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RESEARCH REPORT

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SYRIAN MIGRANTS IN ISTANBUL

DECEMBER 2020 - 019

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RESEARCH REPORT

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IN ISTANBUL

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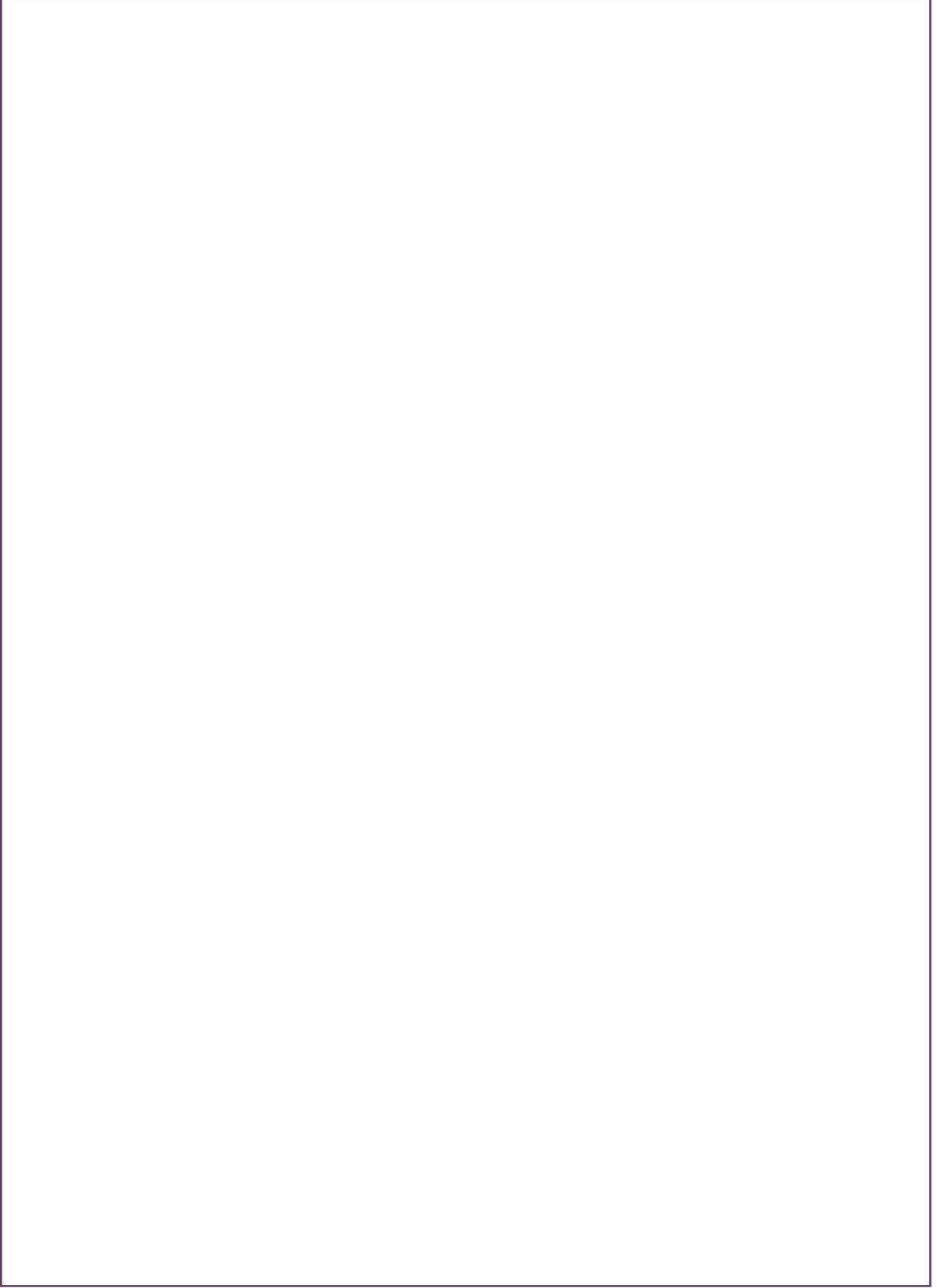
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FOREWORD

The Syrian Civil War has led to one of the most dramatic refugee flows in the history of mankind, having forced a quarter of the citizens of Syria to abandon their country since 2011. In Turkey, which has received the highest Syrian migration, while asylum-seekers were initially welcomed with statements of tolerance and fraternity, the future of the Syrians has become an important matter of debate as the country saw political polarization, rapid social changes, and economic deterioration in the 2010s. Especially with the increasing uncertainty surrounding the civil war, the belief that the Syrians are there to stay has grown stronger, unleashing negative attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Syrians. The security concerns that emerged in parallel to the acts of terrorism in the 2010s, the labor force competition ensuing from the economic troubles, and the linguistic and cultural differences have paved the ground for the Syrians to be seen as the Others.

Following the proliferation of negative statements concerning the Syrians in the media and in the political scene and the increase in acts of violence in recent years, research on the intergroup relations between the host community and the Syrian refugees has gained importance. We as IstanPol have finalized our study which we initiated with the idea that it would be significant to conduct research dealing with the approaches of the citizens to the Syrians as part of the intergroup relations in a metropolis like Istanbul where differences exist more visibly. We hope that this paper, which investigates perceptions of threat, sentiments, prejudices, stereotypes, and acts of violence toward the Syrians, will be a precursor to further research on the subject.

We would like to thank Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's Turkey Office and TÜSES for all the contributions they provided for the realization of this project. We would like to thank Infakto Research for making it possible for the survey work to be carried out in the entire Istanbul and Prof. Dr. Emre Erdoğan and Güçlü Atılğan for their selfless contributions. We would like to thank Prof. Dr. Ali Çarkoğlu, Duygu Merve Uysal, and Dr. Sedef Turper Alışık for offering their criticism, suggestions, and evaluations during the preparation of the questions and the survey experiment in the study. Finally, we would like to thank the Koç University Institute of Social Sciences and Prof. Dr. M. Murat Erdoğan for lending their support to the study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Syrian Civil War, which has resulted in one of the largest refugee waves in history, 6.7 million people have left their country. 54% of them (3.6 million) have migrated to Turkey. Data from the Directorate General of Migration Management indicate that the number of Syrians registered in Istanbul is 496.000. According to the study conducted by the UN International Organization for Migration during the period of June-July 2019, a total of 963.000 Syrian migrants, registered as well as unregistered, live in Istanbul. Such an intense migrant flow and the transformations taking place as a result of the mobility it has ignited render the attitudes of the host community toward the Syrian migrants in Istanbul an important matter.

In our study, which was implemented through face-to-face interviews with 1636 individuals representing the Istanbul population in January, prior to the measures taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, questions ranging in many issues were asked in order to assess the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the citizens toward the Syrians. The questions the participants were asked include Istanbul's problems, perceptions of threat in relation to the Syrians, the attitude of the government toward the Syrians, perceptions by citizens and Syrians of their social status, prejudices and stereotypes concerning the Syrians, sentiments toward the Syrians, the tendency to participate in collective action against the Syrians, policies concerning the Syrians, social distancing with the Syrians, and views on acts of collective violence against the Syrians as well as the tendency to endorse or take part in such acts.

In addition, due to the resurgence of partisan identities in the face of high political polarization in Turkey, the said issues were analyzed through a breakdown by political party preferences. Building on the assumption that contact with Syrians plays an effective part over the intergroup relations, the findings concerning indi-

viduals who make contact with Syrians and individuals who do not were compared.

Individuals who regard the Syrians as Istanbul's greatest problem (10.5%) rank third. 62% of the participants state that they encounter Syrians daily in parks and squares, 69% in stores, markets, and shopping malls, 52% on their street, and 44% at their workplace. 17% of the participants live in the same building as Syrians. 78% of the Istanbul dwellers interviewed, however, do not engage in communication with any Syrian.

Among the perceptions of threat associated with the Syrians, those with the lowest levels relate to lifestyle (5.6 at family level –7.0 at country level). The fact that the majority of the Syrians are Sunni Muslim mitigates lifestyle concerns.

At the family level, perceived security threat is higher than perceived economic threat (6.5 vs. 6.0). At the country level, however, economic concerns outweigh security concerns (7.9 vs. 7.4). The economic crisis, the rise in unemployment, and the labor force competition are included among the reasons that may account for

this finding. Perceived threat among the İyi Parti and MHP voters is above average and high.

When perceptions of threat are analyzed by income level, we find that perceived economic threat against the family decreases as income level increases. Perceived economic threat against the country is similar for all groups. Perceived threat is higher in individuals who encounter Syrians daily. Individuals who engage in communication with Syrians, on the other hand, have a lower average perception of threat.

78% of the participants in Istanbul believe that the government treats the Syrians more favorably than it does the Turkish citizens. This level reaches 99% among the İyi Parti voters and 82% among the CHP voters.

The Syrians have increasingly become the target of prejudices in the society. It is disconcerting that moderate and strong agreement with the statement that the Syrian migrants belong to a less talented race have reached 49% combined. Moreover, the finding that individuals who believe the Syrians are not victims of war have risen to 36% merits critical scrutiny. The voters of the nationalist parties (İyi Parti and MHP) are more highly prejudiced than other voters. On the other hand, the Syrians are overall considered to be an uncivilized and unreliable community with a propensity for violence and crime.

When sentiments toward the Syrians are analyzed, we find that anxiety is the most common sentiment while hate is the least common. Nevertheless, individuals who feel intense anger and individuals who feel intense hatred have respectively reached 33% and 24%. It is a striking finding that individuals who feel compassion (35%) fall behind individuals who feel intense anxiety (47%).

It has come into view how important it is to analyze the tendency to participate in collective action against the Syrians as well as perceptions of threat, prejudices, and negative sentiments relating to them. While individuals with a tendency to participate in “marches against the Syrians” make up 34.3%, individuals with a tenden-

cy to participate in “collective signature against the Syrians” constitute 42.6%. Strong tendency to participate in collective material assistance to the Syrians remains at 7.4%. The MHP and İyi Parti voters are prominent groups in collective action. Among individuals who encounter Syrians daily on the street, the tendency to participate in collective action against the Syrians is stronger.

While the response to the policy resolution to tell the Syrians that their asylum status has been terminated and send them back to Syria averages on 6 points out of 10, it is above 5 for all party voter groups. Support for long-term residence and naturalization is substantially low.

While the tendency to engage in neighborly relations with Syrians and invite them for dinner remains at 50% overall, it drops to 45% in individuals who encounter Syrians daily in the street. Social distancing is higher among individuals who pray less and among individuals with a below-high school education.

In this study, four survey experiments were conducted through four scenarios of collective violence taking place in a neighborhood in order to investigate the tendency of individuals to take part in collective violence. The participants were divided into four groups by the type of offense (harassment vs. pickpocketing) and by the identity of the young person accused (local vs. Syrian). The tendency to take part in collective violence is highest in the two incidents where the person accused is identified as Syrian. In addition, the tendency for violence is higher for harassment than for pickpocketing. The finding that individuals who display a high tendency for violence reaches 35.9% in the harassment scenario in which the Syrian person is accused indicates the severity of attempts at lynching due to rumors of harassment or rape. In the survey, the participants were asked how strongly they believed the person accused committed the offense in question and how strongly they endorsed violence toward that person. The tendency to find the person accused guilty and endorse violence is higher in the scenarios in which a Syrian is accused and in which harassment is involved.

INTRODUCTION: ATTITUDES TOWARD SYRIANS IN METROPOLISES AND THE CASE OF ISTANBUL

It is estimated that at least 380.000 people, among whom are 115.000 civilians, have lost their lives in the Syrian Civil War, which started in 2011. This figure does not include the nearly 100.000 individuals who lost their lives in prisons or who have not been heard from again. Moreover, since 2011, 7 million people have been internally displaced within the borders of Syria.¹

Since the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, the international community has witnessed one of the largest refugee flows in the history of mankind. According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which defines this refugee flow as “the greatest migration wave seen in recent history,” 6.7 million people have abandoned their country in the process, a number which corresponds to over 30% of the Syrian population.²

Turkey hosts 54% of the Syrian asylum-seekers. The number of Syrians granted temporary protection status in Turkey has reached 3.583.000. This figure corresponds to 4.3% of Turkey’s population. While the country received refugees from the Balkans

and the Caucasus as well as from Iraq in the past, this is the first time Turkey has undergone a migration wave of this scale.

If the demographic distribution of the Syrian asylum-seekers in Turkey is analyzed, the share of disadvantaged groups is found to be high.

As a matter of fact, the total number of refugees, which data released by the Directorate General of Migration Management indicate was 40.283 in 2010³, has reached 5.700.000 by 2019 according to the recent report by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.⁴

As of April 17, 2020, of the 3.583.000 Syrians, 1.000.000 are children. The number of children ages 0-18 and women combined is 2.532.000

(70.6%). If the age distribution is analyzed, the number of individuals ages 15-24, defined as the young popu-

lation, is found to be 749.000. While the ratio of the young Syrian population to the total number of Syrians is 20.9%, Turkey's own youth ratio is 15.8%.⁵ Their high youth ratio renders the future of the Syrians in Turkey and their adaptation to social life in the country even more important.

Among the Syrians with temporary protection status in Turkey, men seem to outnumber women by 275.000. The gender gap is highest in the 19-24 age interval by 74.000. The difference reduces by age, and women outnumber men in the age intervals above 55. The fact that young Syrian males are more visible than Syrian females leads to an increase in labor force competition and security concerns.⁶

If the Syrian asylum-seekers are assessed by the type of housing, 63.000 stay at temporary accommodation centers while 3.520.000 reside in urban areas. This suggests that only 1.77% of the Syrians live in camps and the remaining 98.23% live in cities.

Such a high number of Syrians seeking asylum in Turkey and the pace at which migration has been taking place has brought about social, cultural, and economic debates. While social cohesion in the relations between the Syrians and the Turkish citizens is found on one side of the coin, social disharmony and conflict surface on the other side.

Although the Syrian asylum-seekers were initially welcomed as "guests" in their cities of arrival, the prolongation of the Syrian Civil War has led to the opinion that they are there to stay, which, due to the economic deterioration in the past year, has outstripped the discourse of guesthood now.⁷

The language barrier obstructs communication between the communities. Furthermore, citizens believe

that the fact that Syrian migration has taken place at a massive scale is a factor forcing the existing social order to transform.⁸ Consequently, the Syrians, being the other group, are excluded and are considered to be an element of threat against economic resources and security. The differences in culture and lifestyle are also perceived as elements threatening social order.

In the case of Turkey, the socioeconomic and cultural transformations triggered by the fact that the Syrians have, due to economic reasons, settled in groups in the peripheral districts and neighborhoods of the major cities where rents are low and employment opportunities for cheap labor exist have also paved the ground for perceptions of threat and negative emotions.

*One of the most visible
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As past research indicates, the perceptions, opinions, and attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the citizens concerning the Syrians evoke concerns of social disharmony and conflict.⁹ The unfavorable circumstances of social contact between the citizens and the Syrians and the resulting perceptions of threat cause prejudices against the Syrians to spread. Thus, due to many false beliefs held, the idea that the Syrians do not deserve to be helped can find general support.¹⁰

Not only social intolerance but also political intolerance is becoming more widespread regarding the Syrians. Individuals who do not want the Syrian refugees to benefit from public services and believe they should be sent away from Turkey constitute the majority. It appears that such intolerance, which sometimes verges on racism, can be voiced and be promoted without concern.¹¹

Among the most visible worrisome consequences of the social conflict in the cities where Syrians live are acts of violence. As perceptions of threat and prejudices con-



Syrians living in camps set up near the Village of Kerame, located on the Syrian side of the border across Reyhanlı – December 2019 (Photo credit: AA)

cerning Syrians become more widespread, minor and ordinary disagreements turn into big fights, and rumors circulating facilitate the participation of masses in acts of collective violence against Syrians. According to a report released by the International Crisis Group, in 2017 alone, 181 violent incidents took place between Syrians and Turkish citizens, leading to 35 deaths.¹²

Since 2011, newspapers, television, and social media have featured 141 news reports of collective violence against Syrians, some of them amounting to attempted lynching. Thus, the social cohesion of the Syrians is extremely crucial for social peace and security. In order to understand the dynamics of the relations and develop suggestions for solution, it is necessary to investigate the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the citizens concerning the Syrians.

Investigating the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the Turkish citizens relating to the Syrians in major cities like Istanbul that are far from the border region and where the Syrians and the locals share less cultural similarity is critical to analyzing the dynamics of social cohesion.

Istanbul is the city with the largest refugee and Syrian population in the entire Turkey. Interviews conducted

by the United Nations International Organization for Migration in June and July 2019 in all 960 neighborhoods of Istanbul in partnership with local and administrative authorities show that 1.642.000 refugees live in Istanbul, of whom 963.000 are Syrians and 679.000 are nationals from other countries.¹³

This figure also includes the Syrians whose city of registration is not Istanbul. According to information obtained by the Refugees Association from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management, records indicate that the number of Syrians registered in Istanbul was 546.000 in June 2019.¹⁴ Since that date, following the tightening of the policies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the number of migrants in Istanbul has fallen. As of April 2020, 496.000 Syrians currently registered live in Istanbul.¹⁵

While the ratio of Syrians to Istanbul's population, 3.25%, is slightly below the national average, the asylum-seekers seem to be concentrated in certain districts. The attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Syrians become more important in areas with intense Syrian presence.¹⁶ Therefore, the distribution of the Syrian population by district was analyzed.¹⁷

	2017 number of Syrians	2019 number of Syrians	Difference btw 2017 and 2019	District Population	Ratio
Esenyurt	29177	59163	29986	891,120	6.64
Bağcılar	37643	50917	13274	734,369	6.93
Küçükçekmece	38278	43302	5024	770,317	5.62
Sultangazi	31426	41358	9932	523,765	7.90
Esenler	22678	34319	11641	444,561	7.72
Fatih	30747	29558	-1189	436,539	6.77
Başakşehir	26424	26491	67	427,835	6.19
Avclar	19554	22717	3163	435,625	5.21
Sultanbeyli	22396	21480	-916	327,798	6.55
Zeytinburnu	25000	21410	-3590	284,935	7.51
Bahçelievler	17710	21181	3471	594,053	3.57
Gaziosmanpaşa	17709	20573	2864	487,046	4.22
Arnavutköy	17838	19826	1988	270,549	7.33
Kağıthane	14216	16853	2637	437,026	3.86
Ümraniye	14858	15866	1008	690,193	2.30
Güngören	12727	14236	1509	289,331	4.92
Sancaktepe	12072	12977	905	414,143	3.13
Beyoğlu	11841	12467	626	230,526	5.41
Eyüp	10779	10276	-503	383,909	2.68
Bayrampaşa	11004	9812	-1192	271,073	3.62
Şişli	15269	6690	-8579	274,289	2.44
Pendik	4951	6302	1351	693,599	0.91
Beylikdüzü	6728	3445	-3283	331,525	1.04
Tuzla	2794	2889	95	255,468	1.13
Büyükçekmece	5555	2827	-2728	247,736	1.14
Üsküdar	1987	2521	534	529,145	0.48
Bakırköy	2191	2177	-14	222,668	0.98
Beykoz	1947	2037	90	246,700	0.83
Maltepe	2230	2029	-201	497,034	0.41
Sarıyer	1754	1996	242	42,503	0.58
Silivri	2375	1987	-388	187,621	1.06
Çekmeköy	2309	1904	-405	251,937	0.76
Kartal	1773	1664	-109	461,155	0.36
Ataşehir	1436	1254	-182	416,318	0.30
Kadıköy	650	332	-318	458,638	0.07
Çatalca	428	322	-106	72,966	0.44
Şile	166	242	76	36,516	0.66
Adalar	167	113	-54	16,119	0.70
Beşiktaş	277	98	-179	181,074	0.05

The following are the districts with the highest Syrian populations: Esenyurt (59.163 individuals), Bağcılar (50.917 individuals), Küçükçekmece (43.302 individuals), Sultangazi 41.358 individuals), Esenler (34.319 individuals), Fatih (29.558 individuals), Başakşehir (26.491 individuals), Avcılar (22.717 individuals), Sultanbeyli (21.480 individuals), and Zeytinburnu (21.410 individuals).

The following are the districts with the highest ratios of Syrian population: Sultangazi (7.9%), Esenler (7.72%), Zeytinburnu (7.51%), Arnavutköy (7.33%), Bağcılar (6.93%), Fatih (6.77%), Esenyurt (6.64%), Sultanbeyli (6.55%), Başakşehir (6.19%), and Küçükçekmece (5.62%).¹⁸

District	Average Household Income
Fatih	5281
Başakşehir	4513
İstanbul Average	4280
Avcılar	3662
Zeytinburnu	3644
Küçükçekmece	3567
Bağcılar	3197
Esenyurt	3024
Esenler	2847
Sultangazi	2187
Sultanbeyli	2172
Arnavutköy	2030

Of the ten districts with the highest Syrian populations, only Fatih and Başakşehir are above Istanbul's average income level; Avcılar, Küçükçekmece and Zeytinburnu are close to the average; and Esenyurt, Bağcılar, Sultangazi, Esenler, Sultanbeyli, and Arnavutköy are at the bottom of the list of average income levels.

Previous research has revealed that the relatively few Syrians with good financial resources live in districts like Fatih and Başakşehir that stand out for their Islamic lifestyle and in gated communities in other districts.¹⁹ A major portion of the Syrian population, however, appears to live in remote and peripheral districts that have only recently developed and where rents are low and industries requiring cheap labor force are concentrated.

District	Number of Syrians 2017	Number of Syrians 2019	Difference
Esenyurt	29177	59163	29986
Bağcılar	37643	50917	13274
Esenler	22678	34319	11641
Sultangazi	31426	41358	9932
Sultanbeyli	22396	21480	-916
Fatih	30747	29558	-1189
Bayrampaşa	11004	9812	-1192
Büyükkçekmece	5555	2827	-2728
Beylikdüzü	6728	3445	-3283
Zeytinburnu	25000	21410	-3590
Şişli	15269	6690	-8579

Furthermore, we observe that due to the deterioration of economic conditions in the last two years, Syrians have been moving to remote districts on the European side to take jobs in businesses seeking cheap labor and to benefit from cheap housing opportunities. While the Syrian population has been growing in the districts of Esenyurt, Bağcılar, Esenler, and Sultangazi, the districts of Şişli, Fatih, Bayrampaşa, Zeytinburnu, Büyükkçekmece, and Beylikdüzü, where rents are relatively high, have lost some of their Syrian population. The Syrian population has also been declining in Sultanbeyli, located far from the cheap labor market in comparison to districts like Esenyurt and Bağcılar.²⁰

In light of the information above, Istanbul stands as an important case for observing the relations between the citizens and the Syrians. Unlike the provinces on the Syrian border, Istanbul is a city where visible cultural differences exist between the Syrians and the citizens. Therefore, we believe that the dynamics of group relations in Istanbul need to be studied in detail.²¹

Furthermore, Istanbul is a metropolis where cosmopolitanism prevails. This is evidenced by the fact that over 70% of the population residing in Istanbul has a family register kept in a place other than Istanbul.²² It is important to examine the relationship between the citizens and the Syrians in this city where a steady Istanbulite identity is lacking and a problem of security is felt.²³

The recent economic deterioration and the resulting rise in unemployment have affected Istanbul more adversely than it has the country in general. How this development, listed among the problems that led to AKP's loss of Istanbul in the local elections,

has impacted the relationship between the Syrians and the citizens is an important research question.²⁴ It is also a matter of curiosity whether there is any diver-

gence between individuals who encounter Syrians and individuals who do not.

Furthermore, Istanbul strikes one as a place where different groups and their lifestyles come into conflict with one another, leading to political polarization.²⁵ As a matter of fact, the repeating of the most recent local elections has exposed the extent of the polarization. At this point, the Syrian Civil War and the migration crisis are also critical grounds for dissent between the oppositional actors and the government.²⁶ It is essential to evaluate the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the citizens toward the Syrians in light of such important issues.

In the context of the said cultural, economic, social, and political factors, it is clear how important a task it is to analyze the case of Istanbul in detail. Therefore, this study uses a sample representing the Istanbul population in order to investigate the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Syrians. In this

regard, it seeks an answer to the question of how the citizens diverge in the face of factors such as encounter with Syrians and party preferences.

The recent economic deterioration and the subsequent rise in unemployment have affected Istanbul more adversely than it has the rest of the country. How this development, listed among the problems that led to AKP's loss of Istanbul in the local elections, has impacted the relationship between the Syrians and the citizens is an important research question.

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

In our survey work, conducted in the entire Istanbul, 1636 people were interviewed. This survey work, which was carried out by Infacto Research Company in December 2019 and January 2020, used the method of face-to-face interview. The sampling consisted of 1636 individuals representing the Istanbul population, selected through a reweighting of the neighborhoods in our sample by their shares in the city's population.

The participants in the survey were asked open-ended questions on the problems of Turkey and Istanbul. They were asked questions concerning partisanship, on the one hand, and contact and frequency of encounter with Syrians, on the other hand, the two factors hypothesized to impact the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Syrians.

With an aim to identify the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Syrians, which will be analyzed in detail in the following sections of the paper, the survey included questions relating to matters such as perceptions of threat, the government's attitude toward the Syrians, differences in perceptions of group status between Syrians and citizens, prejudices against the Syrians, stereotypes about the Syrians, feelings toward the Syrians, collective action against the Syrians, policies about the

Syrians, social distancing with Syrians, and the tendency to engage in violence against the Syrians as well as the tendency to endorse such violence. The experiment conducted as part of the survey work was designed to observe how citizen reactions to two different offenses (pickpocketing vs. harassment) diverge in relation to the identity of the person charged (Turkish vs. Syrian).

Of the 1636 participants in the survey, 48.1% are women (787 individuals) and 51.9% are men (849 individuals).

If the age distribution of the participants in the survey is analyzed, the young population appears to be the largest group in Istanbul. 38.8% of the participants are ages 18-34. The middle-age group, ages 35-49, constitutes 35.5%. Individuals age 50 or older have a share of 25.7%. The median age in the sample is 38 and the mean is 39.4.

FIGURE 1: GENDER

(N: 1.636)

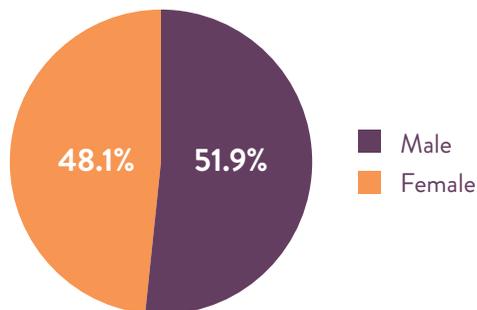


FIGURE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION

(N: 1.636)

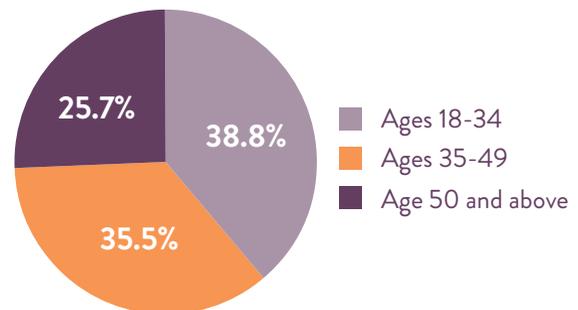
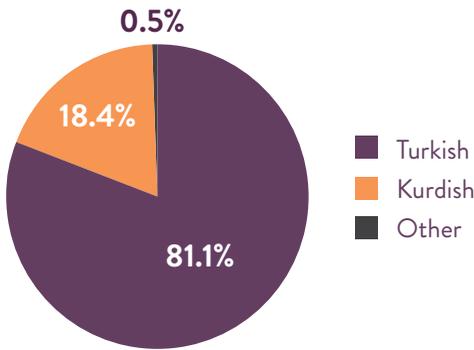


FIGURE 3: ETHNICITY

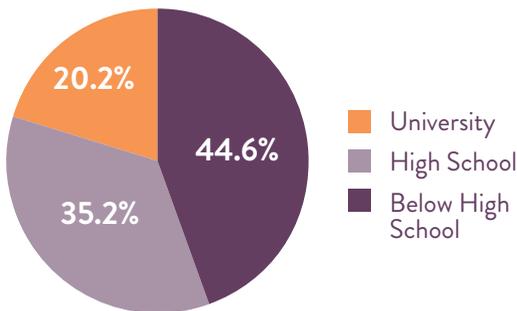
(N: 1.636)



If the participants are analyzed by ethnicity, Turks constitute the majority by 81.1%, as is the case in the country. The share of Kurds in the sample is 18.4%.

FIGURE 4: EDUCATION LEVEL

(N: 1.636)

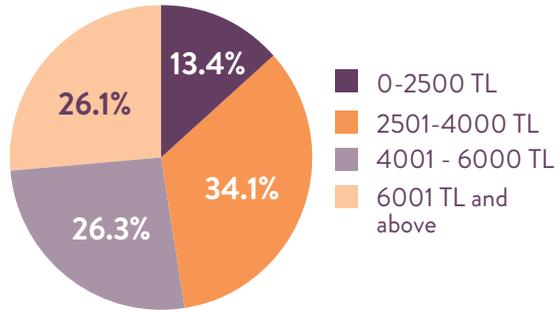


The 1636 participants were asked their highest level of study completed. Individuals with an associate's or bachelor's degree are considered as the group of college graduates, individuals with a high school degree as the group of high school graduates, and individuals with a primary or secondary school degree and individuals with no degree as the below-high school group.

The below-high school group has the largest share by 44.6%, the high school graduates constitute 35.2%, and the college graduates make up 20.2%. Non-college graduates are the vast majority in Istanbul by 79.8%. According to the sample, the mean duration of studies completed is 9.4 years in Istanbul. In other words, an average Istanbul resident studied for 9.4 years, which corresponds to the first or second year of high school.

FIGURE 5: HOUSEHOLD INCOME

(N: 1.454)



The participants were divided into four groups by total household income where the low-income group earns 0-2500 TL, the low-middle-income group 2501-4000 TL, the middle-high-income group 4001-6000 TL, and the high-income group 6001 TL and above. In Istanbul, where the average cost of living is high, the share of individuals with a household income equivalent of or below the minimum wage is relatively low, at 13.4%. The largest segment in Istanbul consists of the low-middle-income group, which stands at 34.1%, with a household income of 2501 to 4000 TL. The shares of the middle-high-income group and the high-income group are very close, 26.3 vs. 26.1%. This suggests that while 47.5% of the households in Istanbul lie in the low- and low-middle-income groups, 52.5% belong in the middle-high- and high-income groups.

FIGURE 6: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

(N: 1.633)

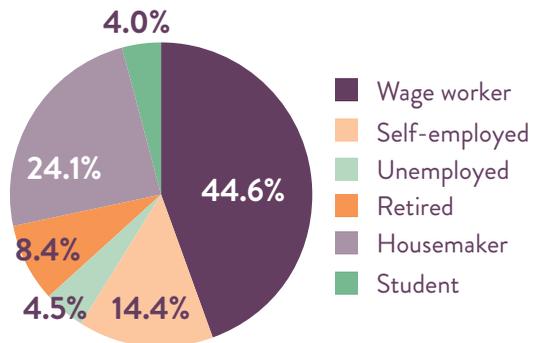
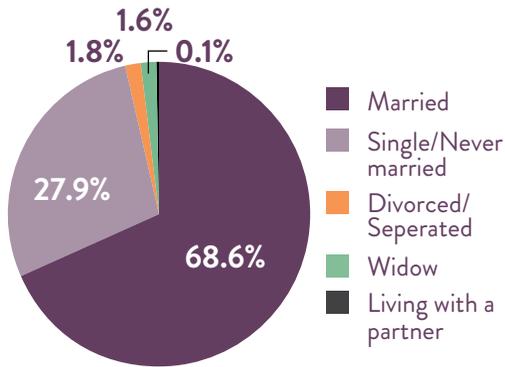


FIGURE 7: MARITAL STATUS

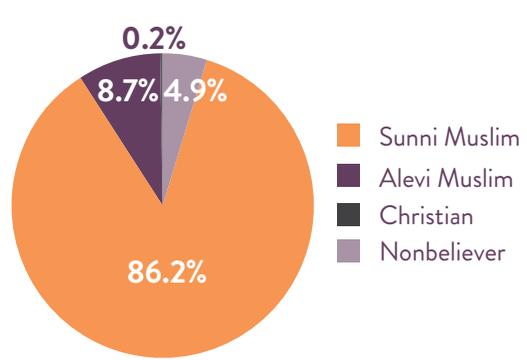
(N: 1.634)



If we describe the participants by employment status, we find that wageworkers make up the largest group by 44.6%. This finding is consistent with our predictions given that the young population, a highly employable group, is large in the city. Homemakers constitute about a quarter of the participants by 24.1%. The self-employed are at 14.4%. In addition, retired people, the unemployed, and students respectively make up 8.4%, 4.5%, and 4%. It appears that in Istanbul, while the working segment reaches 59%, 36.5% is outside the workforce, not including the unemployed.

FIGURE 8: RELIGIOUS BELIEF

(N: 1.621)



Over two-thirds of the participants, 68.6%, indicate that they are married. 1.8% are divorced and 1.6% have lost a spouse. Unmarried people are at 27.9%. People living with a partner are at 0.1%.

If the distribution of the participants by religious belief is analyzed, Sunni Muslims are in the majority, by 86.2%, paralleling the situation at the national level. The shares of Alevi Muslims and non-religious people are relatively high, respectively, 8.7% and 4.9%. Christians remain at 0.2%.

FIGURE 9: FREQUENCY OF PRAYER

(N: 1.505)

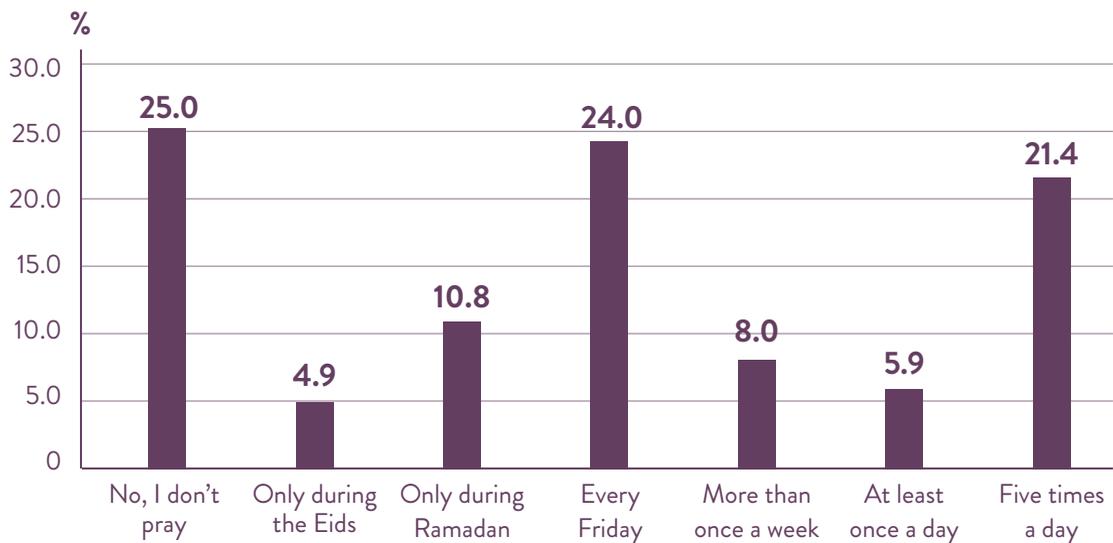
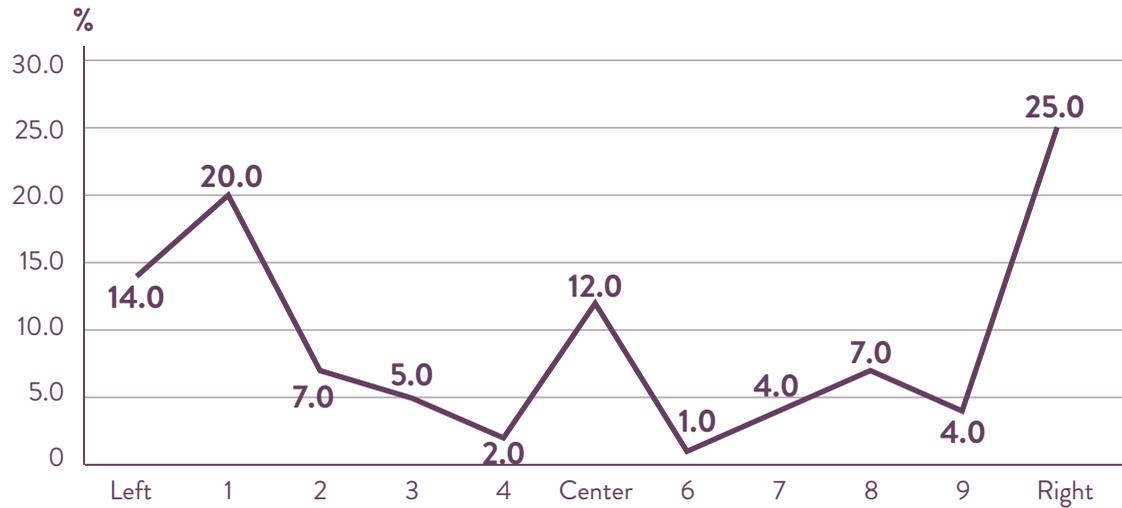


FIGURE 10: IDEOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION (LEFT-RIGHT SCALE)

(N: 1.504)

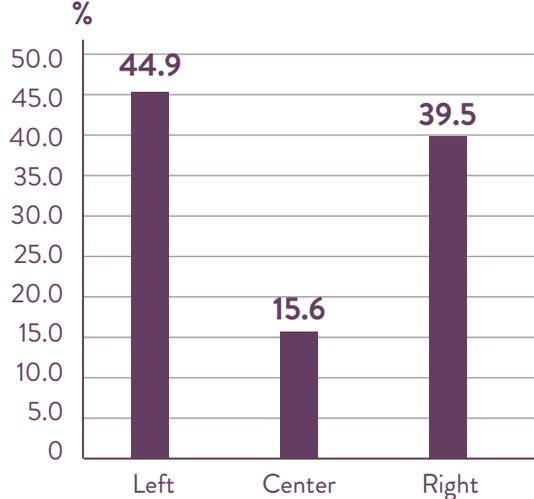


In order to find the distribution of the participants by frequency of prayer, they were asked how often they perform the namaz or the salaah, the Muslim prayer due five times a day. Individuals who never perform the namaz are at 25%, individuals who perform the namaz during the Eids only are at 4.9%, and individuals who perform the namaz during Ramadan only are at 10.8%. Individuals indicating that they attend the Friday namaz remain at 24%. Individuals who perform the namaz more often than once a week are at 8% and individuals who perform the namaz at least once a day are at 5.9%. Finally, 21.4% perform the namaz five times a day.

With an aim to identify their ideological stances, the participants were asked to rate themselves from 0 to 10 on a left-right ideological scale. The results show that just as on the issue of religiosity, the participants are concentrated around the middle as well as around the two ends. 14% are at 0, the most left stance, and 20% are at 1. Individuals in the center remain at 12%. 25% are at 10, the most right stance.

FIGURE 11: IDEOLOGICAL POSITION

(N: 1.621)



Our ideological scale, which defines points 0-3 as the left, 4-6 as the center, and 7-10 as the right, labels 44.9% of the participants as left-wingers, 15.6% as centrists, and 39.5% as right-wingers. In the aftermath of the political polarization which manifested itself in the last local elections in Istanbul, it merits attention that the number of centrist participants is rather low.

TWO FACTORS IMPACTING THE ATTITUDINAL AND BEHAVIORAL TENDENCIES TOWARD THE SYRIANS: PARTISANSHIP AND CONTACT

PARTISANSHIP AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SYRIANS

It is possible to argue while evaluating the attitudes of the participants toward the Syrians that one of the most critical breaking points is partisanship. In a polarized country like Turkey, partisanship is an important factor with potential to cause a divergence in attitudes and/or a differentiation in the degree of an attitude.²⁷

Partisan belonging is an antecedent dimension of individual identity. In any political event, individuals tend to deliberate and make their mind through the signals they receive from their party. Therefore, partisan identity is an important factor determining the political perceptions of individuals and directing them.²⁸ For individuals who do not follow political developments as closely as experts, the stances by the political parties they feel belonging to and the statements by the elites are the means simplifying politics.²⁹ Through partisan identity, the elites can convey to the masses the discourses and judgments they develop on different issues.³⁰ On more complicated issues such as attitudes toward migrants, voters tend to embrace the views voiced by the elites of the political party they feel belonging to the way they are.³¹

In general, right-wing parties and their voters are known to tend to be more anti-migrant.

On this point, a different outlook is observed in Turkey which might present the country as a unique case in the literature on partisanship and anti-migrantism.

Partisanship becomes even more critical as political rivalry and polarization rise.³² As a matter of fact, according to data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, Turkey, where polarization is high, is the country with the third highest partisanship ratio, by 77%, among 46 countries.³³ Similarly, in our survey, 86% state that they feel close to a political party while 87.3% indicate a party preference.

Partisanship, along with polarization, in which emotions come into prominence, impacts perceptions of threat, prejudices, political preferences, and voting behavior.³⁴ While it is viewed as a significant factor in the literature on attitudes toward outgroups, partisanship is a variable generally neglected in studies about migrants.³⁵ Moreover, in research carried out on different groups, it is possible to argue that party loyalty and its degree have a distinguishing effect over anti-migrant attitudinal and behavioral tendencies.³⁶

The fact that following the migration wave since 2011, 3.6 million Syrians are now present in Turkey, which has a total of close to 5 million refugees, renders this issue a matter of polarization and partisanship. Therefore, it becomes important to investigate the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the citizens toward the Syrians.

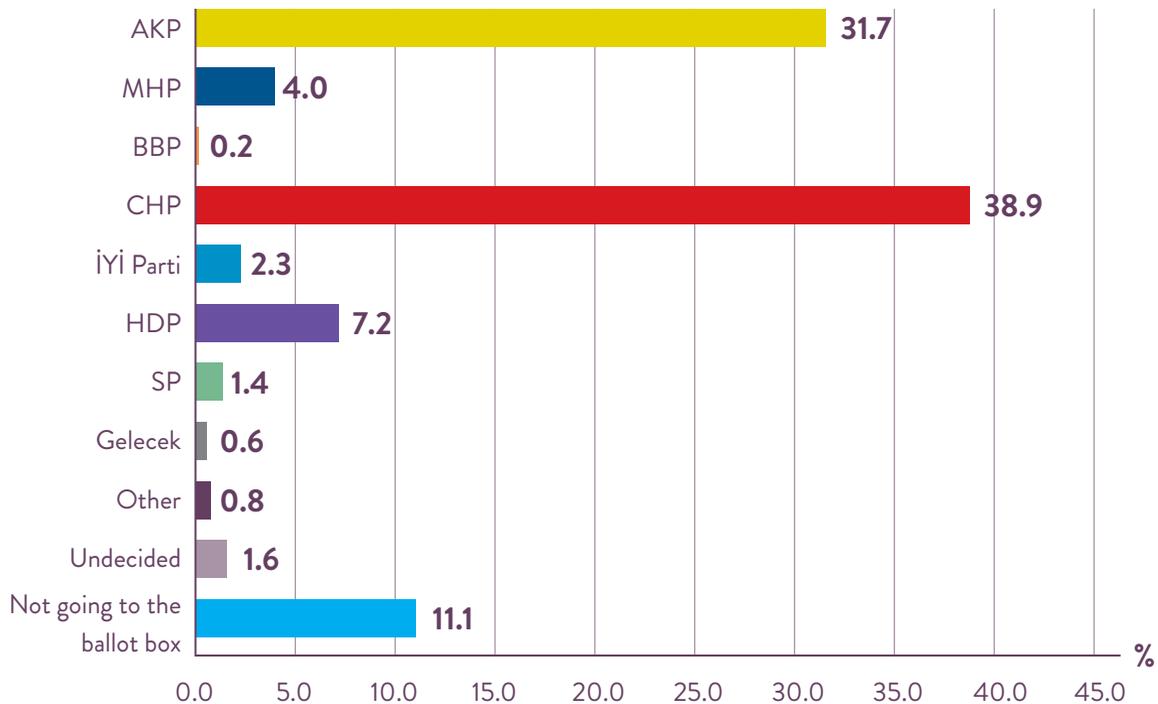
In general, right-wing parties and their voters are known to tend to be more anti-migrant.³⁷ On this point, a different outlook is observed in Turkey which might present the country as a unique case in the literature on partisanship and anti-migrantism.³⁸

The elites of the parties in the People’s Alliance, which are more right-wing, have developed a more tolerant approach to the Syrians compared to the more left parties. The AKP governments presented the Syrians as “Muslim brothers” and “the Muhacirs” (Muslim Immigrants) and demanded their voters to live in harmony with the Syrians in accordance with their identity as “the Ensars” (Helpers).³⁹ On the other hand, politicians from CHP, a party more secular and more left-wing than AKP, and from İyi Parti, which is more center, focus on the perceptions of threat concerning the Syrians.⁴⁰

In this framework, in investigating the relations of the citizens with the Syrians and their attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Syrians, a breakdown by party will be provided and be addressed separately for each dimension. This way, whether there is any divergence between the voters of the parties in opposition and the AKP voters will surface.

In our Istanbul survey, conducted through face-to-face interviews with 1635 individuals, voters indicating a party preference seem to make the vast majority. 87.3%

FIGURE 12: PARTY VOTE DISTRIBUTION (BEFORE REDISTRIBUTION OF UNDECIDED VOTES)
(N: 1.636)



of the 1635 participants state that they would vote for one of the parties in a potential general election. This level is above the national voter turnout by 3%. Thus, it is possible to claim that Istanbul is a more partisan city.

If party preferences are analyzed, the People's Alliance appears to stay behind the National Alliance. While AKP reaches 31.7%, MHP is at 4% and BBP is at 0.2%. Thus, before redistribution of undecided voters, the share of participants stating that they would vote for the People's Alliance is found to be 35.6%.

Our study reveals that CHP, which won the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality in the elections of March 31 and June 23, 2019, has sustained this trend. While the share of CHP votes reaches 38.9%, the share of İyi Parti votes is measured as 2.3%. The People's Alliance achieves a total share of 41.2%.

Before redistribution of undecided voters, while HDP remains at 7.2%, Saadet Partisi and Gelecek Partisi appear to attain electoral support, respectively, at 1.4% and 0.6%. Since it had not been officially founded at the time of the conduct of this survey, DEVA Partisi

is not included in this analysis. Voters turning to other parties constitute 0.8% of the participants.

It is striking that the majority of individuals who do not indicate a party preference are in the group of voters not going to the ballot box. 11.1% state that they would not go to the ballot box to vote for any party. The finding that the undecided are at 1.6% reflects how rigid voting behavior has become in Istanbul, a polarized city.

In the picture emerging following the redistribution of undecided voters, CHP reaches 44.6%, AKP 36.3%, HDP 8.3%, MHP 4.6%, İyi Parti 2.7%, Saadet Partisi 1.7%, Gelecek Partisi 0.7%, and BBP 0.3%.

Before we introduce our discussion on how the party electoral groups diverge in their outlook on the Syrians, we should take a glance into what the participants believe are the most important problems of Turkey and Istanbul.

In the survey, conducted in January 2020, the economy is found to be Turkey's single greatest problem. Under

FIGURE 13: PARTY VOTE DISTRIBUTION (ONLY THOSE INDICATING A PARTY PREFERENCE)
(N: 1.427)

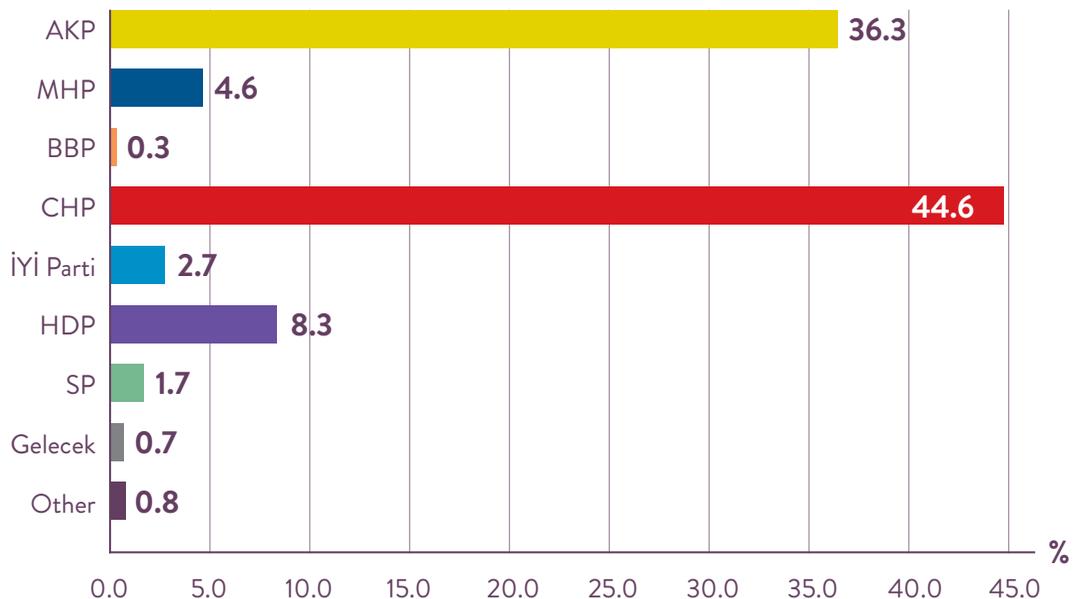
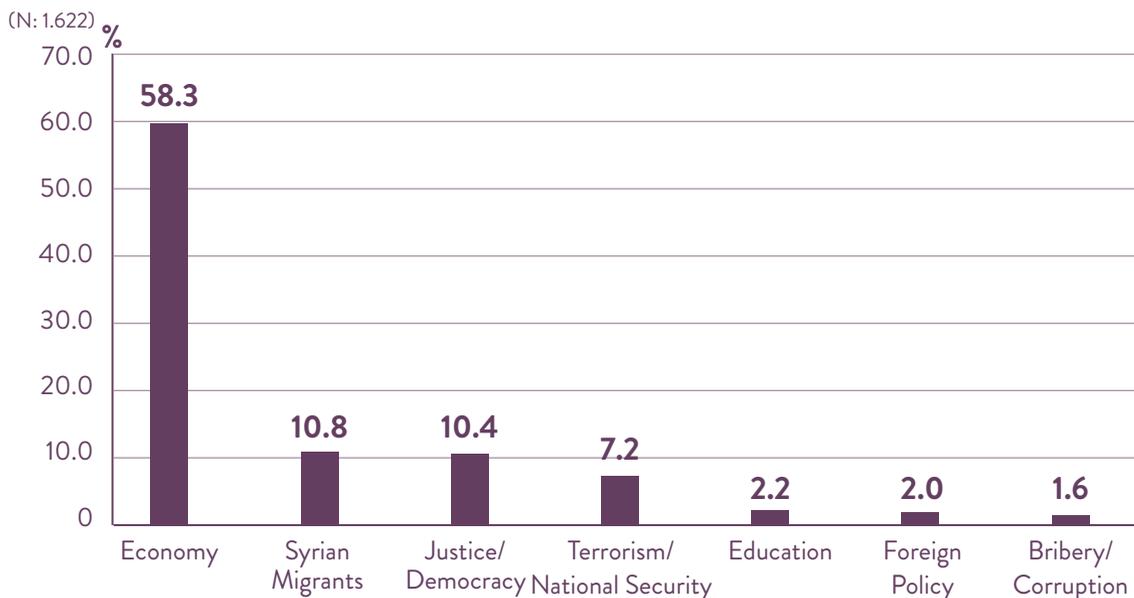


FIGURE 14: TURKEY'S MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM



circumstances where, since the summer of 2018, the Turkish lira has lost value by 25%, prices have risen by 30%, and employment has reached 14% from 10%, and one in every four young people now remains out of employment, it was expected that individuals pointing to the economy as the greatest problem facing Turkey would reach 58.3%.

It is a noteworthy finding that the share of individuals considering the Syrian migrants as the country's greatest problem exceeds the share of individuals indicating the issues relating to justice and democracy as such. The economic troubles growing, the political polarization deepening, and the nationalism rising since 2018 are among the factors that potentially explain why the Syrians rank second on the list.

FIGURE 15: ISTANBUL'S GREATEST PROBLEM

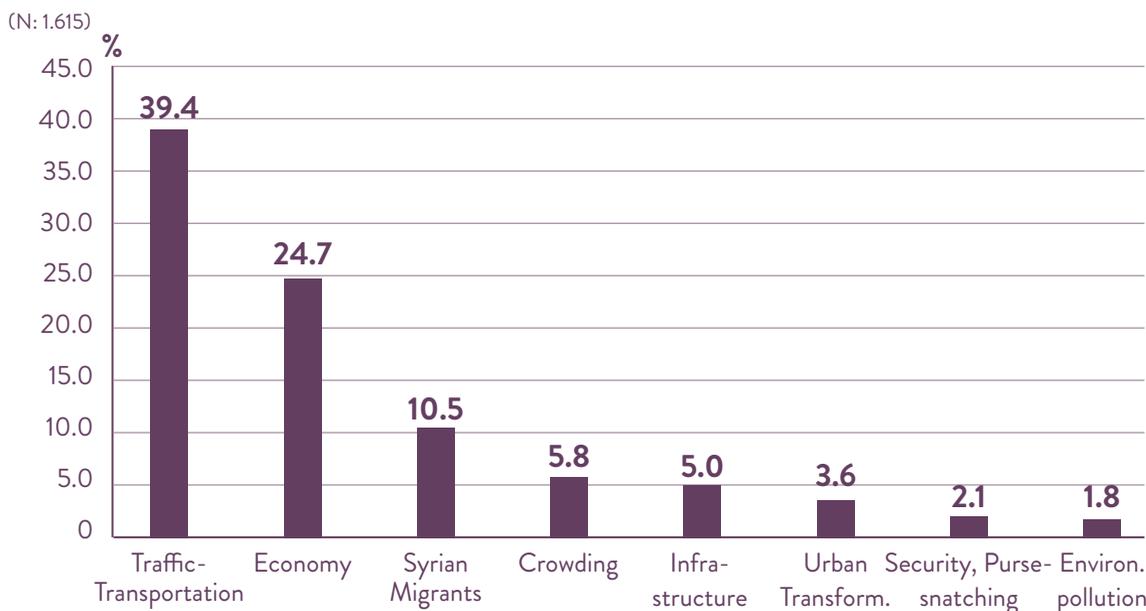
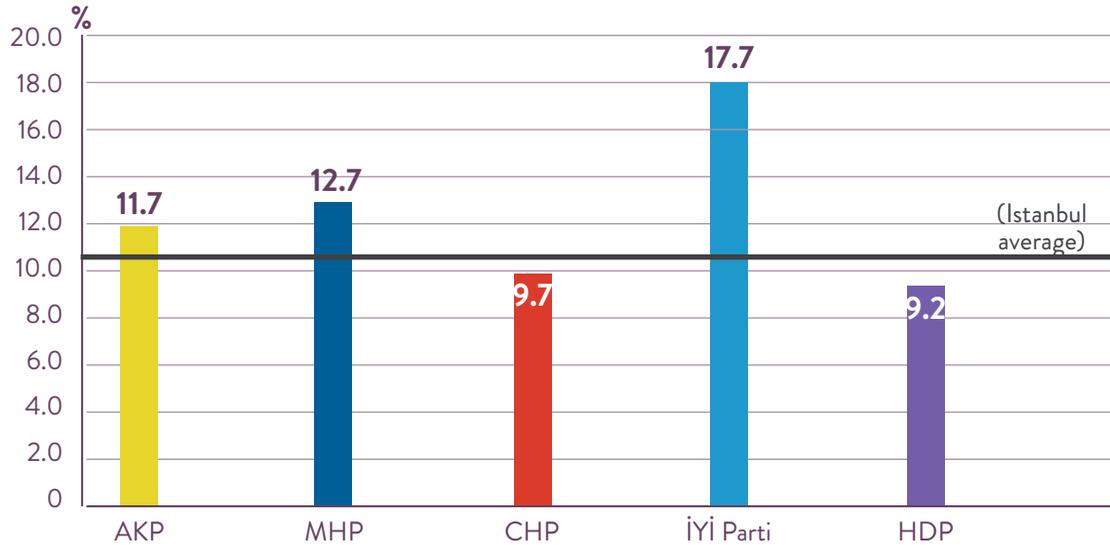


FIGURE 16: ISTANBUL'S GREATEST PROBLEM: "THE SYRIANS" (BY PARTY)

(N: 1.615)



As for Istanbul's problems, we find that individuals who state that traffic and transportation issues are the biggest problem in the city, currently having a population of over 15 million, reach 39.4%. Individuals who consider the economy to be the biggest problem in a large metropolis like Istanbul where the standard of living is high and economic hardships are more easily felt are at 24.7%. Individuals who consider the Syrians as a problem reach 10.5%, a level similar to that found for the corresponding question on Turkey. The finding that the share of individuals who indicate the Syrians as the biggest problem is higher than the share of individuals who consider infrastructure, urban transformation, security, or environmental pollution as a priority issue demonstrates how crucial it is to investigate the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the citizens toward the Syrians.

A comparison of different political parties by the ratio of voters considering the Syrians as Istanbul's biggest problem reveals results paralleling the left-right ideological division in the opposition and ruling blocks.

If we analyze the political parties making up the People's Alliance, the share of individuals who indicate the Syrians as the biggest problem is 1% higher in MHP, a more right-wing party, than in AKP, and is above the Istanbul average.

Among the voters of the HDP, which is on the rightmost end of the ideological spectrum, individuals who consider the Syrians as the biggest problem are at 9.2%, below the Istanbul average of 10.5%. Similarly, the CHP voters' share seems to be at 9.7%, also below the general average.

Strikingly, the share of individuals who indicate the Syrians as the biggest problem in İyi Parti, the most right-wing party in the opposition, is at 17.7%, the highest level among all political parties. The fact that İyi Parti, which has a nationalist, less religious, and right-wing base, puts the Syrians higher on their agenda, is a significant factor that may account for this finding.

CONTACT

Contact is an important phenomenon investigated in the fields of intergroup relations and social harmony as a broad concept comprising encounters among members of different groups, their coexistence, and their dialogue. It is a generally accepted premise that contact has a decisive impact over attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward an outer group. Daily encounters lead members of one group to make observations on the other group and to collect stories. Relations with the other group can inform or reproduce the judgments of individuals about their own group.⁴¹

Since migrants typically come from a different culture, they may be regarded as the most marked outer group by the majority of a local community. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the effects of contact and bilateral relations on attitudes and behavior toward migrants.⁴²

In the literature on intergroup contact, it is believed that as contact increases, the prejudices and threat perceptions of individuals concerning migrants grow weaker, and parallelly, the tendency to support policies limiting the rights of migrants as well as the tendency to support violence toward them declines.⁴³

Negative emotions such as anger, hatred, fear, and anxiety toward the other group; perceptions of threat, empathy; and trust toward the other group, and life satisfaction are believed to be influenced by contact.⁴⁴

On the other hand, some studies suggest that contact does not directly decrease xenophobia and thus should be studied in greater detail. The literature on intergroup threat proposes the idea that locals regard demographic changes induced by foreigners as an element of competition that is against their favor. Increased visibility of the members of a group considered to be foreign not only triggers perceptions of threat related to security and economy but also leads to cultural conflicts.⁴⁵

These two approaches, albeit different from one another, do not exclude each other. In this framework, frequency of contact may not be sufficient to make intergroup relations more tolerant. Nature of contact is also influential on attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward migrants, and it may be shaped by the characteristics of the groups and their compatibility, by the socio-economic conditions, and by the political atmosphere.⁴⁶

Researchers have pointed out that for contact to bring along tolerance, some conditions are required, which may include: similarity in socioeconomic status, shared values and goals, support by political institutions and local authorities for intergroup relations, and opportunity for intergroup collaboration.

In circumstances where communication is poor, intergroup attitudes are shaped without detailed information through basic signs and symbols that reproduce prejudices and stereotypes, and thus tolerance may decline.⁴⁷

In this framework, in order to study contact in more depth, it is necessary to consider a number of factors such as frequency of contact, location of contact, and friendship relations. Differences in impact between encounters without any dialogue, on the one hand, and mutual relations, on the other, are an anticipated outcome. Moreover, closer relations such as in the form of friendship with the other group have been found to have a positive influence.⁴⁸

The participants in this study were asked a series of questions with an aim to assess encounters and mutual relations in detail, in the section entitled "Contact." Frequency of contact with Syrians was asked with a number of options including the workplace, the street, markets, stores, and shopping malls, and parks and squares.

If frequency of contact with Syrians is analyzed by location, the most common places of encounter are parks and squares as well as stores, markets, and shopping malls. 62% of the participants indicate that they encounter Syrians daily in parks and squares. The ratio is 59% for stores, markets, and shopping malls. In ad-

***Frequency of contact
may not be sufficient
to make intergroup
relations more tolerant.
Nature of contact
is also influential
on attitudinal and
behavioral tendencies
toward migrants.***

FIGURE 17: FREQUENCY OF ENCOUNTER WITH SYRIANS

(N: 1.622)



dition, while individuals who encounter Syrians more than once a week in parks and squares combined stand at 85%, individuals who encounter Syrians more than once a week or daily in stores, markets, and shopping malls constitute 78%. Individuals who never encounter Syrians in the said places remain, respectively, at 1% and 2%.

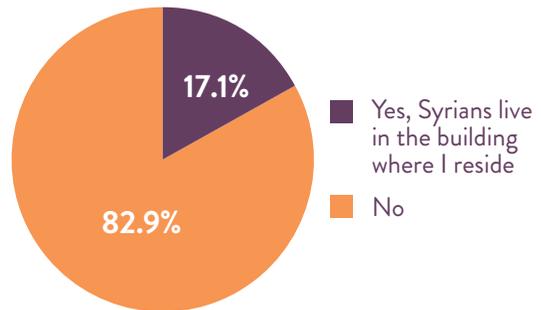
The share of individuals who encounter Syrians in their street of residence is found to be 52%. This suggests that Syrians live on the same street as more than half of the Istanbul residents. Individuals who encounter Syrians in the street more than once a week stand at 74%. Three quarters of the Istanbul population relate that they encounter Syrians in their street of residence at least once a week. The ratio of individuals who never encounter Syrians in their street is only 2%.

Individuals who encounter Syrians at and near their workplace are in the minority with 44%. The share of individuals who encounter Syrians more than once a week is measured as 64%. About two thirds of the working population believe that there are Syrians at

or near their workplace. The ratio of individuals who never encounter Syrians is a few times higher among working people than in other locations (14%).

FIGURE 18: INDIVIDUALS LIVING IN THE SAME BUILDING AS SYRIANS

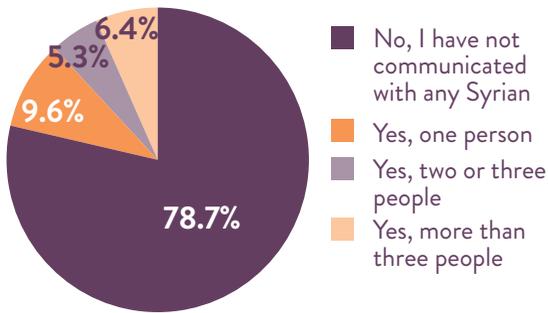
(N: 1.624)



17.1% of the participants indicate that there are Syrians living in the building where they reside. In other words, one in every six people in Istanbul lives in the same building as Syrians.

FIGURE 19: COMMUNICATION WITH SYRIANS (NUMBER OF PEOPLE)

(N: 1.634)



The foremost among the factors that determine the nature of contact is communication with members of the other group. In this regard, the participants were asked whether they have ever engaged in communication with any Syrian. The big majority of the participants, 78.7%, declare that they have never communicated with any Syrian. Individuals who have engaged in communication with only one Syrian person stand at 9.6%. Individuals who have communicated with two or three people are at 5.3% and individuals who have communicated with more than three people are at 6.4%.

While over 95% of the participants in the Istanbul sample indicate that they see Syrians at least once a month in public spaces, the fact that only one in every five Istanbul inhabitants has communicated with Syrians shows that contact typically remains at the level of encounter and intergroup relations are yet to develop.

The factors that lead to the lack of vivid relations between the citizens and the Syrians may include the citizens' view of the migrants as the other group, differences in language and culture, and the low level of interpersonal trust. The fact that visible cultural and linguistic-symbolic differences exist between the Turks and the Syrians may also be a factor. Various research suggests that members of a group tend to react negatively toward symbols that are representative of another group and that this causes a decline in the level of tolerance toward the outgroup.⁴⁹

As a conclusion, intergroup contact has a substantial influence on attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Other. Frequency and nature of contact also determine its impact. Therefore, in assessing attitudes toward Syrians, this study will group the participants by the level of contact and consider the impact of contact.

ATTITUDINAL AND BEHAVIORAL TENDENCIES TOWARD THE SYRIANS

PERCEPTIONS OF THREAT

In studies on perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies toward foreigners, migrants, and minorities, perceived threat is demonstrated among the main factors underlying discrimination. Individuals from an outgroup, perceived as actors challenging the stability and order of the majority group, may be considered to be an element of threat. In this regard, migration means change in the status quo. Thus, citizens often perceive migrants as a threat to the existing order.⁵⁰

It is possible to divide perceived threat into three categories, which concern: cultural/symbolic matters, economic matters, and security matters. Cultural/symbolic threat perceptions relate to lifestyle and the integrity of the national identity, economic threat perceptions reflect individuals' concerns over harm to their household income and the national economy, and security threat perceptions point to anxiety over the country's peace.⁵¹

The theories of social identity and group rivalry are the two most fundamental approaches to explaining threat perceptions related to the other group. While the theory of social identity focuses on the socio-psychological aspect of intergroup relations, the theory of group rivalry emphasizes the effects of demographic and socio-economic transformations.⁵²

The theory of social identity proposes that individuals, born into a family and a society, inevitably interact

with their environment and position themselves within these communication networks. Within such sociality, they feel part of a group and use this group identity to distinguish and categorize individuals that belong to other groups. Consequently, this process leads to the separation of "the other" from "us," which, in turn, results in exclusion.⁵³

"Viewing individuals from an outgroup, defined as "the Others," as entirely separate from the ingroup brings about the perception that the existence of that outgroup most fundamentally contradicts with the unity, order, and stability in the inner group, and the outgroup is perceived as an element of threat. It is possible to argue for a positive relationship between membership to the inner group and the intensity of such perceived threat.⁵⁴

With membership to the inner group, individuals develop a propensity to view other individuals in the inner group as very alike, and they perceive the inner group as a uniform group. This perception, in turn, leads to the exclusion of the outer group as "the Other" and to the consolidation of prejudices and stereotypes concerning that group.⁵⁵ As allegiance to the inner group increases, individuals become more likely to engage in discriminatory attitudes and behavior.⁵⁶ Thus, individuals from the outgroup are otherized through threat perceptions and through generalizations such as stereotypes and prejudices, rather than be subjected to the same criteria used for the ingroup.⁵⁷

According to the theory of social identity, when ethnic and cultural differences are more strongly felt, the perception that other groups such as refugees are a threat to national unity spreads and violence escalates. If individuals in an ingroup develop a perception that the norms and values of an outgroup are inconsistent with those of their own group, they tend to adopt exclusionary attitudes and behavior toward that outgroup. It is also claimed that as the degree of membership to the ingroup increases, the tendency for violence also increases.⁵⁸

In Turkey, it has been observed that national group belonging is strong and tolerance for cultural differences is low among citizens.⁵⁹ While this theory offers a significant departure point, investigating the changes in attitudes toward Syrians among individuals as well as over time requires that we focus on a variety of factors, since ingroup belongingness in general is high in Turkey. Furthermore, the fact that negative perceptions toward the Syrians also exist among different ethnic and religious groups such as the Kurds and the Alevites points to the necessity to focus on a range of factors.⁶⁰

According to the theory of group rivalry, outgroups such as migrants are vulnerable to being perceived by an ingroup as an element of threat concerning access to limited resources and their distribution. Therefore, locals may regard migrants as direct rivals, especially in seeking employment. Besides, social assistance for migrants may sometimes be interpreted as a step hurting the national economy.⁶¹

Past research published within the framework of the theory of group rivalry has focused on variables at the macro level to investigate the impact of factors such as national or regional income level, migrant population and its ratio to the local population, and increases in migrant population.⁶² This suggests that beyond a certain population size, migrants are perceived by locals as an element of threat on matters such as access to limited resources, political power, security, and social status.⁶³ Along macro variables, individual-level threat perceptions also receive significant coverage in the literature.⁶⁴ Threat perceptions, albeit being shaped by the various ideas and beliefs of individuals, are open to the effects of the media, the political elites, political polarization, group belongingness, and the social environment.⁶⁵

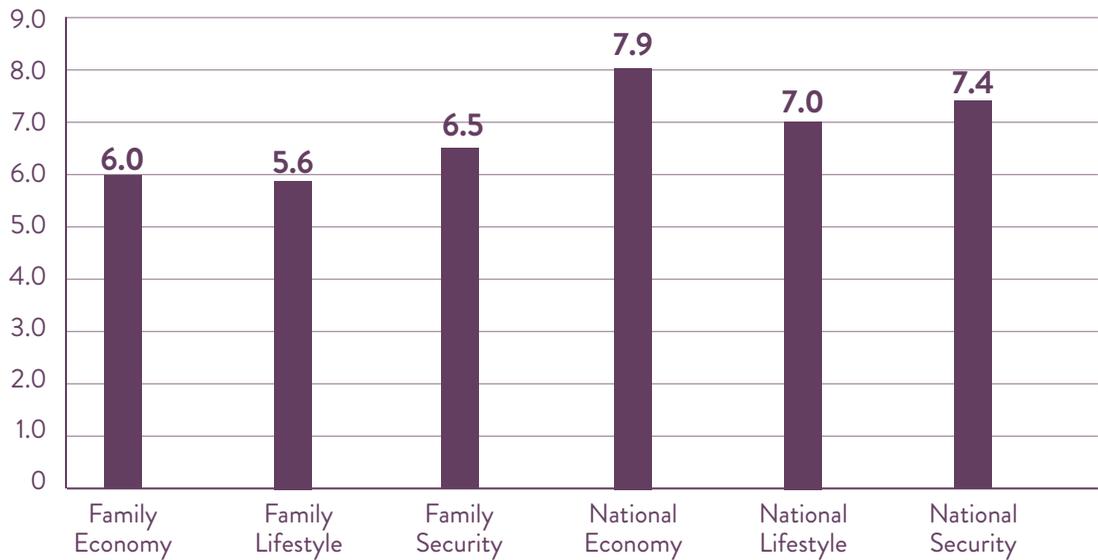
It is possible to form a typological conceptual framework by categorizing perceived threat along two lines, one individual and one national.⁶⁶ Perceived threat at the individual-level points to individuals' judgment that migrants bring direct harm to them and their families. Perceived threat at the national level, in turn, concerns citizens' view that migrants harm their country and nation. Thus, even if they state that migrants do not constitute a direct threat to them or their families, citizens may perceive them as an element of threat to the country's national unity, security, and economy. It may be claimed that since national belongingness is strong in countries like Turkey, threat perceptions at the national level strongly impact attitudes and behavior toward migrants.⁶⁷

In addition to these two dimensions, it is possible to conceptualize threat perceptions in three distinct areas. Economic threat perceptions point to the effects of migrants on the national economy and the resulting financial changes individuals and their families go through. Security threat perceptions reflect perceptions on whether migrants cause a negative change in terms of national security and matters concerning social order and social peace individuals observe around them. Finally, cultural threat perceptions relate to perceptions on whether migrants affect the country's national unity and national culture negatively and whether individuals' lifestyles are under threat by migrants.⁶⁸

In this regard, the participants were asked two sets of three questions on their threat perceptions regarding economic, cultural, and security-related matters, one at the individual level ("Syrian migrants affected my and my family's economic situation negatively;" "Syrian migrants affected my and my family's lifestyle negatively;" and "Syrian migrants affected my and my family's security negatively") and one at the national level ("Syrian migrants affected the country's economy and the unemployment issue negatively;" "Syrian migrants affected the country's culture and lifestyle negatively;" and "Syrian migrants affected the country's security and peace"). They were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with the proposition in each question on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means "did not affect negatively at all" and 10 means "affected entirely negatively."

FIGURE 20: THREAT PERCEPTIONS

(N:1.634)



If the threat perceptions of the Istanbul participants concerning the Syrians are analyzed, we find that perceived threat is higher concerning the country, 7 to 7.9, than concerning the family, 5.6 to 6.5. Average perceived threat concerning lifestyle is below perceived economic and security threat at both levels. The strength of the financial threat perceptions concerning the Syrians is above that of the cultural threat perceptions. It seems that the politicization of the Syrian issue, on the one hand, and the economic crisis in the country as well as the ongoing security concerns, on the other hand, have paved the ground for these matters to come to the fore.

When the results are analyzed by the type of threat, we find that the lowest threat

perceptions relate to lifestyle (5.6 at the family level, and 7.0 at the country level).

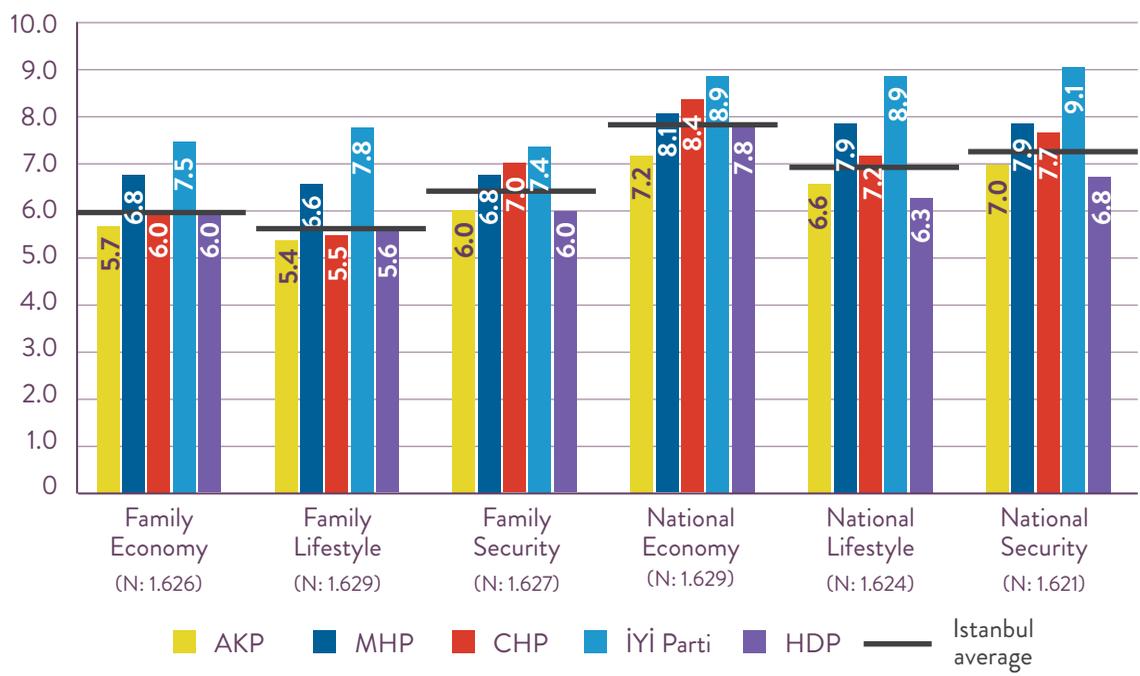
The low level of anxiety over this matter may be accounted for by the majority of the Syrians being Sunni Muslim and leading a religious-conservative lifestyle based on family. Nevertheless, the fact that the Syrians are a different ethnic group and the fact that they are perceived to be large in number may be considered as factors in explaining the finding that country-level threat perceptions concerning lifestyle are at or above 5.

When the security and economic threat perceptions are examined, we observe that family-level security concerns are higher than economic threat perceptions (respectively, 6.5 and

6.0). The fact that the Syrians, who are considered to

If the threat perceptions of the Istanbul participants concerning the Syrians are analyzed, we find that perceived threat is higher concerning the country, 7 to 7.9, than concerning the family, 5.6 to 6.5.

FIGURE 21: THREAT PERCEPTIONS (BY PARTY)



be foreign, move in large groups and often make news in the media due to group fights seems to have resulted in security threat perceptions being higher. At the country level, however, economic concerns are ahead of security concerns (respectively, 7.9 and 7.4). The rise in unemployment induced by the current economic crisis may be regarded as the most important factor underlying this finding. Another factor potentially playing a part in the rise in economic threat perceptions is that the Syrians are more often employed informally in the labor market and thus obtain an advantage in the labor force competition.

If the participants are grouped by the political party they tend to vote for, the İYİ Parti and MHP supporters appear to have threat perceptions above the Istanbul average. The voters of the ruling AKP and the voters of HDP have averages that remain below the general average. Threat perceptions among the CHP voters are close to the Istanbul average. In all party groups, country-level threat perceptions are higher than family-level threat perceptions.

If perceived economic threat toward the family is analyzed, we find that İYİ Parti stands out with an average of 7.5 points in terms of concerns over the family economy. While MHP follows with 6.5, the HDP and CHP aver-

If the participants are grouped by the political parties they tend to vote for, the voters of İYİ Parti and MHP appear to have threat perceptions above the Istanbul average.

ages are at the overall average of 6.0. The AKP supporters are the group with the lowest threat perceptions, 5.7.

With respect to family lifestyle concerns, perceived threat is high in the İYİ Parti and MHP voter groups (respectively, at 7.8 and 5.6). Average perceived threat for the three other parties is below the Istanbul average (HDP 5.6, CHP 5.5., and AKP 5.4). That the support-

ers of CHP, a more secular-nationalist party, have a lower average lifestyle threat perception than the voters of HDP seems to be related to the fact that the former group comes into contact with Syrians less often.

On family security, the parties in the National Alliance occupy the first two places (İyi Parti 7.4, and CHP 7.0). The MHP supporters are at 6.8 and above the average. The voter groups for AKP and HDP each have an average of 6.0, which is below the Istanbul average. If perceived threat to the family is analyzed, it appears that while the İyi Parti supporters have a medium to high threat perception, the voters of other parties have medium-level threat perceptions.

Perceived threat to the national economy is very high in the parties in the National Alliance (İyi Parti 8.9, and CHP 8.4). The MHP supporters also have a threat perception that is above the average and very high (8.1). The threat perception of the HDP voters is at the Istanbul average, at 7.8. It should be noted, however, that this figure represents quite a high threat perception. A high threat perception toward the national economy also exists among the AKP supporters (7.2). In brief, all party voter groups are found to have high economic threat perceptions.

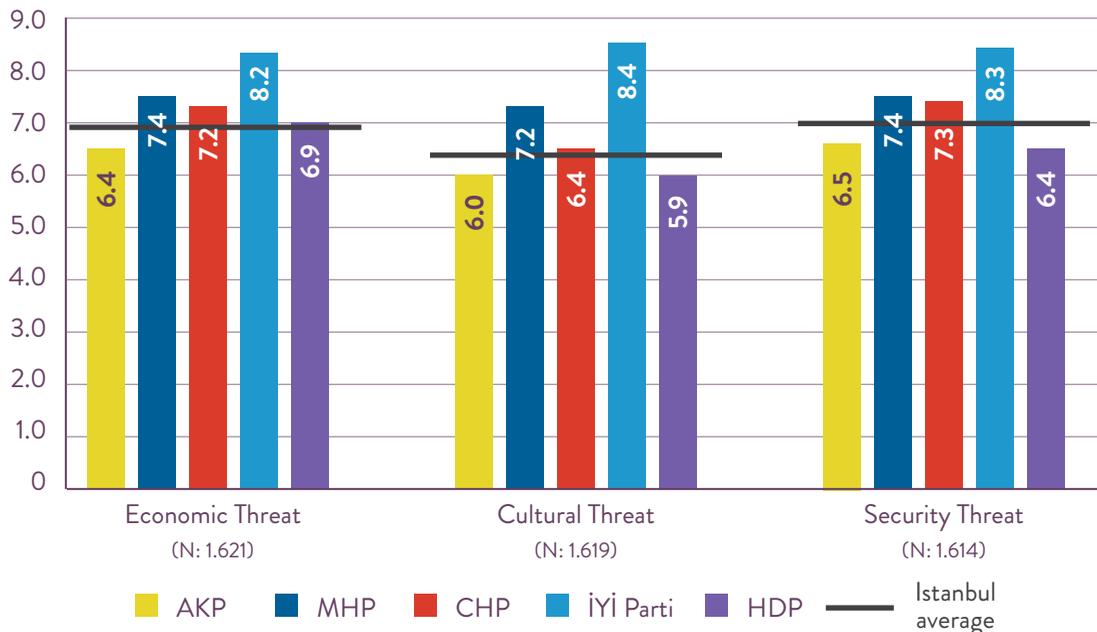
If perceived threat toward the country's lifestyle is analyzed, the nationalist parties occupy the first places (İyi Parti 8.9, and MHP 7.9). The CHP average is at the Istanbul average level, at 7.2. AKP follows with 6.6. The lowest level is among the HDP voters (6.3).

With respect to concerns over national security, the same order is sustained. İyi Parti has an average of 9.1, MHP 7.9, CHP 7.7, AKP 7.0, and HDP 6.8. On matters relating to lifestyle and security, İyi Parti, MHP, and CHP, parties with more educated and nationalist voters, are found to have higher threat perceptions. The voters of the ruling AKP and the voters of HDP each have an average which, while it remains below the general average, is still above 6.

If the relationship between party preference and type of threat is analyzed, perceived economic threat appears strikingly high among the İyi Parti supporters (8.2) and is also high in MHP (7.4) and CHP (7.2). While the HDP voters have an average-level threat perception (6.9), the AKP average is below the overall average by 0.5 point (6.4).

Concerning perceived cultural threat, the nationalist parties stand out. While the İyi Parti voters score 8.4,

FIGURE 22: THREAT PERCEPTIONS – ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, SECURITY (BY PARTY)



the MHP voters have an average of 7.2. The cultural threat perception of the CHP supporters is at an average level (6.4). The AKP and HDP supporters respectively score 6 and 5.9.

With respect to security, the İyi Parti voters are the group with highest perceived threat (8.3). The CHP and MHP supporters seem to have a high-level threat perception concerning national security (7.4 and 7.4). The AKP and HDP supporters score, respectively, 6.5 and 6.4.

Regardless of the type of threat, the İyi Parti and MHP supporters appear to have high-level negative perceptions. Among the CHP supporters, perceived material (economic and security) threat is higher than perceived cultural threat. The HDP voters exhibit the same pattern. They, however, have a higher economic threat perception. While the AKP vot-

ers display a similar pattern, they have a stronger security threat perception.

There exists a significant relationship between income level and perceived economic threat.

Financially disadvantaged groups may consider migrants as rivals and perceive them as an element of threat.⁶⁹ It should be added, however, that income level may not have similar effects on perceived threat at the family and country levels. While perceived threat against the household declines as income level rises, it may still not be possible to observe a clear differentiation in evaluations of the national

economy. Moreover, individuals with higher income levels may have lower perceived threat at the individual and family level because they believe migrants lack capacity to compete with them.⁷⁰

Among the CHP supporters, perceived material (economic and security) threat is higher than perceived cultural threat. The HDP voters exhibit the same pattern.

FIGURE 23: FAMILY AND COUNTRY THREAT PERCEPTIONS (BY INCOME LEVEL)

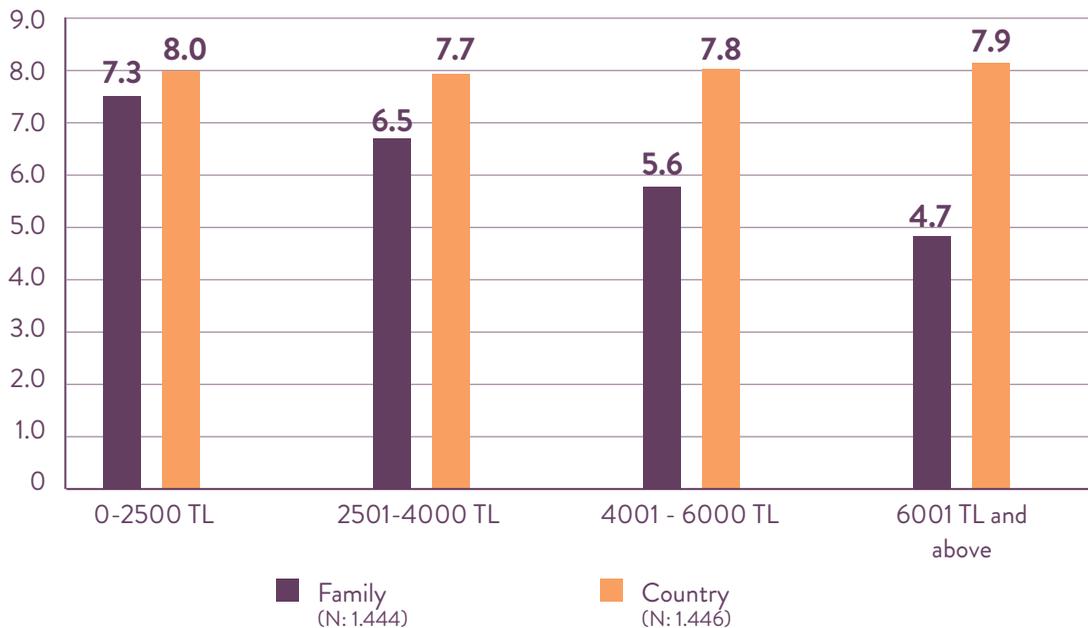
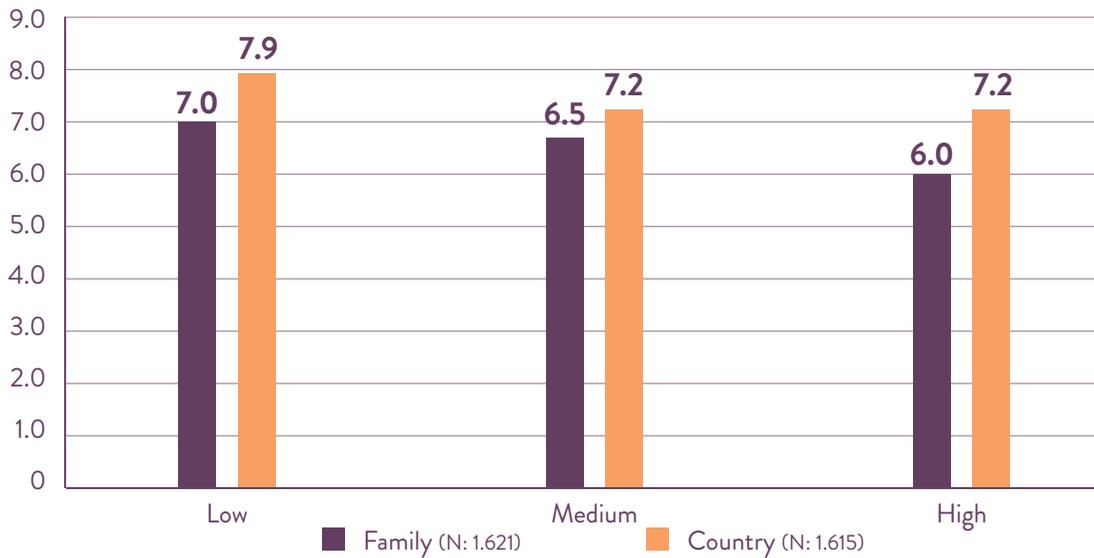


FIGURE 24: FAMILY AND COUNTRY THREAT PERCEPTIONS (BY PERCEIVED NEIGHBORHOOD SECURITY LEVEL)

The participants in this study were divided into four groups based on their income level: low, low-middle, middle-high, and high. The groups were compared to one another with respect to perceived economic threat at two different levels (family and country threat perceptions). In line with the expectations, average perceived threat against the family is found to decline as income level rises. Average perceived threat, which is 7.3 in the low-income group, retreats to 6.5 in the low-middle-income group, 5.6 in the middle-high-income group, and 4.7 in the high-income group. On the other hand, perceived economic threat against the country is similar for all groups. While it is possible to argue for a relationship between income level and perceived economic threat against the family in the entire Istanbul, no such relationship seems likely for perceived threat against the country.

Perceived security threat may vary among individuals at different levels, and individual, national, and global threat perceptions may be shaped by different factors. Furthermore, neighborhood security may also introduce effects to these perceptions.⁷¹

The individuals in this study were divided into three categories based on how safe they feel in the neighborhood where they reside, and perceived security threat concerning Syrians was compared at the family and country

levels. As perceived neighborhood security improves, perceived threat at the family level declines by 0.5 point. Concerns over national security are highest in the group with the lowest neighborhood security (7.9). On the other hand, average perceived threat to neighborhood security is identical in the middle and high groups (7.2). The findings indicate that there is potentially a partial relationship between perceived neighborhood security and perceived security threat concerning the Syrians.

With an aim to scrutinize the relationship between contact and threat, the participants in the study were divided into two groups along three lines: individuals who encounter Syrians daily in various locations vs. individuals who do not, individuals who live in the same building as Syrians vs. individuals who do not, and individuals who have engaged in contact with any Syrian(s) vs. individuals who have not. Perceived threat was measured in two groups along three criteria, and the average values were used to generate a general threat scale.

While it has been claimed that intergroup contact should mitigate perceived threat, researchers emphasize that encounters without communication may not be adequate.⁷² The findings from the present study demonstrate parallel results. We observe that average perceived threat is higher in individuals who encounter Syrians daily in the street, in stores, markets, and shopping malls, in parks and squares, and at the workplace.

FIGURE 25: THREAT PERCEPTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS ENCOUNTERING SYRIANS

We observe that average perceived threat is higher in individuals who encounter Syrians daily in the street, in stores, markets, and shopping malls, in parks and squares, and at the workplace.

Nevertheless, it is striking that there is nearly no difference between individuals who live in the same building as Syrians and individuals who do not, and it should be underlined that individuals who have engaged in communication with Syrians have a 0.8-point lower average than individuals who have not. In summary, these findings in the Istanbul sample reveal a testable hypothesis that casual encounters increase perceived threat while intergroup communication decreases it.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE SYRIANS AND THE CITIZENS

Self-perceived collective victimhood and perceived unfairness due to an outgroup are shaped through negative experiences individuals suffer because of their

group identity.⁷³ Such perceptions not only strengthen group identity but at the same time trigger in individuals negative attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward institutions that mediate these negative experiences and/or between them and the outgroup. Moreover, self-perceived victimhood and perceived unfairness lead individuals to view exclusionary and violent behavior toward the outgroup as legitimate.⁷⁴

In relations between migrants and a local community, the attitudes of institutions toward the groups also play a decisive role over perceived unfairness. A strong confidence that the government and institutions treat individuals equally regardless of their identity mitigates perceived unfairness and thus tends to lead the groups to develop mutual trust.⁷⁵

On the other hand, spread of perceptions among the local group that the government treats migrants better may cause reaction against the government and intolerance toward migrants. With such perceptions, individuals in the local community may assume a stance supporting restriction of the rights granted to migrants.⁷⁶

On the other hand, any inability of the government to ensure fairness between the groups fails at preventing conflict between their members and lays the ground for individuals to “take justice into their own hands” and engage in violence against members of the other group during moments of conflict.⁷⁷ In addition, misinformation on the Syrians circulates widely in the public. For instance, baseless claims are widespread to the effect that the Syrians have been granted citizenship and the right to vote, can enter universities without taking an examination, and are given preferential treatment when making a doctor’s appointment.⁷⁸ Therefore, the

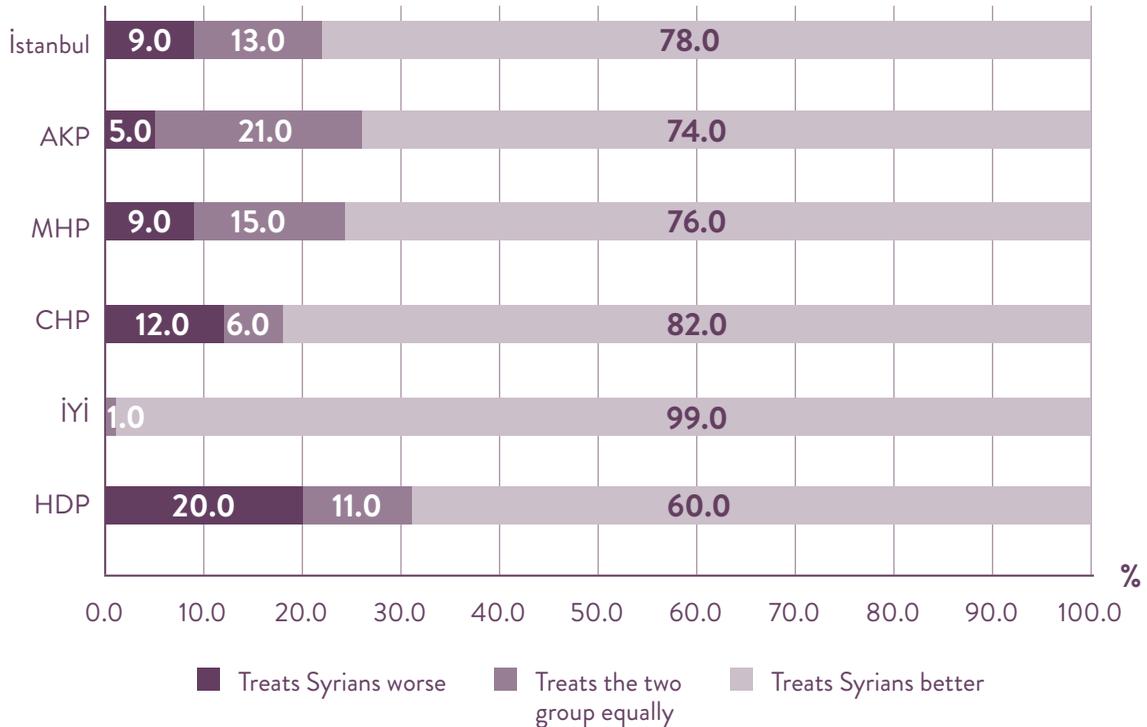
question of how the attitude of the government toward the Syrians is comparatively perceived in the Turkish public opinion is highly critical.

The participants in the study were asked to indicate their view on how the government treats the Syrians vs. the Turkish citizens, using a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means “treats Syrian migrants worse than Turkish citizens”, 5 “treats the two groups equally,” and 10 “treats Syrian migrants better than Turkish citizens.”

An analysis of the results indicates that the majority of the Istanbul participants, 78%, believe that the government treats the Syrians better than the Turkish citizens. While the share of individuals who state that it treats the two groups equally stands at 13%, individuals who believe that it treats the citizens better remain at 9% only.

FIGURE 26: GOVERNMENT’S ATTITUDE TOWARD CITIZENS AND SYRIANS

(N: 1.571)



An analysis of the results by party support shows that the perception that “Syrians receive better treatment” is highest among the MHP voters. Almost all İyi Parti voters, 99%, agree with this statement. While 82% of the CHP voters believe that the government treats the Syrians better, only 6% indicate an opinion that the two groups receive equal treatment, and 12% state that the citizens receive better treatment.

A similar distribution is observed for MHP and AKP, the parties in the People’s Alliance. The share of individuals who indicate that the government treats the Syrians better is, respectively, 76% and 74%. Agreement that the groups are treated equally is higher among the AKP voters than among the MHP voters (21% vs. 15%). The share of individuals who consider that the citizens are better treated is 9% for MHP and 5% for AKP.

While the opinion that the Syrians are better treated finds lower support among the HDP voters, three in every five HDP voters, nevertheless, believe so (60%). Individuals who state that the groups receive equal treatment is at 11%, and individuals who indicate that the citizens are better treated are at 20%.

In summary, the ratio of individuals who believe that the Syrians are better treated is above the Istanbul average in CHP and İyi Parti. The same ratio is slightly below the average in the People’s Alliance parties. It is 18% below the Istanbul average in HDP. It is possible to propose that empathy toward a disadvantaged group is higher among the HDP voters and this reflects on their judgments.

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED GROUP STATUS BETWEEN THE SYRIANS AND THE CITIZENS

Collective relative deprivation takes place when the members of a group perceive a situation of negative inequality between the group’s existing social status and the social status they believe it deserves.⁷⁹ According to this approach, rather than the group’s objective status and the personal status of its members, their subjective perceptions prevail. As perceived distance grows between the group members’ expected prestige and status in society and the group’s existing status, collective anger occurs, and the group members tend more strongly to engage in collective action.⁸⁰

Moreover, group members tend to compare the existing status of their group and that of an outgroup.⁸¹ Perceived threat that the groups are in competition consolidates the group members’ belief that undeservedly, their group is less respected than the outgroup.⁸²

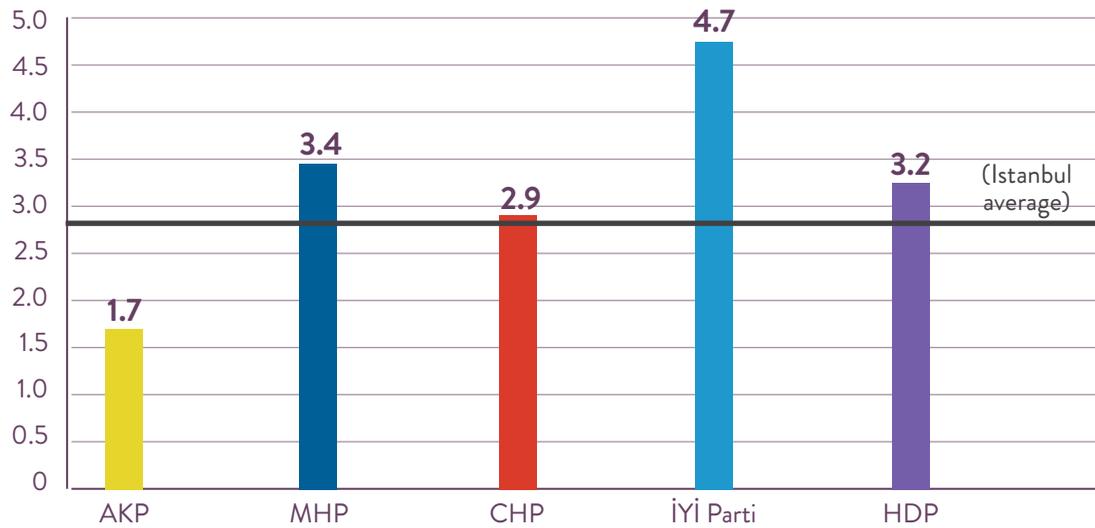
Negative perceptions that members of an outgroup receive more than they deserve lead individuals to adopt exclusionary behavior toward the outgroup more easily.⁸³ Concerning the attitudes of a local community toward migrants, the spread of beliefs that their group stays behind migrants in terms of material and cultural gains and opportunities and that migrants receive more than they deserve leads individuals to take exclusionary attitudes toward migrants and to endorse acts of collective violence against them as well as participate in such acts.⁸⁴

The participants in the study were asked to assess their perceptions of the ingroup and the outgroup, viewing society as a ten-step hierarchical structure and indi-

We observe that the majority of the Istanbul participants, 78%, believe that the government treats the Syrians better than the Turkish citizens.

FIGURE 27: DIFFERENCES IN GROUP STATUS PERCEPTION BETWEEN SYRIANS AND CITIZENS

(N: 1.447)



ating the current status of their group and that of the Syrians and the status they believe each group deserves.

In order to compare the citizens' assessments of the status of their group and the status of the Syrians, we first calculated the difference between the status each individual believes his or her group deserves and his or her perceived status of the group. Then, we calculated the difference between the current status of the Syrians and their deserved status and translated perceived unfairness for both groups into numerical figures. We subtracted the value the citizens assigned to the status of their group from the value obtained for the status of the Syrians in order

to derive a status comparison between the two groups. The high score thus obtained indicates the strength of the opinion that the Syrians have a higher status than the citizens and this is not deserved.

An assessment of the Istanbul average shows that the opinion that the Syrians undeservedly have a higher status than the citizens can find widespread support

in the general public. For all parties, the difference between the current status of the Syrians and their deserved status is greater than the difference between the deserved status of the citizens and their current status. This difference is 2.8 in Istanbul in general.

A comparison of all party groups reveals that İyi Parti stands out with 4.7 points. That a political party that is both nationalist and in opposition occupies the first place in this respect does not contradict our predictions. MHP follows with 3.4 points. The fact

that MHP is in an alliance with the ruling AKP reduces the difference between the perceived and expected statuses of the citizens.

For all parties, the difference between the current status of the Syrians and their deserved status is greater than the difference between the deserved status of the citizens and their current status.

HDP occupies the third place. The difference between the HDP voters' perceived status of their group and its expected status seems to reflect on their evaluations of the Syrians. The HDP voters, a more disadvantaged group in socioeconomic terms, score higher than the CHP voters (3.2 vs 2.9). The voters of the ruling AKP seem, on average, to be content with the status of their group. Their average score of 1.7 points shows how widespread the opinion that the Syrians and the citizens are respected equally in society is among this voter group.

PREJUDICES AGAINST THE SYRIANS

Prejudice indicates how strongly individuals tend to agree with generalizing statements on an outgroup. Individuals tend to reach conclusions on an outgroup without detailed information, relying on common beliefs and generalizations, and to maintain such conclusions.⁸⁵ As a result of these generalizations, individuals uniformize all individuals in the outgroup. As an individual's belongingness to the ingroup increases, this tendency grows stronger.⁸⁶

It is often stated that as perceived socioeconomic differences between the groups increase, prejudices increase as well. It is well-known that prejudices concerning migrants in a host community are especially more common.⁸⁷ Prejudices are closely related with negative attitudes and forms of behavior such as social distancing, intolerance, and propensity for violence.⁸⁸

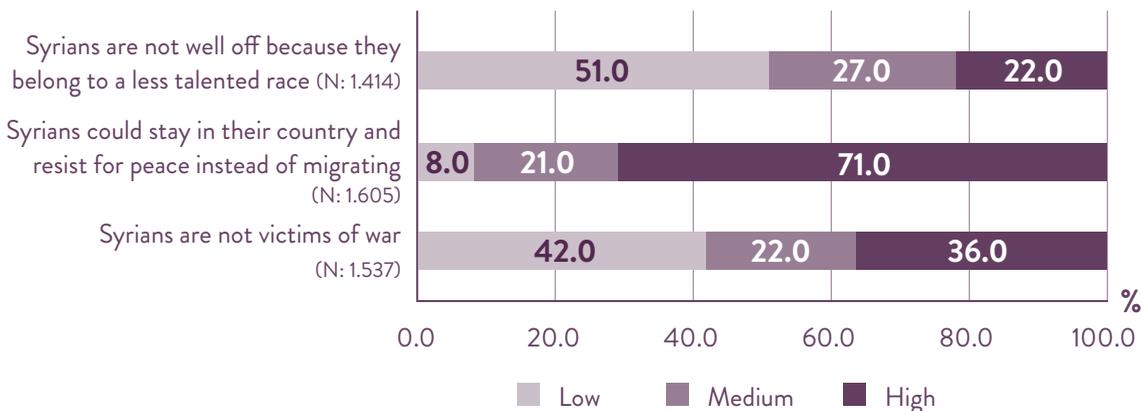
Moreover, it can be suggested that prejudices are shaped not only through intergroup relations but also through statements by other public actors. Particularly in countries with high levels of polarization, it is possible to argue for a parallelism between the attitudes of citizens toward refugees and those of politicians.⁸⁹

The Syrians who have migrated to Turkey have become the target of prejudices. It can be contended that behind the threat perceptions and intolerant attitudes vis-à-vis the Syrians lie such prejudices. Commonly held prejudices against the Syrians include beliefs that the Syrians do not deserve the assistance they receive, that their culture is not as sophisticated as the Turkish culture, and that their cultural differences result in lack of cohesion. In addition, negative statements to the effect that the Syrians are not victims of war and have sought refuge in Turkey instead of fighting to bring peace to their country find support.⁹⁰

In this regard, the participants in the study were asked how strongly they agreed with the statements indicating prejudices against the Syrians. They were asked to rate their responses on a 0 to 10 scale. The results were classified into three groups: low prejudice, medium-level prejudice, and high prejudice. The statements are as follows:

- “The Syrian migrants are not as well off as many Turks because they belong to a less talented race.”
- “The Syrians could stay in their country and resist to defend peace rather than migrate elsewhere.”

FIGURE 28: LEVEL OF PREJUDICE TOWARD SYRIANS



- “The Syrian migrants are not victims of war.”⁹¹

The statement that “the Syrian migrants are not as well off as many Turks because they belong to a less talented race” receives low support from the majority of the participants (51%). It is possible to argue that most participants display a greater tendency not to support this statement since it involves flagrant racism. On the other hand, while medium- and high-level agreement with this statement are low (respectively, 27% and 22%), these figures are still significant and should be taken seriously.

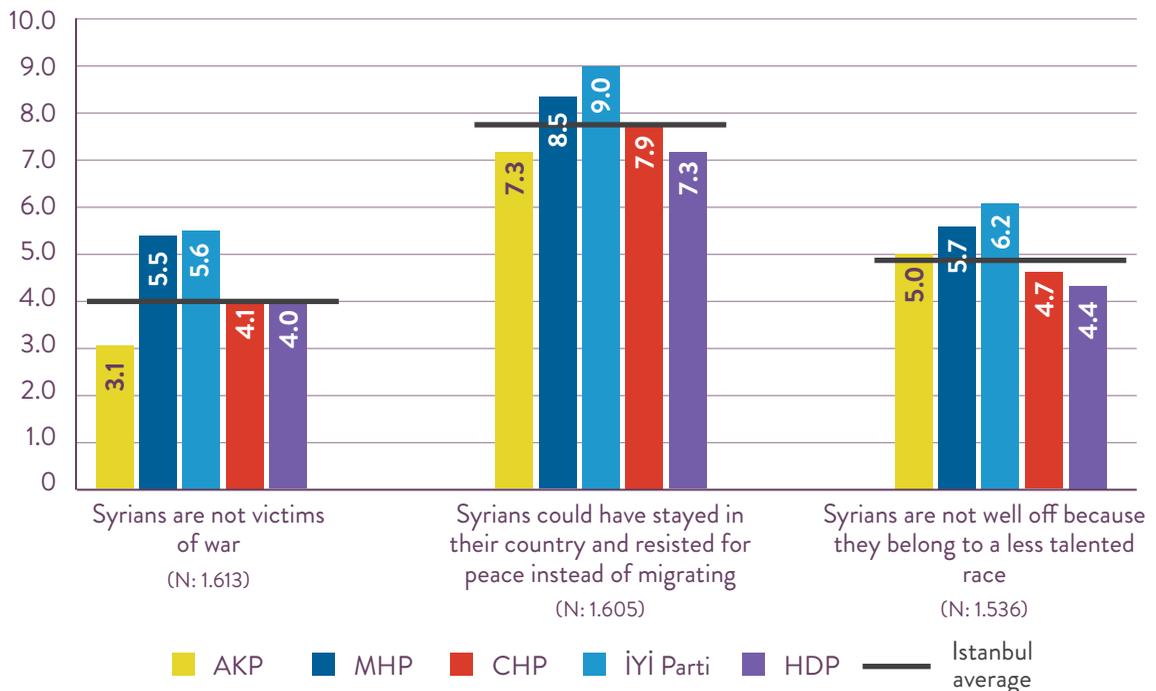
An analysis of the responses to the statement that “the Syrians could have stayed and resisted to defend peace in their country rather than migrate elsewhere” demonstrates that it can find support. While high agreement with the statement in question reaches 71%, low -and medium-level agreement are considerably low (21% and 8%).

An evaluation of the responses to the statement that “the Syrians are not victims of war” shows that it is possible to divide the Istanbul participants into three groups. While individuals who indicate low agreement with the state-

ment occupy the first place with a 42% ratio, analysts as well as authorities should still pay attention to the finding that individuals who believe that the Syrians are not victims of war stand at 36%. Medium-level agreement remains at 22%. In summary, it is a negative development in terms of social peace that the share of individuals who indicate medium-to-high-level agreement with the statement that the Syrians are not victims of war reaches 58%.

It is a negative development in terms of social peace that the share of individuals who indicate medium-to-high-level agreement with the statement that the Syrians are not victims of war reaches 58%.

FIGURE 29: LEVEL OF PREJUDICE TOWARD SYRIANS (BY PARTY)



It is also a matter of curiosity how the party voter groups diverge in relation to the prejudices visited above. The discourses of the opposition parties except HDP appear closely related with the prejudices against the Syrians.⁹² While the government authorities continue to emphasize fraternity, it is evident that a shift toward more restrictive policies has taken place.⁹³ Thus, it is crucial to evaluate the attitudes of the parties under a comparative approach.

The voter attitudes were analyzed through the averaging of the scores they gave each question on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means “do not agree at all” and 10 means “completely agree.” The average response in Istanbul to the statement that “the Syrian migrants are not victims of war” is 4. Although the opinion that the Syrians are not victims of war does not find large support in the Istanbul public, the previous graph has shown that it, nevertheless, has a significant number of proponents. A look into the party distribution demonstrates that the average responses of MHP and İyi Parti, nationalist parties, are above 5 (5.5. and 5.6). The average response in the left-wing opposition parties remain around the overall average (4.1 and 4). Finally, prejudice is below the overall average among the AKP supporters (3.1).

An evaluation of the responses to the statement that “the Syrians could have stayed in their country and resisted to defend peace there rather than migrate elsewhere” shows that it finds high-level support in all party voter groups. The İyi Parti and MHP voters are above the average (9 and 8.5). The CHP average is about the overall average (7.9). For AKP and HDP, the average response is 7.3.

Since it is a more essentialist statement, agreement with the proposition that “the Syrian migrants are not as well off as many Turkish citizens because they belong to a less talented race” is low. We can argue that on this point, the parties fall into two categories: left and right. In the voter groups for İyi Parti, MHP, and AKP, which are right-wing, the average responses are at or above the overall Istanbul average of 5 (6.2, 5.7, and 5). The average responses in CHP and HDP, which stand more to the left, are below the Istanbul average (4.7 and 4.4).

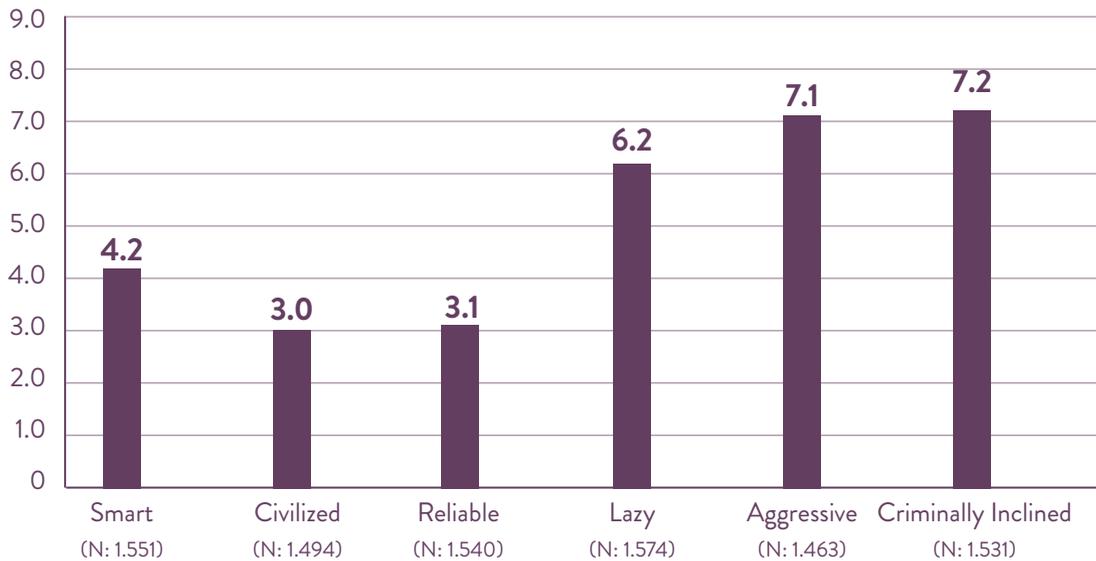
In general, it can be suggested that the “Muhacir-Ensar” (Muslim Immigrants-Helpers) discourse developed by AKP for host-migrant solidarity based on religious fraternity finds support in the party’s voters. It should also be noted that the left parties, which have universalist ideologies, display lower prejudice. However, since nationalism is stronger in the CHP voters, their average is higher than that of the HDP voters. For MHP and İyi Parti, nationalist parties, prejudice is above the average.

STEREOTYPING OF THE SYRIANS

Stereotyping is among the most fundamental parts of the process of otherization and discrimination of the members of an outgroup.⁹⁴ Stereotypes hint at the expectations individuals have concerning others in an ingroup and an outgroup. Such expectations relate in general to what the attitudes and behaviors of individuals that belong to the concerned groups will be like. Stereotyping results from the placement of these expectations into general molds and templates.⁹⁵

The relationship with members of the outgroup is shaped through these stereotypes. It is possible to address stereotypes from a number of dimensions. The competence and capacity of the other group, its warmth and trustworthiness, and whether it is perceived as harmful determine the hierarchy and distance in intergroup relations. For instance, if a group that is not considered to be competent, warm, or trustworthy or which is perceived to be harmful is in the minority in a society, members of the majority group are likely to social distance with them, exclude them, and treat them with intolerance.⁹⁶

Furthermore, through stereotyping, all members of the outgroup are assumed to have the same “essence” and to be unable to move out of that mold. It is especially possible to argue that stereotyping of individuals from different ethnic groups aggravates the lack of tolerance toward them.⁹⁷ Stereotyping also facilitates the dehumanization of individuals from the other group and thus has a share in the legitimization of exclusionary and violent acts against them. An example frequently encountered is when a minority is labelled as “dirty,” “aggressive,” or “violent” and faces exclusion.⁹⁸

FIGURE 30: STEREOTYPES CONCERNING SYRIANS

In the Turkish case, communication is highly limited between the Syrians and the citizens due to the linguistic barrier and to the problems resulting from living in groups.⁹⁹ Thus, stereotypes are among the most important factors determining the attitudinal and behavioral tendencies of the majority toward the Syrians. Such sweeping generalizations inform the Turkish citizens' perception of the Syrians.¹⁰⁰

In this regard, with an aim to measure stereotyping in this study, the participants were given some qualities used to describe the Syrians and were asked to rate how accurately they believe each quality represents the Syrian migrants on a 0 to

10 scale where 0 means "not true at all," 5 means "neither true nor false," and 10 means "absolutely true." In order to identify perceptions of the competence and capacity of the Syrian migrants, the participants were asked questions relating to how "lazy" and "smart" the Syrians are.

In order to measure perceptions on how competent the Syrians are in terms of social cohesion, they were also asked how "civilized" and how "reliable" they find the

Syrians to be. Finally, in order to measure how "harmful" the Syrians are perceived as a group, they were asked to answer the question of how "criminally inclined" and "aggressive" they view the Syrians to be. An analysis of the overall average responses of the participants reveals that negative stereotypes outweigh positive stereotypes. Negative attitudes are less common in assessments regarding the capacities of the Syrians. To illustrate, the average stereotype on how smart the Syrians are is 4.2 and is above that on

how civilized they are, 3, and that on how reliable they are, 3.1. Similarly, the average response to the stereotype that "the Syrians are lazy" is 6.2 and is lower than the average response on aggressive nature, 7.1, and the average response on criminal inclination, 7.2.

If the negative stereotypes in the Turkish society are analyzed, we find that the Syrians are defined as a community that is not civilized or reliable and which is aggressive and criminally inclined.

According to these average ratings, if the negative stereotypes in the Turkish society are analyzed, we find that the Syrians are defined as a community that is not civilized or reliable and which is aggressive and criminally inclined. It can be argued that these stereotypes are reproduced and reinforced through incidents of collective violence between the Turkish host community and the Syrians.

EMOTIONS TOWARD THE SYRIANS

Emotions are informed by instant impressions and reactions an event, person or object evokes in individuals. Generally, such mental states develop rapidly and are short-term and intense. These mental states occur in response to external stimuli.¹⁰¹ They are significant in explaining political attitudinal and behavioral tendencies, which vary at the individual level. Following the introduction of the social media in recent years, the acceleration of the agenda and the rise in polarization have led to a shortening in individuals' time for deliberation, and they now tend more strongly to make decisions under the instant effect of emotions.¹⁰²

Since emotions have become so decisive, their conceptualization has also grown more important. Research on emotions can thus be grouped into several traditions, one of which, rather than classify them into types, places them on two separate poles: negative and positive.¹⁰³ It is well-known, however, that negative and positive emotions develop separately from one another in individual perceptions that come about under different circumstances. For instance, the varying interplay of different threat perceptions, different external stimuli and different assessments of the capacity of an individual or a group brings about the emergence of different negative emotions. Therefore, this study rests on literature which distinguishes between emotions and conceptualizes them separately.¹⁰⁴

In research investigating how individuals diverge in terms of the kinds of exclusionary or inclusionary attitudes they adopt in relation to an outgroup, attitudes toward migrants occupy a crucial place. While the

most commonly examined exclusionary attitudes toward migrants include anxiety, anger, and hatred, compassion is one of the most frequently addressed positive emotions.¹⁰⁵

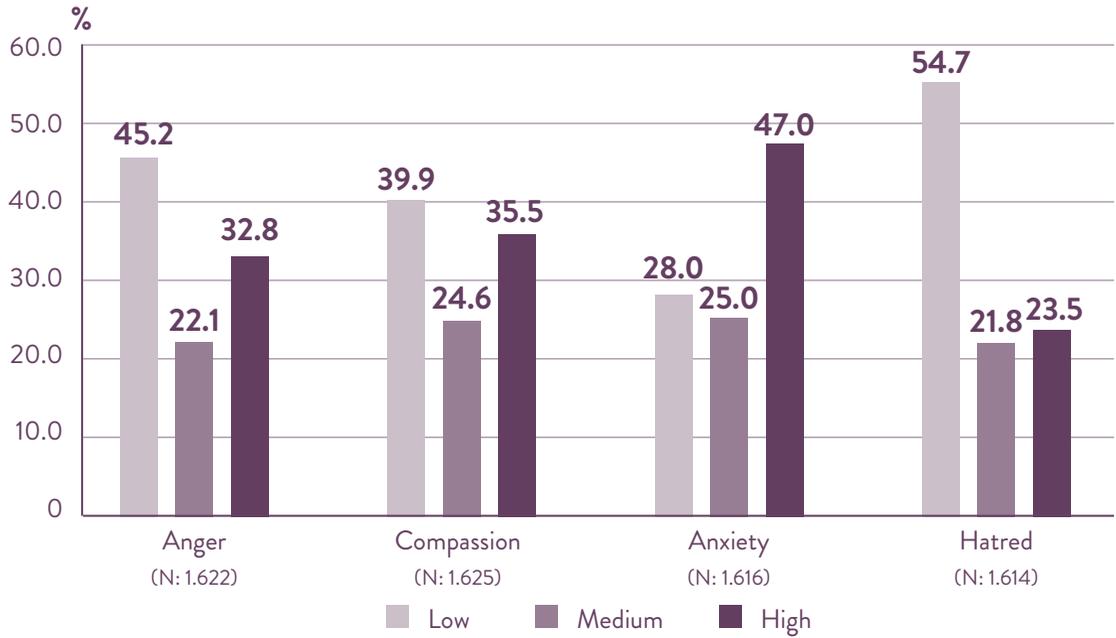
The feeling of anxiety leads individuals to question their previously acquired opinions and beliefs and to turn to different attitudinal and behavioral tendencies in circumstances where they feel under threat or do not consider the group they belong to as competent.¹⁰⁶ It also reduces their likelihood to take risks and facilitates their adoption of exclusionary and/or authoritarian policies.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, the emotions of anger and fear dominate and set individuals in motion in the face of threats they believe they do not deserve.¹⁰⁸ While anger is a more short-term feeling, hate is a more permanent mental state with a greater impact.¹⁰⁹ Emotions such as anxiety that lead to avoidance behavior reduce the propensity to take individual risks, but emotions such as anger and hatred that are stimulating may better explain violent behavior.¹¹⁰ Research has found that in a country such as South Africa where incidents of collective violence against migrants take place, anger transforms perceived threat and unfairness into violent behavior. In such circumstances, anger normalizes violent behavior.¹¹¹

The impact of positive emotions on attitudes and behavior toward migrants has received less focus. Compassion is more common among individuals who can establish empathy with individuals from an outer group and who have relatively low authoritarian inclinations.¹¹²

Prior to and following the survey experiment conducted as part of this study, the participants were asked to answer a question intended to identify what feelings the Syrian migrants evoke in them, indicating their response on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means "did not evoke" and 10 means "absolutely evoked." Such emotions include anger, compassion, anxiety, and hate. The results were grouped into three categories: low-level, medium-level, and high-level.

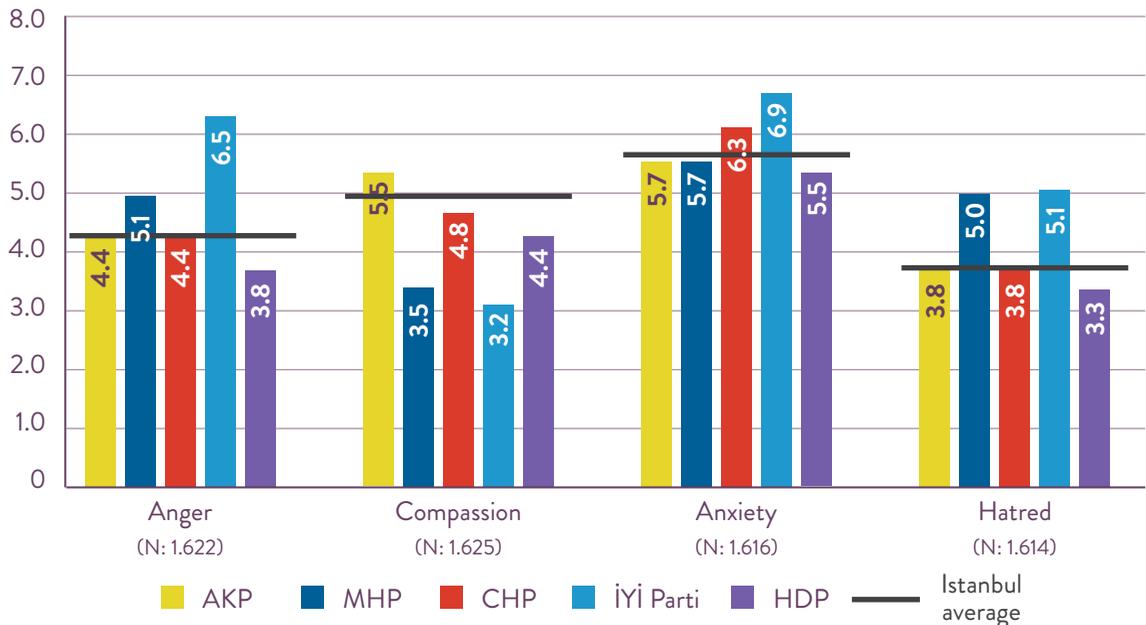
FIGURE 31: EMOTION LEVELS TOWARD SYRIANS



Individuals with a low level of anger are at 45.2%, individuals with a medium level are at 22.1%, and individuals with a high level are at 32.9%. While the participants who feel a high level of anger toward the Syrians are in the minority, it is still noteworthy that they make

up about one third. Individuals with a low level of compassion stand at 39.9%, individuals with a medium level at 24.6%, and individuals with a high level at 35.5%. It is significant that individuals who feel less compassion toward the Syrians reach 65%. The share of individuals

FIGURE 32: EMOTIONS LEVELS TOWARD SYRIANS (BY PARTY)



who feel a high level of anxiety, 47%, is higher than the share of individuals with a low level, 28%, and the ratio of individuals with a medium level, 25%. Individuals who feel a low level of hatred are at 54.7%, individuals who feel a medium level at 21.8%, and individuals with a high level at 23.5%. This suggests that while anxiety is the most common emotion, hate is the least common. The finding that compassion is behind anxiety should be underlined.

A breakdown of the average responses to the questions on emotions by party preferences shows that anger is most common among the İyi Parti voters (6.5). The MHP voters are above the average (5.1). While the AKP and CHP voters are also above the average (4.4), the HDP voters are below the average (3.8).

Compassion is most commonly found among the AKP voters (5.5), followed by CHP (4.8) and HDP (4.4). The voters of the nationalist parties appear to display less compassion toward the Syrians; the MHP average is 3.5, and the İyi Parti average is 3.2.

With respect to anxiety, the party voter groups have similar averages. The parties in the National Alliance, nevertheless, stand out. İyi Parti (6.9) and CHP (6.3) are above the Istanbul average of 5.8. The averages of AKP and MHP, the People's Alliance parties, are about the overall Istanbul average (5.7). The HDP average is slightly lower (5.5).

Concerning hatred, the nationalist parties similarly have higher averages. The İyi Parti average is 5.1, and the MHP average is 5. While the AKP and CHP voter groups are at the overall average (3.8), the HDP average is 0.5 point below it (3.3).

Overall, it can be argued that the nationalist parties

tend more strongly to display negative emotions toward the Syrians. While the CHP voters' average is about the overall average for emotions such as anger and hatred

which can legitimize violent behavior, it is higher for anxiety, a type of emotion that parallels perceived threat. Average negative emotions stand at lower levels in the voter groups of AKP, the ruling party, and HDP, a party with no affinity to Turkish nationalism. On the other hand, with regard to compassion, HDP strikingly remains behind AKP and CHP. This may be interpreted to result from the possibility that the HDP supporters, a more disadvantaged

group, might not find themselves to be sufficiently well off to feel pity for the Syrians.

Average negative emotions stand at lower levels in the voter groups for AKP, the ruling party, and HDP, a party with no affinity to Turkish nationalism.

COLLECTIVE ACTION AGAINST THE SYRIANS

Collective action can be defined as action a group of individuals coming together for a common objective takes against a political institution or an outgroup.¹¹³ For collective action to acquire a political character, it is imperative that there exist a shared identity, a shared goal, and an actor to take joint action against.¹¹⁴ It is one of the requirements for participation in collective action that individuals share the social identity of a group sufficiently to believe that he or she can represent that group.¹¹⁵ Researchers report that as belongingness to the common social identity grows stronger, propensity to take part in collective action rises.¹¹⁶

In explaining collective action against the other group, while a shared identity may be adequate to grasp how it might be possible for the members of the ingroup to have a common goal, it is, nonetheless, necessary to make references to other concepts in order to account

for the motivations of the members to participate in collective action against the outgroup. The term “relative deprivation,” coined by Gurr, is an important departure point to understand the reaction of an ingroup’s members.¹¹⁷ As the difference between the current social status of an ingroup’s members and their deserved status increases, their reaction against an outgroup tends to intensify.

This difference can deepen if, simultaneously, social status is compared with the differences in the status of the outgroup’s members.¹¹⁸ This comparison is not limited to material comparison only. If a group’s members obtain the impression that their social identity is humiliated, this facilitates the formation of collective action against the outgroup and participation in it.¹¹⁹

With such comparisons, negative emotions also come to light. Especially anger toward an outgroup leads the members of an ingroup to come together more easily, and this not only triggers participation in collective action but also increases its likelihood of occurrence.¹²⁰ Experimental research has shown that anger is the emotion that brings an ingroup together with a claim to defend their rights and demand restrictions on the rights of an outgroup.¹²¹

These comparisons appear to play a vital role in attitudes vis-à-vis migrants and refugees and in the reaction of the members of a local community toward these groups. A perception that politicians and institutions treat migrants better than citizens paves the way for a group’s members to participate in anti-migrant collective action.¹²²

In addition to factors such as group identity, comparisons in status between the outgroup and the ingroup, and anger toward the outgroup, the varying costs of different types of action are also a point that needs to be addressed concerning the propensity of the members of the ingroup to take part in collective action. Theories of rational collective action account for individuals’ participation in collective action with references to such costs.¹²³

The factors that comprise the costs of participation in collective action include the degree of the severity of in-

tervention by institutions, the capacity of the ingroup to take action and achieve results, and the amount of effort needed for action. Individuals tend to calculate the costs and potential consequences of action and compare them, relying on these considerations. If the potential results and gains outweigh the costs, individuals tend more strongly to participate in action; and if the costs are perceived to outweigh the gains, they are less likely to do so.¹²⁴

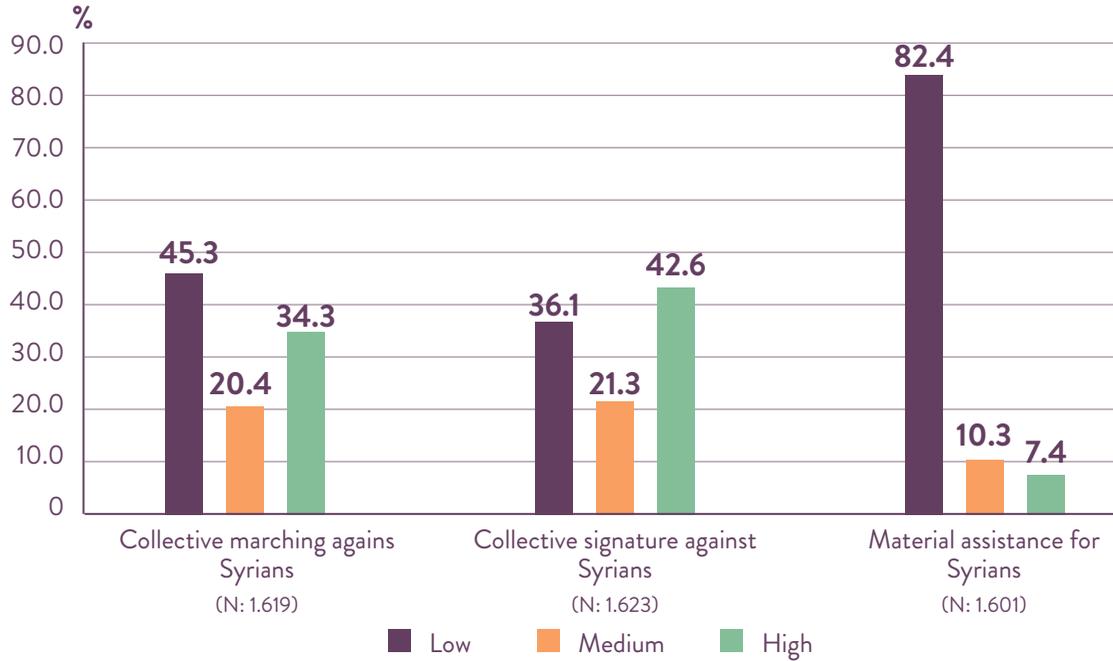
To put it in a nutshell, the factors that may jointly account for individuals’ participation in nonviolent collective action against the other group include belongingness to the ingroup’s identity; the ingroup’s solidarity and common goal; reaction and anger toward the other group as a result of group status comparisons; and the costs and potential outcomes associated with action.¹²⁵

In order to evaluate the propensity to take part in nonviolent collective action against the Syrians, the participants in this study were asked three questions. While the first two among the three types of action featured in the questions imply opposition to the Syrians, the third is supportive of them. The questions on “collective marching against the Syrians” and “collective signature against the Syrians” involve oppositional actions. The question on “material assistance to the Syrians” was asked as a supportive form of collective action.

The participants were asked to indicate their response on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means “do not agree at all” and 10 means “absolutely agree.” Two strategies were used to analyze the responses obtained. First, the responses were grouped into three categories: low (0-3), medium (4-6), and high (7-10). Second, a party breakdown was generated through the averaging of the responses to each question.

In the responses to the question on “collective marching against the Syrians,” individuals who indicate low propensity to participate are at 45.3%, and individuals who indicate high propensity are at 34.3%. Individuals indicating medium-level propensity stand at 20.4%. It merits attention that while non-agreement is a higher tendency than agreement, the ratios are still close.

FIGURE 33: COLLECTIVE ACTION TOWARD SYRIANS (TENDENCY TO PARTICIPATE)



An analysis of the tendency to participate in material assistance toward the Syrians demonstrates that the 82.4% big majority display a low tendency to join such action.

Individuals who exhibit low and high propensity to participate in “collective signature against the Syrians” are, respectively, at 36.1% and at 42.6%. Individuals with medium-level propensity remain at 21.3%. The support for collective signature appears to be stronger. In Turkey, where forms of political participation other than voting are not very common, it is not surprising that the support for collective signature is higher, since collective marching is a more costly and risky form of action than collective signature. Other relevant factors may include intervention by decision-makers through armed forces and the belief that collective signature yields outcomes more easily.

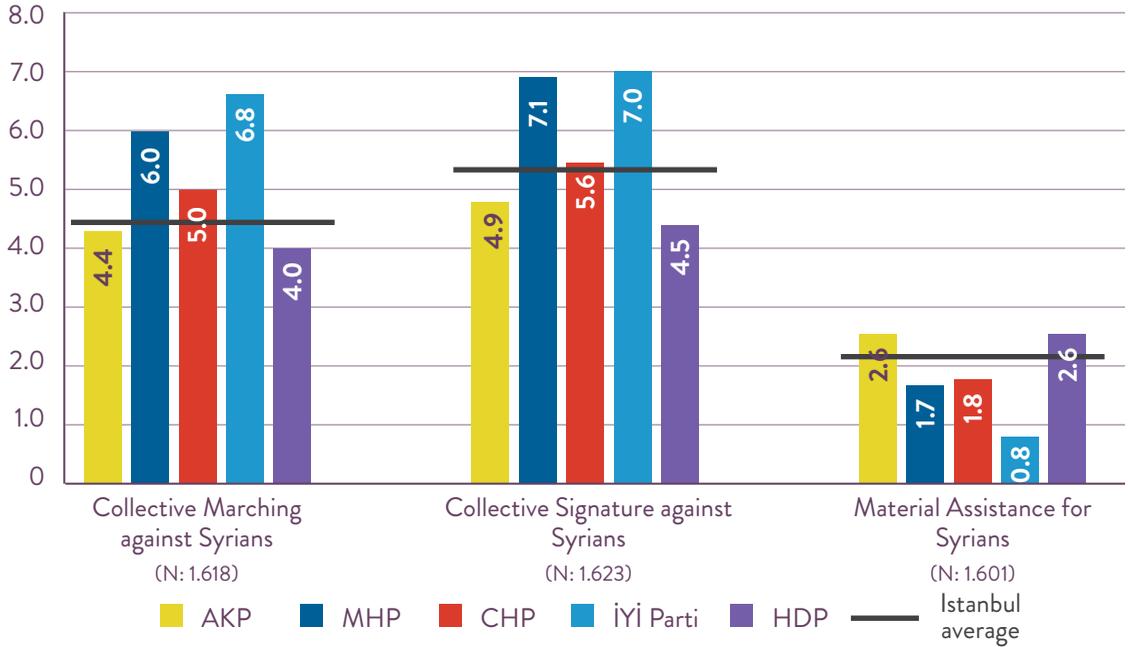
An analysis of the tendency to participate in material assistance toward the Syrians demonstrates that the 82.4%

big majority display a low tendency to join such action. While 10.3% have a medium-level tendency, only 7.4% have a high tendency. This finding shows a parallelism with the finding in the section on stereotyping that the Syrians are not perceived to be victims.

A party breakdown reveals that the voter groups above the Istanbul average of 4.2 are the parties with an affinity to Turkish nationalism. While the tendency to join collective marching is high for İyi Parti (6.8) and MHP (6), it is medium-level for CHP (5). For the voter groups of AKP and HDP, this tendency is low-medium and is below the average (respectively, 4.4. and 4).

Concerning “collective signature against the Syrians,” the overall tendency for participation seems to be

FIGURE 34: COLLECTIVE ACTION TOWARD SYRIANS (BY PARTY)



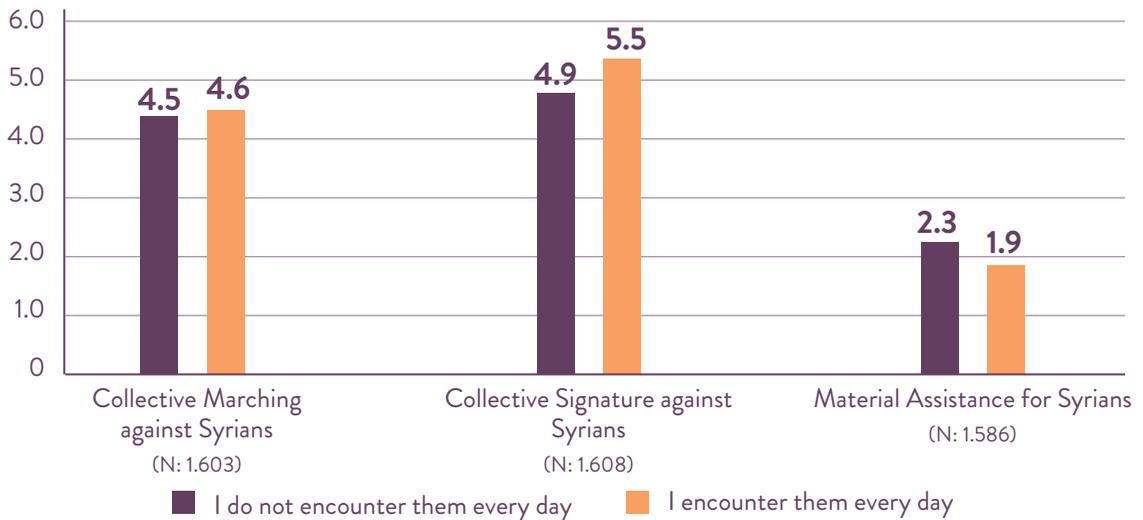
strong (5.6). The tendency to join collective signature is higher in the nationalist parties (7.1 for MHP, and 7 for İyi Parti). For CHP, this tendency is about the overall average. For the AKP and HDP voter groups, it is below the overall average (4.9 and 4.5).

The average on material assistance to the Syrians is substantially low for all party groups. It is above the overall average of 2.3 for HDP (2.6) and AKP (2.5). CHP

(1.8) and MHP (1.7) follow. The İyi Parti average remains at a striking 0.8.

In general, in the parties with an affinity to Turkish nationalism, the tendency to participate in anti-Syrian collective action is high, and the tendency to participate in pro-Syrian collective action is low. While these tendencies are above the average for İyi Parti and MHP, CHP follows from behind.

FIGURE 35: COLLECTIVE ACTION BY STREET ENCOUNTER STATUS



Contact and encounter with an outgroup are known to impact the likelihood of the members of an ingroup to participate in collective action.¹²⁶ Therefore, individuals who encounter Syrians daily in the street where they live (52%) and individuals who do not (48%) were compared in terms of their average responses to the questions on collective actions.

Overall, it is observed that individuals who encounter Syrians daily exhibit a higher tendency to join anti-Syrian action and a lower tendency to join pro-Syrian action than individuals who do not encounter them daily. With respect to support for collective marching against the Syrians, the average of individuals who encounter Syrians is 0.1 point above the average of individuals who do not. The difference rises to 0.6 point on collective signature against the Syrians (5.5. vs 4.9). The average response of individuals encountering Syrians to the question on material assistance to the Syrians (2.3) is 0.4 point higher than that of individuals who do not (1.9). Contact that only occurs in the form of encounter without dialogue is found to fail to introduce a positive change.

POLITICAL INTOLERANCE TOWARD THE SYRIANS

Political intolerance is a concept which refers to individuals' negative attitudes toward the rights and liberties of the members of an outgroup they consider to be the Other. Political tolerance refers to respect for the rights and liberties that allow intergroup contact and lack of conflict, factors needed for different groups to coexist.¹²⁷

In situations where political tolerance, the key to political and social harmony, is lacking, individuals tend not

to stand up against inequality toward the members of a minority outgroup and even to endorse and support the types of attitudes and behavior that instigate such inequality. In this regard, lack of political tolerance lays the ground for intergroup conflict.¹²⁸

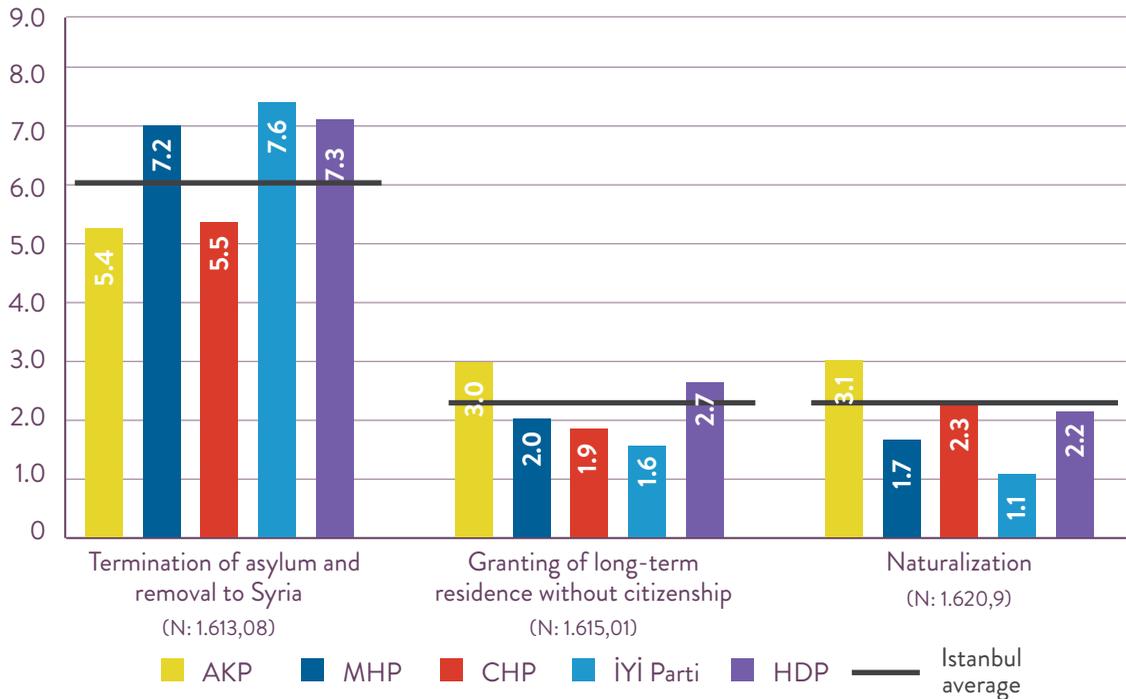
Overall, it is observed that individuals who encounter Syrians daily exhibit a higher tendency to join anti-Syrian action and a lower tendency to join pro-Syrian action than individuals who do not encounter them daily.

emerges in such circumstances, demands for restricting access to civil and political rights for migrants can find widespread support.¹²⁹

Access of migrants to public services, their freedom to associate as a group, and their rights for representation are turned into subjects for debate by anti-migrant individuals.¹³⁰ In the period from the 9/11 attacks to our day, following concerns over national security and terrorism, anti-migrantism and political intolerance have been normalized by the political elites and spread to popular masses.¹³¹ Negative emotions spreading along with threat perceptions have resulted in support for intolerant policies.¹³² Thus, inclusivism, one of the central pillars of an ideal definition of democracy, has been put into danger due to such political intolerance.¹³³

The primary debate in Turkey regarding the political rights of the Syrians relates to the question of whether the Syrians are there to stay in the country. With the pro-

In this framework, it is possible to assess political intolerance through attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the rights and liberties of the minority groups, groups perceived to be the Others, for participation in political and social life. A preference for anti-migrant policies as well as exclusionary attitudes as part of political intolerance may be informed through negative emotional reaction to perceived threat and unfairness. As an outcome of the political intolerance that

FIGURE 36: POLICIES CONCERNING SYRIANS (BY PARTY)

While this intolerant attitude of the nationalist voters does not contradict our prior anticipations, it is surprising that the HDP voters, who take a more tolerant attitude on the issues visited above, exhibit about the same level of intolerance as the nationalist parties in this respect.

longation of the instability in Syria, the future of the Syrians, previously seen as guests, has become a subject for debate between the ruling party and the opposition.¹³⁴

In this framework, the participants in the survey were asked how strongly they regarded each of a list of political rights and policy resolutions concerning the Syrian migrants to be a problem. These political rights and policy resolutions include a proposal to tell the Syrians that their asylum status has been terminated and send them back to Syria, the granting of long-term residence without citizenship to the Syrians, and naturalization of the Syrians.

The participants in the study were asked to indicate their assessment of each political right or policy resolution on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 means “absolutely do not approve” and 10 means “absolutely approve.” The average responses to these questions were used to obtain a party voter group breakdown.

It is possible to suggest that the policy resolution to tell the Syrians that their asylum status has been terminated and send them back to Syria finds support in Istanbul in general. While the average response is 6 out of 10 overall, it is above 5 for each political party.

This exclusionary policy resolution finds largest support among the voter groups of İyi Parti (7.6), HDP (7.3), and MHP (7.2). While this intolerant attitude on the part of the nationalist voters does not contradict our predictions, it is surprising that the HDP voters, who take a more tolerant attitude on the issues visited above, exhibit about the same level of intolerance as the nationalist parties in this respect. That the HDP supporters are a more disadvantaged group in socioeconomic terms and may not see the Syrians as a threat can be considered as a factor in accounting for this surprising finding.

Agreement with the policy resolution to tell the Syrians that their asylum status has been terminated and send them back to Syria is below the overall average for the voters of AKP and CHP (5.4 and 5.5.).

An analysis of the responses given to the proposal to grant the Syrians long-term residence without citizenship reveals that the overall average is strikingly negative. On a scale where 0 corresponds to “absolutely do not approve” and 10 corresponds to “absolutely approve,” the Istanbul average stands at 2.5.

Opposition to the right to residence is clear in all political party groups. Although the AKP and HDP averages (3 and 2.7) stay above the overall average, the general outlook is, nevertheless, negative. In the parties with an affinity to Turkish nationalism, the average is lower (2 for MHP, 1.9 for CHP, and 1.6 for İyi Parti).

The negative attitude toward residence repeats the same pattern in relation to the right to citizenship. While the Istanbul average is observed to be 2.6, only the AKP voters remain above that average (3.1). The CHP and HDP voters follow (2.3 and 2.2). MHP and İyi Parti, the nationalist parties, grant the lowest levels of support to naturalization (1.7 and 1.1).

Overall, political intolerance is found to be high for all party voter groups in Istanbul. Nevertheless, it is significant that support for the proposal to tell the Syrians that their asylum status has been terminated and send them away does not reach high levels among the AKP and CHP voters, who collectively make up a 75% majority in Istanbul.

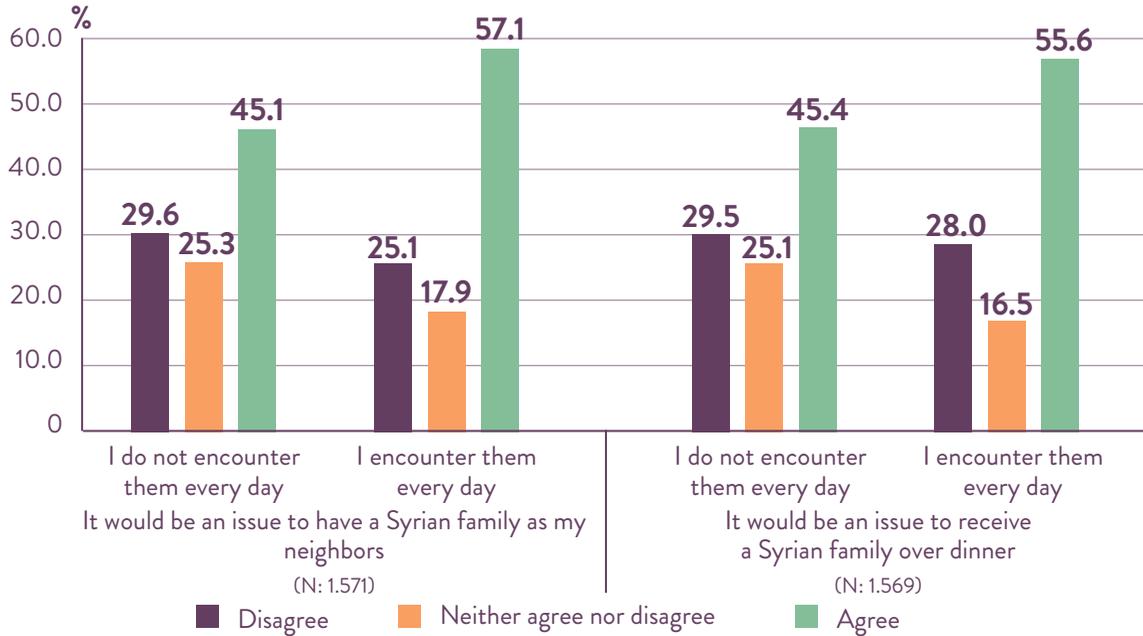
SOCIAL DISTANCING WITH THE SYRIANS

According to the theory of social identity, since individuals define themselves through the group they belong to, they tend to develop threat perceptions, prejudices, and stereotypes regarding the members of other groups. As a result, distant attitudes and behavior toward an outgroup’s members spread among an ingroup’s members, resulting in social distancing. One of the major factors playing a part in social distancing is intergroup communication. The theory of intergroup communication holds that the high quality and spread of contact between members of different groups mitigates negative attitudinal and behavioral tendencies between them. Social distancing, however, limits the opportunity for such intergroup communication.¹³⁵

Relations between locals and migrants are among the phenomena where social distancing can be observed. Due to differences along such lines as basic identity, language, race, color, and religion between the two groups, members of each group tend to engage in distancing behavior in order to preserve the integrity of their own group against the outgroup. Threat perceptions and negative opinions thus emerging lead to the spread and normalization of exclusionary attitudes and behavior such as refusing to engage in communication with migrants, unwillingness to be present in the same school or workplace as them, unwillingness to be neighbors with them or befriend them, and unwillingness to establish a business or marital relationship with them. The general admission of such exclusionary practices lays the ground for social distancing.

The KONDA survey shows that social distancing has been on the rise in recent years. The responses to the questions “What can be your level of association with asylum-seekers from Syria?” and “Would you like the Syrians to be present in the following places?” reveal that in the year 2016, 72.% were willing to accept Syrians in the same city, 57.1% in the same neighborhood, workplace or school, 40.8% as friends or neighbors, 13.7% at home or in the family.

The results obtained when KONDA asked the same questions three years later indicate that the positive attitudes of the Turkish citizens regarding relations with

FIGURE 37: SOCIAL DISTANCING BY STREET ENCOUNTER STATUS

the Syrians were reduced in half. The share of individuals who state that they can live in the same city fell from 72% to 40%. The ratio for “in the same neighborhood” fell from 57% to 31%, “in the same apartment building or as neighbors or as friends” from 41% to 21%, and “in the same house” from 14% to 7%.¹³⁶

In our study, Turkish citizens were asked how they viewed each of the social practices indicated in relation to the Syrian migrants, which include having a Syrian family as a next-door neighbor and inviting a Syrian family to their home for dinner. The participants were asked to assess their opinions using a 0 to 10 scale where 0 corresponds to “not an issue at all” and 10 corresponds to “definitely a big issue.”

Frequency of contact and encounter with members of the outgroup is well-known to be a factor influential in the tendency for social distancing.¹³⁷ Thus, individuals who encounter Syrians daily in the street where they live (52%) and individuals who do not (48%) were compared in terms of their responses to the questions on social distancing. The responses were grouped into three categories: low (0-3 points), medium (4-6), and high (7-10).

The ratio of high ratings on the statement “It would be an issue to have a Syrian family as my neighbors” is

In terms of social distancing, the least religious and the most religious groups were observed to be more tolerant than the group of individuals who pray less.

higher among individuals who encounter Syrians daily (57.1% - 45.1%), and the ratio of low ratings is higher among individuals who do not encounter them daily (29.6% - 25.1%).

The ratio of high ratings on the statement “It would be an issue to invite a Syrian family to my home for dinner” is higher among individuals who encounter Syrians daily (55.6% - 45.4%), and the ratio of low ratings is higher among individuals who do not encounter them daily (29.5% - 28%).

On social distancing as well as on the aspects analyzed

FIGURE 38: SOCIAL DISTANCING AND PRAYER

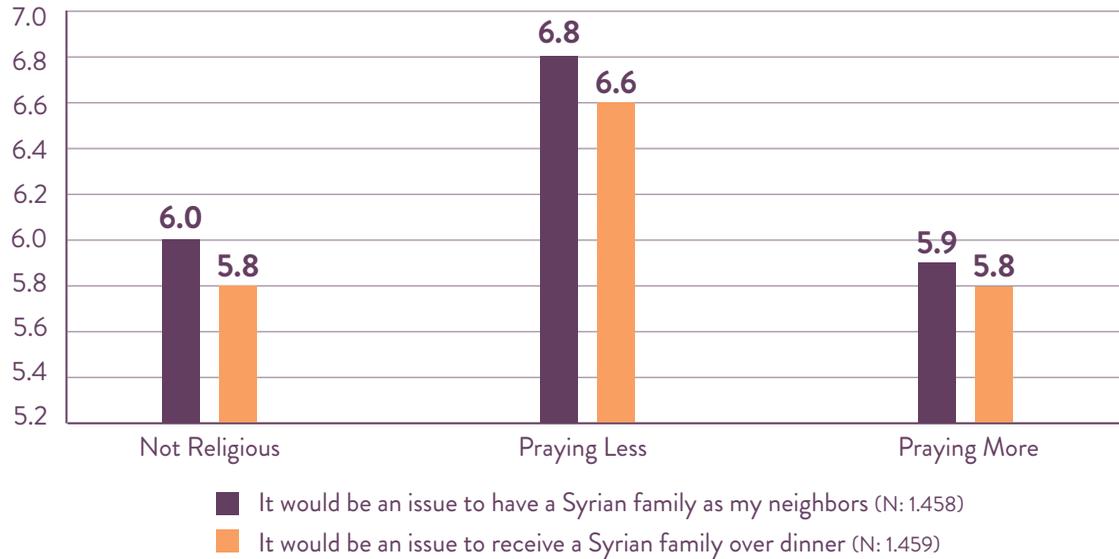
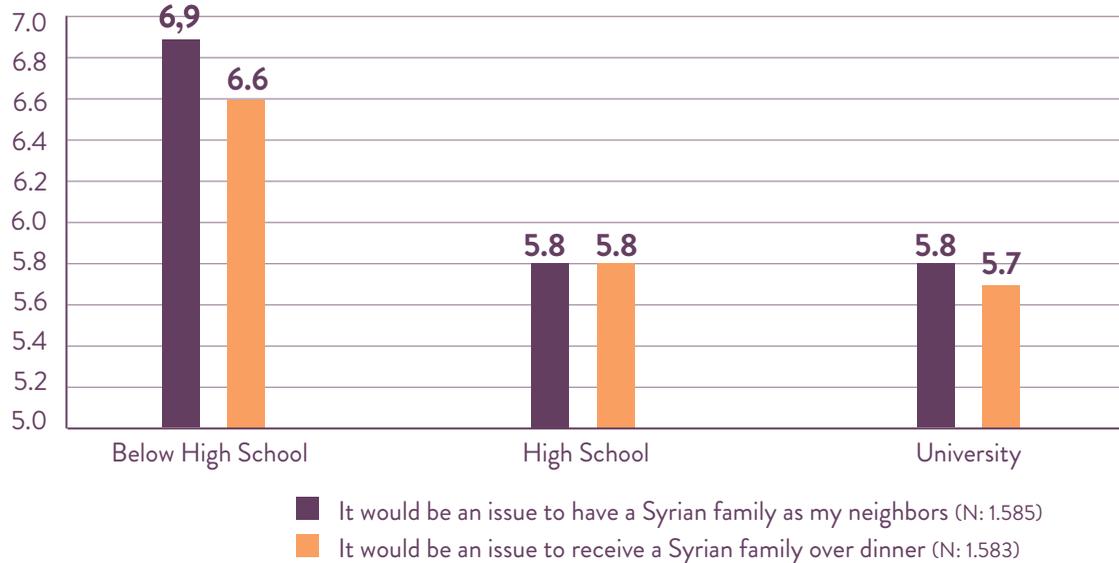


FIGURE 39: SOCIAL DISTANCING AND EDUCATION LEVEL



above, the findings support the view that contact or encounter that is not based on any direct association does not bring about more positive attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Syrians.

The relationship between religiosity and social distancing is also a controversial topic of investigation. Research indicates that while religiosity reduces social distancing toward migrants in the US, it fosters it in European countries.¹³⁸ Our survey, conducted in

the entire Istanbul, divide the participants into three groups along religiosity: individuals who are not religious, individuals who pray less, and individuals who pray more. In terms of social distancing, the least religious and the most religious groups were observed to be more tolerant than the group of individuals who pray less.

In groups with lower education, anti-migrant attitudes and social distancing appear to be stronger tenden-

cies.¹³⁹ This study divides Istanbul inhabitants into three groups based on their level of education. We find that the tendency for social distancing is higher among individuals with high school-level education or with no education. Almost no difference exists, however, between high school graduates and university graduates.

TENDENCY FOR VIOLENCE TOWARD THE SYRIANS AND ENDORSEMENT OF SUCH VIOLENCE

The tendency for collective violence can be defined as individuals' endorsement of and participation in physical and collective interventions against people or groups considered to infringe the norms ensuring the social order in incidents believed to hinder that social order. It has been observed that during moments of collective violence, individuals around tend to intervene and want to punish the person violating the norms "in order to ensure justice" instead of waiting for law enforcement to arrive.¹⁴⁰

The issue of collective violence has been an important subject of study in many disciplines from criminology to psychology to sociology to political science. This issue, in which a good number of factors including authoritarian inclinations, social bonds, discrimination, and political culture among others play a decisive role, is closely related with intergroup relations.¹⁴¹ Negative rumors surrounding members of an outgroup may arouse reaction more easily and lead to acts of collective violence more rapidly than those surrounding locals.¹⁴² Among the groups facing exclusion, minorities and migrants are the groups most commonly threatened by acts of collective violence and attempts at lynching.¹⁴³

Türkiye'de Suriyeli sığınmacılar bu konuda istisna değildir. Uluslararası Kriz Grubu'nun paylaştığı veriye göre 2017'de Suriyeli sığınmacılara yönelik 181 şiddet olayı gerçekleşirken, 35 kişi olaylarda hayatını kaybetmiştir. Ayrıca medyaya yansıyan haberlerde 2011-2019 arasında 146 linç girişimi yaşanmıştır.¹⁴⁴

The Syrian asylum-seekers in Turkey do not constitute an exception in this respect. According to data released by the International Crisis Group, in the year 2017, 181 acts of violence took place against Syrians in

which 35 people lost their lives. In addition, news in the media show that 146 instances of attempted lynching occurred between the years 2011 and 2019. An analysis of the news stories on these incidents and the interviews with the muhtars (muhtar: elected head of a neighborhood or a village) of the neighborhoods where they took place reveals that any spread of news that Syrians are in violation of social norms at the neighborhood level can lead crowds of related families to organize for violence and other inhabitants in the neighborhood to join them. Rumors of incidents such as rape and harassment that violate moral norms as well as fights occurring between small groups can unleash attempts at lynching toward Syrians.¹⁴⁵

Perceptions on the part of an ingroup's members that migrants hurt social bonds, violate the social order or lead to an increase in criminal activity can pave the ground for any rumor or disagreement to easily turn into an act of collective violence. On the other hand, spread of opinions that migrants fail to abide by the social rules in their new community and that they violate the norms in place in its social life also boosts the tendency to endorse and participate in acts of collective violence against the outgroup. While perceptions that ordinary crimes are on the rise, on the one hand, and the violation of moral rules and norms, on the other hand, both instigate antagonism against migrants, it is an important subject of investigation which is the more dominant factor. Thus, the nature of accusations resulting in an act of collective violence is critical.¹⁴⁶

This study conducted a survey experiment to investigate the tendency of individuals for collective violence. In the experiment, the participants were told that a young man in the neighborhood accused of having engaged in harassment or pickpocketing against a young woman in the neighborhood was exposed to violence, and they were asked how strongly they would believe the accusations, what attitude they would take, and how strongly they would endorse the violent behavior of the neighborhood community. Assuming that the type of offense and the ethnic identity of the young man involved are important factors playing a role over participation in collective violence, the participants were divided into four groups based on the type of offense (harassment vs. pickpocketing) and the identity of the

FIGURE 40: COLLECTIVE ACTION: I WOULD JOIN OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD INHABITANTS/I WOULD GO TO POLICE

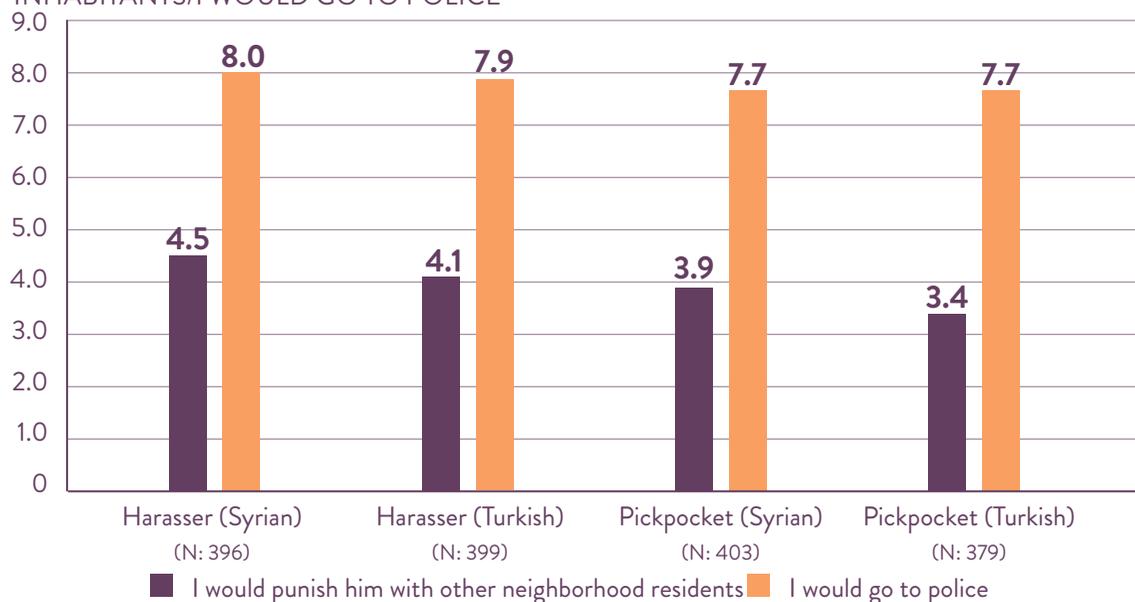
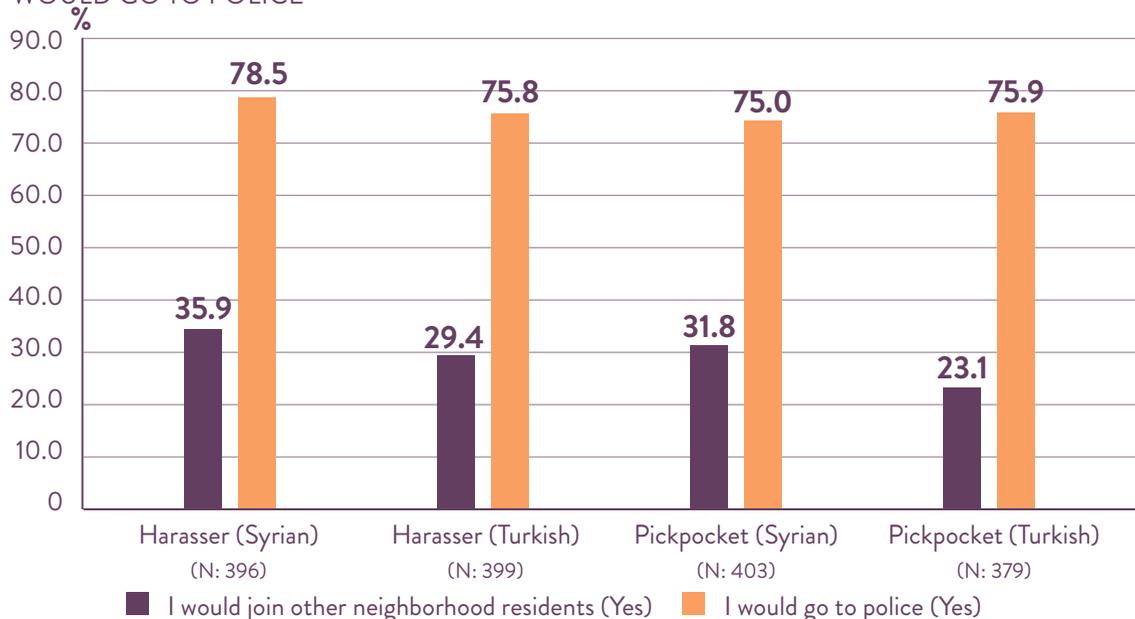


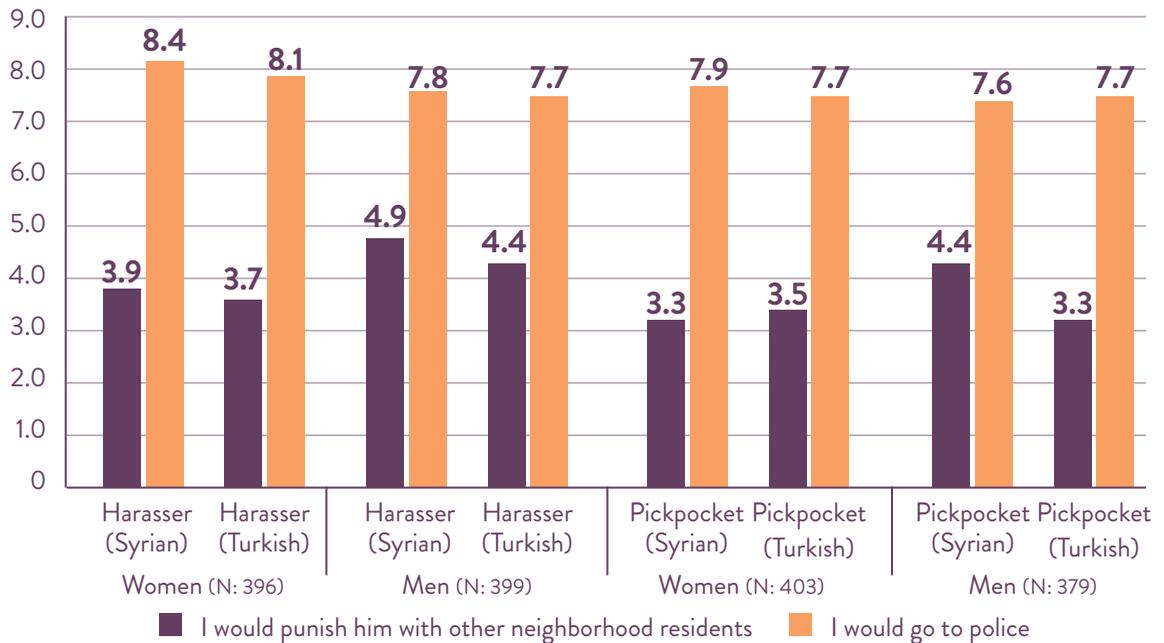
FIGURE 41: COLLECTIVE ACTION: I WOULD JOIN OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD INHABITANTS/I WOULD GO TO POLICE



young man accused. In the four different experimental scenarios involving the two different types of offense, the accused person was defined as “Syrian Farid” or “Hakan from the neighborhood.” The four experimental groups to which the participants were randomly and evenly assigned were named “harassment-Syrian,” “har-

assment-neighborhood resident,” “pickpocketing-Syrian,” and “pickpocketing-neighborhood resident.”

Following the experiment, the participants were asked to indicate their response on each of the two types of behavior on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 corresponds to “ab-

FIGURE 42: COLLECTIVE ACTION AND GENDER

solutely disagree,” 5 corresponds to “neither agree nor disagree,” and 10 corresponds to “absolutely agree.” Based on their answers, they were classified into three groups: disagreement (0-4), in the middle (5), and agreement (6-10). The average responses to the questions were also involved in the analyses.

If we take a look at the averages of the participating groups, we find that the tendency to exercise collective violence on the person accused varies by scenario. The share of individuals with a tendency to participate in collective violence is highest in the two incidents in which the person accused is described as “Syrian.” The share of individuals who state that they would participate in collective violence is 35.9% in the harassment scenario in which the Syrian person is accused and 31.8% in the pickpocketing scenario in which the Syrian person is accused. Where the person accused is a neighborhood resident, the ratio falls to 29.4% in the harassment scenario and to 23.1% in the pickpocketing scenario.

Furthermore, the tendency for violence is observed to be higher in the harassment scenario than in the pickpocketing scenario. The finding that the share of individuals who display a tendency for violence reaches 35.9% in the harassment scenario where the accused person is Syrian

illuminates the mechanism behind lynching attempts due to rumors of harassment or rape and reveals the severity of such incidents.

On the other hand, the share of individuals who state that they would call law enforcement is 75 to 79%. While it reaches 78.5% in the harassment scenario with a Syrian person accused, it is 75% in the other three incidents.

It is an important subject of research whether gender leads to any variation with respect to collective violence.¹⁴⁷ This study observes that women and men have different averages in terms of collective violence, and that men score higher. While the tendency for violence is overall low for both groups, the finding that both averages are almost medium-level can be interpreted as a warning of potential conflict in intergroup relations.

While the average response by men to the statement “I would punish him along with the neighborhood residents” is 4.9 when the person accused is Syrian and 4.4 when he is from the neighborhood, the average response by women is, respectively, 3.9 and 3.7. Both the tendency for violence and the difference between the responses to the scenarios with the Syrian man or the neighborhood resident involved decline for women.

FIGURE 43: LIKELIHOOD OF THE PERSON ACCUSED HAVING COMMITTED THE CRIME



In this study, the scenario for which the opinion that the accused person committed the crime is strongest involves the combination of harassment and a Syrian individual (6.4). The combination of pickpocketing and a Syrian individual follows (6.2).

While the tendency for violence falls for both genders in the pickpocketing scenario, the tendency for violence toward the Syrian young man accused of pickpocketing is lower in women than in men (3.3 vs. 3.5). On the other hand, the tendency for violence toward the neighborhood inhabitant is higher in women than in men (3.5 vs 3.3).

Overall, in all scenarios, the tendency to call police is high and varies between 7.7 and 8.4. This tendency is

slightly stronger in women than in men and the difference grows even larger in the harassment scenarios.

The participants in the study were asked to indicate how strongly they believed the person accused committed the offense on a scale where 0 means “do not believe” and 10 means “believe.” In general, there exists a tendency to believe that the person accused committed the offense. The average response varies between 5.7 and 6.4 in the four scenarios.

FIGURE 44: ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE

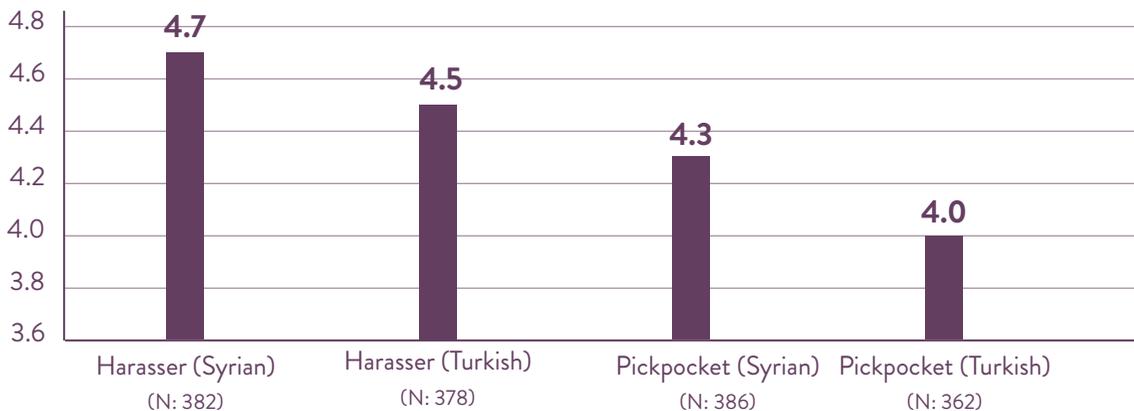
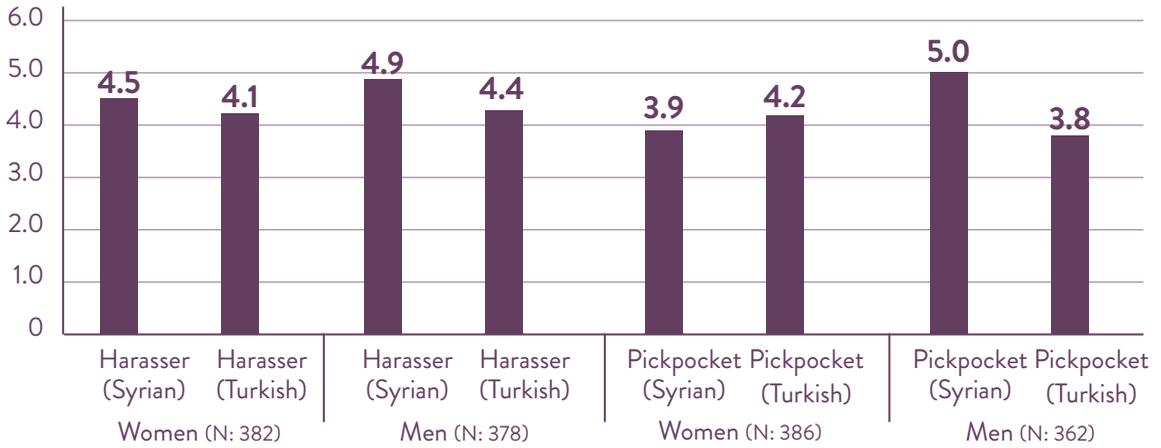


FIGURE 45: ENDORSEMENT OF VIOLENCE AND GENDER



Research reports that accusations against migrants are more easily believed.¹⁴⁸ In this study, the scenario where the opinion that the accused person committed the crime is strongest involves the combination of harassment and a Syrian individual (6.4). The combination of pickpocketing and a Syrian individual follows (6.2).

It appears that following discussions on violence toward women in Turkey and around the world in recent years, harassment accusations are now considered more credible. For both the Turkish and the Syrian suspects, the belief that the person accused committed the crime is stronger when harassment is involved than when pickpocketing is involved.

In general, endorsement of violence toward offenders is expected to be higher among the members of an in-group in cases of norm violations and when migrants are concerned.¹⁴⁹ In this study, we find that endorse-

ment of the neighborhood community’s collective violence toward the person accused is highest in the harassment scenarios and when a Syrian individual is involved (4.7). Endorsement of violence declines to 4.5 toward the neighborhood resident in the harassment scenario. In the pickpocketing scenarios, endorsement of the neighborhood community’s violence toward the Syrian suspect is similarly high (4.3 and 4).

In the harassment scenario in this study, endorsement of violence among women, just as endorsement of violence among men, is higher toward the Syrian suspect, but in both scenarios, endorsement is lower among women than among men. While endorsement of violence toward the Syrian suspect is lower among women than among men in the pickpocketing scenario, endorsement of violence toward the neighborhood resident is higher among women than among men (4.2 vs 3.8).

CONCLUSION

The Syrian Civil War, which broke out in 2011, has resulted in one of the largest refugee waves in history. According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5.6 million Syrians have abandoned their country, with 65% migrating to Turkey.

Such a high number of Syrians seeking asylum in Turkey and the pace at which migration has been taking place has brought about social, cultural, and economic debates. While social cohesion in the relations between the Syrians and the Turkish citizens is found on one side of the coin, social disharmony and conflict surface on the other side.

Due to the linguistic barrier, the cultural differences, the rapid changes in the population dynamics, the economic competition, and the security concerns, we face a risk that depending on the conjuncture, negative attitudinal and behavioral tendencies toward the Syrians might spread further.

Istanbul is the city with the largest numbers of refugees and Syrians in the entire Turkey. 1,642,000 migrants live in Istanbul, of whom 963,000 are Syrians, registered as well as unregistered, and 679,000 are nationals from other countries. The fact that the migrants live in groups in the remote and peripheral districts where rents are low and industries requiring cheap labor are concentrated and the fact that they lead to changes in the demographic structure render the attitudes of the host community toward the Syrian migrants an important parameter.

In our study, conducted with 1636 individuals representing the Istanbul population, the frequency and nature of contact between the Istanbul inhabitants and the Syrian

migrants were analyzed. 62% of the participants state that they encounter Syrians daily in parks and squares, 69% in stores, markets, and shopping malls, 52% on their street, and 44% at their workplace. 17% of the participants live in the same building as Syrians. Despite the high frequency of encounter, however, 78% of the Istanbul inhabitants interviewed do not engage in communication with any Syrian.

Individuals who regard the Syrians as Istanbul's greatest problem, 10.5%, rank third, after individuals who regard traffic and transportation (39%) and the economy (25%) as such. Following the rise in polarization in Turkey, the attitudes of the party voter groups vary in relation to the Syrian migrants as well. The share of individuals who believe that the Syrians are Istanbul's greatest problem is highest in İyi Parti (17.7%) and MHP (12.7), which both stand on the right side of the ideological spectrum.

Threat perceptions concerning the Syrians were analyzed in three groups covering cultural/lifestyle, economic, and security matters and at the family and country levels. An analysis of the results by the type of threat reveals that the lowest levels of perceived threat relate to lifestyle (5.6 at family level, 7.0 at country level). The fact that the majority of the Syrians are Sunni Muslim may be among the factors mitigating lifestyle concerns.¹⁵⁰

At the family level, the perception of security threat is higher than the perception of economic threat (6.5 vs. 6.0). The fact that the Syrians move in large groups and often make news in the media due to group fights might have resulted in this outcome. At the country level, however, economic concerns outweigh security concerns (7.9 vs. 7.4). The economic crisis, the rise in unemployment, and the labor force competition are included among the reasons that may account for this finding. While perceived threat is above the Istanbul average in the İyi Parti and MHP voters, perceived threat is higher at the country level than at the family level for all party voter groups.

When the perceptions of threat are analyzed by income level, we find that the perception of economic threat against the family declines as the income level rises. While perceived threat is 7.3 in the low-income group, it retreats to 6.5 in the low-medium-income group, 5.6 in the medium-high-income group, and 4.7 in the high-income group. On the other hand, perceived economic threat is similar at the country level for all groups.

If we evaluate threat perceptions concerning the Syrians through the degree of security individuals feel in their neighborhood, we observe that as perceived neighborhood security rises, perceived threat declines at the family level.

While it has been claimed that intergroup contact mitigates perceived threat, researchers emphasize that encounters without communication may not be adequate.¹⁵¹ The findings from the present study

demonstrate parallel results. We observe that average perceived threat is higher among individuals who encounter Syrians daily in the street, in stores, markets, and shopping malls, in parks and squares, and at the workplace. Nevertheless, individuals who have engaged in communication with Syrians have lower average threat perceptions than individuals who have not.

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The opinion that the government and institutions treat individuals equally regardless of their identity has a critical impact over intergroup relations. 78% of the Istanbul participants believe that the government treats the Syrians better the Turkish citizens. While the share of individuals who state that it treats the two groups equally stands at 13%, individuals who believe that it treats the citizens better remain at 9% only.

A breakdown of the results by party support shows that the perception that “Syrians receive better treatment” is higher in the People’s Alliance parties. The ratio is 99% for İyi Parti and 82% for CHP. A similar distribution is observed for

MHP and AKP, the parties in the People’s Alliance (76% and 74%). For the HDP supporters, the ratio is about 60%. This result seems rather consistent with the party’s claim to being the party of all minorities in Turkey.

The members of a group tend to compare the existing social status of their group with that of an outgroup. An analysis of the Istanbul average suggests that the opinion that the Syrians are undeservedly ahead of the citizens finds support in the general public. While perceived threat dominates in all party voter groups, it is relatively lower in the AKP voters.

The Syrians have increasingly become the target of prejudices in society. It can be contended that behind the threat perceptions and intolerant attitudes vis-à-vis the Syrians lie such prejudices. While the majority of the participants (51%) indicate low agreement with the statement that “the Syrians are not as well off as many Turks because they belong to a less talented race,” it is disconcerting that low- and medium-level agreement can reach 49% (respectively, 27% and 22%). Moreover, analysts and authorities should pay attention to the finding that individuals who believe that the Syrians are not victims of war stand at 36%. Our findings reveal that the voters of İyİ Parti and MHP, the nationalist parties, are more highly prejudiced than the other party voter groups.

Through stereotyping, all members of an outgroup are assumed to have the same “essence” and to be unable to move out of that mold. Concerning the Syrians, negative stereotypes find more proponents than positive stereotypes. These averages indicate that the negative stereotypes in the Turkish society define the Syrians as a community that is not civilized or reliable and which is aggressive and criminally inclined. It can be argued that these stereotypes are reproduced and reinforced through incidents of collective violence between the Turkish host community and the Syrians.

When the emotions toward the Syrians are analyzed, we find that anxiety is the most common emotion while hate is the least common. While 47% of the participants feel high levels of anxiety, hatred is at low levels in the 55% majority. Nevertheless, individuals who feel intense anger and individuals who feel intense hatred respectively reach 33% and 24%. It is a striking finding that individuals who feel compassion (35%) fall behind individuals who feel intense anxiety (47%).

It has come into view how important a task it is to analyze the tendency to participate in collective action against the Syrians as well as perceptions of threat, prejudices, and negative emotions. While individuals with a tendency to participate in “collective marching against the Syrians” make up 34.3%, individuals with a tendency to participate in “collective signature against the Syrians” constitute 42.6%. Support for collective signature appears to be stronger. In Turkey, where forms of political participation other than voting are not very common, it is not surprising that support for collective signature is higher, since collective marching is a more costly and risky form of action than collective signature. The tendency to participate strongly in collective material assistance to the Syrians remains at 7.4% only.

Both analysts and authorities should pay attention to the finding that individuals who believe that the Syrians are not victims of war stand at 36%.

Concerning “collective signature against the Syrians,” the MHP and İyİ Parti voters stand out. The average tendency to join collective signature is higher in individuals who encounter Syrians daily in the street than in individuals who do not (5.5 vs. 4.9). Similarly, in individuals who encounter Syrians daily, the average tendency for material assistance is lower (1.9 vs 2.3). Contact that only occurs in the form of encounter without dialogue appears to fail to introduce a positive change.

While the response to the policy resolution to tell the Syrians that their asylum has been terminated and send them back to Syria averages on 6 points out of 10, it is above 5 for all party voter groups. This exclusionary policy resolution finds largest support in İyİ Parti (7.6), HDP (7.3), and MHP (7.2). That the HDP supporters are a more disadvantaged group in socioeconomic terms and do not see the Syrians as a threat may be considered as a factor in accounting for this finding. An analysis of the responses on long-term residence and naturalization shows that the Istanbul inhabitants do

not want the Syrians to stay permanently.

If social distancing between the citizens and the Syrians is analyzed, we find that the ratio of high ratings on the statement “It would be an issue to have a Syrian family as my neighbors” is higher in individuals who encounter Syrians daily in the street than in individuals who do not (57.1% - 45.1%). Similarly, the ratio of high ratings on the statement “It would be an issue to invite a Syrian family to my home for dinner” is higher in individuals who encounter Syrians daily (55.% - 45.4%). The least religious and the most religious groups are observed to be more tolerant in terms of social distancing than the group of individuals who pray less. In groups with lower education, anti-migrant attitudes and social distancing appear to be stronger.

The tendency for collective violence can be defined as individuals’ endorsement of and participation in physical and collective interventions against people or groups considered to infringe the norms ensuring the social order in incidents believed to hinder that social order. The Syrian asylum-seekers in Turkey do not constitute an exception in this respect. According to data released by the International Crisis Group, in the year 2017, 181 acts of violence took place against Syrians, leading to the loss of 35 lives. In addition, news in the media show that 146 instances of attempted lynching occurred between the years 2011 and 2019.

In this study, four survey experiments were conducted through four scenarios of collective violence taking place in a neighborhood in order to investigate the tendency of individuals to take part in collective violence.

The participants were divided into four groups by the type of offense (harassment vs. pickpocketing) and by the identity of the young person accused (local vs. Syrian).

The tendency to take part in collective violence is highest in the two incidents where the person accused

is identified as Syrian. In addition, the tendency for violence is higher for harassment than for pickpocketing. The finding that individuals who display a high tendency for violence reaches 35.9% in the harassment scenario in which the Syrian person is accused indicates the severity of attempts at lynching due to rumors of harassment or rape. In the survey, the participants were asked how strongly they believed the person accused committed the offense. The tendency to find the person accused is higher when a Syrian individual is accused. This

tendency is stronger in the harassment scenario. The tendency to exercise collective violence is also higher in the harassment scenarios. The tendency to endorse violence also increases if the person accused is Syrian.

To sum up, in Istanbul, the city with the largest Syrian population in Turkey, the tendency to perceive the Syrians as a threat is high. On the issues of the approach of the government to the Syrians and the current status of the Syrians, the prevailing view is one of unfairness. For the future of intergroup relations, it stands as a warning that while exclusionary policies concerning the Syrians find high levels of support, negative emotions and the tendency for violence are widespread in about one third of the participants.

While the response to the policy resolution to tell the Syrians that their asylum has been terminated and send them back to Syria averages on 6 points out of 10, it is above 5 for all party voter groups.

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