TITLE: Adding the "New" Inhabitant to the Design of Urban Area and Social Work for Refugees

AUTHORS: Pinar KARABABA

PAGES: 45-60

# Journal of Economy Culture and Society

Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi

# Adding the "New" Inhabitant to the Design of Urban Area and Social Work for Refugees

## Kentin "Yeni" Sakinini Kentsel Alan ve Mülteciler için Sosyal Hizmet Tasarımına Eklemek

Pınar KARABABA[1]

[1]Istanbul Gelisim University, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Istanbul, Turkey

**ORCID:** P.K. 0000-0003-1565-9409

**Corresponding author:**
Pınar KARABABA,
Istanbul Gelisim University, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Istanbul, Turkey
**E-mail:** pkarababa@gelisim.edu.tr

**ABSTRACT**

With the mass migration from Syria to Turkey in 2011, Gaziantep, the most developed city in the Syrian border, became a focal place. The high numbers of Syrian refugees led to an urban transformation, during which many international and national NGO's started to work in the city. Both of the migrations ended up with an important raise in the rents, and created new strata.

This paper, which covers the relations in 2016 and 2017 in Gaziantep, is an outcome of my own observations in the field I developed as a former NGO worker, and the findings of an independent field research I conducted in 2017. This work makes a reflexive reading of socio-spatial dynamics between locals, refugees and NGO workers to scrutinize the ways to engage socio-spatial dynamics to the social services mechanism. The reading aim is to pose the contribution of their combined value, in both implementation and evaluation processes.

The presentation of the data aims to bring into discussion this power balance between the local, the refugee and the service provider over its impact on the city surface. It is believed that deciphering these paths and nodes would support a better understanding of the refugee situation and the newly developed urban dynamics.

**Keywords:** Mass migration, urban transformation, temporary protection of turkey, socio-spatial dialectics, Gaziantep

**ÖZ**

Suriye'den Türkiye'ye 2011'de başlayan kitlesel göçle birlikte Gaziantep Suriye sınırındaki en gelişmiş kent olarak merkezi bir önem kazandı. Türkiye'nin Geçici Koruması altındaki çok sayıda Suriyeli mültecinin kente yerleşmesi aynı zamanda ulusal ve uluslararası STK çalışanlarının da kente gelmesine ve bu iki grubun yerleşmesiyle beraber kentte bir dönüşümün görülmesine yol açtı. Her iki göçün etkilerine bakıldığında kentte kiraların ve arsa bedellerinin arttığını ve yeni tabakalaşmaların oluşmaya başladığını görüyoruz.

Bu çalışma 2016-2017 yılları arasında bir STK çalışanı olarak Gaziantep'teki

gözlemlerime ve çalışmam bittikten sonra 2017'de kentte yaptığım bağımsız bir araştırmanın bulgularına dayanıyor. Makalede yerel halk, mülteciler ve STK çalışanları arasındaki karşılaşmaların sosyo-mekansal dinamiklerinin düşünümsel (reflexive) bir bakış açısından bir okuması yapılıyor. Böylece düşünümsellik ve sosyo-mekansal dinamiklere dair teorilerin hem uygulama hem de inceleme aşamasında bir arada elde alınmasının katkısını da ortaya koymayı hedefliyor. Bu bakış açısı üzerinden hedeflenen sosyal hizmet mekanizmasına sosyo-mekansal dinamiklerin nasıl eklenebileceğini tartışmaya açmak.

Makalede verilerin sunumuyla birlikte hedeflenen yerli halk, mülteci ve hizmet sağlayıcı arasında kurulan hiyerarşinin kent yüzeyine etkisini tartışmaya açmak. Bu ilişkiler sonucunda kentte oluşan nokta ve izleklerin ortaya çıkarılmasının Türkiye'de mültecilerin durumunun ve yeni gelişen kent dinamiklerin daha iyi anlaşılmasına hizmet edeceği düşünülüyor.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kitlesel göç, kentsel dönüşüm, geçici koruma, sosyo-mekansal diyalektikler, Gaziantep

### 1. Introduction

After the mass migration from Syria to Turkey in 2011, Gaziantep, as the wealthiest city in the Syrian Border, became an important place of confrontation of the local people and Syrian nationals under the Temporary Protection of Turkey. Its geographical and economic importance, made Gaziantep a focal place for the coordination of policies and programs developed by state and international actors. Under these developments, the high numbers of Syrian refugees, and non-Syrian refugees who came earlier, gave rise to an urban transformation during which many international and national NGOs started to work in the city. Both of the migrations –that of refugees and NGO workers- resulted with a significant increase in the rents, and created a new stratum. However, even though the latter, the NGO migration, was to improve the living conditions of the refugees; the dynamics of the city have been improved for the sake of the service providers, while the refugees were left having more or less the same basic needs for better sheltering, nutrition and employment.

In terms of relation with the locals, there is a common ground between the host culture and the culture of refugees, depending on the shared experience of early marriages, child labor, illegal labor and difficulties in accessing the rights and services. However, instead of being an experience to bring two communities together; the burden of social problems is seen mostly on refugees; migration is taken as a source of problems, and the two communities reside on the edge of a clash. This framework of overlapping problems and severe confrontations is surrounded and intensified by the urban transformation in the city. Both the developments in the rapid urbanization due to migration of two new groups, and ongoing gentrification processes in the city, resulted in new paths and nodes in Gaziantep. These encounters on the city map created a new power balance.

In this paper, I suggest a reflexive reading of the socio-spatial dialectics in the city to uncover the confrontation and the conflict nodes. Such a stance also offers a critical evaluation of the roles of different actors in the city, carrying the roles of planners of the urban dynamics, NGO's planners and workers, refugees and locals, to two interrelated domains: planning and production.

This paper is based on my observations in the field I developed as a former NGO worker between 2016 and 2017, and the findings of an independent field research I conducted in 2017. The presentation of the data aims to bring into discussion this power balance between the local, the refugee and the service provider over its impact on the city surface. It is believed that deciphering these paths and nodes would support a better understanding of both, the refugee situation in Turkey and the newly developed urban dynamics.

### 2. Methodology

This work takes a specific node in this temporal-spatial development of new city dynamics based on the case of Gaziantep, Turkey, at a very specific time in the country's and city's history. Depending on the ongoing transformation in Gaziantep, the paper focuses on the discussion of the "new" presence of refugees in the urban dynamics, and dwells on the modes of novelty some aspects of whose the author is skeptical about. To discuss novelty, less visible layers in spatial dynamics would be displayed, such as the roles of NGOs in the changing urban practices.

The province of Gaziantep, in South East Turkey, poses a good example to discuss intersections of agency and planning in an urban environment. Gaziantep is the entrance point to Turkey from Syria, and it is also a former district of Aleppo, Syria. Due to these qualities of former acquaintance and present accessibility, Gaziantep hosts one of the highest refugee populations in Turkey. Additionally, Gaziantep is one of the biggest industrial cities where locals and refugees

encounter each other in formal and informal sectors. The conflictual confrontation of workers, who are mostly working in the informal sector, leads to common notions on novelties brought by refugees, without considering the crosscutting problems with the host culture and the infrastructure of the country of arrival.

Even though it is prioritized to give place to different experiences in this work; three actors are mainly referred to, locals, refugees and NGO workers. The term refugee is used as an umbrella term. The Republic of Turkey has a detailed list of definitions for different conditions of migration in which Syrian nationals came through mass migration, and are legally referred to as Syrian People under the Temporary Protection of Turkey. During the time of the fieldwork, the number of Syrian nationals under Temporary Protection, as the large majority of refugees in Turkey, was announced as 2,823,987 individuals (registered). (IOM, 2017) The given number is based on the number of registered Syrian nationals, however, there were also unregistered people. The number of residents in Gaziantep for that period is 318.078 (DGMM, 2016, p.79). However, with the addition of unregistered refugees, 400.000 people were estimated to reside in Gaziantep.

As regulated by the temporary protection regime, Syrian nationals under the Temporary Protection of Turkey do not have the rights of refugees, and Turkey does not serve as a country where they can reside without a temporal limitation. The Republic of Turkey is a signatory party to the "1951 Refugee Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees" as a member state of the United Nations. In the scope of this convention, Turkey maintains a geographical limitation which grants refugee status only to people fleeing from a European country (CRSR, 1954).At this point, I should clarify that my choice of using refugee to refer to these groups comes from my personal will for their equal access to rights and services.

As a former part of the service providing mechanism, the main challenge in the research was to access refugees for interviews without risking any possible misunderstanding on the exploitation of the same Syrian people I was providing assistance to. For that, I communicated with different groups who were not familiar with my former position, even though they knew that I once worked in the field, so that they would not be intimidated by the fact that a known person would leak their criticisms, which may lead to the end of the support received; nor would they give answers with expectations for further support.

Referring to my previous work, I should note that I deem it a responsibility to my fellow colleagues to acknowledge that these observations were developed without forgetting the difficulties suffered in working in such a difficult field. I also would like to add that the criticism in this work also addresses myself as a former part of the to-be discussed processes.

### 3. Adding Spatial Dynamics and Reflexivity to the Planning of Social Services

The history of articulation of spatial dynamics to social theory includes both, the visibility of actors on a geographical ground and the appearance of the frame itself as an actor. Firstly, space as the mentioned framework, plays the role of a mold for social organization since human action takes its form in accordance with the surrounding geography. Secondly, this mold is shaped on an interactive ground where the residents inside it can affect the processes within the space and therefore, change it substantially.

This late addition of the relation between structure and agency resembles the late appearance of refugees as central figures in the social theory on migration.

The governing idea about the necessity of adding spatial dynamics to the social theory comes from it being an indispensable component of social relations, as the transitive relation between the

actor(s) and space. This work, in line with contemporary literature on urban spatial dynamics, does not take the urban area as a built and stable reservoir of social relations. To the contrary, it is seen as an active ground under the influences of agency and transformation of space. Even though urban planning displays an urban area under the control of planners and authorities; it is actively shared, appropriated and claimed by different publics from different living conditions in society. Far from being the final construction of one group on top of the decision making processes; the active life of cities is under the effect of different and simultaneous waves of transformation. Transformation, in our context, is caused by ecological factors, migration flows, urban transformation projects and conflicts including war and revolts. Lefebvre (2003) poses the role of the urban area in social life *as a form the urban transforms what it brings together. It consolidates everything, including determinisms, heterogeneous materials and contents, prior order and disorder, conflict, preexisting communications and forms of communication* (p. 174). The mentioned perspective of urban space is a highly known, and much referred standpoint in situating the urban spatial dynamics to the social theory. Therefore, the urban area is positioned as the key spatial unit in governance in terms of the accumulation of economy and predominant social relations.

In my reading, this frame offers us two points for the analysis of the social structure. The first one is a theoretical frame to construct a three-dimensional reading of social phenomena, which includes the abstract planning, conscious action of social actors and the spatial impacts on their actions and decisions. The second one is a practical tool to examine what lacks in social politics on space and social-spatial) relations. "Socio-spatial dialectic", as defined by Soja (1980), is the relation between the role of space in the organization of action and the agency which appropriates and re-produces space over the imposed structure. A dialectical approach re-considers the former arguments on the relations of production in modern era in their mutual relation with the surrounding environment, in a sense its frame. Therefore, the frame is re-evaluated as an active ground, where the frame and relations inside it are mutually producing one another (Soja, 1980, p.225). Using this perspective adds the valuable ability to decipher the footsteps of grassroots over the imposed space of planners. However, in my opinion, the other value to be mentioned below, which is added by this theoretical formation of interrelated actions and agencies, remains less visible. Space as a social product, as first uttered by Lefebvre, is considered with the division between the *perceived, conceived and lived* aspects of it (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). Lefebvre (1991) sees a conflict between planning and spatial experience, and takes the planners as active agents in the implementation of a map, but does not refer them as agents also experiencing the implemented environment. Therefore, the agency becomes limited with the ones living in the space, which leads them to be the actors in the public production of the space. The urban area is not the outcome of a collective production, but it is a contradictory space where public and planners do also have the conflict essential in urban area caused by the contradictions of capitalism. Such construction of space lies in temporality; thus, the short term conflicts between state agents, planners and public groups (p.33). The success of any spatial resistance owes a lot to this temporality as well, which enables a constant change in the plan. The planners, however, are referred to more in the work of Castells (2017), who takes them both, as reluctant agents and as agents whose flexibility enables power to influence disadvantaged groups (p. 141). The planner is the intermediator between power groups and lower ranks whose essential role is to prevent resistance (p. 141).

Therefore, the division creates the frame of social production of space over the combined actions of planners-decision makers and urban dwellers in planning, organizing and experiencing the space which is not only planned, but also appropriated through the actions of urban dwellers.

Appropriation is the inscription of a public experience on space by the public experiencing the space. (Lefebvre, 1991, p.167) One of the concerns of this work is the possibility of losing the footprints of planners living in the space in daily life. The planners may produce an abstract-initial form of space, but there is a larger public experience of space in which they also take an active part. By addressing grassroots as people acting within the planned frame may lead to neglect the dual agency of planners, as planners of the abstract scheme and actors residing in the actualization process of their plans. Abstract planning may not match the temporal presence of an urban scheme; it is, by nature, prior to application. However, following the planning process, their presence in space as actors does not remain at an abstract level; they also reside in the version of their plans imposed by state, and publicly appropriated by residents, which brings us to the essential use of the term *dialectics,* as seen in Soja (Soja, 1980, p.225).

Similar to this construction of planner as a part of the social experience, and not just a part of the abstract shape foreseen for a future environment; the social theories on migration can be evaluated on how central and varied the experience of refugees in them is. İn this way, not only the theoretical construction of migrants and refugee's agency would be prominent, but also the researcher can be approached from the agency aspect, rather than being a sole observer. This perspective opens a correlation between reflexivity in methodology and analysis of socio-spatial dialectics. The notion of reflexivity, as agreed broadly by feminist approaches on methodology based on the control of potential hegemonic relations in the research field by adding the researcher to the frame and adding the agency of the suppressed to the analysis (Stanley and Wise, 1993, p.167). This standpoint also re-constructs the concept of knowledge outside of the domain of universal knowledge, and opens a valid and enlarged space for agency and variety (Harraway, 1991). The conditions shaping the socio-juridical structuring of migration and the migration experience itself, which is under various influences, coincide with the relation between frame and agency in socio-spatial dialectics. We also see them in the research context. The discussion of the relation between the research plan, researcher and the area of research in reflexive methodology has a similar structure. To put it in a simpler way, what is referred here is to apply the reflexivity principle of feminist methodology in relation with socio-spatial aspects to the reading of migration literature. In this way, I believe we can extend our understanding on the issue, since this perspective ends our role as passive readers who wait for a certain ethic to be applied on the field, and it improves our capacity for critical evaluation.

The mentioned suggestion is not only to evaluate a written work on migration. The lacks and unnamed territories in theoretical work on migration affect the shaping of the migration field as an area of expertise. We see the impact of the academic migration literature in the development of field analysis of international/national institutions and NGOs. Many topics, including the integration of refugees to decision making processes, social integration, social inclusion/exclusion; peace-building processes; evaluation of the position of the migrant/refugee in local borders; evaluation of the role of the local people in their relation to migrants/refugees follow the suggestions and evaluations of the academic literature, or they consult academicians in some cases. Therefore, the appearance of the varied experiences of refugees in this literature coincides with the transformation of NGOs and national/international refugee programs. The tendency towards taking refugees as passive and one-dimensional receivers of integration programs, was transformed to consider them active participants of inclusion programs.

When we approach it from the specificity of the migrant and non-migrant actors in the context, the macro-micro division in social sciences loses its importance at some level to display

different layers of social reality. Most of the initial work on the issue, independent from its scale, favors the structure and the conditions in the country of arrival more than the individual history of the refugees and locals. This situation of addressing migration as a problem to be solved in favor of the country of arrival, is criticized by Bakewell (2007) as *sedentary bias* (p.1343). Additionally, the many aspects of migration, as Castles (2010) points out, make it difficult to reach a unified theory on migration:

> It is even harder for an interdisciplinary field like migration studies to develop an agreed body of knowledge, and this problem has been compounded by the rapid growth of the field, over the last 20-30 years. As new researchers have been drawn into the study of migration, they have, not surprisingly, applied the conceptual and methodological tools of their disciplines. The incentive structures of the discipline based academic hierarchy make this hard to avoid. The result is that migration research is compartmentalised, with little analytical and methodological collaboration across boundaries. The disciplinary bias has often meant reductionist approaches that focus on limited aspects of migratory experiences, blocking understanding of the whole migratory process. (Castles, 2010, p.3)

In spite of focusing on unity; a reflexive and dialectical approach would place the individual experience of migrants/refugees to a context whose production process is also considered at different levels as abstract, negotiated and experienced. The application of reflexivity to the reading and participating process of the analysis of migration would lead us, as Gray (2008) emphasizes, to uncover *the dominant narratives* which hide and reveal at the same time, different processes of migration (p.943). The unveiling of dominant narratives and, as I believe, dominant tendencies of action in planning, would reveal the different needs and power relations, which should also be noted in the planning and implementation processes.

Based on the above outline of spatial dynamics, it is claimed in this work that this very point does not only bind the theoretical standpoint of a social researcher. The consideration of the specific dynamics is also essential for the design of social work. However, in many cases we see that, both the theoretical mapping of issues related with migration and the planning of social work for persons-in-need, lack this important element.

### 4. Confrontations in the Transforming City and the Zones of Conflict

I suggest that the novelty of refugees in the urban discourses in Turkey is more related with the high numbers in the mass migration from Syria, rather than being a totally new aspect. The other -the economic migrant, the seasonal worker, the refugee, and the asylum seeker- is an indispensable part of the urban structure, such as cheap laborer and child worker. Yet, most of the time, the low numbers lead to their invisibility, which supports the profit-makers. Another case occurs when they become a part of a visible matter temporally, such as in the case of seasonal work, during which the social policies seem to be active and, when it ends, the discussions on human rights start to wait for the new seasonal work time to come. Even though the experiences of these groups are highly important for depicting inequalities and vulnerabilities; the ordinary construction of everyday reality does not accept this specific type of otherness. In this way, they remain to be new, temporary and excluded. After the mass migration from Syria to Turkey in 2011, the high numbers and rapid need for basic needs, made this concealed presence prominent in the urban environment, bringing together economic and social concerns. As a result, the social rights mechanism required to be re-evaluated, which is strengthened by policies and co-ordinations between

the rapidly growing organizations and empowered state institutions. The process in which the legal structure and social services adjusting their system to the needs and vulnerabilities of people who arrived through mass migration, brought another flow to cities via refugee work. This flow also brought change to the cities, however, it remained unquestioned and mostly unnamed. "Expat", a term that refers to international workers of NGOs and international organizations, could be heard quite often in the field, and obviously has better connotations than migrant, even though it signifies a difference in the living conditions of a person who has settled in a foreign country for work. For local NGO workers, no name is given, because it was simply changing their location in the country for social work. Both flows are covered under the domain of refugee work. For mass migration, the policies regarding the adjustment to the city did not consider the economic and social responses that would come from the city. For the mobilization of NGO staff, the urban aspect was not even calculated. The Republic of Turkey does not bind itself legally to provide accommodation to refugees, meaning that almost 90% of refugees reside in urban areas, and not in camps. As a result of the settlement of both groups to the city, an unexpected change happened in rent rates and land values.

As mentioned by Geniş (2011), lack of access to social security and low wages in the informal sector was describing the employment sector in Gaziantep before mass migration, which did not change after the entrance of a new labor power (p.367). Even though, in terms of employment in the informal sector, locals and refugees share a common problem of exploitation; this led to conflicts related with access to work, rather than bringing communities together. The wages changed drastically while the rents were going higher in many cities. The addition of a new working group, NGO workers, created another dynamic, and the rents for middle class apartments also went higher. As a result, most of the cities re-defined their division into two poles for white collars and disadvantaged communities, in terms of rents and wages. This situation led to a not much discussed controversy in terms of social work, one of whose fundamental goals is to prioritize the benefits of persons-in-need and to provide healthy co-habitation through peace-building processes. While the cities were developed according to the needs of the new white collar migration, both locals and refugees suffered from these economic changes. The social map of the city gained new nodes by the addition of these two new groups. At the same time, there was also the ongoing gentrification process which received a new and large group of inhabitants. While upper classes migrated to the newly constructed areas, the rest of the accommodation processes created a conflict between locals and refugees. The changing city map was also divided between new offices of NGOs and national/international organizations, where administrative units created a new safe area. Community centers became central nodes, where the confrontation between locals and refugees was not a volunteer coming together. These places, in some cases, served as conflict nodes. Distributions and economic support to refugees also contributed to the perception of refugees as invaders, when support programs directly addressed refugees. Disadvantaged locals started to consider themselves as secondary to the social rights mechanism.

### 4.1. Urban Transformation

The specific migration is not the only migration flow received by Gaziantep, even though it is certainly the most critical one in terms of number and need for urgent humanitarian response. As a wealthy industrial city, Gaziantep was an economic attraction point for economic migrants from more disadvantaged areas of Turkey since the 1950s. As Geniş (2011) notes, the impact of the mentioned flow escalated between 1990 and 2000,and reached a 31.25% population growth ratio,

which was later followed by another significant number in the next decade, with the addition of almost 250.000 people (p.338). As a result, the city has an active settlement process where new groupings are formed in accordance with the flow; but mostly, as shown by Geniş, affordable prices and closeness to their relatives are important for economic migrants(p.350). The line of settlements following the footsteps of first comers created strict community zones, separating the inhabitants of the city according to their place in the social stratification. When arrivals started from Syria, two processes became effective in the settlement of refugees. The first one was to find an affordable place, which in some cases led to the unification of different families, to cope with the raising prices. The second one occurred with the simultaneously active gentrification process, where empty buildings became the new homes of refugee families.

Gentrification brings up another dynamic. As mentioned by Karadağ (2011), starting from the 1990s, the economic development of the city led to a change in the settlements of middle class and upper class families, who started to move from the city center to new residential areas built in formerly far-away districts of Gaziantep (p. 401). These areas were developed according to the cultural and economic needs and demands of upper classes, which according to my observation, led to three important flows.

Firstly, the city center entered a renovation process. The renovation process was followed by the parallel development of the city as a safe touristic place in the Southeast of Turkey –formerly known as an unsafe region- The old city center was opened for touristic consumption rather than settlements. However, these areas were still covered by non-renovated old neighborhoods, which were preferred by economically disadvantaged groups.

Secondly, as an important university city in the region and a city where many public offices function, Gaziantep started to adjust the emptied parts in the city center for the needs of students and new state officers. Some of the new buildings in the central area changed their architectural features, from large houses to smaller units, and new rental prices appeared for these groups. These groups were followed by the NGO workers, and rental prices increased once again with the inclusion of demands for bi-annual rent payments coming from landlords to guarantee the flow of payments in a very active work environment.

Lately, the arrival of refugees from Syria transformed the not filled, or not yet gentrified parts of the central area. Even though the housing conditions were mostly poor, the rents were high.

The gentrification process does not only have an impact on the living conditions of these communities. Since it started to address the already settled residential areas of economic migrants coming from nearby cities in Turkey, it opened a new and sometimes fierce dimension of confrontation between locals and refugees. As narrated by one of the local interviewees, there is a movement of middle and upper middle classes from central areas, such as Kavaklık, Kırkayakand Kolejtepe to areas formerly known as villages in the city, such as İbrahimli. As told by her, the urban transformation project also affects the shape of the houses, which are now built as smaller units. Kolejtepe, as an example given by her, became an area of conflict because the population is composed of local middle class, Syrians and Turkish citizens, who came from more disadvantaged areas such as Şehreküstü. Karataş and Hoşgör, are also described by her as Syrian locations (A.K., 2017). There are more economically humble areas in the city which already had a natural border from the rest of the city by being the places for people who are citizens, but not considered as natural members of the Gaziantep community. When gentrification processes started, some of the neighborhoods reacted against their necessity to leave this place, which they considered as their safe point in the city. Their migration to new neighborhoods coincided with the settlement of

refugees in these emptied places, and created a conflict between former economic migrants and refugees, all considered as outsiders. In Map 1 (p. 14), the spatial proximity between two communities can also be seen. Refugees, to the eyes of economic migrants, became invaders who take the last place of shelter from the hands of economic migrants who are also in need:

> Gentrification started more or less with their arrival. Karşıyaka is the center of Gaziantep. Someone from Karşıyaka cannot go anywhere because the ones residing there have been living there for 3 generations. They wouldn't feel well in their new place; its ethnicity. We want a top floor, we should dry our tomato paste (salça), we like to feed pigeons on these tops. (…) The locals pay 300 Turkish liras, but Syrians pay 800 Turkish liras because they live all together, three families in one place. It is economic damage to the locals. They came escaping from one war; we escaped from 1000 wars. (S.M, 2017)

This situation can be interpreted by its inverse image as well, if we take notice of the condition of central places where NGO workers reside. Temporary protection requires Syrian refugees to remain in the city borders. They are allowed to change cities, if they find work in the formal sector in a different city, or if they have security problems. The accumulation of people in certain areas of the city directs NGO workers to work in those areas, while most of them do not reside in those areas. Their living places are mostly central, and in those places the social environment is flexible to be adjusted to their needs. Dance nights and yoga meetings for expats, and the change in cuisine, can be given as examples of this flexibility. Gaziantep, a city of gastronomic heritage protected by UNESCO, started to fill the restaurant menus with different types of alcoholic beverages and food such as broccoli-soup, designed for the taste of ex-pats. On the other side of this adoption, there remains the case of the Syrian cuisine. The addition of Syrian food to the cuisine of Gaziantep was not much of a novelty since it has a great Syrian influence, related with the past co-habitation. Still, problems occurred with the entrance of Syrian restaurants, which were seen as an invasion of a new work force, limiting the potential work opportunities for locals.

While for NGO staff, a new safe zone is created surrounding their living area, the above mentioned areas of cohabitation between locals and refugees, lack a balancing and soothing condition between communities. Therefore, while a safety net surrounds the NGO workers, the main addressee of their work remains outside of this safe border, or their safety is threatened when they are acting inside of it.

One clear, yet surprising case for this inclusion-exclusion relation is seen on the new paths on the city surface. The areas of residence, work and leisure created by the migration of NGO workers brought new walking paths to the city. During the field work, the impact of the new white collars on the working routes of child laborers was revealed. In three interviews with NGO workers and locals working at different organizations, it was mentioned that there is a certain line for street seller children, of which I am also a witness. This line starts in the city center, in front of a large community center for refugees. This well-known place is liked by refugee street seller children since it protects them from the anger of the locals due to its focal location. This area covers also dining places where NGO workers go. The line includes a confrontation between NGO staff and refugees, outside the context of social work. The end point is the borders of the central park in the city, which is at the same time the final point of the NGO work in the city center. Different interviewees started to talk about the same children, whom I also knew due to my work, at different places on that route. The route was stable in all the interviews. It appeared that the presence of NGOs and their workers added a new safe line, where children nourish the idea that they are pro-

tected. However, their sympathy towards people using those places can easily create an open threat to children, since they assume everyone in there is somehow alike. All interviewees mentioned their concern on this aspect, since children also try to hug them (E.K., 2017, T.K., 2017, Y.V., 2017). The idea of protection increases their vulnerability, since they also consider everyone dining in those places as safe people. All of the interviewees complained about their physical closeness to adults resulted in a possible sense of protection, which is rather dangerous for children. Beyond the economic peak, the city relied on the prices for socialization and residential units; the impact is also a social one. On the one hand, the unquestioned presence of NGO workers in the city transforms the route and, on the other hand, it creates a route that opposes the major aim of social work, which is not transforming the lives of locals and refugees without doing risk analysis.
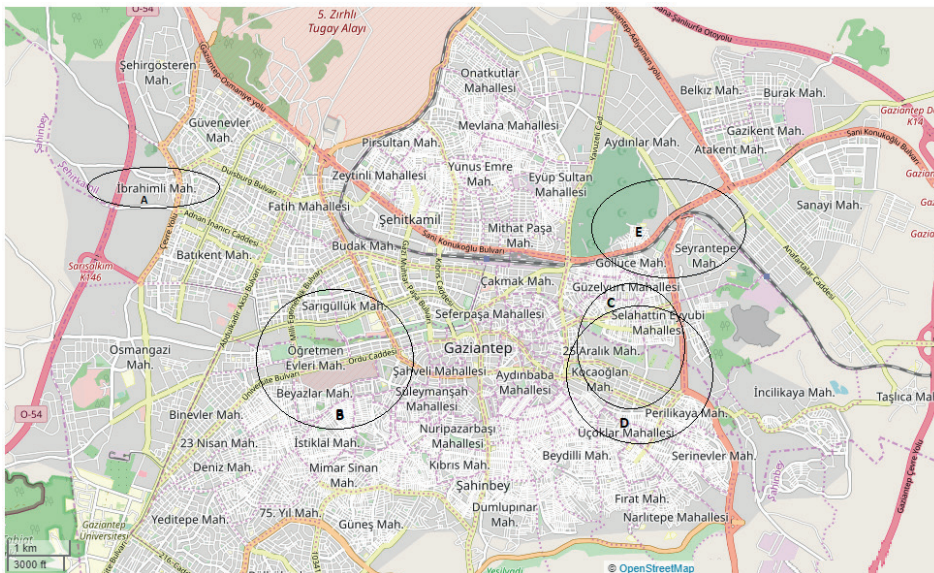


Map1Areas of Transformation in Gaziantep: A: New Middle-Upper Middle Class Settlements, B: Former Middle Class Settlements, C: Disadvantaged Areas, D: Roma Neighborhoods, E: Gentrification Areas.

### 4.2. Role of Community Centers and Aid Programs

Evaluation participants from all sides - UNHCR, partners, donors and Turkish authorities - recognise the importance of the Community Centre model, as a means of providing services and outreach to Syrians. These centres have emerged as the key reference points and one-stop service centres for refugees outside camps: providing information and advice, interpretation, language courses, legal counselling, MHPSS counselling and support groups, day-care and child-friendly spaces, among other services. The only major problem encountered by Community Centres was when they were temporarily mobilised as the medium for delivering cash and CRIs – an understandable convenience from one point of view, but one which ended up greatly disrupting the work of the centres - and the problems of crowd control tested immediate neighbourhood relations. (…) The Community Centres are to some extent now victims of their own success – they have grown so fast in number and variety that UNHCR has difficulty keeping up and there are concerns about dilution of quality (UNHCR, 2016, p.81–82).

UNHCR, as one of the main actors in the decision making, planning and implementation processes in Turkey, adds value to their work by their criticism. As mentioned by their party as well, community centers are both the key nodes for service providing, and possible zones of conflict. One of the reasons for potential conflict is the unplanned encounter of locals and refugees around community centers, which serve as temporal aid distribution points as well. In most cases when locals see a mass around community centers, discontent rises. Other reasons mentioned by an NGO worker (E.K) interviewed in the field, is not adding the perspectives to the development of NGO work which remains, rather work designed by refugees, without much consulting with them (E.K., NGO worker, interview with the author, 26.09.2017, Gaziantep). This comment can also involve the local aspect.

Another NGO worker, (T.K) approaches the point from the possible pacifying effect of aid projects. In most cases, neither spatial dynamics nor solving the crisis through collective production between locals, refugees and decision makers are considered as a must. Therefore, most of the aid projects are one way temporary solutions given to persons-in-need, but they do not offer collectively organized long term solutions:

> In every crisis there is the period of urgent response. That period should be as short as possible to pass to a system in which refugees can work and produce; a system which is does not feed itself with aid but offers local development cases. At the end of the 6th year we are still at the stage of aid and deprivation gets more deepened.(…) Neighborhoods such as Şirinevler, Ünaldı, Cinderesi, Çıksorut are gypsy[1] neighborhoods. In those neighborhoods there are Syrians who got seriously impoverished. They would have lived somewhere else (than living with gypsies) if they could manage. New neighborhoods where poverty gets much deepened are being developed everywhere. (T.K.2017)

As the emphasis on spatial dynamics teaches us, the surrounding and the actions of groups inside that surrounding are interrelated and interdependent. However, when we check the development of social work for refugees, the already existing urban structure is considered only as one-dimensional and only in relation with a mapping of basic and social needs. It is one-dimensional because the city structure is most often taken as an unchanging element in which the only novelty is either the new comers, or the already existing economic structure of the city. Many projects aiming to end informal labor types, with child labor coming first, start from a basic assumption that the poor economy, as a result of the conditions in a certain district or social segment, can be healed by adding an economic support to a group. Livelihood programs depending on capacity building and creation of occupation opportunities in the area-in-need are essential programs to provide solution on a welfare basis. Both national organizations and international actors are key actors in this process. Additionally, the Republic of Turkey, both by changing the legislation on labor including quotas and regulation of labor rights, and including adjustment programs to include refugee groups from certain professions (such as physicians, nurses and delivery nurses) in the formal labor market, became very active on the livelihoods area. The coordination of livelihood programs includes direct work opportunities. One form of livelihood programs includes teaching, such as in the case of the collaboration between UNHCR and the Turkish Employment Agency. The socio-spatial dynamics are visible in the evaluation of UNHCR on designing their support:

---

1 The term is used by the interviewee deliberately.

The needs assessments were a sound beginning for the development of a well-planned skills training strategy, and the fact that the RET needs assessment was carried out in cooperation with İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency), Public Education Centres and local development agencies increased the relevance of the assessment. However, after reviewing the assessment, the evaluation team felt that it was not sufficiently comprehensive to take into account the rapid changes in the labour market. A further area of UNHCR focus **was informal technical and life skills training, both in camps and through community centres in urban areas, as well as Turkish language courses** to enhance Syrian refugees' self-reliance. Data was not available on the impact of these courses on fostering livelihoods and improving refugees' standards of living, and the courses' market linkages were not clear, although anecdotally it seems that the linkage of a sewing training programme and a textile factory in one camp is promising. (UNHCR, 2016, pp.84,85)

In addition to the difficulty of designing projects for rapidly changing spatial conditions; the lack of understanding the spatial dynamics in close community relations resulted in the strengthening of other problems, such as community pressure and increasing needs of the household. The Cash for Work Programs, supported by international actors in collaboration with the Turkish Employment Agency, pose an effective example for solution when these factors are taken into account. The program involves up to 6 months job opportunity and the workers are selected from groups with vulnerability, such as people who have disabled members in their household; people with certain disabilities, or single parents. However, not all partners in livelihood programs considered the relation between the actor and need, and the frame of his/her needs and support programs. In my observation, one of the cases was not providing childcare to mothers who would work, which led to unstable work by selected workers and unfilled quotas. Another case occurred when women workers were expected to work in their neighborhoods. For some women, being seen by the community during work with men would increase community pressure. These concerns of workers led, once again, to problems in maintaining the same worker group for the entire process. The entire employment area includes an important number of national and international projects. Therefore, seeing the mentioned aspect as the only problem in employment is not possible. However, for smaller scale livelihood projects, the participation of women in the workforce was highly affected by this aspect. When we check the number of women who obtained work permits in 2016, we see the number is 1.145, whereas the number for men is 12.145[2] (Ministry of Labor, 2016, p. 127). For livelihood projects implemented by the exemption provided by the state for temporary employment projects for refugees, finding the gender breakdown is not always possible in the reports of service providers and funding partners. The only report including the mentioned this breakdown was published by Yuva Association in their 2016 Activity Report, as the implementation partner of GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), with 14 Syrian women workers and 115 Syrian male workers in Gaziantep (Nizip district) (Yuva, 2017, p.28).

When referring to the labor market conditions in Gaziantep, one should also mention the historical development of specific work relations in the city. The condition of the labor market in Gaziantep has been historically constructed on a tradition of business, whose success depends to

---

2    The main factor in this low number of work permits results from the fact that the employer is liable to pay the fee to obtain the work permits, which is not preferred since finding cheap labor is very easy.

an important extent on invisible and informal labor. The interviews with locals display Gaziantep's relation to the city's new laborers and residents:

> Their first arrival suited us. We rented empty houses at high prices; we made them work for us for low prices. (…) The new comers suffered from the cruelty of us, Turks. They went to live in urban transformation areas in Seyrantepe, Merveşehir, Beykent. The Turks rent them their shops as houses. They opened low door sills, so short, almost at the height of a man. Neighbors helped them. To me its robbery, in the first days the shopkeepers profited a lot from them. (S.M. 2017)

The relations of exploitation in neighborhoods are among the major concerns of NGO work, however, since an entire reading of spacio-temporal conditions is not considered, solutions remain limited with the aforementioned livelihood projects and unending aid procedures.

This critical confrontation between locals and refugees is not only related with the labor market. Peace-building is an important part of NGO work and social services, and it is important to bring people together for co-habitation against the above mentioned conflicts. However, since the information distribution processes are weak both in public services and NGOs, another conflict is created by the legitimization of social support mechanisms. Most of the distribution areas are places shared by both communities where, if only one community receives support, the other feels secondary. In a similar fashion, most of the distribution points are also shared public institutions, such as the post-office, where people who get supports, wait in the same cue with people who are there for their daily engagements. Bringing two communities together without considering a possible conflict, creates rapidly developing temporarily aggressive nodes of conflict, and increases the sense of inequality between the parts: "The state created a knife with two sharp edges" (H.M., 2017).

Hospitals also become one of the most mentioned places of perceived inequality. Similar to the support services provided by public institutions; the services in hospitals as well, are publicly believed to work better for refugees. In their work on the situation in Gaziantep Deniz et. al. (2016), refer to hospitals as one of the confrontation points between locals and refugees, where the social exclusion gets intensified(p.83). Their research also displays the belief about refugees being privileged in the health system, as a commonly believed and non-existent software that favors refugees (p.83). My observations and the interviews I made also prove that belief: *Everything is fine between us, they are protected, they even take our places in the hospitals* (M.C., 2017). During my work, I witnessed that this particular stance of the locals is related also to their ill-information about the health system procedures, such as arranging appointments. For refugees, due to the language barrier, appointments are arranged by NGO translators, and I believe the above-mentioned non-existent software by Deniz et. al., is the actual appointment system in health services, which does not distinguish between locals and refugees. Many disadvantaged locals do not know how to use that system, and they go to hospitals early, and wait until the end of appointed meetings, so that they wait also for refugees who took appointments before. On the other hand, while NGO translators can make appointments, the capacity is not enough to deal with the health problems of all refugees and, therefore, many refugees have to find their way in hospitals, as well as in many other bureaucratic institutions in the place they live:

> In hospitals, if they think no one would help, they are mean to you. Some girl broke her leg. Until she received the protection card, they did not take her to the hospital.[3] She waited hours, 'go back to Syria', the hospital staff said. But some hospitals are better. (S.A., 2017).

---

3   Temporary protection allows only urgent health care services for unregistered people.

That is why, when asked about the definition of refugee for him, he gave the answer:

> P.K: What does the term refugee mean to you?
>
> S.A: Help yourself and that's it, as long as you are not breaking the law, no one would do harm to you, but you are on your own. (S.A., 2017).

While the economic support mechanism is different for locals and refugees, and both parts are not well-informed about how to access them, the services in hospitals function the same for both. However, as a known conflict node, they are not under the scope of peace-building projects, as possible units of crisis similar to public offices of distribution. Another case is seen in community centers which offer both aid (legal and psycho-social) and distribution. These centers are considered as places organizing the peace building projects, but they are not understood as units within the peace building system, whose existence at a certain node in the city may also cause some intervention in the peace building process.

### 5. Conclusion

As seen in the cases above, the newly developed urban dynamics in Gaziantep follow the path of both former lacks in the organization of the city, such as neighborhoods developed via economic-migration, gentrification and informal sector, and a new mobility of refugees and locals. All of the above mentioned processes, as displayed in this work, crosscut each other and translate the city map into a map of new safe zones, new residential and co-habitation areas, and new conflict zones. A common tendency in the organization of the city and the planning of social services is focusing on refugees, seeing them as new-comers. This approach neglects their existence in the city as agents who share a responsibility with the rest of the dwellers. Insistence on this approach may realize the negative potential of these nodes as zones of crisis. The novelty affirmed to refugees erases the past relations between locals and their neighbors. The shared problems between host culture and that of refugees disappear, and other mobilities in the city become invisible, such as the migration of ex-pats and the movement of gentrified neighborhoods. The untouched areas during the planning process unwillingly support the occurrence of conflicts and unsafe places. Additionally, it changes the economic balances in the city. The gaps in planning, so far, show that the rapid need of development for refugee crisis does not seem to be able to reach any goals without adding the role of NGO workers in the city and the response of the locals.

A reading of socio-spatial dialectics in the city, from a reflexive standpoint, brings the planners of social work and city dynamics to the level of actors, and it supports to reveal the relations which also transform the city. At the same time, it displays how actors also plan and affect the city dynamics, which is seen in the re-consideration of rental places for refugees.

It is believed that deciphering these paths and nodes provides a broader scrutiny on the refugee situation in Turkey and the newly developed urban dynamics. The city is an active place, where movement rather than settlement is prominent. If NGO work addresses itself as an agent of urban transformation, and if the urban environment is taken as a dynamic ground in which locals are also active; both the risk analysis would be more efficient and plans about problem solving would be realized on a more realistic ground. While refugee rights and the rights of the locals are taken as separate units; cases of co-habitation, encounter and conflict reveal the need for looking at the interrelations between them.

## References

Bakewell, O. (2008). 'Keeping them in their place': The ambivalent relationship between development and migration in Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, *29*(7), 1341–1358.

Castells, M. (2017). *Kent, sınıf, iktidar*, Ankara:Phoenix

Castles, S. (2010). Understanding global migration: A social transformation perspective, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *36*(10), 1565–1586.

Convention relating to the status of refugees (adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954) 189 UNTS 137 (Geneva Convention), http://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html, accessed 2 April 2019.

Deniz et. al., (2016). *Bizim müstakbel hep harap oldu [Our future is all ruined]*. İstanbul:İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) (2016) *Göç Raporu* [*Migration Report*]. Ankara: İç İşleri Bakanlığı Göç İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü.

Geniş, Ş. (2011). Gaziantep'te göçmen hane profilleri ve kentle bütünleşme dinamikleri [Migrant household profiles and their dynamics in unification with the urban area]. In Gültekin, M. (Ed.), *Ta ezelden taşkındır Antep*[*Antep has always been disorderly*] (pp. 335–370). Ankara: İletişim.

Gray, B. (2008). Putting emotion and reflexivity to work in researching migration. *Sociology*, *42*(5), 935–952.

Haraway, D. (1991). Simians, cyborgs and women: the reinvention of nature. London: Free Association Books.

IOM, Migrant presence monitoring. situation report, December 2016, 1, http://migration.iom.int/docs/Sitrep_Turkey_December_2016.pdf, accessed 10 April 2019.

Karadağ, M. (2011). Gaziantep'te kentsel mekanın ve kültürel coğrafya'nın değişimi [The transformation of urban space and cultural geography in Gaziantep]. In Gültekin, M. (Ed.), Ta ezelden taşkındır Antep [Antep has always been disorderly] (pp. 393–413). Ankara: İletişim.

Lefebvre, H., (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell

———. (2003). *The urban revolution*. Minneapolis (Estados Unidos: University of Minnesota Press.

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (2016). *Work permits of foreigners' report,* Ankara: T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı.

Soja, E. (1980). The socio-spatial dialectic. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 70*(2), 207–225.

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking out again*. London: Routledge.

UNHCR (2016), Evaluation of UNHCR's emergency response to the influx of Syrian Refugees into Turkey: full report, UNHCR,https://www.unhcr.org/research/evalreports/58a6bbca7/evaluation-unhcrs-emergency-response-influx-syrian-refugees-turkey-full.html, accessed 02.04.2019

Yuva Association (2017). 2016 *Activity report*, İstanbul: Yuva Association

### Cited Interviews:

A.K., academic personnel, interview with the author, 10.07.2017, Gaziantep

E.K., NGO responsible, interview with the author, 26.09.2017, Gaziantep

T.K., NGO responsible, interview with the author, 06.10.2017, Gaziantep

Y.V., Coffehouse owner, interview with the author, 16.10.2017, Gaziantep

S.M, Shopkeeper, interview with the author, 17.10.2017, Gaziantep

H.M., Syrian NGO worker, interview with the author, 28.09.2017, Gaziantep

M.C., house laborer[4], interview with the author, 29.09.2017, Gaziantep

S.A., Syrian NGO worker, interview with the author, 05.10.2017, Gaziantep

### Maps:

Map1Areas of Transformationin Gaziantep, p14, https://www.openstreetmap.org/export#map=13/37.0701/37.3822, Access: 01.09.2019.

---

4    Special choice of the author instead of using the more commonterm "housewife"