Mixed Migration Flows into Turkey and the Impact of the Pandemic

Revisiting Social Exclusion and Persisting Inequalities

Sebnem Koser Akcapar and Aysima Çalişan

Contents

Introduction 2
Mixed Migration Flows in Turkey: History and Trends 4
The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Implications on Migrants 10
Methodology 12
Findings and Discussion 15
Being a Migrant in Turkey: What Has Changed During the Pandemic? 16
Different Coping Strategies for Different Types of Migrants 18
Conclusion 22
References 23

Abstract

Evidence from various parts of the world indicates that COVID-19 is particularly dire for migrants and refugees by decreasing their access to fundamental rights, such as protection, health, and decent jobs. However, the impact of the pandemic on each migrant and refugee group has been different. By focusing on the case of Turkey, this paper aims to give insights into the experiences and coping mechanisms of different migrant and refugee groups during the pandemic. Adapting a qualitative method combining online and face-to-face interviews, 100 in-depth interviews were conducted with migrants and refugees living in different provinces in Turkey classified under different categories: Syrian asylum seekers under temporary protection, other nationalities under international protection, residence

S. K. Akcapar (✉)
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Sociology, Social Sciences University of Ankara, Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: sebnem.akcapar@asbu.edu.tr

A. Çalişan
Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Sociology, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey
e-mail: aysima.calisan@metu.edu.tr

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2023
R. Baikady et al. (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Problems*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68127-2_236-1

or work permit holders, international students, irregular migrants, and naturalized citizens. We also conducted one focus group interview with key informants. The collected data was then analyzed by thematic analysis through MaxQDA. The findings indicate that the outbreak has negatively affected the lives of migrants and refugees; however, this impact has been more devastating for some migrant groups by creating another social stratification among them. Accordingly, those who are naturalized are placed at the top, while irregular migrants are at the bottom of this hierarchical pyramid. The differences between these two larger categories are often blurred and highly affected by other socio-economic variables at the intersection of gender, socio-economic status, and access to social networks. These findings, ultimately, point out that COVID-19 has indirect consequences for social cohesion, mobility, and migration management in Turkey.

Keywords

Mixed migration flows · COVID-19 pandemic · Turkey · Social inequalities · Social exclusion · Immigration

Introduction

In his message on the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, refugees, and internally displaced people, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, underlines that the pandemic has created a multidimensional crisis – in terms of protection, health care, and socio-economic conditions – for millions of people on the move and has exacerbated their existing vulnerabilities (Guterres, 2020). In the same speech, Guterres further emphasizes the importance of inclusive policies, especially during the pandemic period, to contain the spread of the virus and protect public health by saying that *"no one is safe until everyone is safe."* However, the likelihood of exposure to the virus and the impact of the pandemic are not equal based on socio-demographic determinants such as gender, race, ethnicity, and legal status (Akcapar & Çalışan, 2021; Apea et al., 2021; Bertocchi & Dimico, 2020; OECD, 2020; Perry et al., 2020). For instance, migrant and refugee groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic considering the number of cases and death rates compared to local populations due to various reasons, such as the lack of an institutionalized system to protect these groups from the pandemic in many countries and the fact that these groups are not included in public health planning and they cannot enjoy basic health rights on an equal basis with the locals (Dempster et al., 2020; OECD, 2020; Vearey et al., 2019). Moreover, migrants and refugees working informally were pointed out as the most affected by the layoffs and income losses caused by the pandemic-related economic recession (Guadagno, 2020; ILO, 2020; OECD, 2020). Similarly, it has been stated that the children of refugees and migrants were more exposed to many risks, such as not being able to access distance education due to limited technical opportunities, face de-schooling,

child labor, and eventually the formation of a lost generation (Kirişçi & Erdoğan, 2020; OECD, 2020; Özkul, 2020).

Against this background, it is important to ask the question of how we can ensure the safety of all. Answering this question requires empirical evidence that would enable us to assess the impact of the pandemic on each migrant and refugee group by highlighting the root causes, similarities, and differences that might lead to various experiences, necessities, and expectations. This chapter, therefore, focuses on different categories of migrants residing in and transiting through Turkey with the overall aim of understanding the change in motivations to continue their onward migration journey, settlement processes, voluntary return, access to employment and fundamental rights and services, survival strategies, and coping mechanisms during the height of the pandemic and under lockdowns. Turkey offers an ideal setting to explore different migrant groups since it has long been a country of origin, transit, and destination for mixed migration flows that include refugees, asylum seekers, irregular migrants, and migrant workers with different skill sets and coming from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Mixed migration is a recently emerged concept among policy circles as a reaction to the analysis of migration, which assumes a dichotomy between people who are forced to move and those who choose to move (Sharpe, 2018; Williams, 2015). The concept has acknowledged that there are blurred lines between these two based on the evidence suggesting that people's motivations to move are not entirely forced or voluntary; rather, these might be intertwined and feature a variety of forms (Kent, 2020; Van Hear et al., 2009). Relatively, mixed migration flows refer to complex and diverse population movements of different migrant and refugee groups due to the various purposes, motives, means, and consequences (Nimkar, 2018; Van der Klaauw, 2009). It includes refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, irregular migrants, victims of smugglers and trafficking, women at risk, unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, and many others subjected to various categorizations (IOM, 2008; Mixed Migration Centre, 2018). According to the mixed migration approach, three issues are emphasized (Vullnetari, 2012). First, motives for migrations vary; however, they can also converge. Conflict and persecution, poverty, environmental disasters, desire to have better lives and opportunities, or a combination of many factors might motivate people to move. Their initial motivations to move can change during their journey and/or in transit and destination country (İçduygu & Akcapar, 2016; Van Hear, 2011). Second, means of travel, modes of entry, or the use of migrant smugglers might overlap. People may be involved in mixed migration flows during the flight since they may cross borders irregularly with the assistance of smugglers along the entire route or only a certain distance (Mixed Migration Centre, 2018; Van Hear, 2011). Third, an individual might shift from one category to another in their life course. A labor migrant, for example, might apply for refugee status due to the conflict that broke out suddenly in his country of origin. To cite another example, an asylum seeker in a safe destination country might want to increase her livelihood opportunities, and consequently, her legal status is changed into that of an economic migrant (Van Hear, 2011).

The chapter begins by overviewing the history of mixed migration flows into Turkey, and how migration policies were put in place to address the complexities arising from different migrant and refugee groups. The second section continues with a critical theoretical and conceptual debate mainly on the relationship between modernity and the pandemic by primarily referring to the writings of Beck (1992), Giddens (2002, 2013), and Bauman (1991, 2016). The third section covers research methodology, in which the research technique, challenges, and certain limitations are discussed. The fourth section is devoted to the analysis and discussion of the findings based on the participants' experiences, which include their migration journey, settlement processes, and the impact of the pandemic on accessing fundamental rights. It concludes with a brief evaluation of the chapter, highlighting the significance of the research and suggesting some policy recommendations.

Mixed Migration Flows in Turkey: History and Trends

Human mobility has always had a crucial impact on Turkey's sociological, economic, political, and cultural structures before and after the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Signaling the link between the politicized character of migration, migration policies in Turkey have always been shaped by the political agenda of each period and the nature of prominent migration movements. In this study, Turkey's migration history and policies are examined over five periods (see Table 1 below).

As the focus of this paper is mixed migration flows in Turkey, human mobility in the first and second periods is only briefly discussed. State-led emigration and immigration flows through population exchange agreements between 1923 and 1950 were utilized as a political tool to create a homogeneous nation-state based

Table 1 The five-migration period in Turkish history (1923–2022)

Period	Migration policy	The prominent migration movement
1923–1950	1934 Law on Settlement	Population exchange
1950–1980	1950 Law on Residence and Travel of Foreigners in Turkey 1950 Passport Act	Internal migration Labor migration abroad
1980–2000	1994 Regulation	Asylum seekers came from neighboring countries Labor migration to Turkey
2000–2011	Europeanization of the Turkish Migration Policy 2003 Law on Work Permits of Foreign Nationals	Irregular migrants + Mixed migration flows
2011–2022	2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection	Mixed migration flows + Highest number of Refugees

Source: Compiled by authors from Bayındır Goularas & Sunata, 2015; İçduygu & Aksel, 2013 and other available national data

on Turkic and Muslim identity (Bayındır Goularas & Sunata, 2015; İçduygu et al., 2008). The legal reflection of these migration movements was the Law on Settlement of 1934, which only allowed the immigration of those of Turkish descent and culture. Another legal document regarding the immigration flows into Turkey was issued back in 1950, which granted foreigners the right to reside and work in the country after local police carried out an inquiry (Law on Residence and Travel of Foreigners, numbered 5683). The second period (1950–1980) predominantly covered intensive internal migration flows and labor migration abroad, mainly to Western European countries. During this period, migration from rural to urban areas led to rapid urbanization and high unemployment. In an effort to reduce high unemployment pressures and to contribute to the country's development with remittances and acquiring new skills, Turkey signed bilateral labor agreements with Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, which needed a cheap labor force to rebuild their war-torn economies. This action was legally supported by the 1950 Passport Law and the Constitution of 1961, allowing the freedom to travel to Turkish citizens to go abroad (Abadan-Unat, 2011). On the other hand, by signing the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol while keeping the geographical limitation clause intact, Turkey became irreversibly connected to the international forced migration regime.

The third period between 1980 and 2000 witnessed the first wave of mixed migration flows into Turkey. As a result, the migration of non-Turkish and non-Muslim people eventually led to a remarkable transformation in terms of not only Turkey's international migration experience and existing migration policies (İçduygu et al., 2014; Kirişçi, 2007) but also its social fabric. The political and economic turmoil that took place in the neighboring countries, as well as in Africa and Asia, caused the mass displacement of people seeking refuge in Turkey (see Table 2). According to Kirişçi (1996), these irregular movements were considered a possible threat to national laws and national security. These concerns brought about a new regulation called the 1994 Asylum Regulation, drawing a certain line between refugee and asylum seeker status based on country of origin (Avcı & Kirişçi, 2006; Frelick, 1997). Due to geographical limitations, Turkey did not provide refugee status to asylum seekers not coming from Council of Europe member states; instead, it gave humanitarian visas to some while repatriation or resettlement in a third country were the only options for many others (Akcapar, 2006, 2017; Avcı & Kirişçi, 2006). Consequently, most asylum seekers either went back to their country of origin or were resettled out of Turkey. The rejected cases either continued to stay in the country without proper documents or crossed the borders irregularly when they had the chance. In the meantime, after the fall of the Soviet regime, many migrants started to arrive in Turkey mostly from former USSR countries but also from Asia and Africa. At first glance, these migrants could be considered economically motivated. Yet, the turmoil in their countries of origin and loss of livelihoods forced them to take part in international migration flows. The fact that few preferred to stay and work in Turkey while most transited to Europe highlighted the country's position as a transit country rather than a destination at the time (Akcapar, 2010).

Table 2 Some remarkable migration movements and main nationalities of migrants since 1979

Year(s)	Source country	Prominent reasons for migration	Number of people coming to Turkey	Migration status
1979	Iran	The Islamic Revolution and the establishment of the Khomeini regime	≈ 1 million Iranians	Asylum Seekers
1979	Afghanistan	The Soviet invasion	4350 Afghans in 1982 21.926 Afghans in 2021	Asylum Seekers
1988–1991	Iraq	The Halabja Massacre Saddam Hussein's ethnic cleansing politics targeting Kurds The Gulf War	≈ 500.000 Iraqis	Asylum Seekers
1989	Bulgaria	Assimilation politics of the Jivkov regime	At least 300.000 Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks	Asylum Seekers
1992–1998	Bosnia Herzegovina	Yugoslav Wars	≈ 25.000 Bosnians	Asylum Seekers
1999	Kosova		≈ 18.000 Kosovars	Asylum Seekers
2001	Macedonia	The Macedonian Civil War	10.500 Macedonians	Asylum Seekers
1995–2009	Iraq	Political and Economic Considerations	461.934	Transit Migrants
	Pakistan			
	Afghanistan			
	Iran			
	Palestine			
	Bangladesh			
	Somalia			
	Mauritania			
	Syria			
	Myanmar (Burma)			
	Others			
	Moldavia			
	Georgia			
	Romania			
	Russian Federation			

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Year(s)	Source country	Prominent reasons for migration	Number of people coming to Turkey	Migration status
1995–2009	Ukraine	Economic Wage Differentials	334.560	Irregular Labor Migrants
	Azerbaijan			
	Bulgaria			
	Germany			
	Armenia			
	Others			
1995–2009	Iraq	Mix of political and economic reasons	796.494	Irregular Migrants, Circular Migrants, Transit Migrants
	Pakistan			
	Afghanistan			
	Moldavia			
	Iran			
	Palestine			
	Georgia			
	Romania			
	Somalia			
	Bangladesh			
	Others			
2011–2022	Syria	Syrian Civil War	3.736.235 Syrians	Asylum Seekers
	Iraq			
	Pakistan			
	Afghanistan			
	Syria			
2014–2022	Moldova	Mix of political and economic Reasons	1.567.392	Irregular Migrants and Asylum Seekers
	Palestine			
	Myanmar (Burma)			
	Georgia			
	Iran			
	Others			

Source: Compiled by authors from Akcapar, 2006, 2018; Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı (PMM) [Turkish Presidency of Migration Management], 2022; Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı (no date) as cited in Doğan & Aydın, 2021; Kirişçi & Karaca, 2015

The fourth period covers the years between 2000 and 2011. During that period, partly as a result of the globalization of migration (Castles & Miller, 2000) and partly due to growing neoliberal demands of the economy, Turkey's previous position changed from a country of transit to a country of destination. With the changing role from the periphery to the semi-core country under World Systems Theory

(Wallerstein, 1974), Istanbul emerged as a global city (Saskia, 1991), where the global economy is managed by attracting foreign direct investment flows. As a result, the countries of origin became more diversified while migrants with various economic, social, and cultural backgrounds, having different migration motivations and aspirations entered Turkey to meet new labor market demands (Akcapar, 2017; Dedeoğlu, 2011). Apart from asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular migrants, labor migration mainly from the post-Soviet countries, the migration of professionals and international students, lifestyle migration and circular migration have become more visible (Akcapar, 2017; Böcker & Balkır, 2012; İçduygu et al., 2014). This period also marked Turkey's negotiations toward its accession to the European Union (EU) as a member state. Therefore, the migration regime in Turkey changed in accordance with EU standards (Bayındır Goularas & Sunata, 2015; Karapınar, 2017). The Law on Work Permits of Foreigners, which went into effect in 2003, should be emphasized here as the first regulation that paved the way for foreigners to find a job and work in Turkey (Avcı & Kirişçi, 2006). The main reason for enacting this law was to respond to the increasing number of irregular and circular economic migrants coming from Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and South Asia and employed in the informal markets (Akcapar, 2017; Özçürümez & Yetkin, 2014).

The violent conflict and political turmoil in Syria started the fifth period in Turkish migration history. Since 2011, the numbers of Syrians seeking refuge in Turkey have gradually increased, reaching more than 3.7 million by 2022 (PMM, 2022). However, this forced mass displacement has political, economic, demographic, and socio-cultural implications, requiring collective and well-organized management (Akcapar, 2017). This resulted in the enactment of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in 2013 and the establishment of the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) which was upgraded into the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) in 2021. What makes the LFIP important is that it was primarily based on the government's acceptance of the fact that Turkey has become an immigration country.

This law also introduced the temporary protection regime for Syrians and enabled them to enjoy their fundamental rights, such as accessing education and healthcare services, getting an identity card, and being protected against forcible returns (Akcapar, 2017; Geçici Koruma Yönetmeliği, 2014). The LFIP has also regulated the international protection regime for asylum seekers other than Syrians and granted conditional refugee status to those waiting to be resettled in a third country. According to the Turkish Presidency for Migration Management (PMM) (2022), more than 557 thousand international protection applications have been reported between 2011–2022. The UNHCR announces that the current number of asylum seekers is 330 thousand, mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran (UNHCR, 2022). Moreover, in theory, all asylum seekers and conditional refugees can apply for a work permit 6 months after applying for international protection status. Yet, the practice is way different than the theory, and asylum seekers are not well-represented among those foreign workers holding work permits (Coşkun, 2017; Lordoğlu, 2007; Tanrıkulu, 2021).

Another important development in the fifth period was the change in citizenship law in 2016 (numbered 5901, Decision No: 9601), which allowed non-Turkish people with investment plans and acquirement of property worth 400.000 USD to apply for citizenship. This was also extended to Syrians under certain conditions, such as (1) entering Turkey legally, (2) having temporary protection status and/or a residence permit, (3) having at least a bachelor's degree and a profession, and (4) not being involved in any crime (Akcapar & Şimşek, 2018). As of 19 December 2022, 223.881 Syrians had been granted Turkish citizenship (Ministry of Interior, cited in Mülteciler Derneği, 2023). However, the discourse on Syrians has changed from guests to "unwanted" foreigners within the years and even led to conflicts between the host society and Syrians (Akcapar & Şimşek, 2018; Erdoğan, 2020; Koca, 2016; Onay-Çoker, 2019; Saraçoğlu & Belanger, 2018).

Other than forced migrants, mixed migration trends included a high number of irregular migrants in Turkey during this last period. Statistics on irregular migration show that over the last 10 years, 1.680.421 irregular migrants have been apprehended in Turkey (PMM, 2022). 2019 was the peak point in irregular migration, where over 454 thousand people were caught while crossing the borders at the entry and/or exit points. The numbers went down to 122.302 in 2020 and 158.289 in 2021 due to pandemic-related travel restrictions and strict border controls. The distribution of the apprehended irregular migrants between 2014 and 2021 based on their nationality is indicated in Fig. 1 below.

This period also witnessed a higher number of foreigners choosing to stay in Turkey with residence and work permits for business, lifestyle, and higher education purposes. As of 2022, the number of residence permit holders is over 1.3 million, mostly concentrated in major metropolitan cities, İstanbul, Antalya, and Ankara, whereas the number of work permit holders were reported to be 145.232 in 2019. Table 3 below demonstrates visa types, number of applicants, and nationalities. Interestingly, migrant workers and asylum seekers originate from the same source countries. Yet, those holding residence permits usually come from higher socio-economic status. Regarding the growing number of international students in higher education, the Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK) states their number as

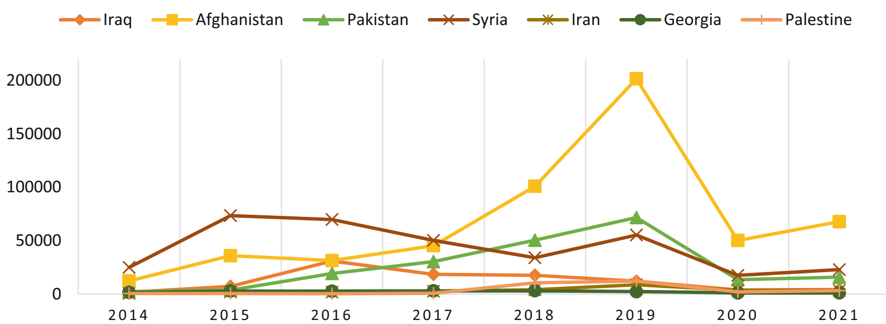

Fig. 1 Distribution of irregular migrants based on nationality by year (2014–2021) (Source: Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı (PMM), 2022)

Table 3 Distribution of residence permits, work permits, and international students in higher education in Turkey

Year	Types and numbers		Region	Number
2022	Short-term residence permits	997.648	Iraq	165.490
			Turkmenistan	123.229
			Iran	108.124
	Student residence permits	120.011	Syria	105.501
			Uzbekistan	71.521
			Azerbaijan	68,565
	Family residence permit	90.398	Russian Federation	68.238
			Afghanistan	54.681
			Kazakhstan	39.899
	Others with residence permits	139.174	Egypt	33.758
			Others	508.225
			Total	1.347.231
2019	Work permit holders	145.232	Syria	63.789
			Kyrgyzstan	11.003
			Ukraine	6197
			Turkmenistan	6128
			Georgia	5220
2019–2020	International students in higher education	171.895	Asia	132.250
			Africa	19.660
			America	910
			Australia	99
			Europe	19.576

Source: Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı (PMM), 2022; Kurum & Erdemli, 2021; Yabancıların Çalışma İzni, 2019; YÖK, 2021

223.925, out of which 47.482 are Syrian nationals. This clearly shows the complex nature of mixed migration flows.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Implications on Migrants

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to emerge as one of the major uncertainties in contemporary societies. In order to understand the reasons and consequences of the pandemic, Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society* (1992) and Anthony Giddens' *Runaway World* (2002, 2013) offer a point of departure in their discussions on modernity. Both state that the new global order is dominated by notions of risk and uncertainty. Accordingly, they point out that the risks in the modern globalized world are different from those of earlier times. In other words, the sources of today's risk originate from mega-risks that affect everyone on the planet. According to Beck, *risk society* produces these mega-risks that threaten humanity globally by posing hazards and uncertainties that are not constrained temporarily, spatially, or socially (1992:

10–13). Beck continues by stating that these risks are unpredictable and immeasurable; thus, it is very hard to forecast their potential impacts and consequences. As in the case of the coronavirus pandemic, the world was caught empty handed by the outbreak of such pandemic. Even when the first case was reported from Wuhan on the last days of 2019, it was very difficult to foresee that it would spread rapidly all over the world and cause 5.5 million deaths within 2 years (WHO, 2020, 2022).

Since early 2020, the virus has crossed borders and affected all countries and people regardless of sex, age, social class, or other demographic determinants. In the beginning, it was stated that everyone was at risk of contracting the virus. However, the pandemic, initially described as *"the great equalizer,"* has not diminished the existing inequalities (Jones & Jones, 2020; Mein, 2020). Instead, inequalities began to be deepened through risk positions based on the identity of individuals (Beck, 1992: 91–102). That being said, socio-demographic determinants, such as age, sex, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or legal status, have determined which social groups would be more exposed to the coronavirus and face the most negative impacts of the pandemic. Much has been written in different settings to manifest that racialized communities, ethnic minorities, migrant and refugee groups, and low-income populations have so far been disproportionately affected by the virus (Aldridge et al., 2020; Karmakar et al., 2021; Mein, 2020; Millett et al., 2020; OECD, 2020; Rostila et al., 2021). These studies point out that disadvantaged social groups have higher morbidity and mortality from COVID-19.

The necessary interventions by governments to contain the virus, however, have falsely assumed that everyone has equal access to resources and shares almost the same conditions to be able to stay at home. Obviously, one's ability to comply with the measures, having the opportunity to work remotely or participate in online education, has been determined by the notion of a risk position. Therefore, staying at home was not an option for disadvantaged and blue-collar groups. Governments had to consider each person's position relative to the current risk if they were to mitigate the impacts of the outbreak. For some social groups, the pandemic represented a multidimensional crisis. Migrants and refugees are among those groups in a vulnerable position. Their exclusion from health systems has led to failure in the fight against the pandemic. There is no doubt that migrant and refugee groups have specific needs that should be addressed and specifically targeted by governments. The implications of the pandemic on the global economy, for instance, have severely affected them. In the first half of 2020, it was stated that COVID-19 would cause the most profound economic recession since World War II (World Bank, 2020). In fact, the economic crisis accompanying COVID-19 drastically attacked hard-to-win gains against global poverty, pushing at least 88 million people under the poverty line (World Bank, 2020). The ILO estimated globally for 2020 that 8.8% of the loss in working hours equals 255 million full-time jobs and 114 million employment loss in the form of 33 million unemployment and 81 million inactivity (2021a). Women, migrants, and refugees have been more affected by working hours and job losses, as they are the "precariat of the neoliberal world order" (Standing, 2014), who are highly employed in the informal economy and live in constant irregularity (ILO, 2020, 2021a, b). Income losses negatively affected the livelihoods

of not only migrants in destination countries but also their families back home, who are dependent on remittances. Most migrants and refugees continued to work during the pandemic since they do not have the opportunity to work remotely or maintain social distance in the workplace; thus, their likelihood of exposure to COVID-19 has remained quite high throughout the pandemic (Guadagno, 2020). Since they are excluded from welfare systems in many countries and/or employed in the informal economy, they are less likely to have a steady income and to enjoy support mechanisms as well as other social benefits.

Moreover, it has been reported that xenophobia toward migrants and refugees has increased in many countries during the pandemic (Bozdağ, 2021; Tyler & Barreto, 2020; WHO, 2021). They have been scapegoated for spreading the virus and exacerbating existing economic problems. The roots of negative attitudes towards migrant and refugee groups can be explained by Bauman's conceptualization of the stranger. According to Bauman, the social and political changes and the unique power struggles in modernity produce strangers who are undecidable, inutile, intolerable, as well as excessive (1991, 2016). Their appearance "at our doors" suddenly and being *en masse* threaten the orderliness of the familiar, taken-for-granted way of life (Bauman, 1991, 2016). This in turn increases the level of anxiety and fear in society, which might lead to misperceptions that hold them responsible for a myriad of social problems, thereby paving the way for discrimination, xenophobia, and racism.

Methodology

The qualitative research method is proven to be the most effective way of recording and understanding social reflection in times of crisis (Teti et al., 2020; Teti et al., 2021). Accordingly, it was adapted in this study with the objective of generating detailed empirical evidence on each migrant and refugee group's experiences during the pandemic period amid restrictions and lockdowns. However, part of the fieldwork was shifted to online platforms, which enabled the researchers to conduct the study from a distance under extraordinary conditions. This shift in methodology has reflected the *new normal* in discussions in the social sciences (Akcapar & Çalışan, 2022; Ghosh, 2020; Howlett, 2022). Even though social scientists have used online research for many years, this methodology shift during the pandemic has been a necessity rather than a choice (Hine, 2015; Howlett, 2022). Nevertheless, in this study, online research enabled the researchers to complete the fieldwork faster and cheaper while conducting interviews with the respondents living in geographically distant places and/or having multiple vulnerabilities (Akcapar & Çalışan, 2022).

Between November 2020 – May 2022, 85 online interviews were conducted through Zoom, Skype, and WhatsApp. The gradual normalization process towards the end of May was an opportunity for the researchers who were suffering from "Zoom fatigue" as well as secondary trauma to study with a multilingual group who have multiple vulnerabilities and traumas (Wiederhold, 2020). After opening up and embracing the "new normal" in the pandemic, 15 more in-depth interviews were

Table 4 Country of origin of participants and gender crosstabulation

Country of origin	Gender				Total (%)	
	Female		Male			
	f	% within the country of origin	*f*	% within the country of origin	*f*	%
Afghanistan	7	46,7	8	53,3	15	15,0
Burundi	0	0,0	1	100,0	1	1,0
Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region[a]	2	40,0	3	60,0	5	5,0
Ethiopia	1	20,0	4	80,0	5	5,0
Philippines	4	100,0	0	0,0	4	4,0
Georgia	8	100,0	0	0,0	8	8,0
Ghana	0	0,0	3	100,0	3	3,0
Iran	4	50,0	4	50,0	8	8,0
Iraq	3	37,5	5	62,5	8	8,0
Malaysia	1	100,0	0	0,0	1	1,0
Palestine	0	0,0	2	100,0	2	2,0
Somalia	3	75,0	1	25,0	4	4,0
Syria	15	45,5	18	54,5	33	33,0
Yemen	0	0,0	1	100,0	1	1,0
Zambia	0	0,0	1	100,0	1	1,0
Zimbabwe	0	0,0	1	100,0	1	1,0
Total	48		52		100	100,0

[a] Note: These are participants coming from Eastern Turkistan and belong to the Uyghur ethnicity

completed face-to-face while maintaining social distance. In total, the data was gathered from 100 in-depth and semi-structured interviews and one focus group interview with key informants. Participants were reached through various social media sites and with the facilitation of gatekeepers. As the sample was a multilingual group, a small number of interviews were conducted through an interpreter, while the others were in either Turkish or English. The nationality of the migrants who participated in the in-depth interviews is shown in Table 4. There were 48 women and 52 men coming from these sixteen countries. This diversity among the respondents indicated mixed migration trends in Turkey even during the height of the pandemic. The majority of the participants resided in Ankara (*N=37*) and İstanbul (*N=29*), while the rest stayed in other provinces, including Adana, Denizli, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kayseri, Kilis, Kütahya, and Mersin. The ethics committee's approval from the university (ASBU, Decision No: 2021/10271) was obtained before giving a start to conduct interviews.

The average age of the participants was 34.56, and the age distribution was between 18 and 64 (Table 5). During the time of interviews, 28 participants were under temporary protection, 20 of them holding residence permits, 10 with work permits, and 13 naturalized Turkish citizens. In addition to that, eleven respondents were asylum-seekers, seven were conditional refugees waiting for resettlement, six

Table 5 Demographic characteristics of the participants

Variables	Gender				Total	
	Female		Male			
	f	% within the variable	*f*	% within the variable	*f*	%
Legal status						
Temporary protection	13	46,4	15	53,6	28	28,0
Residence permit	8	40,0	12	60,0	20	20,0
Turkish citizen	3	23,1	10	76,9	13	13,0
Asylum seeker	5	45,5	6	54,5	11	11,0
Work permit	10	100,0	0	0,0	10	10,0
Conditional refugee	6	85,7	1	14,3	7	7,0
Irregular migrants	2	33,3	4	66,7	6	6,0
International students	1	20,0	4	80,0	5	5,0
Total	48		52		100	100,0
Education level						
Literate	2	50,0	2	50,0	4	4,0
Primary school	11	73,3	4	26,7	15	15,0
Secondary school	1	50,0	1	50,0	2	2,0
High school	17	44,7	21	55,3	38	38,0
Bachelor	14	40,0	21	60,0	35	35,0
Graduate	3	50,0	3	50,0	6	6,0
Total	48		52		100	100,0
Employment status						
Employed	16	40,0	24	60,0	40	40,0
Unemployed	32	53,3	28	46,7	60	60,0
Total	48		52		100	100,0

were irregular migrants, and five were international students. As for education, 38 participants had a high school degree, 15 graduated from primary school two of whom had a secondary school diploma, and four participants were literate. Thirty-five participants graduated from university, and six had a master’s degree. The percentage of employed participants was detected as 40 *(N=40)*, while the rest were unemployed at the time of the interviews. Among those unemployed, eighteen women and twenty-five men stated that they lost their job or were on unpaid leave due to the pandemic. Others indicated that they worked neither in the formal nor informal economy before the pandemic. Unemployed respondents were mainly women, but there were also a few men, indicating gendered differences. Fourteen women said that they were mainly responsible for taking care of their children or elderly and household chores, while three unemployed men stated they relied on savings or reverse remittances from home, suggesting that there were limited opportunities for them at the time to find a proper and decent job.

Findings and Discussion

The participants came from countries where political and economic turmoil have mostly occupied the agenda. However, it is seen that the migration reasons of all participants are not solely motivated by political or economic factors. Rather, these decisions are taken at the intersection of many factors, such as conflict, the violence of human rights and freedoms, poverty, limited economic opportunity, and environmental disasters. There is a robust cause-and-effect relationship between these factors. The migration story of an Ethiopian participant represents important evidence here. His family first became internally displaced within Ethiopia because of the drought-related nutrition crisis in Africa. Soon afterward, the political and economic turmoil in his country of origin made him decide to move with an aspiration to go to Europe, where his cousins have lived there since 2013 as a result of another drought. *"It was hard to live there anymore,"* he said during the interview, *"no chance to work or even live in good conditions"* (a 24-year-old male from Ethiopia, with a residence permit).

Migration experiences and trajectories of other participants are very diverse as well. Most participants *(N=73)* came to Turkey with proper documents by plane, bus, or private car or walked with a group toward Turkey, as in the case of Syrians. The others who engaged in migrant smuggling mostly came from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and Iran, respectively. They used the land route to cross Turkey's border and intended to continue their onward journey since they dreamed of traveling to Europe. Many variables such as the country of destination, the time spent and distance traveled on the routes, the migration route itself, and the decision of crossing the border with/without proper documentation or through the smuggling network played a crucial role in migrants' experiences. Those with enough economic capital who could afford to buy a plane ticket and secure a visa could enter the country easily, regularly, and quickly. On the other hand, some people had to move from one place to another, sometimes by vehicle or on foot. Some took this journey by themselves or with a group, while others had to engage in migrant smuggling, which might cause exploitation and abuse. Some others, especially Afghans, had to stay in other countries for years – especially in Iran – before making the decision to come to Turkey. Even when they decided that Turkey is their final destination, they might also end up in Europe. Some others, on the other hand, initially wanted to get to the EU, yet they were either stranded in Turkey for longer periods or even applied for asylum. This clearly points out the fluidity of previous decisions that might change depending on the current situation.

Gender and socio-economic status are at play in determining one's migration experience. Those who could not afford a decent way of migrating stated that accessing clean water, food, shelter, or medical assistance when they were in need was extremely challenging for them. Moreover, it has been detected that women and children are more likely to be victims on the road due to the risk of being exposed to physical/sexual violence and abuse.

In migration literature, it is put forward that various variables, including geographical proximity, political, cultural, economic, and historical bonds between

countries, have an impact on migrants' decisions (Castles & Miller, 2000). Participants, similarly, referred to these factors and bonds. Educational bonds through *Türkiye scholarship*, for example, were referred to as the main motivators for international students, while livelihood opportunities encouraged mostly Georgians and Filipinos to migrate. Somalis mentioned the trade and investment bond, while the Ethiopians highlighted the historical bonds that date back to the Ottoman Empire, and Iranians spoke of visa-free travel, proximity, and cultural factors. On the other hand, Turkey's geographical location between Europe and Asia is one of the most stated reasons. The proximity to Europe was decisive for some having a dream of the West, while its closeness to the countries of origin was crucial, especially for Syrians, Iraqis, and Georgians.

In addition, social networks, which can be explained as interpersonal connections consisting of ties of common origin, kinship, and friendship between former migrants, new migrants, and non-migrants in the country of origin and destination (Abadan-Unat, 2011; Akcapar, 2010), were identified as a pivotal contributor to the decision-making process. Syrian and Iraqi Turkmens, as well as Uyghur Turks, highlighted common origin and kinship ties based on the same cultural and religious demographics. Afghans, Somalis, Ethiopians, Georgians, and Filipinos spoke of their relatives and friends who have already been to Turkey for years and facilitated their migration journey and initial settlement process.

> *We came here because we are Turkmen. After all, we, our father, and ancestors have been all relatives. My grandmother is from Mersin. Our language is the same; our culture is the same. Also, Turkey is very close to Syria. Now I can go to Syria whenever I want. In addition, Turkey has treated immigrants in a decent way. Lebanon or other countries have not.* (37-year-old Turkmen male from Syria, naturalized Turkish citizen)

Being a Migrant in Turkey: What Has Changed During the Pandemic?

In this section, the participants' experiences in accessing basic rights and services as migrants before and during the pandemic are examined. Most Syrians, along with some Afghans, Africans, and Iranians, stated that there had been many challenges in finding a home, while for migrants of Turkish descent, such as Iraqi and Syrian Turkmen and Uyghurs, finding shelter was hardly a problem. Local people's perception of migrants deteriorated even more during the pandemic. Their privileged position in society as a majority group was exacerbated by the economic downturn that hit Turkey quite hard, and weariness regarding Syrians during the pandemic led to more stigmatization and other-ization of migrants based on one's race, nationality, and ethnicity. One participant reflected on her experiences while searching for a rental home:

> *They (local landowners) don't usually rent houses to Africans. Sometimes my friends and I would talk to real estate agents and landlords to rent a house, but they would always ask us to find a Turkish person as the guarantor. We couldn't find anyone because we didn't have many Turkish friends. (. . .) Some would say that the food we (Africans) cook smells very bad,*

even when we leave the house, the smell does not go away, while the others would say that they don't trust us because we are not trustworthy persons who pay the bills and the rent on time. (28-year-old female from Ethiopia, residence permit)

Many participants stated that their living conditions had totally changed during the pandemic. Few were forced out by their landlords who increased the rent as they wished. Finding a decent place to live, which was already difficult for them before the pandemic due to their ethnicity and nationality, has become a challenge as a result of increasing rental prices during the pandemic. Furthermore, some participants, especially those working in the informal economy, were suffering from job and income losses during the interviews, and they were not able to pay their rent and other expenses. Even though some were lucky to have more tolerable landlords who did not make a big fuss about some delays in paying rent, some others were not so lucky, and they had to develop coping strategies to be able to afford the rent and reduce the monthly expenses. A common practice was to share homes with family members, friends, and people from the same kinship.

There are many tribes in Somalia. There are also many Somalis from different tribes in Turkey. Tribal chiefs have to protect their members according to our culture. Although this is not written, it is a very important law in our society. That's why, for example, some people who could not pay their rent or bills due to the pandemic moved to their tribal chiefs' home. (43-year-old female from Somalia, residence permit)

The landlord kicked us out because we could not pay the rent for three months. Rents are costly in Istanbul. I cannot afford it by myself. That is why I moved to my (Afghan) friends' home. Now, I live now with nine other people. We share rent, costs, and commodities. We all have to live together because that is the only way to make ends meet. We have to send money to our families back home; thus, we have to minimize our expenses here. (26-year-old male from Afghanistan, irregular migrants)

Some participants (*N=43*) lost their jobs and were on unpaid leave during the interviews, while many others stated that at least one member of their household was suffering from reduced income. Unemployment and underemployment rates were already high among these participants; however, these ratios have skyrocketed during the pandemic. One study published in May 2020 revealed that the unemployment rate of 18 percent among migrants and refugees jumped to 88% due to the pandemic (SGDD-ASAM, 2020). Similar studies supported these statistics while highlighting that the outbreak has had a greater impact on migrant and refugee groups in terms of accessing basic needs and livelihoods (MUDEM, 2020; Özkul, 2020; Relief International, 2020). This study, however, not only draws attention to the high unemployment rates among migrants and refugees but also reveals that the level of exposure to the economic implications of the pandemic and the coping strategies developed in response to it differ mainly based on the socio-economic status and legal status of the participants.

Those losing their jobs and income stated that they were either the beneficiaries or applied for the social assistance program provided by governmental and/or non-governmental organizations. However, almost all the participants who were not under temporary protection (*N=67*), i.e., non-Syrians, stated that they could

not benefit from social assistance during the pandemic, which caused feelings of deprivation and being left behind. Especially those under international protection said that the government and European countries have favored Syrians, and although they migrated for similar reasons, they could not enjoy the same rights as them. The perception among the participants under international protection was that the rights were given in a hierarchical order. Below are some excerpts from interviews highlighting this very problem:

> *We (Iranians) and Syrians both escaped persecution. Had I stayed in Iran, I would have been killed by now. The same would have happened to Syrians. But they have been given all rights and every opportunity. I have been unemployed for eight months, but no one gave me even a lira. I am not allowed to go to another city. It is impossible for us to get a travel document. Work permits are easily granted to them. Their health insurance does not stop after a year like ours.* (27-year-old male from Iran, asylum seeker)
>
> *Social assistance is always given to Syrians. Getting a work permit is easier for them. There are less than 10.000 Uyghurs in Turkey, but citizenship is not given to us. Yet, it is given to Syrians. Unfortunately, they (the government) have not really cared about their own kin as much as they did for Syrians. It is a pity.* (46-year-old Uyghur male from Xinjiang, residence permit)

Different Coping Strategies for Different Types of Migrants

It was observed that the participants developed other coping strategies to overcome the economic difficulties they faced. The first was that participants who had a regular job before the pandemic had to accept temporary and daily jobs. The male participants stated they work as seasonal agricultural workers, construction workers, dishwashers, or motorcycle couriers, while the female participants engaged in piecework such as shoemaking, cracking pistachios, and walnuts. Social networks – not only their kin and friends in Turkey but also Turkish acquaintances and former employers – played a crucial role in finding these daily and precarious jobs, which were quite important for the survival of families. One respondent from Afghanistan mentioned how his family back home depended on money sent from Turkey in order to make ends meet:

> *Before the pandemic, I was working as a waiter at a restaurant. I was unemployed due to the restaurants' closures. I am the only one working in my family. I take care of my mother and my six siblings. The employer was aware of my situation. He informed me when he learned that another restaurant owner was looking for a dishwasher. That is how I got to work there.* (18-year-old male from Afghanistan, irregular migrant)

Another coping strategy detected is related to transnationalism, which refers to multiple ties and interactions that connect migrants and institutions across national borders (Vertovec, 2009). Transnational activities in the forms of remittances, political engagement, socio-cultural processes such as marriages or the formation of family and religious activities alongside many others shape migrant's lives (Vertovec, 2003, 2009). According to the accounts cited below, migrants and

refugees already have very dense transnational ties. They stated that they have been financially supported through the remittances sent by their families, relatives, friends, and other people from the same ethnicity or religion abroad.

> *We could not get our salaries regularly before the pandemic, but we were able to afford our expenses. Now, the monthly income is dropped to half. I work at an association producing masks to make extra money. Still, it is not enough. I have five children. They need tablets and the internet to follow their lectures. These are additional costs. I have a sister living in Germany. They started sending us 100–200 Euros a month. Without her support, we would have been homeless, and my children's education would have been disrupted.* (32-year-old female from Iraq, asylum seeker)

For some participants, however, the direction of remittances seems to have reversed. Those who initially sent remittances to their families back home have become dependent on money coming from them. This phenomenon documented both in internal and international migration is called *reverse remittances*, which refers to remittances sent from people at home to people on the move (Mazzucato, 2010; Mobrand, 2012). In contrast to the literature, which predominantly associates reverse flows of remittances with the upper or middle class, this study shows that those dependent on remittances in countries of origin have changed their position to being at the end of the receiving end and started to send money to their relatives in Turkey instead. The following case study exemplifies the situation:

> *I was a worker in a coal factory. The factory closed 6–7 months after the pandemic started. Until then, I was sending money to my family every month. They were saving money both for making their living and for my marriage. Since I have been unemployed for a long time, I asked them to send me the money they have saved. Occasionally I find jobs for a day or two. But without the money coming from Afghanistan, it is not possible for me to make both ends meet.* (26-year-old male from Afghanistan, irregular migrant)
>
> *I am an English tutor. The institution moved courses from in-class to online. First, they stopped paying for the Sodexo (meal card). Then, they cut the salaries at a rate of about 1/3. With my meal card and full salary, I was able to make a living, plus to send some money to my siblings who are students in Somalia. However, now I am not able to do so. Instead, I asked my parents to lend me some money because everything is really expensive here.* (30-year-old female from Somalia, holding residence permit)

Those who lacked savings and social networks to support them financially stated that they chose to return to their countries of origin. The Mixed Migration Centre (2021) reported a similar trend in the case of Syrians living in Turkey due to economic difficulties and rising xenophobia. There were no returnees among the Syrian participants in this study; however, this trend was detected, especially among those from Iraq, Afghanistan, and African countries, driven by losing their source of income and not reaching social assistance. Since asylum seekers and conditional refugees are not allowed to leave Turkey – otherwise their case will be dismissed – return options were only possible for those with residence permits and passports. This is what two of our respondents had to say about the option of returning:

We wanted to stay in Turkey till the end of the pandemic, but I could not work due to the restrictions. Therefore, we decided to return to Ethiopia, where my family and my wife's family live. Ethiopia is way cheaper than Turkey. Also, we feel safe as the number of cases there is indeed very low. (36-year-old male from Ethiopia, residence permit)

During this pandemic, many Iraqis were unemployed. People could not find jobs, could not pay their rent and bills. The Embassy of Iraq in Ankara organized bus services from here to Baghdad for free. They said, "Don't go hungry in Turkey every day; go back to your country." Many people went to Baghdad. Some have stayed in the camps in Baghdad, while others have stayed with their family or relatives. (32-year-old male from Iraq, residence permit)

For others, immobility or being stuck in Turkey was the case. Female migrants, working as live-in domestic workers, experienced that their mobility was further restricted during the pandemic. They said they were not allowed to leave the house, i.e., their workplace, and could not go to their countries of origin due to travel restrictions and the closure of borders. Although they were the first to lose their jobs, male migrant workers - especially if they were irregular - had to stay put in Turkey and depended on savings. Immobility affected international students as well. They could not visit their families and had to live with anxiety for their loved ones back in their countries of origin.

Considering the contagious nature of the coronavirus, the most crucial coping strategy was the fact that some participants who contracted COVID-19 tended to hide that they were infected or avoided going to a healthcare facility when they started to show some of the symptoms. As it was discussed by Akcapar and Çalışan (2021), Syrians working without a work permit continued to go to work by concealing they were infected or in contact with someone detected positive for COVID-19. The 14-day mandatory quarantine period for them meant the threat of losing their jobs and further impoverishment given the low number of working people and highly dependent household members. Non-Syrian participants from diverse countries also adapted the same strategy unless they showed severe symptoms. Legal status, however, determines access to resources and changes coping strategies accordingly as seen in the excerpts below:

When my husband got COVID-19 at the beginning of last winter, we had a hard time at first because we did not have any money. We were supposed to be under quarantine for 14 days. The staff told us to leave the house. But we had no place to go. Therefore, I started working in agriculture. I was getting paid daily. We tried to live with that money until my husband got better. (31-year-old female from Afghanistan, asylum seeker)

When my test result came back positive, I told my boss at work. Then the paramedics came to the house and gave me medicine and told me not to leave the house. I took the test again 14 days later. I went back to work because it was negative. (. . .) No, my salary was not cut off while I was in quarantine. (43-year-old male from Afghanistan, naturalized citizen)

According to the Presidential Decree dated 13 April 2020 and numbered 2399, everyone in Turkey, regardless of their social security or insurance status, is granted free access to diagnostic testing and treatment for COVID-19 (Official Gazette, 2020). This is considered an important step in order to protect public health.

However, accessing healthcare services seems to demonstrate a hierarchical pattern based on legal status that kept the participants from going to a healthcare facility. Particularly those under international protection and irregular migrants face difficulties accessing health services both before and during the pandemic. Health insurance, which is limited to 1 year for asylum seekers and conditional refugees, and high costs prevented them from going to the hospital whenever needed. Irregular migrants confirmed that they never had access to health services, neither before nor during the pandemic, because of fear of deportation. Furthermore, the non-Syrian participants mentioned language barriers, which caused difficulties in conveying their complaints to healthcare workers because no translator speaks their own language – other than Arabic translators – in the hospital. In such cases, getting help from Turkish-speaking acquaintances or their own children as interpreters was a common coping strategy – even though language brokering might work as a stressor for children (Narchal, 2016; Umaña-Taylor, 2003). The interviews also demonstrated that many participants, regardless of being infected or in contact, continued to go to work. However, those who have health insurance – namely naturalized citizens, Syrians under temporary protection, international students, residence and work permit holders – were able to access health services and vaccination programs free of charge.

Other than health, access to education was another major problem area. Socioeconomic and legal status are also at play in migrant and refugee groups' access to education. This research indicated that the children of families with low socioeconomic status were not able to attend online classes because of the digital gap and lack of opportunities. The respondents with children also expressed that overcrowded homes did not offer a suitable learning environment. Children of irregular migrants, on the other hand, could not get access to education as they did not possess any valid documentation, which was required for the online learning platform in Turkey called EBA. Therefore, disrupted education left migrant children behind with the dire threat of pushing them into child labor or child marriage. A Syrian respondent mentioned that his son, who was only 15, had to drop out of high school during the pandemic to contribute to his family budget:

> *My son was a high school student. His Turkish was not good enough to follow online courses during the pandemic and there was no one to help him to study. He was bored and then said, 'I want to drop out of school and go to work'. For me, it was okay because I earn 2.500 Turkish Liras and it was not enough. Then, he found a job at the grocery store. He has been working for 5 months now.* (41-year-old male from Syria, temporary protection)

The following account, which belonged to the general coordinator of an NGO, explains the reasons and consequences of access to education for Afghan children:

> *Child labor is very common, especially for children aged 14–15 and over. Online education has been a big problem during the pandemic period. There are many children who do not have the internet and tablets required for distance learning. There are also families with children whose international protection has been revoked. Since they do not have IDs, they cannot sign in the EBA. Children who cannot attend these online classes go to work to*

contribute to household income. Some girls are forced to be married off at a young age. All projects are developed for Syrians, but Afghans are neglected. (45-year-old female from Afghanistan, residence permit)

Conclusion

The pandemic has a greater impact on migrant and refugee groups' access to fundamental rights by exacerbating existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, deepening poverty and deprivation. This research finds that some migrants and refugees have been disproportionately affected than others based on the intersection of social class, legal status, gender, and race/ethnicity, which indicated a hierarchy among mixed migrants in reaching the available resources and opportunities. Any position in this hierarchy is determinative in all aspects of migrants' lives, from their migration processes to the settlement process and their experiences during the pandemic period. As seen in this study, irregular migrants are at the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid, followed by asylum seekers under international protection, since the former had no access and the latter had limited access to health services compared to other groups (see Fig. 2). On the other hand, naturalized citizens are in the highest position in the hierarchy. As the acquisition of Turkish citizenship is based on their human capital and higher socio-economic status, this finding is not surprising. However, one interesting finding is with regard to residence permit holders. It is generally assumed that they should be better off than asylum seekers and refugees. Yet, high fees to renew residence permits, limited economic and social capital, and downsized economic opportunities during the pandemic hindered their ability to survive in Turkey, forcing them to look for opportunities elsewhere.

Even the ranks between the bottom and the top of the pyramid – Syrians under temporary protection, residence permit holders, and non-Syrians under international protection – are quite fluid and are mostly determined by other variables such as

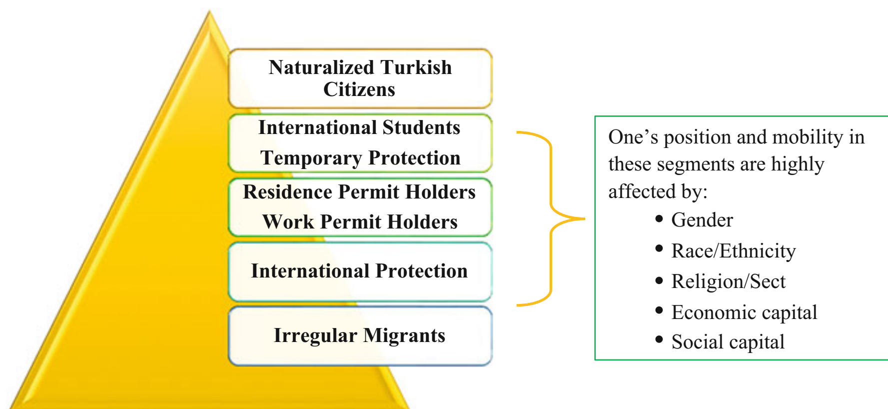

Fig. 2 Hierarchical pyramid on access to resources based on migrant status

gender, social networks, and socio-economic status. Furthermore, the positions of migrants and refugees in the hierarchy are also influential on the coping strategies they have developed against the impacts of the pandemic. These strategies are mainly determined according to migrants' levels of access to economic and social capital, thereby affecting the advantages and disadvantages they might face.

These findings, ultimately, point out that COVID-19 has indirect consequences for social cohesion, mobility, and migration management in Turkey. The pandemic hindered the government's and civil society's efforts in much-needed integration processes, forced some others to go back to their countries of origin or to third unsafe countries and took away already fragile livelihoods, making many consider perilous journeys further to the West. Any migration management in Turkey and elsewhere, therefore, needs to take the human rights of migrants and refugees into consideration. Scientists warn that the pandemic is going to stay with us for a while or that other devastating viruses might appear anytime soon that have a global reach. Throughout these unpredictable times, human security and health safety can only be ensured with the inclusion of all groups living in the country regardless of their migrant and/or citizenship status.

References

Abadan-Unat, N. (2011). *Bitmeyen göç – Konuk işçilikten ulus-ötesi yurttaşlığa [Turks in Europe: From guest workers to transnational citizens]*. Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Akcapar, S. K. (2006). Conversion as a migration strategy in a transit country: Iranian Shiites becoming Christians in Turkey. *International Migration Review, 40*(4), 817–853.

Akcapar, S. K. (2010). Re-thinking social networks and social capital in international migration. *International Migration, 48*(2), 161–196.

Akcapar, S. K. (2017). International migration and diplomacy: Challenges and opportunities in the 21st century. *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs, XXII*(4), 1–34.

Akcapar, S. K., & Çalışan, A. (2021). Neoliberal düzende artan kırılganlıklar: pandemi döneminde mülteci sağlığı [Growing vulnerabilities in the neoliberal order: Refugee health during the pandemic]. *Göç Dergisi, 8*(2), 223–241. https://doi.org/10.33182/gd.v8i2.768

Akcapar, S. K., & Çalışan, A. (2022). Pandemi sürecinde göçmenlerle araştırma yürütmek: Niteliksel yöntemde 'yeni normal' üzerine [Conducting research with migrants during the pandemic:The 'new normal' in the qualitative method]. *Sosyoloji Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 25(1), 8–22.

Akcapar, S. K., & Şimşek, D. (2018). The politics of Syrian refugees in Turkey: A question of inclusion and exclusion through citizenship. *Social Inclusion, 6*(1), 176–187.

Aldridge, R. W., Lewer, D., Katikireddi, S. V., Mathur, R., Pathak, N., Burns, R., . . . Hayward, A. (2020). Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups in England are at increased risk of death from COVID-19: indirect standardisation of NHS mortality data. *Wellcome Open Research, 5*(88). https://doi.org/10.12688/wellcomeopenres.15922.2.

Apea, V. J., Wan, Y. I., Dhairyawan, R., Puthucheart, Z. A., Pearse, R. M., Orkin, C. M., & Prowle, J. R. (2021). Ethnicity and outcomes in patients hospitalised with COVID-19 infection in East London: an observational cohort study. *BMJ Open, 11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-042140

Avcı, G., & Kirişçi, K. (2006). *Turkey's immigration and emigration dilemmas at the gate of the European Union.* Segundo Semestre. Retrieved from http://rimd.reduaz.mx/revista/rev7ing/6.pdf

Bauman, Z. (1991). *Modernity and ambivalence*. Polity Press.
Bauman, Z. (2016). *Strangers at our doors*. Polity Press.
Bayındır Goularas, G., & Sunata, U. (2015). Türk dış politikasında göç ve mülteci rejimi [Migration and refugee regime in Turkish foreign policy]. *Moment Dergi, Hacettepe Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Kültürel Çalışmalar Dergisi, 2*(1), 12–40.
Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity.* Sage Publications.
Bertocchi, G., & Dimico, A. (2020). *COVID-19, race and redlining*. IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3648807
Böcker, A., & Balkır, C. (2012). Migration in later life. Residence, social security and citizenship strategies of Turkish return migrants and Dutch retirement migrants in Turkey. Nijmegen Rodboud University. Nijmegen Migration Law Working Paper Series.
Bozdağ, F. (2021). Social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic: Xenophobic tendency and their consequences. *Psikiyatride Güncel Yaklaşımlar-Current Approaches in Psychiatry*, 537–550. https://doi.org/10.18863/pgy.822767
Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2000). *The age of migration: International population movements in the modern world*. The Guildford Press.
Coşkun, E. (2017). Türkiye'de kağıtsız göçmen kadınlar ve sosyal hizmetler [Undocumented migrant women and social work in Turkey]. *Çalışma ve Toplum, 54*(3), 1299–1316.
Dedeoğlu, S. (2011). Türkiye'de göçmenlerin sosyal dışlanması: İstanbul hazır-giyim sanayinde çalışan Azerbaycanlı göçmen kadınlar örneği. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi, 66*(1), 27–48.
Dempster, H., Ginn, T., Graham, J., Ble, M. G., Jayasinghe, D., & Shorey, B. (2020). *Locked down and left behind: The impact of COVID-19 on refugees' economic inclusion*. Center for Global Development, Refugees International, and International Rescue Committee.
Doğan, Ç., & Aydın, Y. (2021). Yeşilce örneğinden hareketle, yerelden genele göç olgusu [Based on Yeşilce example, local to general migration phenomenon]. *Balkan and Near Eastern Journal of Social Sciences, 7*(1), 115–123.
Erdoğan, M. M. (2020). "Securitization from society" and "social acceptance": Political party-based approaches in Turkey to Syrian refugees. *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi, 17*(68), 73–92.
Frelick, B. (1997). Barriers to protection: Turkey's asylum regulations. *International Journal of Refugee Law, 9*(1), 8–34.
Geçici Koruma Yönetmeliği (Legislation on Temporary Protection) (2014). https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2014/10/20141022-15-1.pdf
Ghosh, B. (2020). Digital ethnography during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Zurich Open Repository and Archive*. *Doing Sociology: Building the Sociological Imagination*. Retrieved from https://doingsociology.org/2020/12/20/digital-ethnography-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-banhishikha-ghosh/
Giddens, A. (2002). *Runaway world how globalisation is reshaping our lives*. Profile Books.
Giddens, A. (2013). *The consequences of modernity.* Stanford University Press.
Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı. (2022). Statistics. Retrieved from https://en.goc.gov.tr/#.
Guadagno, L. (2020). *Migrants and the COVID-19 pandemic: An initial analysis* (Migration Research Series, (60)). International Organization for Migration.
Guterres, A. (2020, January 01). *The COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to reimagine human mobility.* Retrieved from United Nations: https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/covid-19-crisis-opportunity-reimagine-human-mobility
Hine, C. (2015). *Ethnography for the internet: embedded, embodied and everyday.* Bloomsbury Academic.
Howlett, M. (2022). Looking at the 'field' through a Zoom lens: Methodological reflections on conducting online research during a global pandemic. *Qualitative Research, 22*(3), 387–402. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120985691
İçduygu, A., & Akcapar, S. K. (2016). Migrant smuggling in Turkey. In I. M. McAuliffe & F. Laczko (Eds.), *Migrant smuggling data and research: A global review of the emerging evidence base* (pp. 137–160). International Organization for Migration.

İçduygu, A., & Aksel, D. B. (2013). Turkish migration policies: A critical historical retrospective. *Perception, XVIII*(3), 167–190.

İçduygu, A., Toktas, Ş., & Soner, B. A. (2008). The politics of population in a nation-building process: emigration of non-Muslims from Turkey. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 31*(2), 358–389.

İçduygu, A., Erder, S., & Gençkaya, F. Ö. (2014). *Türkiye'nin uluslararası göç politikaları, 1923–2023: Ulus-devlet oluşumundan ulus-ötesi dönüşümlere*. Retrieved from https://mirekoc.ku.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Türkiyenin-Uluslararası-Güç-Politikaları-1923-2023.pdf

ILO. (2020). *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work* (6th ed.). Updated estimates and analysis.

ILO. (2021a). *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work* (7th ed.) Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/–dgreports/—dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_767028.pdf.

ILO. (2021b). *ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work* (8th ed.). International Labour Organization. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_824092.pdf.

IOM. (2008). *International dialogue on migration 2008. Challenge of irregular migration: addressing mixed migration flows. Discussion note*. International Organization for Migration.

Jones, B. L., & Jones, J. S. (2020). Gov. Cuomo is wrong, COVID-19 is anything but an equalizer. The Washington Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/04/05/gov-cuomo-is-wrong-covid-19-is-anything-an-equalizer/

Karapınar, Y. (2017). The Comtemporary lens in international relations: Migration and foreign policy nexus in Turkey. *Perceptions*. *Journal of International Affairs, 22*(3), 103–134.

Karmakar, M., Lants, P. M., & Tipirneni, R. (2021). Association of social and demographic factors with COVID-19 incidence and death rates in the US. *JAMA Network Open, 4*(1), e2036462. https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.36462

Kent, J. (2020). Looking back and moving forward: The research agenda on the global governance of mixed migration. *International Migration, 59*(1), 89–104. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12722

Kirişçi, K. (1996). Is Turkey lifting the 'geographical limitation'? – The November 1994 Regulation on asylum in Turkey. *International Journal of Refugee Law, 8*(3), 293–317.

Kirişçi, K. (2007). Turkey: A country of transition from emigration to immigration. *Mediterranean Politics, 12*(1), 91–97.

Kirişçi, K., & Erdoğan, M. M. (2020, April 20). *Turkey and COVID-19: Don't forget refugees.* Retrieved from Brookings: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/04/20/turkey-and-covid-19-dont-forget-refugees/

Kirişçi, K., & Karaca, S. (2015). Hoşgörü ve çelişkiler: 1989, 1991 ve 2011'de Türkiye'ye yönelen kitlesel mülteci akınları [Tolerance and contradictions: Mass refugee influxes to Turkey in 1989, 1991 and 2011]. In M. M. Erdoğan & A. Kaya (Eds.), *Türkiye'nin göç tarihi: 14. yüzyıldan 21. yüzyıla Türkiye'ye göçler [Turkey's history of migration: migrations to Turkey from the 14th century to the 21st century]* (pp. 295–313). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Koca, B. T. (2016). Syrian refugees in Turkey: from "guests" to "enemies"? *New Perspectives on Turkey, 54*, 55–75.

Kurum, G., & Erdemli, Ö. (2021). Challenges encountered by academicians in international students' education: Turkey case. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 91*, 145–172.

Lordoğlu, K. (2007). Türkiye'deki çalişma hayatinin bir parçasi olarak yabancı çalışanlar [Foreign employees in Turkey]. *Çalışma ve Toplum, 3*, 11–31.

Mazzucato, V. (2010). Reverse remittances in the migration–development nexus: two-way flows between Ghana and The Netherlands. *Population, Space and Place*. https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.646

Mein, S. A. (2020). COVID-19 and health disparities: The reality of "the great equalizer". *Journal of General Internal Medicine, 35*, 2439–2440. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-020-05880-5

Millett, G. A., Jones, A. T., Benkeser, D., Baral, S., Mercer, L., Beyrer, C., et al. (2020). Assessing differential impacts of COVID-19 on black communities. *Annals of Epidemiology, 47*, 37–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2020.05.003

Mixed Migration Centre. (2018). *Experiences of female refugees & migrants in origin, transit and destination countries. A comparative study of women on the move from Afghanistan, East and West Africa*. Mixed Migration Centre.

Mixed Migration Centre. (2021). *Mixed migration review 2021. Reframing human mobility in a changing world*. Mixed Migration Centre. Retrieved from https://mixedmigration.org/articles/reframing-mixed-migration-mmc-launches-the-mixed-migration-review-2021/

Mobrand, E. (2012). Reverse remittances: Internal migration and rural-to-urban remittances in industrialising South Korea. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 38*(3), 389–411.

MUDEM. (2020). *COVID-19 krizi sürecinde Türkiye'deki mültecilerin durum analizi*. Mülteci Destek Derneği – Refugee Support Center.

Mülteciler Derneği (2023). Number of Syrians obtaining Turkish citizenship. Retrieved from https://multeciler.org.tr/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi/

Narchal, R. (2016, May 26). Migrant children are often their parents' translators – and it can lead to ill health. Retrieved from http://theconversation.com/migrant-children-are-often-their-parents-translators-and-it-can-lead-to-ill-health-55309

Nimkar, R. (2018). *Split loyalties: Mixed migration and the diaspora connection*. Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat.

OECD. (2020). What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants and their children? OECD. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/what-is-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-immigrants-and-their-children-e7cbb7de/

Official Gazette. (2020). Retrieved from Resmi Gazete: https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2020/04/20200414.pdf

Onay-Çoker, D. (2019). The representation of Syrian refugees in Turkey: a critical discourse analysis of three newspapers. *Continuum, 33*(3), 369–385.

Özçürümez, S., & Yetkin, D. (2014). Limits to regulating irregular migration in Turkey: What constrains public policy and why? *Turkish Studies, 15*(3), 442–457.

Özkul, D. (2020). *COVID-19 salgını süreci ve sonrası için düzensiz göçmen, sığınmacı ve mültecilere yönelik politika önerileri*. İstanbul Politik Araştırmalar Enstitüsü.

Perry, A., Harshberger, D., & Romer, C. (2020, April 16). *Mapping racial inequity amid COVID-19 underscores policy discriminations against Black Americans.* Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/04/16/mapping-racial-inequity-amid-the-spread-of-covid-19/

Relief International. (2020). *Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on Syrian refugees in Turkey.* Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/impact-covid-19-outbreak-syrian-refugees-turkey-results-rapid-needs-assessment

Rostila, M., Cederstörm, A., Wallace, M., Branden, M., Malmberg, B., & Andersson, G. (2021). Disparities in coronavirus disease 2019 mortality by country of birth in Stockholm, Sweden: A total-population–based cohort study. *American Journal of Epidemiology, 190*(8), 1510–1518. https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwab057

Saraçoğlu, C., & Belanger, D. (2018). Mekân, yer ve şehir: Türkiye'de Suriye karşıtlığının kentteki görünümleri. *Eğitim Bilim Toplum, 16*(62), 46–73.

Saskia, S. (1991). *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton University Press.

SGDD-ASAM. (2020). *COVID-19 salgınının Türkiye'de mülteciler üzerindeki etkilerinin sektörel analizi.* Retrieved from https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/76640

Sharpe, M. (2018). Mixed up: International law and the meaning(s) of "mixed migration". *Refugee Survey Quarterly, 37*, 116–138. https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdx021

Standing, G. (2014). *Prekarya yeni tehlikeli sınıf [The precariat the new dangerous class]* (6th ed.). (E. Bulut, Trans.) İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Tanrıkulu, F. (2021). The political economy of migration and integration: Effects of immigrants on the economy in Turkey. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 19*(4), 364–377.

Teti, M., Schatz, E., & Liebenberg, L. (2020). Methods in the time of COVID-19: the vital role of qualitative inquiries. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 19*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920920962

Teti, M., Pichon, L., & Myron, T. W. (2021). Community-engaged qualitative scholarship during a pandemic: Problems, perils and lessons learned. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211025455

Tyler, T. R., & Barreto, M. A. (2020). Xenophobia in the time of pandemic: othering, anti-Asian attitudes, and COVID-19. *Politics, Groups, and Identities.* https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2020.1769693

Umaña-Taylor, A. J. (2003). Language brokering as a stressor for immigrant children and their families. In I. M. Coleman & L. Ganong (Eds.), *Controversial relationship and family issues in the 21st century (an anthology)* (pp. 157–159). Roxbury Publishing.

UNHCR. (2022, September 01). Global focus: Turkey. Retrieved from https://reporting.unhcr.org/turkey#toc-populations

Van der Klaauw, J. (2009). Refugee rights in times of mixed migration: evolving status and protection issues. *Refugee Survey Quarterly, 28*(4), 59–86.

Van Hear, N. (2011). *Policy primer mixed migration: Policy challenges*. The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford.

Van Hear, N., Brubaker, R., & Bessa, T. (2009). *Human development research paper 2009/20 managing mobility for human development: The growing salience of mixed migration*. United Nations Development Programme.

Vearey, J., Hui, C., & Wickramage, K. (2019). Migration and health: Current issues, governance and knowledge gaps. In M. McAuliffe & B. Khadria (Eds.), *World Migration Report* (pp. 212–232). IOM.

Vertovec, S. (2003). Migration and other modes of transnationalism: Towards conceptual cross-fertilization. *International Migration Review, 37*(3), 641–665. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2003.tb00153.x

Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism*. Routledge.

Vullnetari, J. (2012). Beyond 'choice or force': Roma mobility in Albania and the mixed migration paradigm. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 38*(8), 1305–1321.

Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The modern world-system I: Capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world-economy in the sixteenth century.* Academic Press.

WHO. (2020, August 01). World Health Organization. *Archived: WHO Timeline – COVID-19*. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news/item/27-04-2020-who-timeline%2D%2D-covid-19

WHO. (2021). *Refugees and migrants in times of COVID-19: mapping trends of public health and migration policies and practice*. World Health Organization. Retrieved from https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/341843/9789240028906-eng.pdf?sequence=1

WHO. (2022). *WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard*. Retrieved from World Health Organization: https://covid19.who.int/

Wiederhold, B. K. (2020). Connecting through technology during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic: Avoiding "zoom fatigue". *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking, 23*(7), 437–438.

Williams, N. E. (2015). Mixed and complex mixed migration during armed conflict: Multidimensional empirical evidence from Nepal. *International Journal of Sociology, 44-63*. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207659.2015.1005434

World Bank. (2020). *Poverty and shared prosperity 2020: Reversals of fortune*. World Bank Group. Retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/poverty-and-shared-prosperity

Yabancıların Çalışma İzinleri. (2019). Ankara: T.C. Aile, Çalışma ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı. Retrieved from https://ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/63117/yabanciizin2019.pdf

YÖK. (2021, January 20). İstatistik. Retrived from https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr