



Turkey's Refugee Dilemma

Tiptoeing Toward Integration

By Alan Makovsky March 2019

Center for American Progress



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Introduction and summary

The arrival of 4 million Syrian refugees is changing Turkish society and will continue to do so for at least a generation.¹ The process of Turkish-Syrian mutual adaptation is only the latest chapter of transformation in a society that has undergone significant internal and external migrations in past decades. In 1980, a clear majority of Turks lived in rural areas; today, Turkey's population is three-quarters urban. Syrian refugees are reinforcing this trend, with some 96 percent of them residing in urban or semiurban areas.²

Turkey has experienced other mass in-migrations in the past century, including the arrival of 350,000 Greek Muslims in the immediate aftermath of the 1923 population exchange agreement with Greece³ and 340,000 ethnic Turks expelled by Bulgaria in 1989.⁴ Overall, between 1923, the year Turkey was founded, and 1990, at least 1.4 million people immigrated to Turkey, primarily from the Balkans but also from the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁵ But the influx of Syrians is different in its size and nature from these previous population influxes. These earlier immigrations involved groups who were either ethnic Turks themselves or—in the case of many arrivals from the Balkans, the Black Sea, and Central Asia—non-Turkish Sunni Muslims open to assimilation into Turkish society. After a generation, these immigrants were absorbed into the Turkish melting pot and largely integrated into Turkish society.⁶

Turkish identity has a clear ethnic and religious coloration. However, this is sufficiently blended with the concept of citizenship that most Sunni Muslims who are willing to do so can easily assume unfettered Turkish identity over time.⁷ The great exception has been the Turkish Kurds. While they are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslims and hold Turkish citizenship, many—probably most—resist assuming Turkishness as their primary identity. In large part, this is because they have a clear ethnic identity as Kurds: a distinctive language, a geographical area of concentration within Turkey, and, most important, a sense of common destiny. They also have a sizable population in Turkey, which strengthens their ability to resist Turkification,

psychologically and politically. Like Kurds, Syrian Arabs are Sunni Muslims but are ethnically, linguistically, and, arguably, culturally distinctive from Turks. Should they remain in Turkey in significant numbers, like Kurds, they will probably feel less pressure to integrate than have other, smaller Sunni Muslim groups over the years.

While most Turks hope all the Syrians will eventually return to Syria, that prospect looks unrealistic; sizable numbers of Syrians are indeed likely to remain. The issue of their remaining is politically explosive in Turkey, and the Turkish government has been hesitant to acknowledge publicly that it foresees the long-term integration of the refugees into Turkish society. In fact, bowing to public sentiment, Turkish leaders often proclaim that all Syrians will ultimately return to Syria, and they are likely to express this sentiment repeatedly as March 31 nationwide local elections approach. Yet, whether by default or by design, the government seems to have begun gradually implementing a policy of integration, suggesting that, regardless of their public declarations, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and other key leaders realize that many Syrians are in Turkey to stay. Ultimately, Turkish society may view integration as necessary for social harmony and recognize that, if integration is to be successful, it must be pursued as early and thoroughly as possible. Turkey's future stability may depend on such decisions.

Background

The Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey is as old as the Syrian civil war. The first group of 252 Syrian refugees arrived in Turkey in April 2011, just weeks after Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's response to anti-regime demonstrations throughout Syria turned violent. At that time, Syrians could enter Turkey without a visa,⁸ and Ankara soon announced it would pursue an open-door policy for the refugees.⁹ In effect, any Syrian who made it to Turkey, through any means, would be welcome. Finally, in October 2011, the Turkish government announced that the refugees would be given “temporary protection” status.

Turkish leaders initially thought the refugee flow would be limited and temporary. By the end of 2011, Turkey was hosting just 8,000 registered Syrian refugees, and several thousand had returned home after the situation in Syria briefly appeared to stabilize.¹⁰ In mid-2012, however, a collapse of ceasefire efforts and surge in fighting triggered a torrent of refugee arrivals that would continue for nearly four years.¹¹ In August 2012, Turkey said it could take no more than a total of 100,000 Syrians. Yet by October, the number of refugees had surpassed that once-unthinkable mark.¹² The number of newly registered Syrian refugees in Turkey—which includes arrivals plus births in each respective year—was roughly 140,000 in 2012, 412,000 in 2013, 1,062,000 in 2014, and 881,000 in 2015.¹³ By then, it was abundantly clear that the flow was neither limited nor temporary.

Turkey made occasional efforts to bring its border—and the refugee flow—under closer control. Sporadic border closings occurred as early as 2012, for example. However, it was not until a series of deadly terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016, which claimed hundreds of Turkish and tourist lives,¹⁴ that the government began serious efforts to limit the refugee flow. Prior to 2016, the Turkish government had occasionally closed its border but generally allowed would-be refugees to enter at all points along the border; that changed starting in 2016. Turkey began consistently to tighten and frequently close its border, leaving countless Syrians on the other side in makeshift camps, clamoring for entry. As one element of this tightening, it began

to require that Syrians entering Turkey by land do so only through official border posts, to enable border guards to screen more effectively for security threats. Those who failed to comply with this requirement would be at risk of entering the country illegally under Turkey's new policies—and thus liable for return to Syria.¹⁵

Turkey took other steps as well in 2016 in order to limit the number of refugees and gain control over the composition of the refugee flow. It ended its visa-free policy for Syrians arriving by air and sea, and it began building a security barrier along its Syrian border.¹⁶ It also amended its 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) to allow deportation of those deemed to be associated with terrorism or otherwise constituting a threat to public order.¹⁷

In 2016, there were also more frequent reports of Turkey closing its Syrian border entirely and of Turkish border guards shooting at would-be refugees to prevent them from crossing; such reports continue to this day.¹⁸ According to Human Rights Watch, as of January 2018, nearly 1.7 million Syrian displaced people were residing in makeshift camps on the Syrian side of the Syrian-Turkish border.¹⁹

At least in part because of the restrictive new measures, registered Syrian refugee arrivals appear to have ebbed in recent years.²⁰ The annual increase in the registered Syrian refugee population—arrivals plus births, minus deaths and departures—declined to 352,000 in 2016. While that number spiked to 569,000 in 2017, it dipped to 198,000 in 2018—the smallest increase since 2012. In 2018, the majority of newly registered Syrian refugees were clearly newborns, not arrivals from across the increasingly impermeable border.²¹

According to the United Nation's refugee agency, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of February 7, 2019, there were a total of 3,644,342 registered Syrian refugees in Turkey.²² In addition, there are likely hundreds of thousands of unregistered Syrian refugees in Turkey, probably amounting to more than 4 million in total.²³ These refugees have since spread well beyond the border regions and now reside in all of Turkey's 81 provinces.²⁴

Indeed, of the 6.4 million Syrians who have fled their country since April 2011, nearly two-thirds, or 64 percent, are residing in Turkey. Remarkably, some 15 percent of Syria's pre-Syrian civil war residents now live in Turkey.²⁵

Refugee status

In this report, the term “refugee” will be used generically to refer to Syrians who crossed the border from Syria seeking safety in Turkey. It should be noted, however, that Turkey does not consider any of them “refugees” in the legal sense, as defined in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.²⁶

The Geneva Convention, which sets out refugees’ rights and obligations, initially applied only to pre-1951 refugees, not to future refugees. Moreover, signatories were given the option of applying it to all refugees or only to European refugees; Turkey opted for the latter, thus establishing a “geographic limitation.” The 1967 additional Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees removed these temporal and geographic restrictions, but it “grandfathered” the right of 1951 signatories, such as Turkey, that had chosen the Europe-only option to continue to adhere to that geographic limitation.²⁷

At first, Turkish officials were careful to refer to the refugees from Syria strictly as “guests,” lest they inadvertently suggest that the Syrians were “refugees” with Geneva Convention rights. In October 2011, however, the Turkish government announced that it would consider them as people under temporary protection, and the use of the term “guests” came to be used less in both formal and informal discourse.²⁸ With Turkey having begun to establish its own structure for managing the Syrians, Turkish officials began to use the terms “refugees” and “guests” interchangeably—apparently now less concerned that their use of “refugee” would be confused with Geneva protections.²⁹ Turkish media also generally refers to the Syrians as “refugees.”

As part of the October 2011 temporary protection regime, Ankara pledged that it would welcome all people crossing the Syrian border to seek safety in Turkey, that it would provide for their humanitarian needs, and that it would not force any such people to return against their will³⁰—this last point a bow to the well-known Geneva principle of nonrefoulement. Turkey largely honored these pledges until it became overwhelmed by the large number of Syrians and by a breakdown in security in the middle of the decade.

Ankara formalized its temporary protection regime with Article 91 of its LFIP, passed in April 2013, and its Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR), issued in October 2014.³¹ The TPR includes a right to health and education for those under protection, just as Geneva does for refugees. There are some differences, however: Under the TPR, Syrians need Turkish government-granted permits in order to work legally in

the country, as discussed elsewhere in this paper.³² As applied, this system drives most Syrian workers into the underground economy and leaves them open to exploitation. In contrast, Article 24 of the 1951 Geneva Convention guarantees refugees a right to work that is essentially equivalent to that of the host country's citizens.³³

Another potentially important difference is that under Article 11 of the TPR, Turkey reserves the right to terminate the temporary protection regime collectively or, under Article 12, individually. Thus, theoretically, it seems, Turkey could send the Syrians back to Syria at any time, notwithstanding its pledge of nonrefoulement—and, in many individual cases, it has done just that.

In 2016, Turkey amended the LFIP to facilitate deportations of temporary protection individuals associated with terrorism.³⁴ In principle, this seems to accord with Article 32 of the Geneva Convention, which allows for expulsion of refugees for reasons of “national security or public order,” following “due process.”³⁵ It appears Turkey did, in some cases, accord due process, but certainly not in all.³⁶

In sum, by its national law, Turkey is obliged to admit non-Europeans who fit the Geneva definition of a refugee, but it accords them fewer rights than those inherent in full-fledged refugee status, since it does not apply the 1951 Geneva Convention to them. In any case, a commitment based on national law rather than international obligation, is inherently easier to change and therefore less binding.

Return to Syria unlikely

Notwithstanding Turkish leaders' assertions to the contrary, the overwhelming majority of Syrian refugees will likely remain in Turkey. Several factors point toward this conclusion:

1. Few Syrians intend to leave. According to a 2017 survey, 61 percent of Syrian refugees say that they would return only if the war ended and a “good” regime were in place in Syria; another 16 percent say they are “not thinking to go back at all.” Meanwhile, 13 percent say that they would return at the end of the war, no matter what type of regime is in place. And only 3 percent say they will return even without an end to the war.³⁷ When asked about their preferred status in Turkey, more than two-thirds of the refugees said they either wanted dual Syrian-Turkish citizenship or Turkish citizenship only.³⁸ With little prospect for the emergence of a Syrian regime that would tempt most refugees to return, the Syrian refugees and their descendants are likely to be a major presence in Turkey for years to come.³⁹ This is certainly the case to the extent refugee preferences predominate.

2. The Syrian population in Turkey is growing—mainly naturally—both in absolute terms and as a percentage of the Turkish population. While the number of arrivals has tapered off, the Syrian population is growing through reproduction. In November 2018, Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu announced that 385,431 Syrian babies had been born and registered in Turkey since 2011.⁴⁰ Moreover, the birth rate itself seems to be increasing, based on the assertions of two well regarded experts. Scholar Murat Erdoğan—no relation to Turkish President Erdoğan—writing in November 2017, put the birth rate at 306 Syrian babies per day.⁴¹ Nearly a year later, in October 2018, scholar Şebnem Köşer Akçapar estimated an average of 350 Syrian births per day in Turkey.⁴² Given the Syrian community's disproportionately young population,⁴³ it seems likely that the birth rate will continue to increase. Meanwhile, Turkey's fertility rate has been falling for years and is now at the replacement-level rate of 2.1 children per woman—its lowest point since World War I.⁴⁴

3. It is difficult to persuade people to resettle in a war-devastated area. Returning Syrian refugees would face many daunting prospects in their homeland, starting with the challenges of finding a place to live and earning a living. Hospitals, schools, and basic services throughout much of Syria have been destroyed or are nonfunctional. There is also the possibility that the Assad regime or opposition groups will seek to exact revenge against male former refugees for fleeing, rather than staying and fighting.

In October 2018, President Erdoğan claimed that, since 2016, up to 320,000 Syrians had already resettled from Turkey into areas of northwestern Syria occupied by Turkey and pro-Turkish militias.⁴⁵ Many experts are skeptical of Erdoğan's claim.⁴⁶ However, even if it is fully accurate, it would reduce the Syrian population in Turkey by less than 10 percent, leaving more than 3 million Syrians in Turkey.

According to Turkish officials, all of the returns have been voluntary, although some have resulted from the Turkish government's urging refugees to visit their Syrian homes during religious holidays, with some, as envisioned by the Turkish government, deciding to stay.⁴⁷ Some Turkish municipalities also organize and pay for buses to take Syrian refugees – on a voluntary basis, it is always said -- to the Syrian border or into the part of northern Syria occupied by Turkey.⁴⁸ A UNHCR spokesperson in Turkey said that the agency is not encouraging refugees to return, since doing so is “not fully safe.”⁴⁹

4. As unhappy as Turks are about the Syrians' presence, they may nevertheless be resigned to it. Seventy-nine percent of Turks say they do not expect the Syrians to return home after the war, and 77 percent say they are bracing for a new wave of refugees from Syria, presumably from the Syrian border province of Idlib, which is home to about 3 million civilians, controlled by Syrian opposition groups, and shakily under the protection of the Turkish military as part of a Russian-Turkish-Iranian demilitarization agreement.⁵⁰

5. Most Syrian refugees have now built lives in Turkey. In fact, many manage to earn a living on their own. With the passage of time, more and more refugees will come to see Turkey as home. As of late 2017, the average Syrian refugee had already lived in Turkey for more than 3 1/2 years.⁵¹

6. Refugees reside throughout the country. Initially concentrated in the southeast near the Syrian border, the refugees are now spread throughout all 81 of Turkey's provinces. The northwestern city of Istanbul hosts the largest number of registered Syrian refugees—more than half a million.⁵²

7. Even with an unlikely return to stability and the establishment of a safe environment in Syria, it would be difficult for Turkey successfully to locate, round up, and force millions of Syrians to return against their will. It would require enormous resources, and Turkey quite possibly would face international opprobrium were it to do so. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of unregistered refugees would be virtually impossible to find.

The integration challenge

When President Erdoğan raised the prospect of granting Syrian refugees Turkish citizenship in July 2016,⁵³ public pushback was strong.⁵⁴ Opposition parties objected, convinced that Erdoğan saw the refugees as a potential source of future political support, but even many of the president's own supporters opposed the idea. Overwhelmingly, Turks just wanted the refugees to return home.

Erdoğan got the electorate's message and now frequently insists that all the refugees eventually will return home. However, he did not drop the citizenship idea entirely. Instead, his government has focused on providing citizenship, in limited numbers, for Syrians with educational, business, or professional qualifications of value to Turkish society. In late 2016, there were even reports that Turkey was refusing to grant exit visas to highly educated Syrians who had received resettlement visas from the United States or Germany.⁵⁵ According to Turkish Interior Minister Soylu, 76,443 Syrians—some 36,000 adults and their children—had received Turkish citizenship by early January 2019, and the process of naturalization of skilled Syrians continues, if slowly.⁵⁶

Erdoğan's stance on citizenship

President Erdoğan has been inconsistent on the issue of citizenship for Syrian and other refugees.⁵⁷ Erdoğan's July 2016 call for citizenship seemed to apply to all the Syrian refugees. But in January 2017, he specified that he wanted citizenship, following careful vetting by the Ministry of Interior, for those Syrian refugees with skills that would benefit Turkey—"highly qualified people ... engineers, lawyers, doctors. Let's make use of that talent," he said. "Instead of letting them work illegally here and there, let's give them a chance to work as citizens like the children of this nation."⁵⁸ This approach more or less describes current policy.

On February 3, 2018, Erdoğan spoke of building permanent housing for Syrian refugees on both sides of the Turkish-Syrian border.⁵⁹ Five days later, in his monthly meeting with local officials, he asserted the refugees—implying all—would return home, using that goal as a justification for the war in Afrin.⁶⁰ In May 2018, just seven weeks before presidential and parliamentary elections, he surprisingly seemed to suggest once more that citizenship would be a good idea for all refugees in Turkey, so that they would no longer work in the underground economy. In late June 2018, virtually on election eve, he made a thunderous speech in Gaziantep, again pledging that all the refugees would return.⁶¹

The decision to grant citizenship in limited numbers, however, does not begin to resolve the fundamental questions about the future disposition of Syrian refugees in Turkey. First, Turkey must determine whether to acknowledge that the vast majority of Syrians will likely remain in Turkey and, if so, it must consider how to integrate them into wider Turkish society. Given the size of the Syrian refugee community, its lack of obvious alternatives to Turkey, and the potential consequences for Turkey of ignoring the problem, efforts at integration appear to be Turkey's only logical solution. Failure to integrate the Syrians could create new divisions in Turkish society as well as deepen pre-existing economic, religious, and ethnic divisions. Granting citizenship in its current, limited scope and pace would likely have little impact on the problem, but there can be meaningful steps toward integration that do not involve mass conferral of citizenship.

Given the unpopularity of the refugees and the opposition's demands that the Syrians return home, the very word "integration" is toxic in public discourse. The Turkish government generally uses the euphemism "harmonization"⁶² when alluding to steps promoting integration. Few Turkish officials want to acknowledge that a large-scale return of refugees to Syria is unlikely or that the realistic alternatives are either integra-

tion or the development of a permanently disaffected underclass. Fewer still want to consider, much less promote, the notion that integration may ultimately entail wide-scale citizenship. As noted, Erdoğan has publicly broached the subject but not in a sustained manner. (see text box “Erdoğan’s stance on citizenship”)

Without fanfare, however, the Turkish government has indeed taken steps toward integration. It has begun phasing out so-called temporary education centers (TECs), in which the language of instruction is Arabic, and instead is moving Syrian students into the Turkish public school system. The refugee camps are also being drawn down, with less than 4 percent of Syrian refugees now living in camps.⁶³ The vast majority of Syrians today are doing their best to get by in Turkish towns and cities, sometimes with assistance from Turkish and international organizations; some 1.5 million Syrian refugees receive monthly allowances funded by the European Union and passed through the Turkish government.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, a little-publicized 2018 study by Turkey’s ombudsman signaled Turkish semiofficial awareness that the Syrian presence is likely permanent. The study projected that the Syrian population in Turkey would likely surpass 4 million to 5 million within 10 years and asserted that “it is necessary to produce policies based on [the expectation of] permanence.”⁶⁵ The ombudsman is not a government spokesman; formally, he is autonomous. Yet he was elected by President Erdoğan’s governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Parliament and is himself a member of the ruling party. Moreover, the report carries introductions by Erdoğan and other senior elected officials. While those introductions do not explicitly endorse the contents of the report, their presence implies something close to an official endorsement while allowing the government plausible deniability. As such, the report probably represents the closest the government has come to acknowledging institutionally that much of the Syrian population is in Turkey to stay.⁶⁶

Evolution of negative attitudes

Turkey’s initial, dutiful welcome of the Syrian refugees fed a perception abroad that the Turkish public initially supported its government’s open-door policy, with the public’s attitude souring only in more recent times. One author describes the evolution of Turkish attitudes as “initial compassion which developed into xenophobia,”⁶⁷ likening the more recent Turkish attitude to that of a host toward “a guest overstaying his/her visit.”⁶⁸ Indeed, there was a small group, mainly within the AKP—labeled “compassionate Islamists” in one Center for American Progress (CAP) study⁶⁹—

that strongly supported the open-door policy and remain favorable toward the refugees to this day. In reality, however, a clear majority of Turks were unhappy with the arrival of Syrian refugees almost from the beginning. While President Erdoğan welcomed the Syrians as “guests” and “siblings,” most Turks chafed at their presence.⁷⁰

A September 2012 Metropoll survey found that 52 percent of Turks initially disagreed with the decision to allow the Syrians into the country, and 66 percent said additional refugees should be turned away.⁷¹ At that point, there were only about 80,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey, mostly in camps far from major Turkish cities. By contrast, there are now 50 times more, spread across all 81 provinces.⁷² Perhaps unsurprisingly, these negative attitudes have only intensified.

Terrorism associated with the Syrian civil war reinforced and deepened public unhappiness regarding the refugees. The May 2013 bombing of Reyhanlı on Turkey’s southern border, which left 53 dead and dozens wounded, may have been an early turning point. Reyhanlı, just 3 miles from Syria, had a significant refugee presence.⁷³ The source of the bombing was not clear; the Turkish government arrested several Turks with alleged ties to Syrian intelligence.⁷⁴ But, for most Turks, the important fact was that the attack was clearly linked to the Syrian war, illustrating that Turkey’s support for the Syrian opposition and welcoming of refugees could have deadly consequences inside Turkey.

Around the time of the Reyhanlı bombing, large numbers of Syrians were also beginning to move from the camps near the border into urban centers across the country. This brought large numbers of refugees face to face with Turks for the first time, and these encounters seemed only to increase Turkish resentment. In 2014, significant anti-refugee protests broke out in the Turkish cities of Gaziantep, Hatay, Urfa, and Kahramanmaraş—all of which hosted significant numbers of Syrians.⁷⁵ According to scholars Bezen Balamir Coşkun and Selin Yıldız Nielsen, tensions were fed by the view that Syrians contributed to “low wages and dire working conditions, drastic increases in rent prices, and an increase in petty crime in urban areas where the asylum seekers had settled intensively.”⁷⁶ Most of these complaints—especially those related to economic conditions—have persisted over the years.

Following the Reyhanlı bombing and a spate of other terror attacks in 2015 and 2016, Turks increasingly began to associate refugees with violence—not necessarily because refugees themselves were perpetrators but because the refugee flow seemingly demonstrated that Turkey had lost control of its southern border, allowing the ill-intentioned to enter with the genuinely needy. After the Reyhanlı bombing, protestors

had denounced jihadists, who seemingly could go back and forth across the border at will.⁷⁷ In January 2016, an Islamic State-affiliated Syrian refugee, legally registered in Turkey, staged a suicide bombing in Istanbul's Blue Mosque tourist district, killing 10 tourists and wounding more than a dozen others.⁷⁸ Not long thereafter, Turkey began to take stern measures to tighten border control, as discussed earlier.

By opening its borders to refugees, Turkey acted both morally and in accordance with its national and international undertakings. The Turkish public begrudgingly accepted this policy, but without embracing it. Confident in the correctness of its approach, the government never undertook a serious effort to build public support for its policy. The issue was never discussed in Parliament; the government did not try to convince opposition political parties to endorse its refugee response; and no meaningful informational campaign was undertaken to combat public misperceptions about the refugees. This failure of the government to engage, through formal or informal means, likely contributed to negative public attitudes that continue to mount to this day.⁷⁹ Only in January 2019 did the ruling AKP—likely motivated by concern over the March 2019 local elections—belatedly announce that it plans to distribute brochures explaining misconceptions about state policies toward the refugees.⁸⁰

Attitudes harden

As it stands, the largest obstacle to an overt program of integration is the Turkish public's perception of the refugees. In a September 2018 poll, 83 percent of Turks said they view Syrian refugees negatively, while only 17 percent said they viewed them positively. Voters for all five major parties subscribed to negative views, to only slightly varying degrees. Those backing Erdoğan's AKP and the Kurdish rights-focused Peoples' Democracy Party (HDP) were only slightly less negative than supporters of the secularist opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), the ethnic Turkish nationalists of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), and the similarly nationalist İyi (Good) Party.⁸¹

This same poll echoed a November 2017 CAP-commissioned survey in which 79 percent of respondents had an unfavorable view of the Syrian refugees, making them among the least popular groups in Turkey.⁸² Meanwhile, a 2017 public opinion survey gauging Turks' views toward Syrian refugees found "lazy," "rude," "dowdy/filthy," and "untrustable/dangerous" among the adjectives topping the list, several percentage points ahead of positive attributes.⁸³

In the September 2018 survey, when asked what most upsets them about the refugees, Turkish respondents' No. 1 complaint, at 28 percent, was rising unemployment among Turks, which they blamed on the Syrians. Begging came in second at 18 percent, followed by nonpayment of taxes at 16 percent, rising terrorism and security problems at 13 percent, and lower wages at 8 percent. Only 7 percent said, "nothing [about the refugees] upsets me."⁸⁴

Those categories do not begin to reflect the raw emotions many Turks express about the refugees. In CAP-sponsored focus groups in late 2017, supporters of all parties voiced complaints such as, "I feel like a stranger in my own country"; "I never hear Turkish on the street anymore"; "they [the Syrians] receive more [state funding] than we do just for coming here"; "he [Erdoğan] takes from his own people and gives to the Syrians"; "first we let them in, and now they wage war [that is to say, commit crimes] against us."⁸⁵

Focus group participants repeatedly complained that young Syrian men were relaxing in Turkey rather than fighting for justice in their homeland. As one respondent said, "Young Syrians go to the beach, while their relatives fight a war in Syria. ... If there were a war in my country, I would join and not think twice about it." As is often the case in refugee situations, negative host country perceptions may have little to no relationship to facts but, nevertheless, are deeply held.⁸⁶

According to a May 2018 CAP-commissioned poll, nearly 80 percent of Turks want the Syrians to return to Syria.⁸⁷ Broken into categories, one-third said the Turkish government should send back the refugees "no matter what," while 45 percent said the government should return the refugees only to safe zones set up by Turkey on the Syrian side of the border. Meanwhile, a paltry 9 percent thought the Syrians should "become citizens of Turkey and pay taxes," and only 13 percent backed the status quo, advocating for the refugees to "continue to be treated as guests but not allowed citizenship."

Asked in another recent poll about their government's overall policy on Syrian refugees, 72 percent of Turks disapproved, including 56 percent of AKP voters. Just a year earlier, another poll reported a somewhat lower level of disapproval: 62 percent of Turks overall and 45 percent of AKP voters.⁸⁸ The trend is clear.

With the public's increasingly negative perception of refugee policy and of the Syrian refugees themselves, the Turkish government probably deserves credit for having advanced integration—or harmonization, in the government's preferred term—to the extent that it has.

Integration by stealth?

Many experts have urged Turkey to adopt a clear and comprehensive policy of integration, proposing, for example, a right for refugees to live and work anywhere in the country without the need for work permits; a strengthened mandate for municipalities, which are closer to the needs of their respective refugee communities; educational remediation opportunities and vocational training for the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees who missed out on schooling entirely in the early years of the crisis; and a public education campaign directed toward Turkish citizens to combat misperceptions about refugees.⁸⁹ These are all good ideas that take into account the political reality that many Syrian refugees are likely to remain in Turkey and must be integrated for the sake of Turkey's social harmony, while recognizing that blanket naturalization is not in the cards for the foreseeable future.

Even as Turkish politicians pledge to voters that all the Syrians will return home, the Turkish government seems to be tentatively pursuing measures that foster coexistence between Turks and Syrians and begin to integrate the refugees into Turkish society. Indeed, the government's actions suggest that Turkish leaders are preparing for significant numbers of Syrians to remain in Turkey indefinitely, as the ombudsman report suggests will happen.

As previously mentioned, the refugee camps are being phased out, and Syrian students are being integrated into Turkish public schools. Meanwhile, Syrians are being integrated increasingly into the Turkish economy.

These steps may be deliberate, signaling the government's recognition that a sizable number of refugees and their descendants will remain in Turkey and that, therefore, integration is the best long-term policy. On the other hand, the government simply may view these measures as the best of bad alternatives available at the moment—less costly or more efficient than striving to keep the Turkish and Syrian communities fully separate. If the former is true, it could be considered integration by stealth—a low-key approach made necessary because integration runs counter to the thrust of most public statements coming from Turkish leaders. This would not reflect a full-blown policy of integration, since there is much more that can be done to integrate the Syrian community, as noted above, but it may be all the integration that the political traffic will bear for now. In any case, by closing refugee camps and encouraging refugees to live in Turkish society; by opening the economy to the refugees, however haltingly; and by educating the refugees as Turks, the government has inarguably taken important steps in the direction of integration.

Closing the camps

At first, Turkey attempted to accommodate all the refugees in camps, or temporary shelter centers (TSCs), as they are officially called. Until early 2013, virtually all of the then-less than 200,000 registered refugees lived in these centers. In 2013, however, the flow of refugees overwhelmed the TSCs, and by early 2014, only a slight majority of the refugees were housed in the camps. By the end of that year, little more than 20 percent were living in TSCs, with the remainder residing in urban and near-urban areas.⁹⁰ Since that time, the percentage of refugees in camps has steadily dwindled. By February 2019, there were only 142,000 Syrian refugees—less than 4 percent of all registered Syrian refugees—in TSCs.⁹¹ Furthermore, between early 2016 and the end of 2018, the number of camps had decreased by half, from 26 to 13, based in eight provinces clustered near the Syrian border.⁹²

The camps were established and run by Turkey, with the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in a support role, and, in consultation with UNHCR, Turkey decides when to close them. The Turkish government's objective in closing them, according to a UNHCR official, is “to facilitate integration (sic) of refugees residing in camps to the host communities with a view to self-reliance and social cohesion, and also to mitigate the consequences of long-term residence in camps to refugees.” The official said that the UNHCR supports this approach.⁹³

When camps are closed, families are given the option to move to another camp or settle outside the camps in Turkish urban areas; most choose the latter. To those who settle outside the camps, the UNHCR provides a one-time payout depending on family size—generally around 10,000 Turkish lira, or about \$1,850⁹⁴—“to cover their short-term basic needs, including transportation, rent and household expenses.”⁹⁵

Syrians cope economically—and a few thrive

The move to close the camps was heavily influenced by the experiences of the 96 percent of refugees living outside the camps all over Turkey. Economically, Syrians have managed surprisingly well outside the camps, if not without many difficulties, and, overall, have contributed to the Turkish economy.

Precise statistics are hard to come by. According to a study by the Economic Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV)—a think tank affiliated with Turkey's national chamber of commerce, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey—there are 2.2 million working-age Syrian refugees. Roughly 1 million of these are employed in the informal economy, thus lacking worker protections and avoiding Turkish taxes. A near-negligible 32,000, just 1.5 percent of the total Syrian refugee

workforce, hold work permits and work in the formal economy, according to the Turkish interior minister.⁹⁶ These figures suggest that a slight majority of the Syrians are either unemployed or not in the market, such as housewives and students.⁹⁷

According to the same TEPAV report, there are some 10,000 wholly or partly Syrian refugee-owned businesses registered in Turkey, employing roughly 44,000 Syrians as well as thousands of Turks. Since the average Syrian refugee household comprises six people, Syrian wholly and partly owned enterprises likely sustain more than 250,000 Syrian refugees.⁹⁸ There are also several thousand unregistered Syrian businesses.⁹⁹ As of mid-2017, Syrian refugees had invested \$334 million into the then-more than 6,000 Syrian-owned registered companies in Turkey.¹⁰⁰

Most Syrian businesses are small, with average annual revenue of \$463,000. Seventy-four percent of the Syrian-owned companies have less than 10 employees, 24 percent have 10 to 50 employees, and just 2 percent have 50 to 250 employees.¹⁰¹ Still, each year since 2013, Syrians have started more companies in Turkey than any other foreign group.¹⁰²

The question of Syrian employment is among the most sensitive in Turkey today. There is a widespread perception in Turkish society that Syrian refugees undermine employment prospects for Turkish workers; 71 percent of Turks believe this, according to a late 2017 poll.¹⁰³ As discussed earlier in this report, Turks' leading complaint about the Syrian refugees is that they have contributed to rising Turkish unemployment. Some Turkish leaders and experts dispute that conclusion, insisting that Syrians mainly perform jobs that Turks would not do anyway.¹⁰⁴ Yet there is sufficient evidence to conclude that Turkish workers at the lower end of the scale—construction, textile, and seasonal agricultural workers—are indeed disadvantaged, as Syrian workers are generally more than willing to work in these sectors on an underground basis, meaning longer hours and less pay than Turkish workers would accept.¹⁰⁵ As one study puts it, the already disadvantaged sectors of the Turkish labor market, such as women, youth, and the less-educated, are the ones most hurt by competition from Syrians.¹⁰⁶

In 2016, the Turkish government announced a work permit system to tackle the Syrian employment problem, but the program is not popular, and, as noted, only about 32,000 Syrians have received work permits to date. Syrians face a number of obstacles and disincentives when applying for work permits. First, to acquire a work permit, they must work in the province in which they are registered as under temporary protection.¹⁰⁷ Since registration is required within 10 days of arrival in Turkey,

however, this province is usually the one where the refugee entered Turkey.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, refugees are disproportionately registered in the provinces bordering Syria, while the jobs tend to be elsewhere—in big cities in western Turkey, such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Bursa. These destinations are naturally where many of the refugees go and work, regardless of registration, but they do so as part of the underground economy.

Furthermore, a Syrian refugee can receive a work permit only with the backing of a prospective employer and after having been registered as under temporary protection for at least six months.¹⁰⁹ There are frequently delays in issuance of permits, and the cost of a work permit is not negligible for most Syrians: 250 Turkish lira, or about \$47—recently reduced from 600 Turkish lira. Another consideration for permit applicants is that a job in the formal economy usually spells the end of direct assistance under the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) program, which the European Union funds and the Turkish Red Crescent administers.¹¹⁰ (see text box “Some key sources of funding for Syrian refugees”)

Prospective Turkish employers also face obstacles and disincentives to hiring Syrians. Syrian work permit holders are subject to the same minimum wage and maximum hours requirements as Turkish workers and thus are generally less attractive to Turkish employers. Many prospective Turkish employers are interested in Syrian workers precisely because they will work below minimum wage and for longer hours than legally allowed—in short, because they can be exploited. There are countless stories of defenseless Syrian workers suffering exploitation, without recourse, at the hands of ruthless Turkish employers.¹¹¹

There are plenty of expenses and red tape for would-be employers of Syrian refugees with work permits. They must make social security payments and be able to prove that at least 90 percent of their company’s employees are Turkish. This quota requirement can be waived only if employers can demonstrate to the government that, over a four-week period prior to application for a work permit, they searched for but failed to find any available qualified Turks in the relevant province to fill the position.¹¹²

For the prospect of immediate employment, most Syrians are willing to eschew the protections and other benefits afforded by a work permit and the formal economy. In that regard, it should be noted that they have plenty of company in Turkey, where an estimated 35 percent of the Turkish economy occurs underground, beyond the reach of government regulations and tax assessment.¹¹³

Education leads way on integration

The Turkish educational system is essential to the integration of the Syrians into Turkish society. In its most remarkably pro-integration decision to date, the Turkish government seems to have made a decision to use this system to the fullest: Soon, all Syrian students will attend Turkish public schools.

From the beginning, Turkey welcomed the refugees into Turkish schools, but few attended initially. In September 2014, Turkey opened—or, in some cases, recognized already informally existing—temporary education centers (TEC), which taught a modified Syrian curriculum in Arabic. As of August 2017, there were 404 TECs.¹¹⁴ The TECs, however, were established on the premise that the refugees would soon return to Syria. Over time, presumably as the Turkish government came to accept that the Syrians would likely remain, the government made the momentous decision to transfer and integrate the Syrians into the Turkish state educational system. This decision seems explicable only as an attempt to facilitate Syrian integration into Turkish society. In 2017, using designated funding from the European Union, the Turkish government began providing cash assistance to encourage refugee families to send their children to government schools, through a program known as Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE).¹¹⁵ (see text box “Some key sources of funding for Syrian refugees”) Also in 2017, the government began phasing out the TECs, with a goal to close them completely within three years.¹¹⁶

Turkish efforts to educate refugees have had some meaningful success, particularly in the basic realm of increased school attendance. In the 2014-15 school year, the first year of organized schooling for refugees, 190,000 Syrians attended the TECs, while only 40,000 were in the Turkish school system. Together, these 230,000 students constituted only 30 percent of school-age Syrians, with the other 70 percent not attending school at all. However, by the 2017-18 school year, 63 percent of the 976,000 school-age Syrians were in school, including 100 percent of primary school-age, or grades one through four, Syrians.¹¹⁷ And, for the first time, a majority of those in school were attending Turkish public schools rather than TECs, with 351,000 in the former and 268,000 in the latter.¹¹⁸ Meanwhile, TEC students began taking 15 hours of Turkish per week in preparation for the move to Turkish schools.¹¹⁹

Despite this progress, it is an immense challenge to incorporate the Syrians into Turkish public schools in the planned three-year time frame, much less to do so in a manner that will provide a good education. According to scholar Murat Erdoğan, Turkey would need 1,200 new schools to accommodate all the Syrians, not to men-

tion hundreds of additional teachers. Adding to the challenge is the fact that the Syrian school-age population is increasing every year—by some 140,000 in the past two years alone.¹²⁰

Also, whereas Turkish students are legally required to complete 12 years of schooling, school attendance for Syrians is voluntary, further complicating the mission to integrate Syrians into Turkish society via the educational system. Reportedly, the Turkish government is considering a plan to withhold monthly ESSN support allowances—120 Turkish lira, or about \$22, per family member—from Syrian families whose children do not attend school. This would be a separate measure, beyond the withholding of the CCTE monetary inducement specifically tied to school attendance.¹²¹

Some Turks support integrating Syrians into Turkish schools

It is surprising that the heavy infusion of Syrian refugees into Turkish public schools has not created a stronger, education-specific backlash from the Turkish public. Collectively, they seem to take a slightly softer line in this area of refugee life—perhaps because Turks want Syrians to overcome the Turkish-language barrier and rely less on Arabic, or perhaps because many Turks are resigned to the Syrians' enduring presence and fear that, lacking Turkish education, they may become a permanent and threatening underclass in Turkish society. According to a 2017 poll, 33 percent of Turks say the Syrians' education should only be in Turkish, matching the government's declared policy. Conversely, 26 percent say they should be given no education at all, presumably reflecting fear that education equals permanence.¹²²

Whatever the challenges, the decision to discontinue the TECs and absorb the Syrians into Turkish schools seems to be an acknowledgement that the Syrian presence in Turkey likely will be permanent. Moreover, by acculturating Syrian students, it will tend to reinforce that permanence. The implications of this decision for the long-term integration of Syrians into Turkish society are potentially immensely positive.

Failure to integrate would have dire consequences

Should Turkey fail to integrate its Syrian population effectively, it would likely face profound social consequences, some of which are already visible. For example, the hundreds of thousands of school-age children who missed out on education entirely may struggle to compensate for that loss as adults and perhaps will not always pursue societally healthy paths in doing so. Turkey's more recent efforts at educating the refugees, estimable though they are, do not ameliorate the situation of this "lost generation," which might come to form a permanent, resentful underclass in Turkey.¹²³ The Syrian refugees arrived in Turkey at a significant educational disadvantage. Of those who arrived through 2015, an estimated one-third were illiterate, and another 13 percent were literate but self-taught.¹²⁴ Meanwhile, Turkey has largely conquered illiteracy in its own society.¹²⁵ This educational gap has probably contributed to the tensions that have developed between Turks and Syrian refugees.

Of course, educational differences are not the only source of cultural tension in Turkey. Turkish scholar Nigar Göksel has written extensively about the Syrian refugee issue and recently completed research on Turkish-Syrian relations in the conservative, southeastern Turkish city of Urfa. While it is difficult to generalize refugees' cultural practices, which differ depending on ethnicity and point of origin in Syria, Göksel identifies some basic cleavages between the refugees and their host communities. She says that, in Urfa, refugees are in some ways more conservative than even their famously conservative host community; however, in other ways, they are more liberal. For example, Göksel writes, the Syrians are "more reluctant [than local Turks] to send their children to co-educational facilities. On the other hand, locals complain that the Syrians are too 'comfortable' about being out late at night or about their women using heavy-make-up."¹²⁶

Polygamy is a major source of tension. In Syria, polygamy, which allows for up to four wives, per Islamic law, is legal. In Turkey, it was banned in 1926 but never completely eliminated in more conservative parts of society, particularly in the Turkish southeast. Polygamy is now increasing among Turks in Urfa and, presumably, elsewhere in the southeast under the influence of Syrian practice. Meanwhile, Syrian

families have strong economic incentives to marry young daughters in the family to local Turkish men, including to those already married. Turkish men pay Syrian families a fee for their Syrian brides, while the Syrian families are responsible for one less dependent. According to Göksel:

There has been a proliferation of Syrian women being taken as second, third, and fourth 'wives' by Turkish men. ... Sometimes in Urfa these 'matches' are arranged by intermediaries—networks that make money from the transaction—or extended family members who act as 'fixers.' ... Needless to say, Turkish wives feel threatened by the prospect of having to accommodate another woman in the house.¹²⁷

These social tensions play upon existing fault lines in Turkish society, which has yet to resolve its secular-religious animosities or fully integrate its Kurdish and Alevi citizens.¹²⁸ In fact, a clumsy effort to integrate the majority-Sunni Syrians could simply sharpen those pre-existing tensions. Many Alevis, Kurds, and secular Turks are concerned that the refugees will tilt Turkey politically and culturally further toward the AKP and its religious, nationalist worldview—particularly if a meaningful number of them are granted citizenship and the consequent right to vote. Fairly or not, secularists in major urban centers see the refugees as reinforcing trends—such as an increase in tourism from the Middle East—that they feel are giving the country an uncomfortably Middle Eastern religious and cultural flavor.¹²⁹ Kurds resent the widespread use of Arabic in street signs and schools, while the use of Kurdish is legally restricted. The placement of some refugee camps in Alevi, pro-CHP, and pro-HDP districts has also angered locals, though these tensions have been managed.¹³⁰

Meanwhile, the injection of so many Arabs has scrambled the demography of several southeastern provinces, including perhaps the emergence of Hatay as Turkey's first Arab-majority province, according to Soner Cagaptay and Maya Yalkin. Kilis, which has nearly as many Syrian refugees as Turkish citizens, may also fit the Arab-majority category.¹³¹

These economic and cultural tensions create real risks. A January 2018 International Crisis Group report noted a meaningful uptick in Turkish-Syrian violence, although the report finds it is not yet at dangerous levels.¹³² The smooth integration of Syrians into Turkish society is hampered by a profound difference in objectives and perceptions; the majority of Syrians want Turkish citizenship, while the majority of Turks want the Syrians to leave. Syrians say that they feel culturally close to the Turks—perhaps for reasons stemming from shared religious values and customs—whereas the Turks tend to say they see the Syrians as culturally alien.¹³³

It is difficult to project how Turkish-Syrian tensions could shape Turkish society over the long term, but there is considerable reason for concern. The growth of an unassimilated group with limited political rights could produce social problems akin to those of Turkish guest workers in Germany, albeit in a society seemingly much less materially equipped to handle it. Another example is the situation of Palestinians in Lebanon, who face limited economic opportunities, local hostility, and legal restrictions based on the host government's fantasy that they will ultimately leave. Lacking any alternative to their current country of residence, the Palestinians are left in indefinite limbo. The same could happen to the Syrian community in Turkey.¹³⁴

Given the size of the Syrian community in Turkey and the potential for violence, it is clearly in Turkey's interest to avoid such an outcome. Ankara's current approach of simply tiptoeing toward integration is politically understandable at this moment, especially with popular feelings running against the refugees and with local elections fast approaching, but it is likely to prove inadequate over the long run.

Looming test: Local elections

Considering the dramatic scale of the refugee issue, it is surprising that it has not proven more disruptive in the political arena. Crude analysis of the June 2018 parliamentary elections suggests that the refugee issue had, at most, minimal impact on the results. The AKP lost seats relative to its performance in the preceding November 2015 election, but these seats were lost proportionally nationwide. The party performed no worse in provinces where the refugee issue seemingly would have loomed largest—provinces with the highest refugee populations, those with the highest concentration of refugees,¹³⁵ and those most reliant on the seasonal agricultural work that has been largely captured by underground Syrian workers¹³⁶—than it did nationwide.¹³⁷ If the refugee issue indeed was a factor in the AKP's decline, it was a factor evenly distributed throughout the nation, lacking disproportionate wallop where it would be most expected.

The refugee issue may have played some role in the modest regional success of the İyi Party, Turkey's most stridently anti-refugee party and the smallest of the five parties represented in Turkish Parliament. The İyi Party seems to have won a disproportionate number of its 43 seats—out of 600 in the entire Parliament—in provinces dependent on seasonal agricultural workers, such as Adana, Antalya, and Mersin. Still, it finished no higher than third place in any of those provinces.¹³⁸

The insignificant electoral impact of the refugee issue in 2018 may reflect voters' resignation to the Syrians' presence, or it may reflect opposition parties' failure to present a realistic program to address the issue. It may also suggest that the well-documented public anger about the refugee situation, while broad, is not very deep. In a public opinion survey taken shortly after the election, just 4 percent of Turks cited the Syrian refugee issue as Turkey's most important problem.¹³⁹ Four months before the election, in a February 2018 poll, just 9 percent of Turks cited the refugee issue as one of Turkey's two biggest problems—far behind economic and security concerns and slightly behind education.¹⁴⁰

Could the refugee issue yet explode and have an impact on the nationwide local elections scheduled for March 31, 2019? Two separate January 2019 polls yield conflicting evidence. To the question of Turkey's biggest problem, one poll puts the refugee issue at a microscopic 2 percent,¹⁴¹ the other at a surprisingly large 13 percent—more than sixfold larger than the result in the rival poll and more than threefold the number from the summer 2018 survey cited above.¹⁴² Time—and perhaps the March 31 elections—will tell if public concern about the refugee issue has genuinely increased in a dramatic and enduring fashion, or if the latter survey is simply an outlier.

Although the central government makes refugee policy, municipalities are directly and visibly associated with the refugee issue in a way that the central government is not. Municipalities receive funding from Ankara based on the number of Turkish citizens who live there, and those funds normally constitute more than half the local budget. Many municipalities use those funds to conduct special programs for the Syrian refugees; thus, those expenditures do indeed deplete the local budgets for citizen services. Municipal programs for refugees also fan the popular Turkish belief that Syrians are living off Turkish tax funds, which—although correct to a certain extent—is heavily exaggerated. Even programs funded by external sources, such as the European Union or nongovernmental organizations, are often mistakenly believed to be funded from taxpayer sources.¹⁴³

Some key sources of funding for Syrian refugees

Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees in the world,¹⁴⁴ and it has spent generously on their behalf. Ankara provides free health care and education to the refugees as well as full services for the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees who have come through, or still live in, refugee camps sprinkled around the Turkish south.

In December 2017, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Recep Akdağ claimed that the Turkish government and its agencies have spent nearly 85 billion Turkish lira—equating, he said, to more than \$30 billion—on Syrian refugees from 2012 through 2017. Included in this figure, he reported, was more than 6 billion Turkish lira spent on “municipal services” and more than 110 million Turkish lira on “campaigns organized by municipalities,”¹⁴⁵ all of which presumably came out of municipal budgets. There was perhaps some exaggeration in the dollar figure.¹⁴⁶

Since 2016, Turkey and the refugees have benefited from sizable aid from the European Union, courtesy of a March 2016 EU-Turkey agreement that helps Turkey defray health, education, and other refugee-associated costs. By the terms of that agreement, Turkey agreed to take measures to prevent unauthorized refugee crossings to Greece—that is, to EU territory—and to take back any refugees who illegally made that crossing. In return, the European Union pledged, among other things, to provide 6 billion euros over the following three years in programmatic support for refugees in Turkey.¹⁴⁷ To this point, the European Union has committed 4.2 billion euros to what is officially called “The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey” and has actually disbursed a little more than 2.1 billion euros.¹⁴⁸

As part of this aid program, the European Union funds two major direct assistance programs for Syrian refugees in Turkey: the Emergency Social Safety Net program, which provides support to needy Syrians and their families—more than 1.5 million people, as of January 2019—and the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education program, which provides funding to families who send their children to school and is paid out on a per-student basis, to parents of 410,000 students, as of January 2019. The latter program is intended to incentivize parents to send their children to Turkish state schools.¹⁴⁹ Both programs are implemented by Turkish agencies, which may contribute to the many Turks’ misperception that Turkey is funding those programs as well.

ESSN beneficiaries receive 120 Turkish lira each month, plus an additional quarterly payment of 50 to 250 Turkish lira per household, depending on its size. CCTE payments are made every two months on the following basis: 35 Turkish lira for each boy and 40 Turkish lira for each girl in primary school, as well as 50 Turkish lira for each boy and 60 Turkish lira for each girl in high school.¹⁵⁰

As of September 21, 2017, the United States had contributed \$572 million to support Syrian refugees in Turkey since the beginning of the crisis. It had contributed far more for refugee support to Lebanon, \$1.6 billion, and Jordan, a little more than \$1 billion, both of which Washington deemed needier than Turkey.¹⁵¹

Therefore, local incumbents who direct significant government funds to programs for refugees could be liable to electoral jeopardy in March. This risk may be exacerbated by Turkey's currently struggling economy; with unemployment and inflation soaring, many Turks blame Syrian refugees for their economic woes, as discussed above.¹⁵² Refugee-friendly Gaziantep, which the AKP won by a landslide in the last local election in 2014, could be an interesting test case for 2019.¹⁵³

At the local level, the AKP is the dominant party in most of the provinces where the largest number of Syrian refugees reside. However limited the electoral impact of the refugee issue in 2018, local AKP candidates will likely take it seriously as a potential factor in the 2019 elections and emphasize their party's determination that all Syrian refugees return home. Even though President Erdoğan's real preference on this issue is not always clear, as the AKP's campaigner in chief, he will likely take that position as well, as he did just before the June 2018 election. (see text box "Erdoğan's stance on citizenship")

In early January 2019, the AKP's Istanbul mayoral candidate Binali Yıldırım pledged that the refugees' presence would not be permanent and menacingly promised that there would be "zero tolerance" for Syrian lawbreakers, saying, "We'll grab them and throw them out by the ear."¹⁵⁴ Istanbul hosts by far the most Syrian refugees of any city or province in Turkey, with more than 550,000 registered.¹⁵⁵ The harsh attitude struck by the governing party's candidate for the most important mayoralty in the nation—the job that launched Erdoğan to national leadership—almost certainly will set the tone for the AKP's candidates in other localities.

Conclusion

The nationwide elections in March will likely be the final electoral test for the AKP and its rivals for several years, with the next presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 2023. Whatever the outcome of the election, Turkey is in a race against time to employ, educate, and socially integrate the Syrian refugees. As the Turkish ombudsman's report cited earlier suggests, doing so serves the interest of social peace, benefiting Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees alike.

Moreover, the Syrian refugee crisis could be a harbinger of future challenges. For several years now, Turkey has been classified by the World Bank as an upper-middle-income country.¹⁵⁶ It is certainly wealthier, more stable, and, even in its increasingly authoritarian state, freer than many Muslim-majority countries to its south and east, making it a magnet for increasing numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers throughout the region. Therefore, the challenge of integrating a large population of refugees may be a continuous one. If Turkey is to find a workable formula for facilitating effective integration, it needs to start developing, funding, and implementing that formula as soon as possible.

About the author

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Author's note: All Turkish proper nouns are rendered with Turkish spellings, except the name of the country Turkey and the familiar cities Istanbul and Izmir.

Endnotes

- 1 As of February 7, 2019, there were 3,644,342 registered Syrian refugees and, as of September 10, 2018, 370,400 registered non-Syrian refugees—including 172,000 Afghans, 142,000 Iraqis, 39,000 Iranians, 5,700 Somalis, and 11,700 “other nationalities”—for a total of slightly more than 4 million registered refugees, Syrian and non-Syrian. There are said to be hundreds of thousands of nonregistered refugees, both Syrian and non-Syrian, in Turkey as well. See U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, “Syria Regional Refugee Response: Turkey,” available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/113> (last accessed February 2019); U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, “Turkey Fact Sheet” (Geneva, Switzerland: 2018), available at <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/11/01.-UNHCR-Turkey-Fact-Sheet-September-2018.pdf>.
- 2 Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, “Temporary Protection,” table titled “Sheltered and Unsheltered Syrian Refugees by Temporary Shelter Centers,” available at http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/temporary-protection_915_1024_4748_icerik (last accessed February 2019); Kemal Kirişçi (sic), Jessica Brandt, and M. Murat Erdoğan, “Syrian refugees in Turkey: Beyond the numbers,” Brookings Institution, June 19, 2018, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/06/19/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-beyond-the-numbers/>.
- 3 World Legal Information Institute, “League of Nations Treaty Series: Greece and Turkey, Convention concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations and Protocol, signed at Lausanne, January 30, 1923” (Lausanne, Switzerland: 1925), available at <http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/LNTSer/1925/14.html>; Kemal Kirişçi, “Post Second World War Immigration from Balkan Countries to Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 12 (1995): 61–77, p. 63: 384,000 total immigrants came to Turkey from Greece between 1923 and 1939 under the terms of this agreement.
- 4 This number, 340,000, is how many arrived between June 1989 and September 1989. Agence France-Press, “Turkish exodus in 1989 was ethnic purge: Bulgarian archives,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, September 11, 2012, available at <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkish-exodus-in-1989-was-ethnic-purge-bulgarian-archives-29853>. In late August 1989, overwhelmed by the flood of Bulgarian Turkish immigrants fleeing oppression, Turkey reinstated the visa requirement that had been lifted in June. In the weeks following the November 1989 collapse of Bulgarian communist ruler Todor Zhivkov’s government, Bulgaria removed the discriminatory anti-Turkish laws that had prompted the migration in the first place, and many of the Bulgarian Turkish emigrants returned to Bulgaria. Ultimately 245,032 Bulgarian Turks settled in Turkey, and 124,678 returned to Bulgaria. See Kirişçi, “Post Second World War Immigration from Balkan Countries to Turkey,” p. 68.
- 5 The number 1.4 million is derived from three separate figures given in Kirişçi, “Post Second World War Immigration from Balkan Countries to Turkey”; 815,210 immigrants from 1923 through 1939 (p. 63), 21,616 immigrants from 1940 to 1945 (p. 63), and post-World War II, “more than 575,000” immigrants (p. 75).
- 6 See Ahmet İçduygu, “Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Long Road Ahead” (Washington: Migration Policy Institute Transatlantic Council on Migration, 2015), p. 3, footnote 8, available at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/syrian-refugees-turkey-long-road-ahead>; Kirişçi, “Post Second World War Immigration from Balkan Countries to Turkey,” pp. 61–62: For many decades migration to and settlement in Turkey were confined to those of “Turkish descent and Turkish culture (*Türk soyu ve kültürü*),” but these terms were not defined and the Turkish government applied them subjectively and broadly.
- 7 Of course, many non-Sunnis hold Turkish citizenship, including several million Alevi, who are heterodox Muslims, and tens of thousands of Christians and Jews. But most Turks consider mainstream, Sunni Islam a criterion of full-fledged “Turkishness.” In a Center for American Progress-sponsored survey in late 2017, 67 percent of Turks deemed “being Muslim” very important to their concept of Turkishness. Eighty percent, including 51 percent strongly, agreed with the statement “Islam plays a central role in my own life and is essential to my understanding of Turkish identity.” See John Halpin and others, “Is Turkey Experiencing a New Nationalism? An Examination of Public Attitudes on Turkish Self-Perception” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2018), pp. 17–18, 21, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/02/11/445620/turkey-experiencing-new-nationalism/>. The survey did not specify Sunni Islam, but, from this author’s long experience in Turkey, most Turks mean Sunni Islam when discussing Islam as an element of Turkishness. The overwhelming number of Turks are Sunni, and Sunni Islam is the only form of Islam recognized by Turkey’s Religious Affairs Directorate. Efforts to win formal government recognition for Alevism have floundered for decades. In a 2016 survey, 36 percent of Turks cited “religious unity” as the most important element in forging bonds of citizenship; 33 percent cited common culture and traditions; 22 percent cited adherence to a common set of laws; and only 9 percent cited a common language. Regarding the requirements of Turkish citizenship, 38 percent say it is necessary to be a Muslim; 41 percent it is necessary to be of the “Turkish race (*Türk ırkı*)”; 52 percent say it is necessary to speak Turkish; and 63 percent say legal status as a citizen is sufficient. See KONDA and Istanbul Policy Center’s Stiftung Mercator Initiative, “Vatandaşlık Araştırması: 5-6 Mart 2016” (Istanbul, Turkey: 2016), pp. 18–19, available at <http://www.birarada.org/upload/Node/26816/files/VatandaslikArastrirmasiRapor.pdf>. For a broader discussion of these issues and the source of the reference to the KONDA survey, see Melike Gülyaşar, “Suriyeliler ve Vatandaşlık: Yerel Halk ve Suriyeli Sığınmacılar Çerçevesinde Bir Değerlendirme,” *OPUS International Journal of Society Researches* 7 (13) (2017): 678–705, p. 685, available at <http://dergipark.gov.tr/download/article-file/390348>.
- 8 This was based on a bilateral agreement signed in 2009. See Asli S. Okyay, “Turkey’s post-2011 approach to its Syrian border and its implications for domestic politics,” *International Affairs* 93 (4) (2017): 829–846, available at <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article/93/4/829/3897494#104130951>; Syrian Arab News Agency, “Syria cancels mutual visa waiver agreement with Turkey,” December 17, 2015, available at <https://sana.sy/en/?p=64306>.
- 9 Proclaiming that “when a finger of any of our brothers living in Muslim countries bleeds, we feel the pain here,” former Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu described this approach as an element of Turkey’s “humanitarian” foreign policy. See Bezen Balamir Coşkun and Selin Yıldız Nielsen, *Encounters in the Turkey-Syria Borderland* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), p. 33.
- 10 İçduygu, “Syrian Refugees in Turkey,” p. 6.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
- 12 Agence France-Presse, “Turkey says it can take no more than 100,000 Syrian refugees,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, August 20, 2012, available at <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkey-says-it-can-take-no-more-than-100000-syrian-refugees-28169>.

- 13 These figures, as well as figures in this endnote, are derived from a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees graph. See U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, "Syria Regional Refugee Response: Turkey." All numbers refer to registered refugees only. Another way to look at the pace of arrivals of registered refugees is through milestones. As noted, the 100,000th registered refugee arrived in October 2012. One year thereafter, in October 2013, the 500,000th arrived. In October 2014, the 1 millionth arrived, and just one year after that, in October 2015, the 2 millionth. With the pace finally starting to slow in 2016, the 3 millionth arrived only in June 2017.
- 14 For a relatively complete list of the major attacks in this period, see Zach Montague, Kenneth R. Rosen, and Timothy R. Williams, "Recent Terrorist Attacks in Turkey," *The New York Times*, December 31, 2016, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/12/31/world/europe/turkey-recent-attacks.html>. This list omits some other major attacks, such as those in Diyarbakır (June 2015), Sürüç (July 2015), and Istanbul (January 2017)—the last a New Year's Eve bombing in the early hours of January 1, 2017. For these, see BBC, "Turkey rally explosions 'caused by homemade bombs,'" June 6, 2015, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33035450>; BBC, "Suruc massacre: At least 30 killed in Turkey border blast," July 20, 2015, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33593615>; Tim Arango, "Nightclub Massacre in Istanbul Exposes Turkey's Deepening Fault Lines," *The New York Times*, January 1, 2017, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/01/world/europe/turkey-istanbul-attack.html>. The website Datagraver, which says it draws 2015 data from the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database and 2016 data from Wikipedia, claims that close to 1,000 people were killed in all terrorist incidents in Turkey from 2015 to 2016. See Datagraver, "Terrorism Attacks in Turkey 1970-2016," available at <https://www.datagraver.com/case/terrorism-attacks-in-turkey-1970-2016> (last accessed March 2019).
- 15 Laura Batalla and Juliette Tolay, "Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees? Turkey's Policy Response and Challenges" (Washington: Atlantic Council, 2018), pp. 5–6, available at <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/reports/toward-long-term-solidarity-with-syrian-refugees-turkey-s-policy-response-and-challenges>.
- 16 Plans for the barrier were announced in 2015. Construction was completed in June 2018, covering 475 miles of the 566-mile border. Most of the rest of the border is formed by the Orontes River, a natural barrier. Mina Aldroubi, "Syria-Turkey border wall completed," *The National*, June 10, 2018, available at <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/syria-turkey-border-wall-completed-1.738637>.
- 17 European Council on Refugees and Exiles and Asylum Information Database, "Overview of Main Changes Since the Previous Report Update: Turkey."
- 18 Human Rights Watch (HRW) says that Turkish border guards began pushing many Syrian asylum-seekers back across the border as early as August 2015. April and May 2016 saw the first instances of beatings and shootings by Turkish border guards, "resulting in deaths and serious injuries," with many other Syrians sent back across the border. Citing the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), HRW claims that "at least 330" would-be asylum-seekers had died trying to cross the border—without specifying whether their deaths resulted from shootings—as of November 2017. The linked SOHR report speaks of 336 "casualties" rather than "killings." HRW praises Turkey's "generous hosting of large numbers of Syrians," while cautioning that that fact "does not absolve it of its responsibility to help those seeking protection at its borders." In a separate, July 2018 report, HRW claims that 10 Turkish provinces, including Istanbul and most of the provinces on the Syrian border, had "suspended" registration for "all but a handful" of refugees. See Human Rights Watch, "Turkey/Syria: Border Guards Shoot, Block Fleeing Syrians," February 3, 2018, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/03/turkey/syria-border-guards-shoot-block-fleeing-syrians>; Human Rights Watch, "Turkey Stops Registering Syrian Asylum Seekers," July 6, 2018, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/16/turkey-stops-registering-syrian-asylum-seekers>; Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, "A new casualty by the Turkish border guards in an attempt to cross the border line," November 17, 2017, available at <http://www.syriahq.com/en/?p=78799>.
- 19 Human Rights Watch, "Turkey: Mass Deportations of Syrians," March 22, 2018, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/22/turkey-mass-deportations-syrians>.
- 20 In a letter to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Turkish Interior Ministry's Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) denied HRW's claims regarding deportations, shootings, and suspension of registration, insisting that toughened border measures were undertaken only for the sake of preventing terrorism. Despite the need to prevent terrorism, Turkey continues to admit "Syrians who are in need, emergency patients, wounded and coming for family reunification at its border gates ... [as well as those who] come with road transport ... from Gaziantep, Hatay, and Kilis border gates," the DGMM response says. Based on this response, it appears Turkey has significantly limited Syrians' right to enter the country as individuals under temporary protection, although it does not acknowledge that it has done so. See Human Rights Watch, "Turkey's Directorate of Migration Management Responses to Human Rights Watch Questions" (Washington: 2018), available at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/201806eca_turkey_refugees_asylum.pdf.
- 21 U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, "Syria Regional Refugee Response: Turkey."
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Particularly in the first years of the war, significant numbers of Syrian refugees entered Turkey without registering. Until early 2015, most Syrian refugees not living in camps remained "unregistered and unidentified and continued to move and disperse throughout the country." Turkey, the source says, initiated serious efforts to establish systematic registration only in early 2014. See European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Asylum Information Database, "Temporary Protection in 2011-2014: Political Discretion and Improvisation, Turkey," available at <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/temporary-protection-2011-2014-political-discretion-and-improvisation> (last accessed February 2019).
- 24 T.C. Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (Ombudsmanlık), "Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler: Özel Rapor" (2018), p. 195, available at <https://www.ombudsman.gov.tr/suriyeliler/rapor.html>.
- 25 U.S. High Commissioner for Refugees, "Syria Regional Refugee Response," available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria> (last accessed February 2019). The next-most, 17 percent, were in Lebanon, and the third-most, 12 percent, were in Jordan.
- 26 For texts of the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Additional Protocol, as well as an introductory note by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, see U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees" (Geneva, Switzerland: 2010), available at <https://cms.emergency.unhcr.org/documents/11982/55726/Convention+relating+to+the+Status+of+Refugees+%28signed+28+July+1951%2C+entered+into+force+22+April+1954%29+189+UNTS+150+and+P+rotocol+relating+to+the+Status+of+Refugees+%28signed+31+January+1967%2C+entered+into+force+4+October+1967%29+606+UNTS+267/0bf3248a-cfa8-4a60-864d-65cdfce1d47>. As summarized in the introductory note on p. 3, a refugee is defined as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."
- 27 Ibid., pp. 3, 14–15, and 46–47.

- 28 Kemal Kirişçi, "Syrian Refugees and Turkey's Challenge: Going Beyond Hospitality" (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2014), p. 14, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Syrian-Refugees-and-Turkeys-Challenges-May-14-2014.pdf>.
- 29 See, for example, Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, "Syrian Guests in Turkey" (Ankara, Turkey: 2014.), available at <https://www.afad.gov.tr/upload/Node/3494/xfiles/syrian-guests.pdf>, which clarifies on p. 7, "In this report, the words of 'guest' and 'refugee' indicates The Syrian citizens under temporary protection status in Turkey."
- 30 Asylum Information Database and European Council on Refugees and Exiles, "Temporary Protection in 2011-2014: Political Discretion and Improvisation," available at <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/temporary-protection-2011-2014-political-discretion-and-improvisation> (last accessed February 2019).
- 31 See Asylum Information Database and European Council on Refugees and Exiles, "Introduction to the Asylum Context in Turkey," available at <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/introduction-asylum-context-turkey> (last accessed February 2019). For the Turkish text of the LFIP, see Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi, "LFIP (Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu)," Law no. 6458 (2013), available at Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.6458.pdf>. An English-language translation of the TPR is available at, "Temporary Protection Regulation" (Ankara, Turkey: 2014), available at <http://www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/temptemp.pdf>. Links for an English translation of the LFIP and the Turkish text of the TPR (Gecici Koruma Yönetmeliği) can be found at <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/overview-legal-framework>; however, the author was unable to access either of these two links.
- 32 See Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, "Temporary Protection Regulation"; European Council on Refugees and Exiles and Asylum Information Database, "Content of International Protection: Turkey," available at <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/content-international-protection> (last accessed February 2019); European Council on Refugees and Exiles and Asylum Information Database, "Overview of Main Changes Since the Previous Report Update: Turkey," available at <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/overview-main-changes-previous-report-update> (last accessed February 2019); Coşkun and Nielsen, *Encounters in the Turkey-Syria Borderland*, pp. 17–29, especially pp. 25–26.
- 33 U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," p. 25.
- 34 European Council on Refugees and Exiles and Asylum Information Database, "Overview of Main Changes Since the Previous Report Update: Turkey."
- 35 U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, "Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees," pp. 29–30.
- 36 That is the implication of the assertion that "[w]hile some Administrative Courts have halted deportations in some cases, the *non-refoulement* principle is not uniformly applied in Administrative Court reviews." See European Council on Refugees and Exiles and Asylum Information Database, "Overview of Main Changes Since the Previous Report Update: Turkey," section entitled "Right to remain." The author was unable to ascertain statistics as to how many Syrians were subject to deportation proceedings under the 2016 amendment, much less how many appealed that ruling in the Turkish judicial system. Given the harsher methods Turkey began employing against Syrian asylum-seekers at the border in 2016 and the fact that the amendment was issued under emergency rule, following the thwarted coup of July 2016, it seems unlikely that many were granted due process prior to deportation.
- 37 M. Murat Erdoğan, "Syrians-Barometer-2017: A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion With Syrians in Turkey" (Ankara, Turkey: Hacettepe University and others, 2017), p. 19, Table 90-A. M. Murat Erdoğan has given the author written permission to quote from the version cited above.
- 38 *Ibid.*, pp. 36–38, 40. Notwithstanding the widespread desire for citizenship, Syrians have mixed views regarding their experience in Turkey. Only one-third, or 34 percent, of Syrians say they are happy in Turkey, and one-fifth, or 22 percent, say they are unhappy, with the remainder neither happy nor unhappy, at 42 percent, or not answering, at 2 percent. Their major complaint is unfavorable working conditions and low pay. Fifty-five percent say they are exploited by the Turks. Yet, they credit Turkey with giving them more support than the United Nations, European Union, and Muslim world have, and they rate highly the health and education services offered them in Turkey.
- 39 For an in-depth discussion of the unlikelihood of return from a semi-official Turkish source, see T.C. Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (Ombudsmanlık), "Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler," pp. 195–196.
- 40 Eren Bozkurt, "Soylu: 24 Haziran'da 22 bin Suriyeli oy kullandı," *Anadolu Ajansı*, November 16, 2018, available at <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201811161036175225-suleyman-soylu-suriyeli-oy/>.
- 41 Erdoğan, "Syrians-Barometer-2017," p. 3.
- 42 İpek Özbey, "Suriye'yle ilgili hiçbir hatıraları yok," *Hürriyet*, October 15, 2018, available at <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/ipek-ozbey/suriyeyle-iligili-hicbir-hatiralar-yok-40986818>.
- 43 See Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, "Temporary Protection," table titled "Distribution by Age and Gender of Registered Syrian Refugees Recorded by Taking Biometric Data." There are nearly a half-million children ages 0 to 4 and slightly more than a half-million ages 5 to 9. There are also more than a half-million adults ages 19 to 24, prime reproductive years.
- 44 If integrated effectively, the Syrians could be a welcome injection of fresh blood into the Turkish population. In addition to the declining fertility rate, Turkey had been a net emigration country for many years prior to the Syrians' arrival. See Worldometers, "Population of Turkey (2019 and historical)," available at <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/turkey-population/> (last accessed March 2019); Kareem Shaheen and Gökçe Saracoglu, "Turkey's waning fertility threatens Erdoğan's vision of strength," *The Guardian*, December 25, 2017, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/25/turkey-fertility-secular-religious-divide-erdogan-population-growth>; Bülent Sarioğlu, "Turkey's fertility rate falls to critical level of 2.1 for first time since WWI," *Hürriyet Daily News*, May 26, 2017, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-fertility-rate-falls-to-critical-level-of-21-for-first-time-since-wwi-113583>.
- 45 *Yeni Şafak*, "260 bin Suriyeli geri döndü," October 8, 2018, available at <https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/260-bin-suriyeli-geri-dondu-3400831>. Parliamentary Speaker Binali Yıldırım put the number at 295,000 in January 2019. *Millî Gazete*, "Binali Yıldırım: Tutar kulağından atarız," January 7, 2019, available at <https://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/1776766/binali-yildirim-suriyelileri-tutar-kulagindan-atariz>; Ahval News, "Syrians not in Turkey to stay, says AKP's Yıldırım," January 8, 2019, available at <https://ahvalnews.com/syrian-refugees/syrians-not-turkey-stay-says-akps-yildirim>.
- 46 Molly O'Toole, "Syrian War Refugees Have 'No Place Any-more' as Turkey Pushes Them to Return Home," *Newsweek*, December 20, 2018, available at <https://www.newsweek.com/2018/12/28/syria-turkey-refugees-erdogan-war-1265789.html>.

- 47 See, for example, *Sabah*, “Son dakika: Suriyeliler ülkelerine dönüyor,” September 3, 2018, available at <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2018/09/03/suriyeliler-ulkelerine-donuyor>.
- 48 “Turkey steps up efforts to send Syrian refugees home,” *The Arab Weekly*, November 11, 2018, available at <https://the-arab-weekly.com/turkey-steps-efforts-send-syrian-refugees-home>; “Istanbul’s Esenyurt sees more Syrians taking up return scheme,” *Daily Sabah*, September 13, 2018, available at <https://www.dailysabah.com/istanbul/2018/09/14/istanbul-esenyurt-sees-more-syrians-taking-up-return-scheme>.
- 49 O’Toole, “Syrian War Refugees Have ‘No Place Anymore’ as Turkey Pushes Them to Return Home.”
- 50 Metropoll, “Turkey’s Pulse,” September 2018, on file with author.
- 51 Erdoğan, “Syrians-Barometer-2017,” p. 5.
- 52 See Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, “Temporary Protection,” table titled “Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Province.”
- 53 BBC, “Erdoğan’dan Türkiye’deki Suriyelilere vatandaşlık açıklaması,” July 3, 2016, available at https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/07/160703_erdogan_suriyeliler; Al Jazeera, “Erdogan: Syrian refugees could become Turkish citizens,” July 3, 2016, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/erdogan-syrian-refugees-turkish-citizens-160703133739430.html>; Reuters, “Turkey’s Erdogan moots plan to grant citizenship to Syrians,” July 5, 2016, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey/turkeys-erdogan-moots-plan-to-grant-citizenship-to-syrians-idUSKCN0ZL155>.
- 54 Selin Girit, “Turks hit back at Erdogan plan to give Syrians citizenship,” BBC, July 5, 2016, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36704791>; Verda Özer, “Erdogan details dual citizenship for Syrians,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, July 11, 2016, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/erdogan-details-dual-citizenship-for-syrians-101428>; Umut Uras, “Erdogan plan to make Syrians citizens sparks online war,” Al Jazeera, July 3, 2016, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/erdogan-syrians-citizenship-hashtag-160703190729668.html>.
- 55 Lisel Hintz and Caroline Feehan, “Burden or Boon? Turkey’s Tactical Treatment of the Syrian Refugee Crisis” (Washington: Middle East Institute, 2017), available at <https://www.mei.edu/publications/burden-or-boon-turkeys-tactical-treatment-syrian-refugee-crisis>.
- 56 Turkish Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu says 28,000 naturalized Syrian citizens were eligible to vote in the June 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections. He claims that 22,000 did so, and “at most 36,000” will be eligible to vote in the March 31, 2019, local elections. By far the largest professional group represented among the new citizens is teachers, with 5,292—likely an indication of the importance Turkey is starting to place on integrating the Syrians. A well-informed Turkish scholar said in a phone interview that approximately 70 percent of the naturalizations result from invitations from the Turkish government, and the remainder come through applications from Syrians who have been in the country for five years. In a recent representative survey of Syrian businessmen living in Turkey’s southeast, 23 percent said they had received citizenship. Under Turkish law, residence in the country for five years, plus knowledge of Turkish—and a few other pro forma requirements—qualifies one to apply for citizenship. That law apparently does not apply so automatically to those in the country under temporary protection status, however. Soylu, whose Interior Ministry is in charge of migration and citizenship issues, has emerged as a strong defender of the Syrian community and Turkey’s obligations to it. In a fascinating interview published January 7, 2019, he criticized negative stereotypes about the community, spoke of Turkey’s obligation to the Syrians based on “brotherhood” and “Muslim-ness,” and went on to claim that 62 percent of the refugees are from areas in Syria that were part of the National Pact—the areas claimed (or, in some cases, tentatively claimed) by Turkish nationalist leader Mustafa Kemal (later, Atatürk) and his fellow nationalists in 1919 during Turkey’s independence war—suggesting that this makes them virtually the same people as Turks. See T24, “Süleyman Soylu: Bu güne kadar 76 bin 443 Suriyeliye vatandaşlık verdik,” January 7, 2019, available at <https://t24.com.tr/haber/suleyman-soylu-bu-gune-kadar-76-bin-443-suriyeliye-vatandaslik-verdik,791996>; *Hürriyet Daily News*, “Minister suggests Syrian children born in Turkey should be granted citizenship,” December 17, 2018, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/minister-suggests-syrian-children-born-in-turkey-should-be-granted-citizenship-139784>; Bozkurt, “Soylu: 24 Haziran’da 22 bin Suriyeli oy kullandı”; Murat Erdoğan, Turkish scholar, Hacettepe University, interview with author via phone, November 8, 2018, on file with author; Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), “Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience: Final Report – November 2018” (Ankara, Turkey: 2018), p. 25, on file with author; Khaled al-Khateb, “Can Syrian refugees in Turkey benefit from amendment to citizenship law?,” Al-Monitor, October 10, 2018, available at <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/10/syrian-refugees-turkey-nationality-requirements.html>. Erik Jan Zürcher, “Impending Turkish invasion and the revival of the National Pact,” *Ahval*, December 26, 2018, available at <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-syria/impending-turkish-invasion-and-revival-national-pact>.
- 57 For a review of many of these statements, see *Cumhuriyet*, “Hangi Erdoğan! ‘İlanihaye saklayacak halimiz yok’ diyen Erdoğan vatandaşlık sözü vermişti,” February 8, 2018, available at http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/922330/Hangi_Erdogan___ilanihaye_saklayacak_halimiz_yok_diyen_Erdogan_vatandaslik_sozu_vermisti.html.
- 58 Al Jazeera, “Erdogan offers citizenship to Syrian and Iraqi refugees,” January 7, 2017, available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/erdogan-offers-citizenship-syrian-iraqi-refugees-170106195134961.html>.
- 59 Gizem Karakiş, “Suriyelilere kalıcı konut,” *Hürriyet*, February 3, 2018, available at <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/suriyelilere-kalici-konut-40729951>.
- 60 See, for example, Dorian Jones, “With Turkey’s offensive into Afrin, Erdogan is seeking to kill two birds with one stone,” *Deutsche Welle*, March 2, 2018, available at <https://www.dw.com/en/with-turkeys-offensive-into-afrin-erdogan-is-seeking-to-kill-two-birds-with-one-stone/a-42803519>; Anadolu Ajansı, “Erdoğan’dan Suriyeli Mesajı: 3,5 Milyonu Burada İlanihaye Saklayacak Değiliz,” *Haberler*, February 8, 2018, available at <https://www.haberler.com/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-simdi-cikarilacak-kanunlarla-10542201-haber/>.
- 61 Anadolu Ajansı, “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Hedefimiz Suriyeliilerin tamamının evlerine dönmesi,” NTV, June 21, 2018, available at https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-erdoganhedefimiz-suriyeliilerin-tamaminin-evlerine-donmesi,zmSC_mCSMKGZtGx_c114EQ. Late last year, the powerful interior minister, Süleyman Soylu, said he “wishes” the “380,000” Syrians born in Turkey could receive citizenship. See *Hürriyet Daily News*, “Minister suggests Syrian children born in Turkey should be granted citizenship.”
- 62 See, for example, Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, “Uyum Hakkında,” available at http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik/uyum_409_564 (last accessed March 2019). It explicitly says that “harmonization,” which it calls a voluntary act, is “not assimilation or integration.”

- 63 As of February 2019, this number was 142,290, out of more than 3.6 million refugees. See Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, "Temporary Protection," table titled "Sheltered and Unsheltered Syrian Refugees by Temporary Shelter Centers."
- 64 This is the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) program, discussed later in the paper. The figure of 1.5 million is as of January 2019. See European Union, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, "Turkey," available at https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/europe/turkey_en (last accessed February 2019).
- 65 T.C. Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (Ombudsmanlık), "Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler," pp. 196–197. The number is probably already more than 4 million, registered and unregistered, as noted elsewhere in this paper.
- 66 Highlights of the report can be found in Sinan Tartanoğlu, "Gerçekle yüzleşin: Savaş bitse de kalıcılar," *Cumhuriyet*, November 5, 2018, available at http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/1132275/Gercekle_yuzlesin__Savas_bitse_de_kalicialar.html. Over the years, Turkish officials have occasionally asserted, without pressing the point, that the Syrian refugees are likely to remain in Turkey. As far back as November 2014, former Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmuş asserted as much. See *Habertürk*, "Türkiye'ye sığınan Suriyeliler kalıcı," November 5, 2014, available at <https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1006654-turkiye-ye-siginan-suriyeliler-kalici>
- 67 Selin Yıldız Nielsen, "Perceptions Between Syrian Refugees and Their Host Communities," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 15 (3) (2016): 99–106, p. 103, available at <http://turkishpolicy.com/article/832/perceptions-between-syrian-refugees-and-their-host-community>.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 102.
- 69 Max Hoffman, Michael Werz, and John Halpin, "Turkey's 'New Nationalism' Amid Shifting Politics: Further Analysis of Polling Results," p. 10, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2018/02/11/446164/turkeys-new-nationalism-amid-shifting-politics/>.
- 70 See, for example, *Hürriyet*, "Başbakan Erdoğan'ın konuşmasının tam metni," September 5, 2012, available at <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakan-erdoganin-konusmasinin-tam-metni-21388292>; NTV, "Erdoğan'dan Suriyelilere: Zaferiniz uzak değil," May 6, 2012, available at <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogandan-suriyelilere-zaferiniz-uzak-degil,eh4lpDgi200ApyeeBVldQ>.
- 71 Joe Parkinson and Ayla Albayrak, "Turkey Hits 'Limit' of Syrian Refugees," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 15, 2012, available at <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10000872396390443675404578058103242571138>.
- 72 Seventy-two percent of Turks say they encounter a Syrian refugee every day; 17 percent say a few times a week. Thus, refugees are a regular presence in the lives of roughly 90 percent of Turks. See Metropoll, "Turkey's Pulse."
- 73 Coşkun and Nielsen, *Encounters in the Turkey-Syria Borderland*, p. 34; İçduygu, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey," p. 11, writing about Reyhanlı in a contemporary sense in 2015, say there were 100,000 Syrian refugees among 63,000 Turkish citizens in Reyhanlı.
- 74 *Daily Sabah*, "Life sentences for Assad-linked suspects in 2013 bombings in Turkey," February 24, 2018, available at <https://www.dailysabah.com/investigations/2018/02/24/life-sentences-for-assad-linked-suspects-in-2013-bombings-in-turkey>; Humeyra Pamuk, "Turkish intelligence seizes bombing suspect inside Syria," Reuters, September 12, 2018, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-reyhanli/turkish-intelligence-seizes-bombing-suspect-inside-syria-idUSKCN1LS152>.
- 75 See Coşkun and Nielsen, *Encounters in the Turkey-Syria Borderland*, pp 34–36. Quote is from p. 35.
- 76 *Ibid.*, p. 35
- 77 Jonathon Burch, "Deadly bombs spark protests in Turkish border city," Reuters, May 12, 2013, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-turkey-protest/deadly-bombs-spark-protests-in-turkish-border-city-idUSBRE9480AA20130512>.
- 78 Ceylan Yeginsu and Tim Arango, "Istanbul Explosion Kills 10 Tourists, and ISIS Is Blamed," *The New York Times*, January 12, 2016, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/13/world/europe/explosion-in-istanbul-tourist-district-kills-at-least-10.html>; Ceylan Yeginsu and Victor Homola, "Istanbul Bomber Entered as a Refugee, Turks Say," *The New York Times*, January 13, 2016, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/14/world/europe/istanbul-explosion.html>.
- 79 See Batalla and Tolay, "Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees?," p. 8. Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), "Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience: Final Report – November 2018," p. 40, cites a 2016 Gallup World Happiness Report that rates Turkey poorly on a "Migrant Acceptance Index," based on public attitudes toward migrants. The study can be found at Neli Esipova, John Fleming, and Julie Ray, "New Index Shows Least-, Most-Accepting Countries for Migrants," Gallup, August 23, 2017, available at <https://news.gallup.com/poll/216377/new-index-shows-least-accepting-countries-migrants.aspx>. The ratings are based on respondents' answers to three questions: whether they consider it good or bad to have immigrants in their country, to have one as a neighbor, and to have one marry into their family.
- 80 *Habertürk*, "AK Parti'den 'Suriyeli sığınmacılar' broşürü," January 9, 2019, available at <https://www.haberturk.com/ak-parti-den-suriyeli-siginmacilar-brosuru-2286274>.
- 81 Party support is determined by how respondents voted in the June 2018 general election. Just 24 percent of AKP voters and 27 percent of HDP voters, respectively, had positive views of the refugees. Some 76 percent of AKP voters and 72 percent of HDP voters viewed the refugees negatively. CHP and MHP voters were harsher and identical to one another, with 7 percent positive and 93 percent negative, while İyi Party voters were 6 percent positive and 94 percent negative. See Metropoll, "Turkey's Pulse"; Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin, "Turkey's 'New Nationalism' Amid Shifting Politics," p. 10: The authors refer to the noteworthy minority of AKP voters who view the refugees favorably as "compassionate Islamists [the authors' term], for whom Turkey's care for Syrian refugees—and wider humanitarian work supporting the umma, or global community of Islam—is an important source of national pride."
- 82 The survey queried Turkish views of Russia, NATO, Christians, Jews, and the United States. All those entities were viewed unfavorably by a clear majority of Turks, but only the United States, with a favorability-unfavorability rating of 10 percent-to-83 percent, proved as unpopular as the Syrian refugees. See Halpin and others, "Is Turkey Experiencing a New Nationalism?," p. 23, Table 1. For a nuanced analysis of Turkish attitudes toward the Syrian refugees based on the same survey, see Hoffman, Werz, and Halpin, "Turkey's 'New Nationalism' Amid Shifting Politics."
- 83 Erdoğan, "Syrians-Barometer-2017," p. 20.
- 84 Metropoll, "Turkey's Pulse."
- 85 Focus groups, Istanbul, conducted in September 2017 and April 2018. Anonymized transcripts are on file with the author.
- 86 For example, according to Nielsen, crime rates among the Syrian population are lower than among the Turkish population. Turkish taxpayer assistance to refugees is also less than most Turks believe. See Nielsen, "Perceptions Between Syrian Refugees and Their Host Communities," p. 103.

- 87 These figures are from a CAP-commissioned and designed nationwide poll of Turkey conducted by the Turkish polling firm Metropoll. The survey is based on 2,534 face-to-face interviews with Turks using stratified sampling and weighting methods in 28 provinces. Seventy percent of in-person respondents were then called by phone to verify the data. The survey was conducted May 24 to June 4, 2018. Total results have a margin error of 1.95 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence. Another 2017 poll, approaching the issue slightly differently, came up with a somewhat softer result. When asked, “Where should Syrian refugees live?”, 37 percent of Turks said they should reside in safe zones in Syria, and “only” 11.5 percent said they should be deported without concern for ensuring their safety. The remainder envisioned them in Turkey, under varying circumstances: 28 percent said they should live only in camps, 8 percent said they should be evenly distributed throughout Turkey, another 8 percent said the Syrians should live “wherever they want,” and 5 percent said a Syrians-only city should be founded. See Erdoğan, “Syrians-Barometer-2017,” p. 26.
- 88 Erdoğan, “Syrians-Barometer-2017,” pp. 27–28.
- 89 See, especially, Erdoğan, “Syrians-Barometer-2017,” pp. 42–46. Erdoğan, p. 44, says, on p. 44, citizenship is “the ultimate stage of integration,” possible only after conditioning Turks to its acceptance following “social, economic, and spatial integration.” Batalla and Tolay, “Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees?,” pp. 21–23; International Crisis Group, “Turkey’s Syrian Refugees: Defusing Metropolitan Tensions” (Brussels, Belgium: 2018), Section III: “Investing in Long-term Integration,” available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/248-turkeys-syrian-refugees-defusing-metropolitan-tensions>.
- 90 İçduygu, “Syrian Refugees in Turkey,” p. 7.
- 91 Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, “Temporary Protection,” table titled “Sheltered and Unsheltered Syrian Refugees by Temporary Shelter Centers.”
- 92 Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, “Temporary Protection,” table titled “Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection According to Shelter Centers (13 Shelter Centers in 8 Province (sic));” Batalla and Tolay, “Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees?,” p. 4, points out that Syrians were never required to live in the camps and that camp residents were and are “mostly free” to come and go as they please.
- 93 Most of the details, including the quotes, in this paragraph and the one below it, as well as the characterization of Turkish government objectives in reducing the number of camps, are taken from private, but on-the-record, email communication. Selin Ünal, spokesperson in Turkey, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, personal communication with author via email, November 20, 2018, on file with author. The Turkish government itself probably would have eschewed the word “integration” in favor of “harmonization.”
- 94 This estimation is based on a rounded-off conversion rate of 5.3 Turkish lira to the U.S. dollar, as of February 26, 2019. From early November 2018 through late February 2019, the lira has held steady between 5.2 and 5.4, most often at 5.3, as it was January 1, 2019. See Exchange Rates, “US Dollar (USD) to Turkish Lira (TRY) exchange rate history,” available at <https://www.exchangerates.org.uk/USD-TRY-exchange-rate-history.html> (last accessed January 2019).
- 95 Selin Ünal, spokesperson in Turkey, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, personal communication with author via emails, November 20, 2018, on file with author.
- 96 Apparently responding to a question in Parliament in mid-November 2018, Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu said that 32,199 Syrian refugees have work permits. See Bozkurt, “Soylu: 24 Haziran’da 22 bin Suriyeli oy kullandı.”
- 97 A 2017 poll of Syrian refugees suggested a somewhat different situation, with 39 percent of Syrians saying they are working, 20 percent saying they are not working, and the rest identifying themselves as students, housewives, disabled, or retired. See Erdoğan, “Syrians-Barometer-2017,” p. 32.
- 98 Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), “Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience: Final Report – November 2018,” p. 15. In the case of Syrian-owned businesses, Turkey apparently does not enforce its regulation that 90 percent of employees must be Turkish citizens.
- 99 Hacer Boyacıoğlu, “Syrian businesses thrive across Turkey: Report,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, November 8, 2018, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/syrian-businesses-thrive-across-turkey-report-138699>; *Hürriyet Daily News*, “Syrian entrepreneurs thrive in Turkey, boost economy,” May 16, 2018, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/syrian-entrepreneurs-thrive-in-turkey-boost-economy-131907>.
- 100 Vijaya Ramachandran, “Another Side to the Story: Syrian Refugees Have Invested over \$300 Million in the Turkish Economy,” Center for Global Development, August 2, 2017, available at <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/another-side-story-syrian-refugees-have-invested-over-300-million-turkish-economy>.
- 101 See Batalla and Tolay, “Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees?,” p. 16; Selen Ucak, Jennifer P. Holt, and Kavya Raman, “Another Side to the Story: A market assessment of Syrian SMEs in Turkey” (New York: Building Markets, 2017), p. 9, available at https://buildingmarkets.org/sites/default/files/pdm_reports/another_side_to_the_story_a_market_assessment_of_syrian_smes_in_turkey.pdf.
- 102 Batalla and Tolay, “Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees?,” p. 16.
- 103 Emre Erdoğan and Pinar Uyan Semerci, “Attitudes towards Syrians in Turkey-2017” (Ankara, Turkey: Istanbul Bilgi University – Center for Migration Research, 2018), available at https://goc.bilgi.edu.tr/media/uploads/2018/03/15/turkish-perceptions-of-syrian-refugees-20180315_YoG-Y-Zol.pdf.
- 104 Erdoğan, “Syrians-Barometer-2017,” p. 32; International Crisis Group, “Turkey’s Syrian Refugees.” See views attributed to then-Deputy Prime Minister Veysi Kaynak in Section III. A: “Economic Integration.”
- 105 Kivanç Eliaçık, “Syrian refugees have a right to equal pay for equal work,” *Equal Times*, June 20, 2018, available at <https://www.equaltimes.org/syrian-refugees-have-a-right-to#.XHRjbi2ZOJQ>.
- 106 Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), “Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience: Final Report – November 2018,” p. 40; Center for American Progress, Istanbul Policy Center, and Instituto Affari Internazionali, “Turkey’s Path to Prosperity in 2023: How to Avoid the Middle-Income Trap Through Inclusive Economic Growth” (Washington: 2016), p. 24, available at <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/20020037/Turkey2023EconomicGrowth-report.pdf>. According to a 2015 World Bank study, six Turks are displaced for every 10 Syrians that enter the informal economy. Hardest hit are Turkish workers without formal education. See Ximena V. Del Carpio and Mathis Wagner, “The Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Turkish Labor Market” (Washington: World Bank Group, Social Protection and Labor Global Practice Group, 2015), p. 4, available at <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/505471468194980180/pdf/WPS7402.pdf>.

- 107 Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), "Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience: Final Report – November 2018," p. 13.
- 108 There are six main routes into Turkey from Syria. See Del Carpio and Wagner, "The Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Turkish Labor Market," p. 3, footnote 6.
- 109 Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), "Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience: Final Report – November 2018," p. 13.
- 110 Batalla and Tolay, "Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees?," p. 16.
- 111 See, for example, O'Toole, "Syrian War Refugees Have 'No Place Anymore' as Turkey Pushes Them to Return Home."
- 112 See "Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection," Turkish Law No. 6458 (January 11, 2016), available at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/582c71464.html>; Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), "Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience: Final Report – November 2018," p. 13, includes an English list of most of the main work permit requirements.
- 113 Erdoğan, "Syrians-Barometer-2017," p. 11.
- 114 T.C. Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (Ombudsmanlık), "Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler," p. 135.
- 115 Batalla and Tolay, "Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees?," p. 14; Gabriele Cloeters and others, "Syrians in Turkey" (Istanbul, Turkey: Istanbul Policy Center, 2018), p. 11, available at <http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SyriansinTurkeyEN.pdf>.
- 116 T.C. Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (Ombudsmanlık), "Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler," pp. 135–136. At the beginning of 2018, the Turkish Ministry of National Education reportedly informed provincial officials that the TECs would be closed down at the end of the school year, seemingly a year ahead of schedule. Anonymous Turkish educator, personal communication with author via email, on file with author.
- 117 Only 53 percent attend middle school—grades five through eight—and just 23 percent attend high school, grades nine through 12. T.C. Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (Ombudsmanlık), "Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler," p. 140, Table 12.
- 118 *Ibid.*, p. 139, Table 11. One study suggests that Syrians disproportionately gravitate toward Turkey's religion-oriented Imam Hatip school system, which, like Syria's state school system, requires Quran and other Islamic studies and segregates by gender. Accordingly, the author believes that Imam Hatip schools, with an appropriately tailored curriculum, can be a highly effective tool for integrating school-age Syrian refugees into Turkish society. Although perhaps a sensible proposition, the author does not give attendance numbers or otherwise back up his claim that Syrians prefer Imam Hatip schooling. See Hilmi Demir, "Suriyeli Göçmenlerde Radikalleşme: Riskler ve Fırsatlar," Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, July 12, 2018, available at https://www.tepav.org.tr/tr/blog/s/6253/Suriyeli+Gocmenlerde+Radikallesme_+Riskler+ve+Firsatlar.
- 119 T.C. Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (Ombudsmanlık), "Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler," p. 136.
- 120 The Syrian school-age population was up to 976,000 in the 2017-18 school year from 833,039 two years earlier. Gamze Kolcu, "Over 610,000 Syrians enrolled in Turkish education system during 2017-2018 school year," *Hürriyet Daily News*, August 27, 2018, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/over-610-000-syrians-enrolled-in-turkish-education-system-during-2017-2018-school-year-136172>.
- 121 Serkan Demirtaş, "Turkey wants EU aid as long as Syrian crisis lasts," *Hürriyet Daily News*, December 1, 2018, available at <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opinion/serkan-demirtas/turkey-wants-eu-aid-as-long-as-syrian-crisis-lasts-139344>. Turkish agencies administer both programs, ESSN and CCTE, out of funds provided by the European Union. See text box "Some key sources of funding for Syrian refugees," elsewhere in this paper.
- 122 Erdoğan, "Syrians-Barometer-2017," p. 29.
- 123 The phrase apparently comes from CHP member of Parliament Veli Ağbaba, who said in 2015 that the alarming number of Syrians not attending school created "the danger of a lost generation. They will exponentially join crime waves. We are at a critical juncture to prevent this by urgently integrating them in our education system and providing vocational training." See International Crisis Group, "Turkey's Refugee Crisis: The Politics of Permanence" (Brussels, Belgium: 2016), available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/turkey-s-refugee-crisis-politics-permanence>.
- 124 T.C. Kamu Denetçiliği Kurumu (Ombudsmanlık), "Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler," p. 134.
- 125 Adult literacy in Turkey is at more than 96 percent. CIA, "The World Factbook: Middle East, Turkey," available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html> (last accessed February 2019).
- 126 Nigar Göksel, project director, Turkey, International Crisis Group, personal communication with author via email, December 4, 2018, on file with author.
- 127 Nigar Göksel, project director, Turkey, International Crisis Group, personal communication with author via email, December 4, 2018, on file with author. Regarding the pressures on Syrian women that lead to their entering polygamous marriages, see Constanze Letsch, "Syria's refugees: fears of abuse grow as Turkish men snap up wives," *The Guardian*, September 8, 2014, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/08/syrian-refugee-brides-turkish-husbands-marriage>; Burcu Karakaş, "The fragility of Syrian refugee women in Turkey," *Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso*, December 24, 2018, available at <https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Turkey/The-fragility-of-Syrian-refugee-women-in-Turkey-191805>. Financial pressures also lead to child marriages within the Syrian refugee community. See also Alexa Keefe, "Divorced at 15: Inside the Lives of Child Brides," *National Geographic*, January 18, 2018, available at <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/proof/2018/01/child-marriage-divorce-syrian-refugees-turkey/>.
- 128 Alevis are heterodox Muslims whose religious practices are scorned by many Sunnis.
- 129 This observation is derived significantly from the insights of Nigar Göksel, project director, Turkey, International Crisis Group, personal communication with author via email, December 20, 2018, on file with author.
- 130 International Crisis Group, "Turkey's Refugee Crisis."
- 131 Soner Cagaptay and Maya Yalkin, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey" (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2018), available at <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/syrian-refugees-in-turkey>. In making this assessment, Cagaptay and Yalkin take into account estimates of Hatay's and Kilis' pre-2011 ethnic Arab populations.

- 132 International Crisis Group, "Turkey's Syrian Refugees." See also Stephen Starr, "Syrians in Turkey face anger and violence," *The Irish Times*, November 7, 2018, available at <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/syrians-in-turkey-face-anger-and-violence-1.3688674>; Waseem Alsharqi, "The Dangerous Dance: Syrians in the New Year's Eve," *OpenDemocracy*, January 20, 2019, available at <https://www.opendemocracy.net/north-africa-west-asia/the-dangerous-dance-syrians-in-the-new-years-eve>. The last concerns a brief December 31, 2018, celebration and demonstration in Istanbul's famed Taksim Square, during which Syrian men lofted a large Syrian flag and repeatedly chanted, "Syria! Syria!" A video of the incident was widely viewed in Turkey, stoking widespread anger among Turks. A violent incident occurred in Istanbul's heavily Syrian Esenyurt district on February 9, 2019, when a group of Turks reportedly attacked Syrian refugees and shops, chanting, "This is Turkey, not Syria!" Social media reports claimed that several people had been killed and wounded, but Turkish officials said only that three Turks were wounded and three Syrians arrested. See Harekact, "Mass Aggression against Syrian Community in Esenyurt, Istanbul," February 14, 2019, available at <https://harekact.bordermonitoring.eu/2019/02/14/mass-aggression-against-syrian-community-in-esenyurt-istanbul/>.
- 133 Erdoğan, "Syrians-Barometer-2017," pp. 22–23, 27. There has been no in-depth demographic study of the refugees, to this author's knowledge. The aforementioned expert Murat Erdoğan, who has been studying the refugee community since its early days, estimates that "more than 95% are Sunni Arabs." Murat Erdoğan, personal communication with author via text, January 17, 2019, on file with author. On the other hand, President Erdoğan reportedly told President Trump that more than 300,000 of the Syrian refugees are Kurds. Ragip Soylu, "Under pressure, Trump sought assurances from Erdogan on fate of Syrian Kurds," *Middle East Eye*, January 3, 2019, available at <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/under-pressure-trump-sought-assurances-erdogan-fate-syrian-kurds>. Turkish officials have also mentioned the figure of 300,000 Syrian Kurdish refugees in Turkey to this author on occasion.
- 134 For a case study of deepening social problems affecting the Syrian community, as well as proposed solutions, see International Crisis Group, "Mitigating Risks for Syrian Refugee Youth in Turkey's Sanliurfa" (Brussels, Belgium: 2019), available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/253-mitigating-risks-syrian-refugee-youth-turkeys-sanliurfa>.
- 135 The 10 provinces with the most registered Syrian refugees, based on figures as of February 7, 2019, are Istanbul (558,000), Urfa (453,000), Hatay (448,000), Gaziantep (426,000), Adana (235,000), Mersin (206,000), Bursa (168,000), Izmir (143,000), Kilis (115,000), and Konya (107,000). For an official Turkish government province-by-province breakdown of the registered Syrian refugee population and the Turkish citizen population, see Republic of Turkey Ministry of the Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, "Temporary Protection," table titled "Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Province."
- 136 Mainly the provinces of Turkey's cotton-growing southwest.
- 137 In 2018, Turks elected a total of 600 parliamentarians, 230 of them in the 10 provinces with the most registered Syrian refugees; in 2015, they elected only 550 parliamentarians, with 207 of them from the aforementioned 10 provinces. Thus, of the 50 additional seats elected in 2018, 23 of them were elected in the 10 provinces with the most registered Syrian refugees. The AKP lost a total of seven seats in those provinces, falling from 111 seats to 104. Nationally, the AKP lost 22 seats. For a province-by-province breakdown of the official results of the June 24, 2018, presidential and parliamentary elections, as well as previous Turkish elections, see Supreme Electoral Council, "Seçim Arşivi," available at <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/secim-arşivi/2612> (last accessed January 2019).
- 138 For election results, see Supreme Electoral Council, "Seçim Arşivi."
- 139 The top three problems cited: the economy at 36 percent, terrorism at 15 percent, and unemployment at 13 percent. Less than 1 percent cited the Kurdish problem as the nation's top problem. See Metropoll, "Turkey's Pulse," p. 59.
- 140 İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, "Dimensions of Polarization in Turkey" (Istanbul, Turkey: 2018), available at https://goc.bilgi.edu.tr/media/uploads/2018/02/06/dimensions-of-polarizationppt_Tz7XeBg.pdf.
- 141 Metropoll, "Turkey's Pulse," p. 22.
- 142 Ayal Ganioglu, "Economic woes set to seal fate of Turkey's local polls," *Al-Monitor*, January 28, 2019, available at https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/01/turkey-economic-woes-set-to-seal-fate-of-local-elections.html?utm_campaign=20190129&utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Briefly%20Turkey. For in-depth reporting on the poll, see Rifat Doğan, "Piar Araştırma: AKP oylarında 7 puanlık düşüş var," *artigerçek*, January 23, 2019, available at <https://www.artigercek.com/haberler/piar-arastirma-akp-oylarında-yuzde-7-dusus-var>. The top two problems cited in the poll were the economy, at 34.5 percent, and unemployment, at 14.6 percent; the refugee issue was third.
- 143 Asked in a 2017 poll, with multiple answers possible, how Syrians sustained themselves in Turkey, Turks' No. 1 answer, at 86 percent, was "with the Turkish state's help." Only 8 percent said, with "the support of NGOs" and only 5 percent said with "the support of foreign organizations/states." The Turkish state has provided free health care and many other services. As indicated earlier in this report, however, there has been considerable funding from nongovernmental organizations and foreign states as well. Meanwhile, two-thirds of Syrian refugees told pollsters in 2017 that they had not received any "institutional or individual assistance in the past year." See Erdoğan, "Syrians-Barometer-2017," pp. 24, 34.
- 144 "U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, "Turkey Fact Sheet, August 2018" (Geneva, Switzerland: 2018), available at <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/09/01.-UNHCR-Turkey-Fact-Sheet-August-2018.pdf>.
- 145 The total cited by Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Recep Akdağ clearly includes some nongovernment-origin funds, such as more than 852 million Turkish lira from "other civil society organizations." It also includes nonhumanitarian, associated costs, such as more than 9 trillion Turkish lira for "security and public order services" and 1.5 trillion Turkish lira for "cost of depreciation of camps properties." A breakdown of Turkish-reported funding sources can be found at Andalou Agency, "Suriyeliler için harcanan maliyetin analizi," June 12, 2017, available at
- 146 Akdağ was using an outdated exchange rate from circa 2015, although it may also have represented a fair average exchange rate for the period of 2012 through 2017. By December 2017, 85 billion Turkish lira would have equated to about \$21 billion, or by today's rate, about \$16 billion. See IRS, "Yearly Average Currency Exchange Rates," available at <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/yearly-average-currency-exchange-rates> (last accessed February 2019).

- 147 For a useful summary of the terms of the agreement, see Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), "Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience: Final Report – November 2018," p. 7.
- 148 For an overview of the EU program for refugees in Turkey, see European Union, European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations, "The EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey," available at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/migration_en (last accessed February 2019). For a complete list of projects for refugees in Turkey undertaken with EU funding, as well as their current status as of January 16, 2019, see European Union, "EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey, List of projects committed/decided, contracted, disbursed," available at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/facility_table.pdf (last accessed February 2019).
- 149 European Union, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, "Turkey."
- 150 Both the ESSN and CCTE programs are administered via debit cards supplied by the Turkish Red Crescent. Although 88 percent of ESSN beneficiaries and 87 percent of CCTE beneficiaries are Syrian refugees, some Afghan, Iraqi, and Iranian refugee families also receive benefits. For the 22 months from late November 2016 through September 2018, the European Union spent a total of \$663 million on ESSN and roughly \$49 million on CCTE. See Turkish Red Crescent Migration and Refugee Services Department, "Syria Crisis: Humanitarian Relief Operation" (Ankara, Turkey: 2018), available at <https://kizilay.org.tr/Upload/Dokuman/Dosya/october-2018-syria-crisis-humanitarian-relief-operation-21-11-2018-68705489.pdf>. For an elaboration of the criteria to qualify for ESSN support and for more detail on the terms of payment, see Kizilaykart-Suy, "ESSN Criteria," available at <http://kizilaykart-suy.org/EN/faq3.html> (last accessed February 2019).
- 151 U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Humanitarian Assistance in Response to the Syrian Crisis," September 21, 2017, available at <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/09/274360.htm>.
- 152 FocusEconomics, "Turkey: Inflation continues to climb in October," November 5, 2018, available at <https://www.focus-economics.com/countries/turkey/news/inflation/inflation-continues-to-climb-in-october>; Trading Economics, "Turkey Youth Unemployment Rate," available at <https://tradingeconomics.com/turkey/youth-unemployment-rate> (last accessed February 2019).
- 153 See Batalla and Tolay, "Toward Long-Term Solidarity with Syrian Refugees?," p. 12, Box 2, which describes Gaziantep's extensive refugee programs as "a successful model for refugee integration from a local perspective." As of December 2017, the Gaziantep municipality had spent \$36 million on refugee programs.
- 154 *Milli Gazete*, "Binali Yıldırım"; Ahval News, "Syrians not in Turkey to stay, says AKP's Yıldırım."
- 155 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior Directorate General of Migration Management, "Temporary Protection."
- 156 Center for American Progress, Istanbul Policy Center, and Istituto Affari Internazionali, "Turkey's Path to Prosperity in 2023," p. 3.

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