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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SYRIANS BAROMETER

“A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING SOCIAL
COHESION WITH SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE”

SB- 2022

Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĞAN
NOVEMBER 2023

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Syrians Barometer surveys are one of the most comprehensive field-studies on the subject of Syrians in Türkiye conducted simultaneously with the Turkish society and Syrians. SB research repeated every year since 2017. The research aims to understand and analyze the social encounters, opinions, attitudes, anxieties, expectations and, most importantly, perceptions through comprehensive surveys and focus group meetings. It also attempts at observing the trends of change and suggesting policy recommendations regarding these.

6 Due to the earthquakes on February 2023, the Syrians section of SB-2022 could not be completed. Therefore, SB-2022 study exceptionally only analyzes data from the survey and focus groups with Turkish Citizens (Turks).

*Included in this Executive Summary
are SB-2022's General Framework, Main Findings and Research Profile.*

*The full Syrian Barometer-2022 study report & Executive Summary (and previous SB reports & Executive Summaries) are available in
Turkish, English, Arabic
at:*

*<https://www.unhcr.org/Türkiye>
www.mmuraterdogan.com*

NOTE:

The detailed "Policy Recommendations" section in the SB-2021 study is not included in the executive summary. Those interested in the subject can find it in the full report/book.

SB RESEARCH'S FRAMEWORK

As the anti-administration demonstrations that started in March 2011 spiraled out of control and turned into a civil war encompassing all of Syria, the tragedy surrounding the plight of Syrians who had to escape from their countries to save their lives and sought asylum in neighboring countries has been continuing over 12 years. The number of Syrians who escaped out of the country, which had a national population of 22.5 million in 2011, has surpassed 6.6 million. Additionally, there are around 7 million displaced people within Syria.

Sharing 911 km of land border with Syria, one of the most significantly affected actors from this immense crisis is Türkiye. The first mass movement of Syrians into Türkiye took place with the arrival of a group of 252 individuals through the Cilvegözü border gate in Hatay. Just 3 years later, in 2014, Türkiye has become the country with the highest number of refugees¹ in the world. The influx of Syrian refugees to Türkiye continued until 2017. Entries from Syria to Türkiye have been minimal after 2017, but the increase in numbers has continued until recent years, with an annual average of 100 thousand Syrian babies born in Türkiye. According to the official figures provided by the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) of the Ministry of Interior, the number of Syrians "under temporary protection" is 3.535.898 as of 31 December 2022.² This figure, which corresponds to 3,98% of Türkiye's national population of 85.279.553. According to the numbers announced by the Turkish Government, the number of Syrian babies born in Türkiye between 2011-2021 is 750.000-800.000, the number of Syrians who have received citizenship is 200 thousand. According to statements made by the Ministry of Interior in Türkiye, the number of Syrians returning to Syria as of 2022 is around 550.000.³

Although Türkiye is no stranger to migration and refugee movements, the recent human mobility experience in Türkiye with Syrians is unprecedented in terms of its scale and how quickly it had unfolded. In fact, while the number of individuals under international protection in the country was 58.000, by the end of 2014 the figure reached millions making Türkiye the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. With the issue of Syrian refugees

1 In general, those who are forcibly displaced from their countries or within the country are called "refugees" in the sociological context. By 2022, the number of refugees has reached 90 million. However, according to UNHCR's data, in 2022, there are 27.1 million refugees in the world, 53.2 million internally displaced and 4.6 million asylum seekers. In other words, the concept of refugee is also used for those other than those who receive refugee status. It is also known that the number of people officially accepted as refugees in Türkiye is less than 50.

Even though Türkiye is party to both 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 New York Protocol Relating to Legal Status of Refugees, it retains the geographical limitation in the Convention. The Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which entered into force in 2013, also adopted this approach while regulating the statuses of "refugee", "conditional refugee", and "subsidiary protection". For Syrians who came to Türkiye en masse after 2011, another type of protection, "Temporary Protection" status has been given. As used by academics and even from time to time by Turkish public institutions, SB study, being fully aware of this legal context and its official definition of a refugee, prefers to use the concepts of "Syrians", "asylum-seekers" or "refugee" to refer to the displaced Syrians arriving in Türkiye since 2011. (For the use of the concept of refugee by public institutions in Türkiye in the sociological context See: <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/138450/-our-country-has-been-home-to-the-highest-number-of-refugees-for-the-past-7-years->,)

2 The PMM gave the number of Syrians under temporary protection as 3.535.898 on December 31, 2022. (<https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>, Access: 20 January 2023)

3 Based on its own information, UNHCR puts the number of voluntary returnees at 153,306 as of October 31, 2022. Of this number, 29 thousand returned in 2022. (https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria_durable_solutions) (Access: 10.01.2024)

perceived to be ever so intimately linked to the political developments in Syria, neither the Turkish public nor the political authorities nor the Syrian refugees themselves had predicted that the process would unfold in this way with millions of refugees ending up staying in Türkiye for many years. Until 2013, an effort was made to ensure the settlement of Syrians in the camps set up along the border regions. With the increasing numbers and capacities strained, it had become inevitable to let Syrians move to other parts of Türkiye. Thus, started a new sociological phase. Around 90% Syrians have become “urban refugees”, settling across different towns and cities around Türkiye and living side by side with the Turkish society largely with their own accord. Currently, 98% so Syrians in Türkiye live outside of camps. In terms of explaining the sociological situation in Türkiye, it is important to keep in mind that after 2011, millions of migrants from many countries other than Syrians such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, etc. came to Türkiye, and some of them, both Syrians and other nationalities, stayed in Türkiye for a while and then moved to other countries. In other words, although Syrians are the dominant group mentioned here, the number of other groups has also reached an extremely high level, which has further increased the concerns of the society.

29 April 2021 marked the 10th anniversary of the arrival of first Syrians in mass groups in Türkiye, where the average duration of their stay exceeded 5 years. Because of the continuing war and the environment of violence that is becoming chronic in their country as well as the significant destruction these had brought on the country and other political and security-related problems, Syrians’ future prospects of returning to Syria have become uncertain. It is observed that Syrians who find it difficult to return to their country tend to build a new life in Türkiye. This is evident by the facts that a vast majority of Syrians are “urban refugees” living side by side with the Turkish society all around the country, at least 800 thousand Syrian babies were born in Türkiye, Syrians are actively involved in the working life with around 1 million Syrians working, up to 730.000 Syrian children are enrolled to Turkish public schools, over 50.000 Syrian students at Turkish universities, and they are making their livelihood in Türkiye largely themselves. While it is difficult to predict what the future will hold for Syrians in Türkiye, the observable sociological fact is that the lives that they have established over the years here and the hopelessness regarding the situation in Syria deeply affected their plans for the future. As their possibilities, motivations, and tendencies for returning to Syria has been weakened, there is a significant need for planning as well as developing effective policies in social, political, and security fields. It is understood that Turkish society and Syrians have to live together regardless of the expectations or desires of both sides, and that the possibility of this becoming permanent is getting stronger.

SYRIANS BAROMETER: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING SOCIAL COHESION WITH SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE

SYRIANS BAROMETER (SB) research is conceived of as a regularly held study to be simultaneously conducted on Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye, whose number has exceeded 3,5 million as of 31 December 2022, and the Turkish society. Structured as a continuation of two previous studies, “Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration” published in 2014 and “Syrians Barometer: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye” published in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021; the study aims to measure and analyze the views, opinions, and attitudes of both Syrians in Türkiye and the Turkish society. The main aim of the SB is to take the most realistic scientific photograph possible of social reality and cohesion, which is the most comprehensive study on social cohesion in this field and the main objective of which is to provide a “a framework for achieving social cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye”, being done once every year. SB research is expected both to provide reliable data on a regular basis to public institutions, researchers, academics, civil society organizations, international organizations, and other interested parties; and to serve as a resource for empirical data-based policies.

SB attempts to remain outside of the political discussions as much as possible and to draw attention to the social reality between Syrians and the Turkish society. In addition, it aims to examine the mutual perceptions and, more importantly, to track, measure, and analyze the transformation/development in the perceptions. It is in this context that the experiences, fore-sights, expectations, anxieties, collaborations, and social cohesion processes are examined and analyzed, within the inevitable limitations of a social science research. Undoubtedly, the findings, which come from the comprehensive surveys and focus group meetings, and which are used as the basis of analysis here, cannot be fully generalized. In other words, what is presented here as the views of the “Turkish society” or “Syrians in Türkiye” are obviously the views of the participants of this research and can only be related to the wider populations in a limited manner. In the same way, neither the findings that are based on the empirical data nor the analysis and interpretation that are conducted based on these findings are or can be presented as “the truth”.

One of the areas of social cohesion discussions created by mass human mobilizations is related to the “public” sphere, in other words, to the state’s preferences, capacity and practices. But more important for the issue of social cohesion is the societal sphere. **Syrians Barometer** study, by mainly focusing on the societal space, aims at investigating a social situation, making empirical observations, and providing a *framework* on “social cohesion”. **This study defines social cohesion as “the way of life in which different communities, whether came together voluntarily or involuntarily, could live in peace and harmony on a common ground of belonging where pluralism is embraced in a framework of mutual acceptance and respect.”** The study preferred to engage with the empirical findings of the field study and to underline the essential significance of perceptions and social acceptance for harmonization, instead of elaborating theoretical discussions on the issue.

Fieldwork for the SB survey is generally conducted at the end of that year, and the analysis is shared with the public 6-9 months later. The research findings naturally reflect the situation on the aforementioned dates. The SB-2022 fieldwork (survey and focus group discussions) was also conducted in December 2022 and January 2023.

SB-2022 MAIN FINDINGS: TURKISH SOCIETY (TURKS)

The main findings of SB-2021, which were also evaluated in comparison to SB-2017, SB-2019 and SB-2020 studies, where relevant, can be summarized as follows:

SB studies try to take an academic picture of the Syrians in Türkiye, which has been increasingly on the agenda of Turkish society and politics since 2011. The highly dynamic nature of the process, the socio-economic and political changes in Türkiye and even in the region, the limitations of academic studies -even the most comprehensive ones- and complications such as the pandemic, earthquakes, elections and so forth make it imperative to remind that the findings do not belong to the whole, but to the situation at the time. Making assessments on this issue has become even more difficult with the politicization and instrumentalization of the process. However, the second main objective of the SB study, after “making a realistic determination”, with the awareness of the new situation and the challenges of compulsory coexistence, is to put forward policy recommendations for a peaceful and dignified future for Turkish society and Syrians living with them, without causing additional social tensions and even conflicts. When large numbers of different social groups live in the same social environment, either deliberately, as in the case of regular migration, or suddenly and unplanned, as in the case of forced migration, it is vital that the “hosts” and the “newcomers” live together in “harmony”. While the “risk” of social cohesion policies for encouraging the permanence of newcomers is well known, if voluntary or forced coexistence has become inevitable, it is clear that these policies are investments in the peaceful society of the future, or even a soft security approach in this context. SB studies can be characterized as an academic effort to contribute to the efforts on the peaceful, secure, and prosperous future of Turkish society by revealing the real picture.

SB studies include both standard questions to track trends and also try to understand developments in some issues related to the period with questions added from time to time. In this context, systematically conducted SB studies, the present one being the fifth, have become an important source for both Turkish society and Syrians to access and evaluate data to analyze where the process is going. The findings emerging from the SB-2022 study should be evaluated as “general” and specific” findings.

SB-2022 GENERAL FINDINGS

The SB-2022 study faced two major obstacles. Due to the earthquakes on February 6, 2023, the fieldwork was conducted only on the data from the survey and FGDs conducted with the Turkish community, as the survey and FGDs with Syrians could not be completed. Therefore, the principle of simultaneous surveys with two communities in SB studies was exceptionally not realized in this study. Despite this, however, the findings obtained are considered to be valuable in terms of understanding the “acceptance level of the host community”, which is the main determinant of the social cohesion processes. The second major obstacle to the SB-2022 study stemmed from the political atmosphere of the Presidential and General Elections in Türkiye. The debate on Syrians in Türkiye, and specifically on “return/repatriation of Syrians”, has become a more popular and political issue than ever before, and this has been prominently reflected in the survey and FGDs conducted with the Turkish society.

The general and data-based findings obtained within the framework of the SB-2022 survey and FGDs conducted with the Turkish society can be summarized as follows:

- Turkish society’s initial high level of social acceptance of Syrians became “fragile” over time and then turned more into “tolerance/endurance” than “acceptance”. The outlook of social acceptance in SB-2022 reveals a process in which even tolerance/endurance is weakening, and rejection is becoming stronger. It is thought that the negative course of this process is due to the decline in Turkish society’s expectations that Syrians will go back, a serious influx of irregular migrants into Türkiye, the emergence of joint but parallel social lives in urban areas, economic problems and the fact that the issue of “refugees” labeled with Syrians has become an important and popular issue in politics.
- Another indicator of the reactions of the Turkish society towards Syrians emerged both in the survey and especially in the FGDs. Participation in an academic study on Syrians was generally rejected by Turks who only said, *“let them go/they should be sent away, there is no need to talk about anything else”*. In this process where it was very difficult to find participants for the FGDs, most of the participants displayed a very categorical-negative attitude towards Syrians. Respondents’ main complaints and concerns were not only about Syrians, but also about administrative processes that were perceived to be poorly managed or not managed at all.
- More strongly than in any other SB study, Turkish society thinks that Syrians will be permanent, believes that they will not return voluntarily, views this with concern, does not show the will to live together and, as a result, tends to reject the vision of a common future to a great extent.
- **In SB-2022, the demand and expectation of the Turkish society is for Syrians to leave/be sent away from Türkiye, with 88.5% which is the highest among all SBs.** The previously observed demand of the Turkish society that “they should be sent to safe zones” is changing to “they should be sent back to Syria”. In other words, Turkish society does not care whether Syrians are sent to “safe zones” or to places outside “safe zones”.
- When the views expressed by the Turkish society in the SB study are tested with demographic variables such as sex, age, education level, and occupation, generally no significant

changes are observed. Among all categories, **the most serious distinction is observed between citizens living in the border region and those living in other regions. However, compared to the previous SB studies, the regional balance also differed in SB-2021 and SB-2022, and the reactions of Turks living in metropolitan cities towards Syrians became harsher than the reactions in the border region cities with dense Syrian populations. This can be explained by the politicization of the process and the fact that discourses of demographic and cultural transformation have gained more traction in urban metropolitan areas.**

- **The process regarding Syrians in Türkiye is rapidly becoming politicized:** The issue of Syrians and other refugees in Türkiye is becoming highly politicized. As with all aspects of society, human mobility, whether in the form of migration or asylum, cannot be considered independent of politics. As is well known, the issue of human mobility, and migration (economic migration) in particular, is perceived as an instrument of economic development policy. Victims of forced migration, i.e., asylum seekers and refugees, in turn, are usually dealt with in connection with security and politics. It is inevitable that this issue, which is becoming increasingly more prominent in the daily life of Turkish society, is also climbing up in its political agenda. In this context, it can even be said that the politicization of the issue came rather late. It has been observed that until the last few years, Turkish society has kept this issue in the background and has not reflected it in its political preferences.
- **The transformation of the process into a political instrument has been particularly evident in the last two to three years.** This can be attributed to the fact that almost all Syrians, numbering over 3.5 million, live together with the Turkish society in urban areas, the strengthening perceptions in the Turkish society that Syrians will not be able to return to their country, the economic problems exacerbated by the pandemic, the 2023 election process in Türkiye and the growing political style that is dominated by populism. It is clear that in the creation of a more serious sensitivity regarding this process in the last two years, the rising numbers of and confidence-breaking scenes including irregular migrants, especially Afghans and Pakistanis, have been effective.
- No effective and credible communication strategy has been developed to address Turkish society's concerns about the very high numbers of refugees and irregular migrants, most of which stem from perceptions rather than experiences. **The concerns and reactions of the society, which are not taken seriously enough, seem to have opened a very useful space especially for populist politicians.** In other words, the issue of Syrians has become one of the most important political debates in Türkiye due to the failure to take the concerns and anxieties of the Turkish society seriously enough and a similar failure to come up with satisfactory policies and especially a credible and convincing communication strategy towards them.
- The period leading up to the Presidential and General Elections held in May 2023 played an important role in further politicization of the issue, which was also reflected in the findings of SB-2022. The opposition parties' criticism of the government for its general policies and practices on refugees, taking into account the concerns of the society, has received a significant response from the society. It can even be said that these debates have had a certain impact among the supporters of the ruling party. The fact that Turkish society considers Syrians and irregular migrants, who are described as "flooding into Türkiye to invade", among the three most important problems of Türkiye has been effective in the opposition's paying more attention to the issue.
- As is well known, social cohesion processes have three main pillars. The first is the state/public sphere, the second is the Turkish society, and the third is the newcomers, in the Turkish context, Syrians. Although it is the state/public actors that determine and implement the

policy, social cohesion cannot take place without a certain level of acceptance from the host community (Turkish society). For social cohesion process, it is clear that Turkish society is far away from accepting and internalizing a common life with Syrians. Despite the fact that more than 90% of Turkish society says that “more than half of the Syrians will stay”, they approach the vision of living together with Syrians with great concern and even reject it. This will make social cohesion processes more difficult together with the effect of the politicization of the issue. In other words, the Turkish society’s high level of anxiety towards Syrians, their social distance and the politicization of the process limit and complicate the quantitative and qualitative development of relations and the social cohesion processes in general.

- As a result of the politicization of the process and the reactions from the society on both Syrians and irregular migrants, the policy put forward by the administration is basically described as “combating irregular migration”. However, this situation causes the society to see Syrians and other refugees who have been granted temporary protection or international protection by the Turkish State and irregular migrants who entered the country illegally as the same. It should be emphasized that this is a particular challenge for harmonization process of Syrians in Türkiye.
- The problems caused by the lack of an initial settlement policy for Syrians in Türkiye and the continuation of the process with a chain migration reflex have begun to manifest themselves. The uneven distribution of Syrians across provinces, districts and even neighborhoods has made process management difficult and has led to ghettoization. It is not yet known what impact the “Combating Spatial Concentration (Sparsification) Project” implemented by the Ministry of Interior in February 2022 will have on this issue. However, it is unlikely that this project will yield results that will sufficiently address public concerns.
- **Although there is a high level of concern about Syrians in all areas, a striking change is observed in the demographic analysis of the SB data indicating that concerns are growing to a larger extent among people living in metropolitan cities than among people in border regions.** Until SB-2021, it was observed that those living with a large Syrian population in areas bordering Syria were highly anxious in all areas, much higher than the Türkiye average. In addition to those living in metropolitan areas, high levels of anxiety are also observed among students and those in the 18-24 age group.
- The COVID-19 pandemic, declared by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, has led to an important experience in terms of both social cohesion and health services. It is observed that the impact of the **pandemic** has “filed down” or “postponed” the concerns and anxieties of the Turkish society towards Syrians to some extent, especially in 2020, but in SB-2021 and especially SB-2022, with the decrease in the impact of the pandemic, economic problems and the politicization of the process, the discomforts are expressed with renewed strength. It is thought that the economic problems in Türkiye during this period were also effective in intensifying the reactions.
- It is understood that the issue in which the Turkish society is most uncomfortable with regarding Syrians is the citizenship policy. Citizenship, which is normally defined as the last and positive stage of the harmonization process, seems to have made Turkish society’s attitude towards Syrians even more negative. The most important reason for this seems to be that the “exceptional citizenship” process granted to Syrians is not transparent and the society is not sufficiently informed about this issue.
- The SB researchs show that the Turkish community’s high level of anxiety is often rooted in perceptions, not experiences. Turkish society needs to be regularly and accurately - albeit this sometimes being an uncomfortable situation - informed about refugees. An accurate, regular and reliable communication strategy is also a serious need for social cohesion policies.

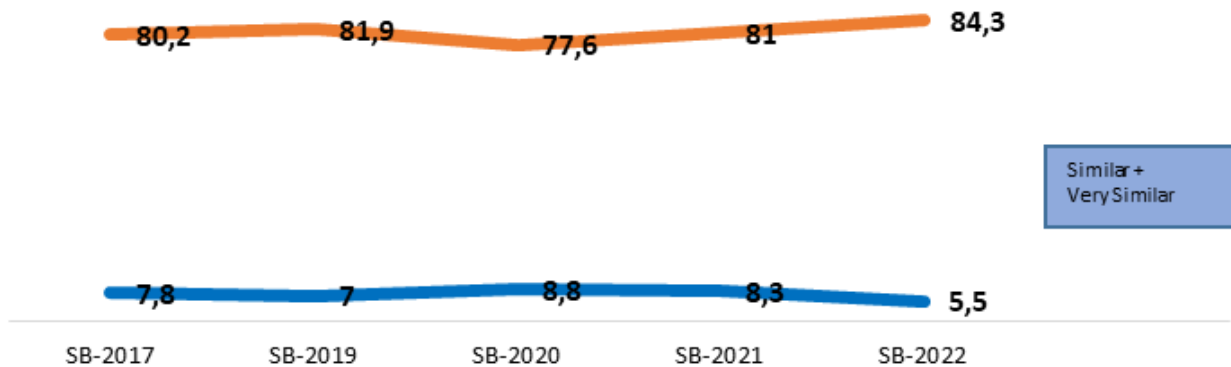
SB-2022 SPECIFIC SURVEY AND FGD FINDINGS:

Syrians live together with Turkish society, especially in urban areas. The total rate of respondents who answered, “yes there are”, “yes there are a few” or “yes there are a lot” to the question “Are there any Syrians in the neighborhood/district/region where you live?”, which is an “awareness” question, is around 80% in all four SB studies. In SB-2022, this figure reached the highest level of 84.2%.

There have been changes in Turkish society’s perception/definition of Syrians, with concepts that emphasize anxieties and concerns coming to the fore. Turkish society, which for a long-time defined Syrians as “oppressed people, victims, people fleeing from war and persecution”, has in recent years preferred to define Syrians with the expressions of “concern” and “threat”. While in the previous studies the Turkish society defined Syrians primarily as “people fleeing from war and persecution”, a significant transformation was observed in SB-2021 and SB-2022. In SB-2022, while the first preference of the Turkish society when defining Syrians is “people who are burdens on us” with 51.6%, the second preference is “dangerous people who will cause us a lot of troubles in the future” with 38% and the third preference is “people who did not protect their country” with 33.4%. The definition of “victims who escaped persecution/war” ranks fourth with 30.2% in SB-2022. The perception of Syrians as “people exploited as cheap labor” in Turkish society is also found between 12.8% and 17.7% in the five SB studies. This rate is 15.8% in SB-2022.

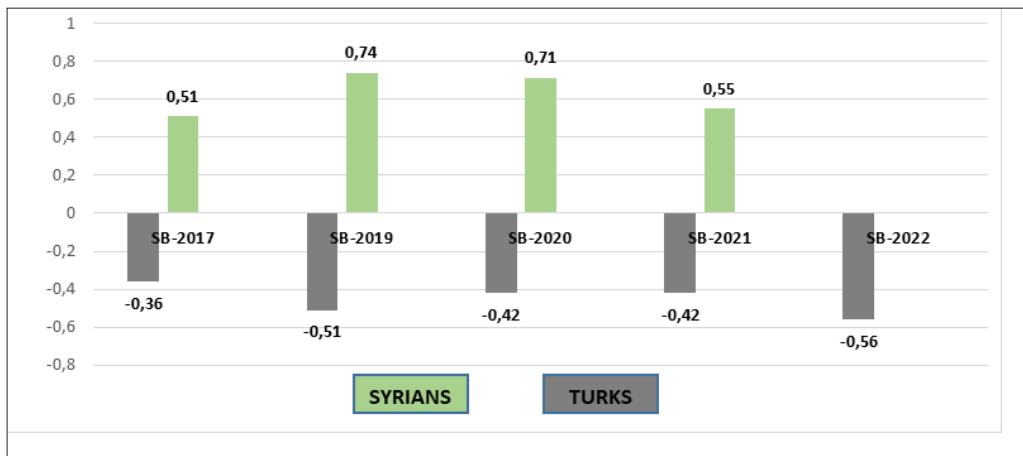
- **Findings on the perception of cultural similarity in social cohesion processes, which is an important part of SB studies, reveal that Turkish society decisively distances itself from Syrians both socially and culturally.** Although the political language emphasizes “religious fraternity”, “good neighborliness”, “common history”, and so forth, it is understood that these increasingly do not resonate with the people, who even reactively “reject” them. In SB-2022, the sum of those who answered, “not similar at all” and “not similar” to the question “To what extent do you think Syrians in Türkiye are culturally similar to us?” is 84.3%, which is quite high. In fact, despite the political discourse, it is understood that Turkish society has had a very clear perception on this issue from the very beginning and does not see Syrians as culturally of “their own”, and that this perception has been getting stronger every year. However, an interesting finding regarding this question emerges for Turkish citizens that live in “border cities”. Although this group, which consists of the cities bordering Syria or connected to the border region, actually has very close characteristics to the Syrians in terms of language, religion, ethnic origin, traditions, culture, etc., with Arabic being widely spoken in everyday life in some places, the rate of those who say “we are not culturally similar to Syrians” is 78.5% in these provinces (the Türkiye average is 84.3%). It is surprising that the gap is so low (and in some years even above the national average).

SB-2022: To what extent do you think Syrians in Türkiye are culturally similar to us? %

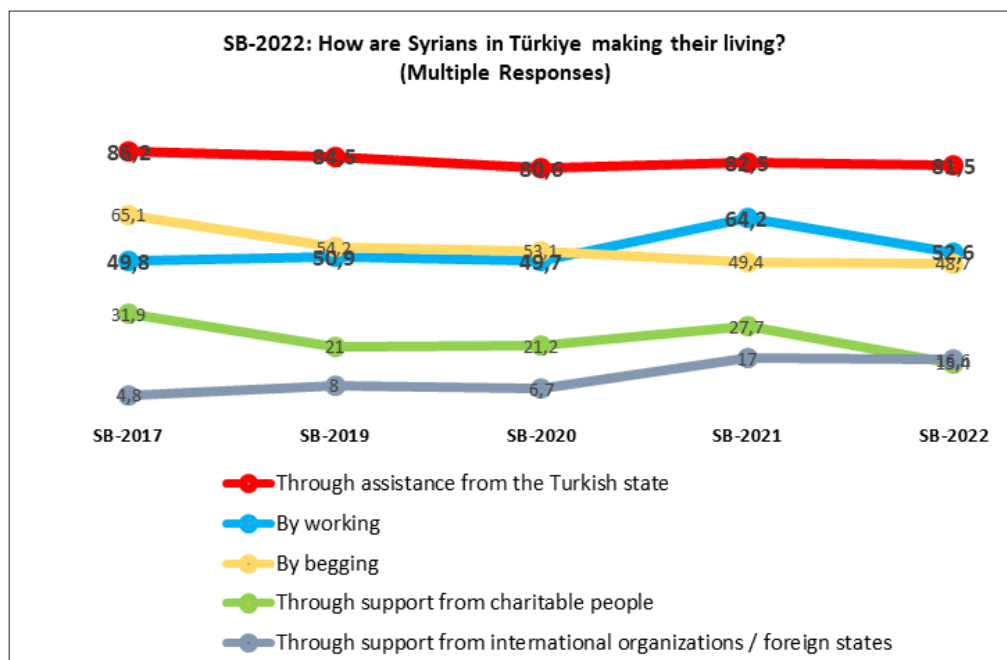


- **It is noteworthy that the tendency of the Turkish society to provide in-kind/cash assistance to Syrians has decreased over the years.** In response to the question “Have you ever provided in-kind or cash assistance to Syrians (other than giving money to beggars)?”, which aims to understand whether Turkish society **actively provide support to Syrians**, 34.1% answered “yes” in SB-2019, while this rate reached 40.5% in SB-2020, with a slight decrease to 39.6% in SB-2021, and with a more significant decrease to 33.9% in SB-2022. For the first time in the last three SB surveys, the answer “I did not want to give support” ranked first with 32.5% in the responses to the question “Why haven’t you provided any support to Syrians in the past year?”.
- **The findings of the SB studies on interactions / communication with Syrians reveal that Turkish society’s social relations with Syrians have decreased in almost every field.** Despite the fact that Syrians share more common spaces with Turkish society, speak Turkish, albeit to a limited extent, send their children to Turkish public schools and participate in business life, the fact that social relations remain so limited and even diminish points to the problems to be experienced in terms of social cohesion processes.
- **The findings on “social distance”, which was tried to be understood with the question “Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements in terms of reflecting your feelings about Syrians” posing ten different statements, show that the very high level of social distance of the Turkish society towards Syrians reached its highest level (-0.56) in SB-2022, especially among Turks living in metropolitan cities.** The social distance score among Syrians, which was +0.71 in SB-2017, decreased to +0.55 in SB-2021. When the details of the social distance findings are examined, it is understood that the issue of coexistence in the education/school environment (“it wouldn’t disturb me if Syrian children would enroll to the same school as my children”) is accepted at the highest level in both SB-2021 and SB-2022. However, even this acceptance dropped radically from 41.3% in SB-2021 to 24.5% in SB-2022. This is followed by “working in the same workplace” with a Syrian, albeit with a decreasing trend. Overall, when SB-2021 and SB-2022 rates are compared, it is observed that the distance has increased in all fields.

SB-2022: SOCIAL DISTANCE



- In studies on social cohesion, it is often recognized that a significant part of the host community's objection to newcomers stems from the **"financial burdens" created or believed to be created by the newcomers**. In order to determine the perception on the **financial burden of Syrians in Türkiye**, the question "How are the Syrians in Türkiye making their living?" was posed using the "multiple response" technique and the answers show that more than 80% of the society (SB-2017: 86.2%, SB-2019: 84.5%, SB-2020: 80.6%, SB-2021: 82.5%, SB-2022: 81.5%) believe that Syrians live "through the assistance from the Turkish state". However, in SB-2021, the rate of those who said "by working" rose to the second place for the first time with 64.2%, and in SB-2022, although with a slight decrease, it maintained its second rank with 52.6%. According to SB studies, although Turkish society believes that Syrians live with the support of the Turkish state by far, they are also increasingly aware of the fact that Syrians also work.

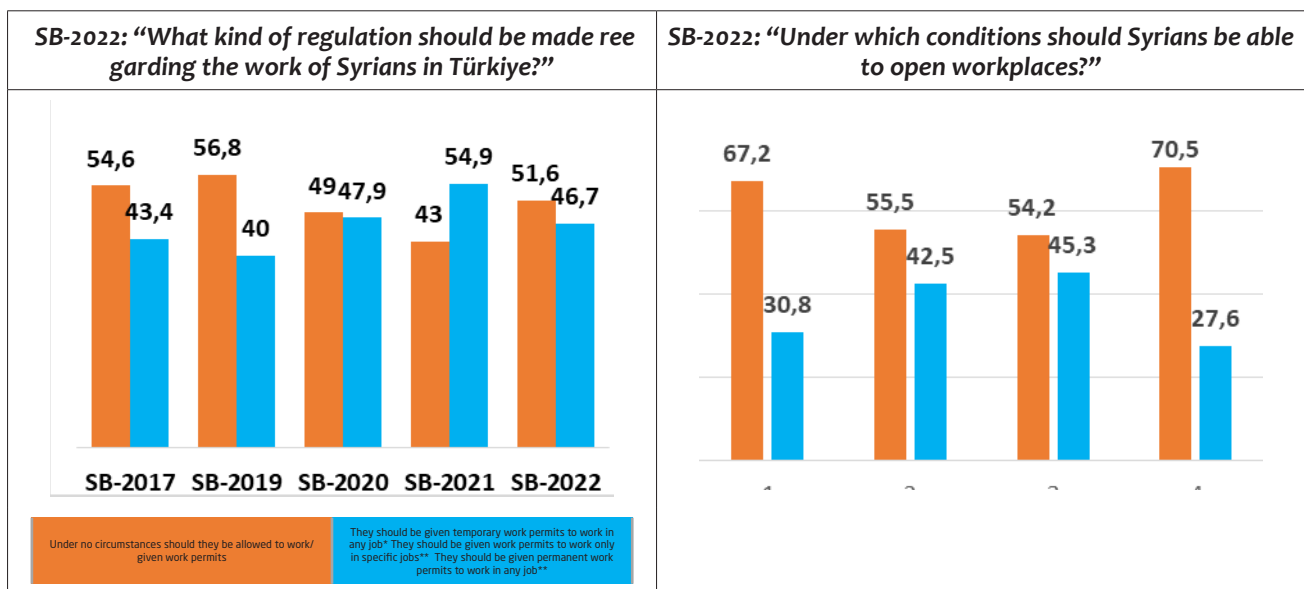


- **SB studies show that concerns about Syrians in Turkish society have steadily increased in almost all areas.** When average anxiety levels are evaluated out of 5, it was 3.2 in SB-2017, 3.6 in SB-2019, 3.5 in SB-2020, 3.5 in SB-2021, and, at its highest level, 3.8 in SB-2022. All these figures point to an already quite high-level of concern that should not be ignored. This has also been effective in the politicization of the process. The concerns and reactions of the society, which are not taken seriously enough, seem to have opened a very useful political space.
- **In SB-2022, just like in SB-2020, the most serious concern/anxiety in the Turkish society about Syrians is “Syrians becoming citizens” with 84% (score equivalent 4.1).** The statement that has been at the top or second place in the SB studies since the beginning is the proposition that “they will harm the economy of our country”. In SB-2022, the support for this is 76.8% and the score value is 3.9. The statement “I think that Syrians will harm Türkiye’s social-cultural structure ” ranks third with 76.3% and the score of 3.8. The concern about “demographic change and identity deterioration” (“I think that Syrians will corrupt Turkish society’s identity”), which has been on the agenda frequently in the last two years in Türkiye, is also represented at a high rate of 76.1% (score: 3.8). Based on these findings, it can be said that Turkish society’s anxieties about Syrians are essentially related to identity concerns. In other words, Turkish society has more abstract concerns than concrete and actual or imminent ones like “job losses” or “increased crime rates”.

SB-2022- To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding Syrians in Türkiye? (Scored)

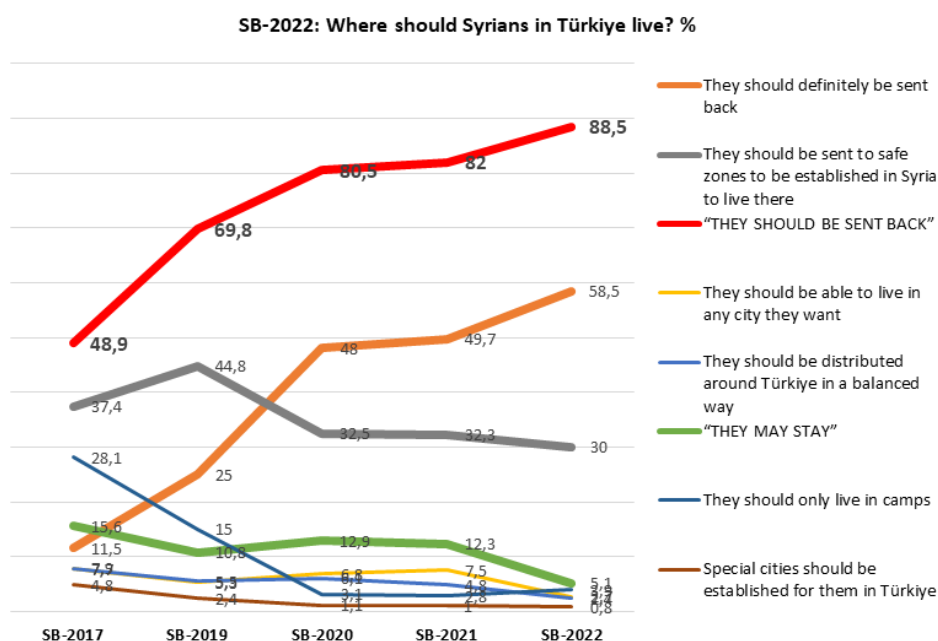
Rank		2017	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	I am worried about Syrians becoming citizens*	-	3,5	3,8	-	4,1
2	I think that Syrians will harm our country’s economy	3,4	3,8	3,7	3,7	3,9
3	I think that Syrians will harm Türkiye’s socio-cultural structure	3,3	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,8
4	I think that Syrians will corrupt Turkish society’s identity	-	3,5	3,5	3,5	3,8
5	I think that there will be reduction or deterioration in the public services provided by the state because of Syrians	-	3,7	3,6	3,6	3,8
6	I think that Syrians disturb social peace by engaging in violence, theft, smuggling, and prostitution**	3,4	3,7	3,5	3,5	3,8
7	I think that Syrians will strip us of our jobs	3,1	3,5	3,4	3,4	3,6
<div> <div>0-2,99</div> <div>3,0-5,0</div> </div> Average Score		3,2	3,6	3,5	3,5	3,8
8	I think that Syrians will harm me, my family, my children	2,9	3,4	3,0	3,2	3,4

- **There is no significant relationship between having actually suffered “personal harm” from Syrians and concerns, and it is understood that perceptions come to the fore rather than personal experiences and concrete problems.** In order to observe the relationship between concerns about Syrians and “personal harm”, Turkish society is asked whether they, their families or their personal environment have suffered any harm by Syrians. In the SB-2022 survey, the rate of those who stated that they had been personally harmed by Syrians in the last 5 years was 13.8%. This rate was 9.4% in SB-2017, 13.7% in SB-2019, 11.4% in SB-2020, and 11.7% in SB-2021. As in SB-2021, in SB-2022, the responses of those who stated that they, their families or relatives have been harmed by Syrians in the last five years reveal that “bullying/harassment”, “violence”, “theft” and “unrest/noise” come to the forefront.
- **The concerns of “losing one’s job” or “having to work for lower wages”, which are the primary concerns in the host community during mass human mobilities, appear to be much less prioritized by the Turkish society.** It can be suggested that this is related to the experience and that the expected negative scenarios in this regard have not been actualized to the extent that would worry the society. The rate of respondents who answered “Under no circumstances should they be given work permits” to the question “*What kind of regulation should be made regarding the work of Syrians in Türkiye?*”, i.e. those who oppose working of Syrians, increased by more than 8 points to 51.6% in SB-2022 compared to SB-2021. *Despite this*, concern about job loss ranks very low in the list of concerns about Syrians in Turkish society. Among the responses for the question “*Under which conditions should Syrians be able to open workplaces?*”, the answer “they definitely shouldn’t” received support from 54.6% in SB-2017, 67.2% in SB-2019, 55.5% in SB-2020, 54.2% in SB-2021, and 70.5% in SB-2022. This is much stronger than their refusal to grant working rights. It can be said that the economic problems and the politicization of the process play an important role in the background here, as well as the “rejection of permanence”.



- **The response of the Turkish society to the question “where should Syrians live?” as “they should be sent back to their country” has increased to a record high of 88.5%**

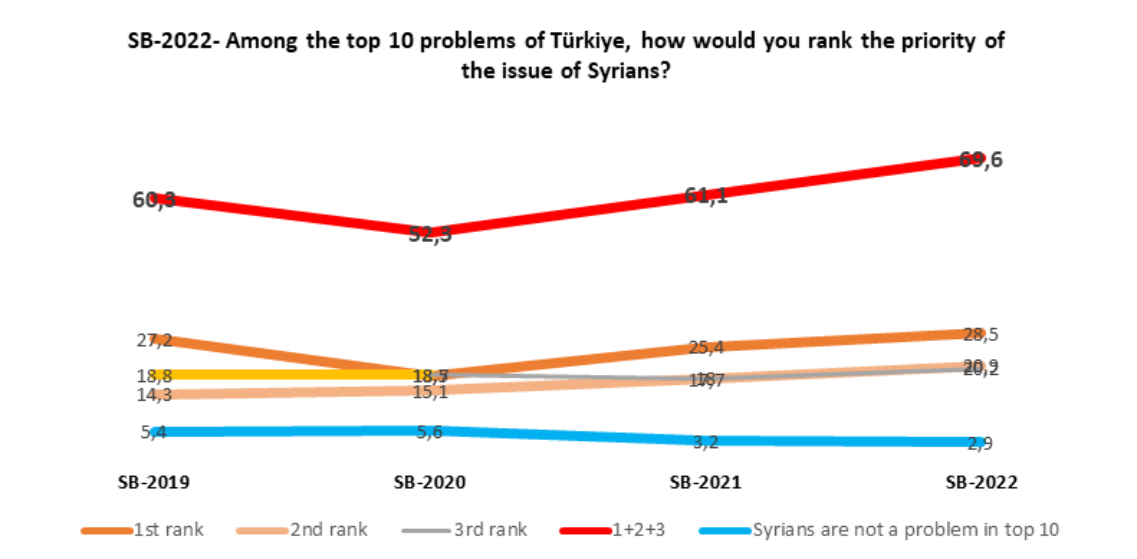
in SB-2022 since the beginning of the SB studies. What is more striking is that the option “they should be sent to safe zones”, which was the primary demand of the Turkish society in SB-2017 and SB-2019, has fallen to second place since SB-2020 (SB-2017: 37.4%, SB-2019: 44.8%, SB-2020: 32.5%; SB-2021: 32.3%, SB-2022: 30%) and the option “they should definitely be sent back” has increased phenomenally (2017: 11.5%, 2019: 25%, SB-2020: 48%, SB-2021: 49.7%, SB-2022: 58.5%). The clear finding from the SB studies is that the main desire of the Turkish society is for Syrians to leave Türkiye. In other words, the findings of the SB studies seem to suggest that Turkish society is not ready and willing to live together with Syrians. It cannot be expected for such a high level of demand to not become a political issue. However, due to fundamental human rights, international and national legislation on refugees, the current situation in Syria, the sociological changes that took place, and so forth, the expectation of the Turkish society regarding repatriation of Syrians is unlikely to be realized.



- **Although Turkish society is demanding the return of Syrians to their country, they do not seem to be very hopeful about their return.** As the perception that Syrians will become permanent grows stronger, it is observed that concerns, pessimism and objections increase in the attitude of the Turkish society towards Syrians. In 2014, when there were just 1.6 million Syrians in Türkiye, the survey found that 45.1% of Turkish respondents reported believing that all Syrians in the country will return. However, after 2017, it is observed that the perception in the society has changed drastically. In other words, since 2020, more than 80% of the Turkish society thinks that all or most of the Syrians will stay in Türkiye.
- **The responses provided for the question “To what extent have Syrians integrated into Turkish society/Türkiye?” show that the Turkish society is quite dissatisfied about the issue of Syrians’ social cohesion/harmonization.** In SB-2022, while a combined rate of 12.2% of the respondents believe that Syrians have “completely or to a large extent integrated”, the rate of those who suggest that they harmonized “only to a little extent or none at all” is 77.1%. Remarkably, Turkish society finds the Syrians’ social cohesion processes less and

less “successful” every year. In other words, although the duration of cohabitation extends, the Turkish society’s perception that Syrians are not integrating gets stronger.

- **According to Turkish society, Syrians are among the top three most important problems in Türkiye.** As in every society, it is natural for the Turkish society to have problems sometimes constantly and sometimes periodically. It can be said that in recent years, Turkish society has been dealing with problems in many areas such as fight against terrorism, economy, employment, social tension, foreign policy, etc. In the SB research, with the question “*Among the top 10 problems of Türkiye, how would you rank the priority of the issue of Syrians?*”, which has been asked since SB-2019, it was tried to explain to what extent the Turkish society sees Syrians as a problem and where they rank them among the problems. In the SB-2019 study, the sum of those who considered Syrians as Türkiye’s “most important”, “second most important” and “third most important” problem exceeded 60%. It is also observed that further politicization of the issue in 2022 turned it into a problem area which is a priority for the Turkish society.



- **According to the SB studies, Syrians getting citizenship is the most serious concern of the Turkish society about them.** While the SB surveys indicate that around 90% of Turkish society believe that at least half of the Syrians will stay in the country permanently, when asked the question “*What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding giving Syrians Turkish citizenship?*”, the rate of those who say “*none of them should be given citizenship*” is very high. When asked this question and given the chance to provide multiple responses, 75.9% of the respondents suggested “*none of them should be given citizenship*” in SB-2022 (SB-2017: 75.8%; SB-2019: 76.5%; SB-2020: 71.8%; SB-2021: 67.9%). In order to better understand the concerns of the Turkish society about Syrians and to evaluate them in the context of social cohesion, a new question was asked in SB-2022: “*What is your most important concern about Syrians?*” It is seen that the Turks who participated in the SB-2022 study gave the answer “*them becoming citizens*” with a considerably higher rate (37.9%) than the other options. It was followed by “*damage to the economy*” (13.6%) and “*increase in criminality/criminal activities/gangs*” (10.5%).

- Independently from whether Syrians will be permanent in Türkiye, access to education for school-age Syrian children under temporary protection should be considered as an important priority. However, in addition to the capacity problems in this regard, the change in the attitude of the Turkish society towards Syrians' education is noteworthy.** The survey respondents were asked the question *"What kind of an arrangement should be made regarding education of Syrian children?"* The rate of respondents who suggested *"They should be able to benefit from all kinds of education rights"* was 9.5% in SB-2017, and 6% in SB-2019. Then there was a significant increase in SB-2020, where this rate rose to 29.9% and remained almost same in SB-2021 (29.3%). In SB-2022, it scored a more significant decrease to become 24.7%. While the support for the statement *"they shouldn't be able to receive any education"* in Turkish society was 25.7% in SB-2017, 16.7% in SB-2019, 16.9% in SB-2020, and 14.4% in SB-2021, this proposition rose to the second place in the ranking with 21.7% in SB-2022.
- Both Turks and Syrians have frequently reported problems with "peer bullying" in schools.** For this reason, the question *"Do your children have problems with their Syrian peers at school or in the neighborhood?"* was asked in SB-2022. Among Turks who have Syrian children in the same school with their own children, 16.5% mention that there are problems. Those living in border cities where the Syrian population is dense and where there are naturally high numbers of Syrian students in schools express this problem with 21.5%. This situation reveals the risk that peer bullying, especially in middle schools, is based on an ethnic basis, and in this context, it has a profoundly negative impact on social cohesion processes.
- Turkish society is highly critical of the government's policies regarding Syrians.** While the rate of those who found the government's policies *"very wrong"* and *"wrong"* was 62.4% in SB- 2017, this was 73% in SB-2019, 70.3 in SB-2020, 69.3% in SB-2021, and 80.2% in SB-2022. In SB-2022, the rate of those who found the government's policies *"very wrong"* increased to 49.5%.
- The reconstruction activities carried out by Türkiye in the safe zones within the framework of its return policies are not sufficiently supported by the Turkish society.** The answers from the Turkish society to the question *"To what extent do you find it right that Türkiye is building houses and providing services such as education, health and infrastructure in Syria to encourage return?"* show that this policy is found *"wrong"* by 55.2% of the respondents. The rate of those who consider this policy right is 32.9%. Turkish state officials state that return will also be encouraged through reconstruction activities in the safe zones.
- According to Turkish society, the most important problem of Syrians in Türkiye is that "they have no problems".** This statement, which was suggested by 31.4% of the respondents, was followed by cultural differences" (20%), "harmonization" (13.3%), and "becoming stateless (10%)". 8.8% of the Turkish respondents, in turn, stated that the most important problem of Syrians is "discrimination/marginalization". The highest support for the view that Syrians "have no problems" comes from those living in border provinces with 45.6%.

SB-2022: Technical Details of Survey Research Methodology

	Turkish Citizens
Sample Size	2.267 persons 2.267 individuals selected according to a quota to be representative of Turkish society in 26 cities which are determined based on their populations on NUTS-2 level
Universe of the research	The average size of Turkish households is taken to be 3,17 in accordance with TUIK 2022 data.* The number of households was calculated by dividing the population by this average: 85,279,553 (TUIK-ADNKS 2022) / 3,17 = 26.902.067.** The sample size, in turn, was calculated on the basis of these figures on a 95% confidence level and $\pm 2,06$ confidence interval to be 2.267.
Mode of Survey Application	Person Based / (CAPI – Computer-Assisted Personal Interview method)
Time of Survey Application	24 December 2022-4 January 2023
Confidence Level	%95
Confidence Interval	± 2.06
Method of De-termining and Applying the Quota (the surveys were carried out at the homes of respondents within the framework of a province-district-neighborhood-based selection)	The survey questionnaires for Turkish citizens were administered in the city centers of 26 cities in NUTS-2 level, with individuals of 18 years of age or older who have the capacity to understand and answer the questions. Only one person in each household was surveyed. In the selection of individual respondents, simple random sampling was used and the number of surveys to be conducted in each city was determined according to their respective populations by taking into account the population at the NUTS-2 level. The selection of households to conduct surveys was done applying the random walk rule by the city field managers. Maximum effort has been paid to ensure proportional representation of different sex, age, educational attainment, and occupational groups since the study aimed to include these as potentially relevant categories for analysis. In the analysis and presentation of the responses to some specific questions, particularly when responses are collected on a "Likert" scale for more advanced comparison, a special system of point-based assessment is also used. ¹
Field Survey Implementation	The field implementation of the surveys was conducted by An-kara Centre for Social Research (ANAR), one of the most experienced institutions in this sector. ² [http://www.anararastirma.com.tr] Focus Group Discussions (FGD) for the SB are conducted and analyzed by the SB research team.
Reporting	Prof. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan

- 1 In some of the questions that used a 5-point Likert scale, a scoring was conducted in order to simplify the presentation of the findings and make it easier for them to be comparatively analyzed. This scoring was done in the following way: A point-score from 1 to 5 was assigned for each response option on the relevant scale, i.e.
 1 = Very insufficient/ completely disagree/ not worried at all, etc.
 2 = Insufficient/ disagree/ not worried, etc.
 3 = Neither sufficient, nor insufficient/ neither agree, nor disagree/ neither worried, nor not worried, etc. 4 = Sufficient/ agree/ worried, etc.
 5 = Very sufficient/ completely agree/ very worried, etc.
 6 = No idea/ Don't know
 7 = No response
 When calculating the scores, the numerical codes were given weight in the following way:
 1 → 1, 2 → 2, 3 → 3, 4 → 4, 5 → 5, 6 → 0, 7 → 0
 Using these weights, arithmetic mean was calculated for every relevant statement/question.
 These calculations were made automatically on the SPSS software.
 Lastly, depending on the scale used in each statement/question, the scoring was evaluated to be either on the "negative" or "positive" side of the scale.
 a) 0,0-2,99: Negative side- i.e. Insufficient, disagree, not worried, etc.
 b) 3,0-5,0: Positive side- i.e. Sufficient, agree, worried, etc.

- 2 ANAR Araştırma: <http://www.anararastirma.com.tr/tr/>

Prof. Dr. M. Murat ERDOĞAN

Director of Mülkiye Migration Research Center of Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science (SBF)

Prof. ERDOĞAN is Director of Mülkiye Migration Research Center of Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science (SBF) since February 2022 . Prof. Erdoğan is a member of UNESCO-Türkiye Communication Committee, board member of ISC of Metropolis International and the President of IGAM-Academy.

He was between 2017-2022 at Turkish German University. He was also the founder and director of the Migration and Integration Research Center of TGU between November 2017, May 2021; and Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center (HUGO) between 2009-2017. He carried out the research of his PhD dissertation from Ankara University -titled "The Relationship between Türkiye and European Union after the Cold War: Geo-Strategic Perspective: 1990-2005"- as a Konrad Adenauer Foundation fellow at Bonn and Freiburg universities in Germany in 1994-1999. In 2000-2003, Erdoğan worked at the Press Section of the Turkish Embassy in Berlin, and later as an advisor at the Turkish Grand National Assembly's Commission on EU Integration (2004), also as an advisor to the president of Turkish Higher Education Council, and to the Rector of Hacettepe University (2012-2016).

Prof. Erdoğan carried out studies as a visiting researcher with different fellowships at universities as Duisburg-Essen (2007), Berlin-Humboldt (2010), Oxford University (2012), Johns Hopkins University-AICGS (2014), and Humboldt University (2019). He was fellow at CATS (Centre for Applied Türkiye Studies) of SWP (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik -German Institute for International and Security Affairs) in Berlin (April 2022-April 2023).

His academic research interests include voluntary and forced migration, refugees, people of Turkish origin living abroad, EU, political cartoons, political behaviour, Islamophobia, and Germany and Turkish foreign policy. He conducts comprehensive public opinion research on a regular basis and publishes particularly the "Euro-Turks-Barometre" on Turkish diaspora in Europe, and the "Syrians Barometer" on Syrians in Türkiye.

Prof. Erdoğan's recent books include the following:

- Forced Migration in Türkiye: Refugee Perspectives, Organisational Assistance, and Political Embedding (2024) (Edts with B.Ş.Z.Savcı-L.Pries) Routledge.
- Marmara's Urban Refugees: Municipalities & Process Management (& B.Şener, M.Ağca) (2022)
- Syrians Barometer-2020: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye (2021)
- Demographical Development of the Syrian Refugee Population and its Potential Impacts on The Education, Employment and Municipality Services in Türkiye in Near Future (& M. Çorabatır) (2019) (in Turkish&English)
- Göç Uyum ve Yerel Yönetimler (2019) (Migration, Integration and Local Governments) (in Turkish) (2018)
- Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Türkiye
- Syrians Barometer-2017: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye (2018)
- Syrian Refugees and Process Management of Municipalities: The Case of Istanbul (2017)
- Perspectives, Expectations and Suggestions of the Turkish Business Sector on Syrians in Türkiye (2015)
- "Türkiye's Migration History: Migration to Türkiye from the 14th Century to the 21st Century " (with A. Kaya) (2015)
- "Syrians in Türkiye: Social Acceptance and Integration" (2015)
- Turks in German Cartoons, 50 Jahre 50 Karikaturen/50 Years 50 Cartoons: Turken in Deutschland aus der Sicht Deutcher Karikaturisten (2012) • Turks Abroad: Fifty Years of Migration and Integration (2010)

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SYRIANS BAROMETER-2022

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING SOCIAL COHESION
WITH SYRIANS IN TÜRKİYE



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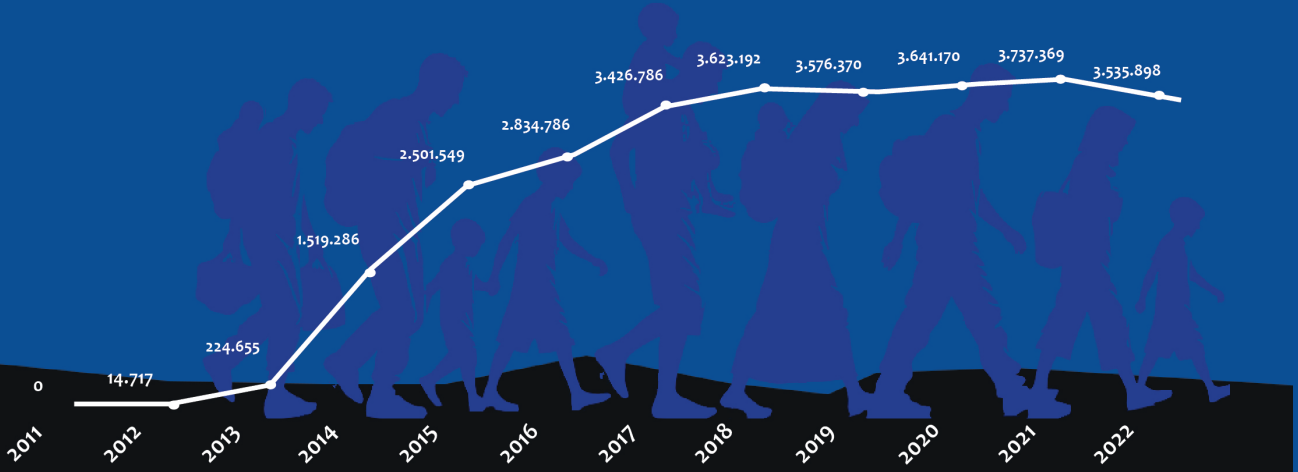
29 Nisan 2011’de 252 kişilik ilk Suriyeli kabile Hatay sınırından Türkiye’ye ulaştığında, bu insani hareketliliğin ulaşacağı ne sayısal büyüklükler ve ne de kalış süreleri öngörülebilmişti. Ama Türkiye üç yıl sonrasında, yani 2014’te dünyada en fazla mülteciye ev sahipliği yapan ülke konumuna geldi. 12 yıl sonunda Türkiye’deki Suriyelilerin sayısı 3,5 milyonu aşmış ve Türkiye nüfusunun %3,9’una ulaşmış durumda. Türkiye’deki Suriyelilerin %98’inden fazlası kent mültecileri olarak Türk toplumu ile birlikte yaşıyor, 2011-2022 arasında en az 750-800 bin Suriyeli bebek Türkiye’de doğdu, 730 bini aşkın Suriyeli çocuk Türk devlet okullarına gidiyor, 50 binden fazla Suriyeli genç Türk Üniversitelerinde okuyor, 240 bin civarında Suriyeli vatandaşlığa geçti. Hem Suriye’de kronikleşen savaş ortamı hem de Suriyelilerin kendi yaşamlarını Türkiye’de kurma çabaları nedeniyle, Suriyeliler arasında gönüllü geri dönüş eğilimlerinin de belirgin biçimde azaldığı gözlemlenmektedir. Ancak buna rağmen; toplumsal alanda özellikle büyük sayılardan ve uzayan süreçlerden kaynaklanan ciddi kaygıların ve itirazların varlığı da her geçen gün kendisini daha çok belli etmekte ve konu günlük siyasetin ilgi alanına dönüşmektedir.

“Suriyeliler Barometresi: Suriyelilerle Uyum İçinde Yaşamın Çerçevesi” toplumsal uyumun kurumsal ve resmi olan bölümünden daha çok toplumsal alanı anlamaya dair bir çaba olarak Prof. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan tarafından 2014’ten beri tasarlanmış ve düzenli olarak tekrarlanmaktadır. Hem Türk toplumu hem de Suriyeliler bakımından “ortak toplumsal yaşama” dair gelişmeleri, uyum ve gerilim süreçlerini anlamayı ve politika önerileri geliştirmeyi amaçlayan çalışma, temsiliyet

gücü yüksek kapsamlı kamuoyu araştırması ve odak grup görüşmeleri ile gerçekleştirilmektedir. Araştırmanın temel amacı ve çabası, akademik kısıtların farkında olarak, bu önemli ve son derece dinamik süreç konusunda mümkün olan en gerçekçi fotoğrafı elde etmek, buradan hareketle toplumsal huzur merkezli değerlendirme ve önerileri kamuoyu ile paylaşmaktır. SB saha çalışmaları Türkler ve Suriyeliler ile en fazla bir aylık zaman aralığında gerçekleştirilmektedir. Ancak SB-2022 çalışması kapsamında 6 Şubat 2023’de yaşanan deprem felaketi nedeni ile Suriyeliler ile yapılan çalışma tamamlanamamıştır. Bu nedenle SB-2022’de sadece T.C. Vatandaşları ile gerçekleşen saha çalışması değerlendirilmektedir. Aralık 2022- Ocak 2023’de yapılan SB-2022 çalışması, T.C. Vatandaşları için NUTS-2 modellemesine uygun biçimde 26 ilde 2.253 kişi ile “kişi bazlı” (güven düzeyi: %95 ve güven aralığı ±2,06) gerçekleştirilmiştir. SB-2022 çerçevesinde ayrıca 7 ilde 57 katılımı ile 10 OGG yapılmıştır.

UNHCR Türkiye desteği ile Prof. M. Murat Erdoğan yönetimi ve raporlaması ile gerçekleşen SB-2022 araştırma ekibinde Dr. Nihal Eminoğlu, Tülin Haji Mohamad, Doç. Dr.Fulya Memişoğlu, Dr. Onur Unutulmaz ve Deniz Aydın’ı yer almıştır.

Ayrıca göç, mülteci ve toplumsal araştırmalar alanında hem Türkiye hem de yurtdışında son derece değerli/duayan akademisyenlerden oluşan “Suriyeliler Barometresi Akademik Kurulu” üyeleri Prof. Dr. Nermi Abadan-Unat, Prof. Dr. Mustafa Aydın, Prof. Dr. Banu Ergöçmen, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali Eryurt, Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Ferris, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Nuri Gültekin, Prof. Dr. Ahmet Kasım Han, Prof. Dr. Ahmet İçduygu, Omar Kadkoy, Prof. Dr. Neeraj Kaushal, Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya, Prof. Dr. Fuat Keyman, Ümit Kızıltan, Prof. Dr. Kemal Kirişçi, Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Narlı, Kathleen Newland, Prof. Dr. Barbara Oomen, Prof. Dr. Ludger Pries, Doç.Dr. Saime Özçürümez, Prof. Dr. H.Halil Uslucan, Prof. Dr. Nasser Yassin, Doç.Dr. Ayselin Yıldız ve UNHCR-Ankara çalışmaya çok önemli destek ve katkılar vermişlerdir.



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