

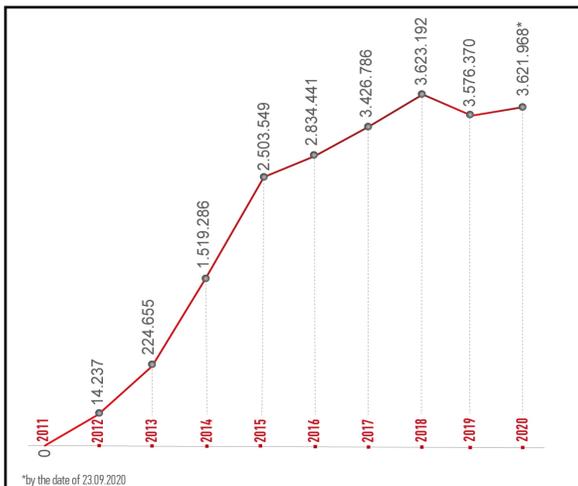
Turkey: border management, protection, reception, and integration of refugees

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya (*İstanbul Bilgi University*)

Dr. N. Ela Gökalp-Aras and Dr. Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek (*Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul*)

Dr. Susan Rottmann (*Özyeğin University*)

Number of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Year



Source: DGMM. 2020. "Temporary Protection Statistics"

Abstract

Hosting the largest number of refugees in the world has become one of Turkey's most pressing domestic and foreign-policy challenges with significant implications for migration governance. Since 2011, numerous government institutions have been involved in developing protection, reception and integration procedures. There is room for improvement in terms of policy coherence and inter-agency coordination, but many migrants insist they are quite happy to be in Turkey.

References

- Gokalp-Aras, N. E. and Sahin-Mencutek, Z. (2019). Border Management and Migration Controls- Turkey Country Report, <https://zenodo.org/record/3402839#>.
- Gökalp-Aras, N. E. and Şahin-Mencütek, Z. (2020). Refugee Protection- Turkey Country Report, <https://zenodo.org/record/3613702#.X3TY-GgzY2w>
- Kaya, A. (2020). Reception- Turkey Country Report <https://zenodo.org/record/3665809#.X3TZLWgzY2w>
- Rottmann, S. (2020). Integration Policies, Practices and Experiences – Turkey Country Report <https://zenodo.org/record/3865824#.X3TZgWgzY2w>

Contact

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya
İstanbul Bilgi University
ayhan.kaya@bilgi.edu.tr

Introduction

Since 2014, Turkey has been hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. The vast majority of Turkey's refugees are 3.6 million Syrians under temporary protection who amount to 64.4% of the total displaced population. There are also close to 370,000 refugee and asylum seekers of other nationalities (the top three nationalities being Afghans, Iraqis and Iranians) under international protection.

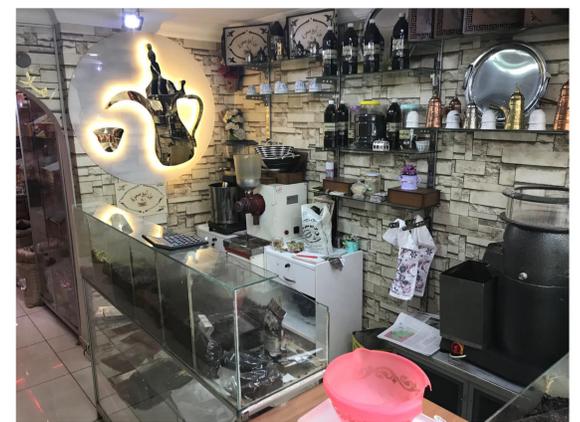
Main Results

Integration policies in the aftermath of 2015:

- 1) *From open door policy towards Syrians to return rhetoric and practices (2011-2019)*
 - Border management at first revolved around humanitarianism and later around securitization and policies of deterrence.
 - There is increasing concern about involuntary returns of Syrians as well as individual cases of administrative detention and deportation of irregular migrants.
- 2) *From hospitality to reluctance in reception*
 - Turkey does not commit to the provision of shelter for asylum applicants, but authorizes the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) to provide state-funded accommodation on a discretionary basis.
 - In the first years of mass immigration of Syrians, a religio-political discourse of reception based on guesthood and Ansar spirit was promoted.
- 3) *Multiple international protection statuses and differences in access to rights by beneficiaries*
 - National asylum Law (2013) introduced four protection types: Refugees, conditional refugees, subsidiary protection, temporary protection
 - There are differences regarding access to rights for the beneficiaries of international protection (non-Syrians) and temporary protection (Syrians).
- 4) *De-facto Integration Policy*
 - Despite lacking an official national integration programme and despite the rise of a return discourse (to Syria) among public officials and the media, there is a de facto national integration policy, including integration measures for employment, education, healthcare and citizenship.
 - As a new policy field, integration will most likely take more institutional forms and remain a salient issue in the public discourse in the years to come.

Methods and Material

Our research is based on a document analysis of policy and legislative documents (macro level) and the field work, including 84 semi-structured interviews conducted with different meso level stakeholders in four cities (İstanbul, İzmir, Şanlıurfa and Ankara) and 104 micro level interviews with migrants of mostly Syrian origin. The data was analysed on the basis of a qualitative content analysis approach which combines deductive and inductive elements.



A Syrian coffee shop in Istanbul

Lessons Learned

- Need to develop a more civilian border management structure and eliminate vagueness and contradictions in Turkey's legal framework.
- Voluntary returns should be closely monitored for compliance with the non-refoulement principle.
- Ensuring equal and fair access to asylum procedures and facilitating the full access of asylum-seekers to legal aid remain priorities to be achieved. There is a need for developing a full-fledged national asylum management system. The disadvantages and differences between international and temporary protection should be gradually eliminated.
- There is a need to delve deeper into the mechanisms of "integration" of Syrians instead of approaching the issue of refugee accommodation from the lens of "temporariness". The state should develop a comprehensive national integration plan that is also open for local, public debate.
- Addressing refugees' vulnerabilities due to gender, age or disability necessitates multi-dimensional responses that harmonize legislation, implementation and follow-ups.