses by (1) facilitating the migration and integration of those of "Turkish origin and culture" either as migrants or as refugees and (2) preventing and impeding the entry as migrants or refugees of those who did not meet this criterion. Although the new Settlement Law of November 2006 has made changes toward the liberalization of migration policies, it continues to limit formal immigration to Turkey to individuals and groups of "Turkish descent and culture." The identifying features of "Turkishness" are not solely related

to Turkish ethnicity but the ability and willingness to adopt the Turkish language and membership of the Muslim Sunni ethnic group often associated with past Ottoman rule. In this context, it appears that many Syrians, from Kurds and Arabs to Assyrians and Yezidis, are likely to face difficulties in settling and integrating themselves in Turkey despite claiming historically established community links to the country. Moreover, even though only Turkmen of Syria can be formally incorporated and naturalized into the Turkish nation according to the Settlement Law, the political interest of the Turkish state in keeping Turkish-origin populations in the neighboring countries (as was the case in Iraq during the 1990s) might hinder their settlement and naturalization process in Turkey. Consequently, as far as the future of integration of Syrian refugees is considered, from the official perspective, the presence of a large number of Syrians in Turkey not only requires a long-term solution but also a recognition of the long-term economic, social, and political responsibility of supporting the refugee communities in the country. Against this background, the most recent government position toward Syrian refugees has two main dimensions: on the one hand, it aims at halting the flow of refugees and reversing their movement; on the other hand, it intends to provide them, at least some of the selected groups of Syrians (highly skilled or high-income groups), with better settlement and integration opportunities.

What we know from the deep-rooted literature on migrant and refugee integration is that well-established, comprehensive integration policies are needed to cater to migrants and refugees, firstly to provide for their immediate need for housing, education, employment, and health. In the area of housing, the state pursues a policy of self-financed accommodation for the majority of the Syrian population. Although the temporary accommodation centers were provided as the initial response by the state for the early comers, there is an ongoing practice of reducing the number of camp populations and closing down the camps. Since the early days of the refugee influx, Syrian refugees have been provided with free healthcare services at Migrant Health Centers established in highly populated areas and public hospitals through referrals. In the area of education, Syrian and other refugee children are supported to have access to education via Temporary Education Centers or through the state schools under national curriculum. According to UNICEF, for the 2018–19 education year, 616,000 Syrian and other refugee children were registered to receive formal education in Turkey; however, more than 430,000 children were out of school (UNICEF 2018). In the area of labor force participation, the Turkish parliament has amended a law in 2016 for those under temporary protection on access to the formal labor market in Turkey. With this law, those under temporary protection could obtain work permits six months after they had received their TP identities; however, the applications for the permits had to be initiated by their em-

ployers. Despite this legal setting, the number of Syrians who participated in the formal labor market remained low at 31,000 people in 2019, due to its limited added benefits, in comparison to informal labor force participation.

As refugees become more permanent, mostly due to both the refugees' own spontaneous integration into communities and the continuing deterioration of the situation in Syria, public opinion has grown less hospitable and, at times, hostile. Complaints about the strain that refugees place on the local economy and their competition for jobs is a widely voiced complaint in Turkey's public discourse (Erdoğan 2015; Orhan and Gündoğan 2015; Öztürkler and Göksel 2015). Especially in the bordering cities such as Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, and Mersin, protests and clashes have occurred in parallel with growing competitiveness in the job market and soaring inflation. Furthermore, economic argument did not emerge in isolation from concerns about culture, security, and the social system (Özden 2013; Dinçer et al. 2013; Kirişçi 2014). Even though these concerns have not mainly been voiced though reactionary behavior, there is a rising discontent and xenophobia among the public opinion that alarms the policymakers (Erdoğan 2018).

Motives and Incentives of Syrians

Along with the structural factors, the motives and incentives of refugees are subject to change over the course of this protracted conflict. The existence of continuous passages across the Syrian-Turkish borders reveals that a certain group of Syrian refugees is still actively involved in the conflict. Repatriation is expected for this group in the event of a political restructuring in Syria. For the remaining majority of the population, their longer stay in Turkey leads to a certain permanency. There is a significantly higher population of younger Syrians in Turkey: according to the DGMM (2019), 47 percent of the Syrian population is under eighteen, and based on the Ministry of Interior, as of November 2018, 405,500 Syrians were born in Turkey. Under current conditions, Syrians born in Turkey receive no citizenship rights. Still, especially in the camps, the Turkish state has been proactive in socializing the young Syrians into Turkish society and culture through schooling–this has been reflected in the curriculum used in the camps, which includes the Turkish national anthem. The socialization through education or participation in professional and social life may act as a pull factor for Syrians to stay in Turkey.

Existing empirical research on Syrians provides limited knowledge on the changing motivations of the Syrians living in Turkey. According to a survey conducted by Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) in 2013, some 2 percent of the respondents reported thinking of returning as early as possible, and 88 percent thought of returning in case of a

change in the conditions in Syria, their hometown, or regime change. Only 7.7 percent reported that they never thought of returning (AFAD 2013). In a follow-up survey in 2017, 71 percent of the respondents reported thinking of returning, and 16 percent reported never thinking of returning to Syria. A similar result was obtained in another survey conducted in 2017, where 16 percent of the participants reported that they never thought of returning to Syria (Erdoğan 2018). This change in the self-projection of Syrians illustrates that their longer stay in Turkey increases their likelihood of not returning in the future.

Conclusion

The challenge of human displacement from Syria is large and growing in scale. A great deal of qualitative and quantitative evidence suggests that the situation of Syria's displaced people is becoming increasingly problematic. On the one hand, those who succeed in escaping from their country are struggling to find a safe refuge in other states; on the other, those who have found safe refuge in other states are trying to integrate their lives into the receiving communities over time.

The central problem of this chapter is how, in what ways, and to what extent the long-term or permanent settlement of Syrian refugees in Turkey has occurred over the last five years. In that respect, assuming a dialogical interplay between individual characteristics of refugees and local/national and global/international processes and structures, this analysis reexamines and problematizes the settlement prospects of Syrian refugees in Turkey. A comparative perspective, referring to the cases of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, has also been provided.

Consequently, it is possible to draw the following conclusions. The early notion of Syrian refugees as temporary "guests" in Turkey has been increasingly questioned, as a protracted displacement seems increasingly inevitable along with the likelihood that permanent settlement in the country will be an option for a significant proportion of the refugee population (Kirişçi and Karaca 2014). Based on the existing literature on the determinants of settlement and the case of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, time and other factors imbue a "vulnerable permanency" for this population.

First and foremost, despite the attempts for a safe zone on the Turkish-Syrian border that is expected to host voluntary repatriations, the current conditions in Syria provide an environment for refugees in the short and medium term that is far from secure. As in the case with Afghanistan, the restructuring of the country after its protracted conflict and the establishment of accountable and responsive governance is a long-term process. This is especially critical considering the former failed examples of safe zones in

Bosnia and Rwanda that provided far from secure shelters for refugees. Furthermore, the history of Afghan refugees has illustrated that, even though the repatriation may become a possible scenario during the periods of relative security, its sustainability depends on a number of factors, including the existence of property rights, accountable and responsive governance, and adequate delivery of services. In the case of Syria, the prospects for return remain limited in an environment rent by internal and international conflict. If returning home is not an option, two other choices exist for refugees in Turkey: either staying in their current country or moving on to other countries–but in doing so they often become subject to temporary protection status. One can expect that, as happened in the case of the Afghan refugees, there will be spillover effects of Syrian refugee flows beyond the immediate region, not only to relatively close regions such as Europe but also to more distant lands such as North America and Australia over the coming decades.

Second, despite providing a rapid protection under the conditions of mass influx, temporary protection does not easily facilitate a status of integration into the receiving communities in Turkey or elsewhere. Under the current international refugee regime, the long-term solutions for refugees in the cases of mass influx depend on the decisions of the sovereign states and the political confrontations in the international realm. Europe's response to Bosnian refugees with temporary protection and the less systematic protection schemes offered by Pakistani and Iranian governments to Afghan refugees are illustrative of the ultimate authority of each case. In Iran and Pakistan, the restrictive policies for naturalization, permanent settlement, and access to legal employment and social integration continue to be the main impediments against Afghans' legal integration in these countries, despite having lived there for many years. For the Syrian case, there are certain legal and administrative measures that have already been taken to provide some comfort to the temporarily protected Syrian refugees: the changes to Turkey's labor laws and the provisions toward limited inclusion in the welfare state facilitate Syrians' socialization and integration to the Turkish society. Still, even though the refugees have been subject to a transitioning asylum and protection regime in Turkey, their secure status will be limited unless the geographical limitation and the Settlement Law are revised by the Turkish state.

Third, the natural process of migration and settlement itself, and the changes in the actions and perceptions of refugees, may alter the conditions of permanency in Turkey. For instance, in the case of many Afghan refugees who were born or spent their childhood in Iran, Afghanistan is an "unknown" they have never seen, making it more difficult to decide on repatriation (Tober 2007). For the Syrians in Turkey, the changes in the self may be reinforced through spontaneous integration of Syrians via the emergence of new generations, processes of schooling, employment, or intermarriages into the receiving communities.

Ahmet İçduygu currently holds a dual appointment as full professor at Koç in the Department of International Relations and the Department of Sociology. He is also the director of the Migration Research Center at Koç (MiReKoç). In addition to his numerous articles in scholarly journals such as *Ethnic and Racial Studies, Citizenship Studies,* and *International Migration*, his most recent books include *Critical Reflections in Migration Research: Views from the South and the East*, coedited with Ayşem Biriz Karaçay (Koç University Press, 2014), *Forced Migration and Social Cohesion*, in Turkish, coauthored with Saime Özçürümez (Bilgi University Press, 2020), and *Migrants and Cities*, coedited by Jan Ruth (Edward Elgar, forthcoming).

Damla B. Aksel is assistant professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Bahçeşehir University (İstanbul) and a research associate at Migration Research Center at Koç University (MiReKoç). Her research focuses on migration governance, transnationalism, diasporas, irregular migration, and migration in the context of Turkey-EU relations. She is the author of *Home States and Homeland Politics: Interactions between the Turkish State and Its Emigrants in France and the United States* (Routledge, 2019).

Note

1. For the figures cited in this paragraph, see the UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response website: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria.

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