

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY

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March 2017

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(Authors listed in alphabetical order)

March 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Syrians arriving en masse since 2011 have become part of daily life in Turkey. Their unprecedented number living outside camps has necessitated 'civil society' to respond, forced to fill the vacuum of assistance left by a government which has mainly focused its support on those who are in camps. Our one year research project, conducted in four cities across Turkey (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Gaziantep), aimed to understand how civil society is responding to Syrians in the country. It is mindful that discussing 'changes' in civil society is difficult owing to the lack of a fixed comparison and the various stratifications and ambiguities within the term. It therefore focuses instead on how relationships between different actors are being affected by the Syrian presence and how CSO activities may affect the possible inclusion of Syrians in the country. The primary findings of the project have highlighted many areas to be researched further, but our initial findings can be summarised as follows:

CSOs are filling the vacuum in the field owing to the lack of state presence outside camps, and they are often seen by Syrians as part of the state's machinery. It is generally agreed that CSOs are successful in providing material assistance given their capacity, which is still relatively limited in relation to the scale of the issue. However, there remain disputes over whether providing material assistance should be CSOs' primary objective, or whether the focus should be on advocacy for rights, and the development of an inclusive environment with equal access to education, health and the labour market for all Syrians. In terms of discussing the 'success' of civil society, actors define it through employing different criteria, which are broadly reflective of their specific agenda, and this results in mixed evaluations. The policy of avoiding turning the Syrian issue into something political is also reflected in the needs versus rights division being practiced by different civil society groups, with many CSOs focusing on material assistance rather than rights for refugees.

Although there has been a general increase in the number of associations, this is happening concurrently to a government project to increase the numbers of CSOs as part of their own political framework. Anecdotal information highlights an extensive increase in the capacity of projects in the past few years, but capacity is still not changing among other groups in response to Syrians. There is also a pattern of existing groups increasing or changing their activities. The changes civil society is undergoing as a result of the response to Syrians are delineated down existing stratifications.

Despite the increasing number and activities of CSOs there is a lack of communication among these actors. The problems of cooperation and coordination are widely acknowledged. Competition between CSOs is regarded as the primary reason for such problems. There is competition for a number of reasons, ranging from rivalry for funds to political differences and differences of world view. The CSO sector in Turkey has also been deeply affected by the entrance of INGOs into the country in unprecedented numbers. INGOs are increasing the capacity of civil society through funding and partnerships but, through this process, they are also creating competition and marketisation in the field, which is driving CSOs from voluntarism to professionalism.

Many CSOs believe that the state is cooperating only with those who are ideologically aligned with it, or even creating its own CSOs. Traditional roles and relations of the state and CSOs are enduring in this regard despite increasing levels of cooperation in the field. The response to Syrians by the state and civil society is prompting renewed questions about what position civil society should hold in relation to the state. The policies of the government to regulate CSO activities, such as AFAD's expanding role, EYDAS and accreditation, are regarded as an infringement of the relatively autonomous space of non-government aligned CSOs.

Syrian and local CSOs have the potential to ease the inclusion process of Syrian refugees through their activities. However, the relations between these institutions remain quite problematic. Hierarchical relationships, language barriers and cultural differences are listed as the main traps blocking higher levels of cooperation. Considering that these civil society actors, both Syrians and locals, are a microcosm of society in general, these problems are likely to be a barrier to future inclusion in wider contexts as well.

To conclude, the arrival of Syrians has exacerbated many existent problems in Turkey, such as the question of education in the mother tongue, social security systems, and the placement of minority groups within society. It has also raised questions about the role of civil society in relation to the state, and whether the manner of its evolution is occurring along new, or existing lines. Arguably the civil society response constitutes a definitive moment for its galvanisation, motivation and shape, but this must be considered in the context of the suspicions about the government use of CSOs as a tool of engineering in their political framework. The entrance of Syrians into a stratified community is prompting power negotiations between different actors over the terms of dealing with them, and these areas of contestation are indicating ways in which the state reflex is in place and ways in which civil society is attempting to respond on its own terms.

List of Abbreviations

AFAD: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency

AKP: Justice and Development Party

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

DGMM: Directorate General of Migration Management

ENKS: The Kurdish National Council of Syria

ERG: Education Reform Initiative

EYDAS: Electronic Aid Distribution System

FES: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

GAP: Southeastern Anatolia Project

HDRF: Human Development Research Foundation

HÜGO: Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Center

HYD/HCA: Helsinki Citizens' Assembly

IGAM: Asylum and Migration Research Center

IHOP: Human Rights Joint Platform

IMPR: International Middle East Peace Research Center

INGO: International Non-Governmental Organisation

KADAV: Women's Solidarity Foundation

LFIP: The Law on Foreigners and International Protection

NGO: Non-governmental Organisation

OKDER: Okmeydanı Association

TPC: Temporary Protection Centers

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of civil society actors is critical in the manner in which refugees are hosted, and accepted, at local levels, which in turn may impact on the national and international response to protracted refugee situations. Far too often refugee assistance is approached and examined in a top-down manner that renders the agency of civil society invisible. Clearly the legal framework of refugee policy making, organisation of large humanitarian assistance, and lobbying for funding from the donor community is done at national and international levels. However, the enactment of small scale humanitarian assistance and local social initiatives depends on the interactions of civil society with refugees. How civil society actors respond to, assist in some cases, and in other cases contest, the presence of refugees within their society is an important factor for the ability of refugees to secure assistance and reach a dignified standard of living. This works both ways – the way civil society within a host community responds to a refugee presence has a significant impact on its own character and dynamics.

The presence of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries now qualifies as a protracted refugee situation, using Crisp's definition – that is, refugees who have lived in exile for more than five years, and who still have no immediate

prospect of finding a durable solution to their plight by means of voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement.¹ The UNHCR estimate that 2.45 million Syrians will be living within host communities by the end of 2016 – 90 percent of the Syrian population in Turkey. Those outside camps are often unaccounted for, and survive under challenging circumstances with poor access to information, registration and to public services, including education and healthcare. Only those with residence permits can enroll in public schools. Others can only follow education as 'guests' or attend temporary education Centers (TEC).² All registered Syrians have access to free healthcare in public hospitals in all 81 provinces of Turkey,³ while all Syrians, regardless of registration, can technically receive free emergency health services. On January 15 2016, the government passed a new law which officially allowed the granting of work permits to all Syrians who had completed their registration in the country. However, by April 2016, according to reports, fewer than 0.1 percent of Syrians stood to gain the right to work under the new labour law⁴ owing to practicalities such as Turkish employers being unwilling to pay them the minimum wage.

Research papers and INGO situation reports about Syrians in Turkey have been produced consistently for the past five years, the duration of Syrians'

¹ Jeff Crisp, "No Solution in Sight: The Problem of Protracted Refugee Situations in Africa", *The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies*, Working Paper No. 68, (2002):1.

² Temporary Education Centers (TEC) teach in Arabic and use a curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education of the Syrian Interim Government and modified by the Turkish Ministry of Education. Currently approximately 78 percent of Syrian students attend TECs and 22 percent attend other schooling institutions, mainly Turkish public institutions. Bulent Aras and Salih Yasun, "The Educational Opportunities and Challenges of Syrian Refugee Students in Turkey: Temporary Education Centers and Beyond", *Istanbul Policy Center-Sabancı University-Stiftung Mercator Initiative*, (2016): 1, accessed 25 October 2016.

³ The government released a circular in 2013, Circular 2013/08, which extended the free emergency healthcare provision from 11 to 81 provinces in Turkey; "Suriyeli Mültecilerin Sağlık Hizmetlerine Erişimi", accessed 24 October 2016.

⁴ Patrick Kingsley, "Fewer than 0.1% of Syrians in Turkey in line for work permits", *The Guardian*, 11 April 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/11/fewer-than-01-of-syrians-in-turkey-in-line-for-work-permits>, accessed 19 April 2016.

presence in the country in large numbers. This research has hitherto focused on how Syrians are coping in Turkey, how the Turkish government is dealing with the Syrians and the perceptions of Syrians by Turkish individuals. There has been a lack of research into how civil society in Turkey is adapting or changing as a result of the Syrian presence here, and the medium to long term impact that these changes in civil society might have on Syrians and Turkish society as a whole. This research aims to fill this gap by producing data about current changes in civil society in response to Syrians in Turkey. The main research question is: "How are CSOs in Turkey evolving in response to assisting Syrians in Turkey and what are the implications of this?" It examines the impact on CSOs in terms of their relations with each other, their relations with the state, and their capacity. And it documents how these evolving dynamics between assistance giving actors in Turkey may have long-term repercussions for relations between CSOs and the state. This research is being conducted in an environment of constant flux, both in terms of the political situation within Turkey and the numbers and situation of Syrian refugees generally and in Turkey. As a result it is not being conducted with clearly defined boundaries, rather it hopes to capture some of the ongoing changes that civil society is going through in response to a changing reality.

The protracted Syrian presence in Turkey, as in the other neighbouring host countries of Lebanon and Jordan, and the way those countries are dealing with it, is contributing to two fundamental questions about the manner of refugee assistance. The first is the shift from short term humanitarian emergency provision towards initiatives aimed at dealing with longer term realities. This is not an

easily defined disjuncture – despite it being over five years since the first Syrian refugees arrived in Turkey in large numbers there are still those with emergency humanitarian needs who cannot be ignored, alongside those with more entrenched welfare concerns such as labour, education and language. Much prevarication over implementing this shift to the longer-term has also been caused by the imperatives of the donor industry, which, with regards to refugee responses, are intrinsically geared towards emergency oriented provision. The shift towards longer term strategies therefore requires different humanitarian structures and, in some cases, actors. The second is the recognition that, with ever increasing numbers of refugees living outside official camps or informal settlements, the role of host countries, and particularly communities and local institutions within host countries, in assisting refugees has become increasingly pressing. Former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres called for a new 'aid architecture' for refugee assistance in December 2014, reflecting the intense strain the Syrian refugee crisis has placed on the international humanitarian apparatus.⁵

In both of these contexts, there is an increasing awareness of the need to incorporate individuals and local communities into new aid architectures. Researching the dynamics of the refugee-civil society relationship is needed to understand what the longer-term implications of the refugee presence are likely to be and, crucially, whether it is possible to use it to increase civil society initiatives at local levels – and how this might be achieved if so.

In addition, the particular response of civil initiatives in Turkey to Syrians has exposed

⁵ 3RP Syria Crisis, UN and partners launch major aid plans for Syria and region. December 18, 2014 <http://www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/news/un-partners-launch-major-aid-plans-syria-region/>, accessed 18 January 2017.

and deepened other issues regarding refugee assistance, which have been stratified as a result of the context of existing social and political struggles in the country. Debates over the agency of the refugee – whether they should be treated as a dependent victim or an actor in their own future – and, related to this, the concept of 'charity' in refugee provision are influenced by the two main motivations behind the government's response to Syrians. Arguably, these combine both Islamic fraternity, and the neo-Ottomanist argument that Turks have a historical responsibility toward the peoples of the Ottoman Empire. There are confused ideas about who is responsible for assisting refugees, with many in Turkey believing it is the duty of the international community; and whether the state is shirking its duties by allowing, directly or indirectly, a space for civil society to exist. The perceptions and expectations of international, national and local actors, about what civil society should be doing in Turkey is also shaping the space in which it is operating, and the potential of a future space. The ways in which responses to Syrians are developing in Turkey therefore reflect some fundamental issues within the country – its evolving attitude and relationship towards international actors, confusion over the role of the state in relation to civil society, and the placement of Syrians as a public versus private responsibility.

1.1. Context in Turkey

Soon after the arrival of the first refugees in spring 2011, Turkey adopted an open door policy which made it easy for Syrians to enter the country. Syrians are typically referred to as 'guests' by Turkish media and government

officials. The Turkish geographical limitation on the refugee definition of the 1967 New York Protocol prevents their possible application to acquire the status of refugee. As part of Turkey's renewal of its legislation under the framework of the ongoing EU accession process, asylum and migration laws have also been updated. The Law on Foreigners and International Protection (*Yabancılar ve Uluslararası Koruma Kanunu*) was issued in April 2013 and came into force in 2014. This law provided Syrians with a new, unique, status – that of temporary protection (LFIP, 2014, art. 91).

Until recently, all Syrians were eligible for such 'temporary protection' in Turkey on prima facie basis, which means that any Syrian nationals seeking international protection are admitted to Turkish territory and will not be sent back to Syria against their will.⁶ From early 2015 the government started temporarily closing a number of borders with Syria before closing them permanently to all but seriously injured Syrian asylum seekers in October 2015.⁷ In January 2016 Turkey introduced a visa requirement for Syrians arriving from third countries via air or sea and announced a work permit regulation for Syrians who have lived over six months in Turkey.

Dealing with the presence of Syrians is occurring in an increasingly complex political environment, both domestically and internationally.

Internationally, the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan, which was agreed upon in October 2015 and officially implemented on 20 March 2016, which agreed that for every Syrian migrant sent back to Turkey, one Syrian already in Turkey who had not attempted to reach the EU through illegal

⁶ Relief Web, "Legal status of individuals fleeing Syria: Syria Needs Analysis Project", June 2013. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/legal_status_of_individuals_fleeing_syria.pdf, accessed 18 April 2016.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Turkey: Syrians Pushed Back at the Border", 23 November 2015 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/11/23/turkey-syrians-pushed-back-border>, accessed 2 August 2016.

means would be resettled in the EU, turned refugees into political and security pawns. Many international human rights and refugee right organisations have claimed that the treatment of Syrian refugees by European powers is subverting internationally recognised laws. In this context, and since the first arrivals of Syrians into Turkey across the open border between the two countries, the continued 'hospitality of Turkey' towards the 2.754 million Syrians⁸ on its land has been widely credited. The question of Syrians' long-term presence is also extremely sensitive, with disagreement about whether to aim for 'integration' – which is perceived negatively by some actors as 'assimilation' – or 'harmonisation', which is the preferred term of DGMM. 'Harmonisation' here means a form of integration, where the migrant group can keep its cultural identity but live in 'harmony' with the host society.⁹ Prior to the attempted coup in Turkey on 15 July, the government had signalled mixed messages over its intention to grant Syrians living in Turkey citizenship.¹⁰ However, this has prompted some controversy from opponents of the ruling party AKP, who are concerned that President Erdoğan is seeking to establish the Syrian community as a loyal constituency for the future – another politically charged move – and in the context of increasingly curtailed citizenship rights for Turkish citizens during the state of emergency. Following the attempted coup, Syrians have faced increasing insecurities as a result of their being embedded within the domestic political situation. These insecurities have ranged from being directly targeted in post-

coup violence¹¹ to refugee support systems being weakened by post-coup purges.

Additionally, civil society in Turkey is heavily bifurcated and its very categorisation is ambiguous and open to varied interpretations. The influx of Syrians into the country has, over the past six years, steadily concentrated the attention of a diverse range of actors, who may loosely be termed 'civil society' but whose grouping, in reality, only serves to highlight the fallacy of such a single term. These actors include state organisations, non-state groups operating along various political ideological lines, 'rights based' groups, humanitarian service providers, 'faith based' groups, labour unions, solidarity groups, volunteer initiatives, Syrian initiatives, expat collectives and individuals. As a direct result of the Syrian refugee issue, these actors, with previously diverse agendas and spheres of work, are focusing on the same issue, often through necessity rather than choice. Of particular significance is how, or whether, these actors are working together, the particular areas of negotiation and contestation between them, and the implications for such negotiations on relations between these, and the modality and type of assistance to Syrians. Part of the focus of the research is to understand whether the common platform created by the Syrian presence has the potential to unify previously disparate elements of civil society in Turkey in a way which other common interests, such as resources, water, urban regeneration, has not been able to achieve.

⁸ According to the UNHCR, there were 2,753,696 registered Syrians in Turkey as of 19 October 2016; Syrian Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, accessed 28 October 2016.

⁹ Sophia Hoffman, Et Sahizer Samuk, "Turkish Immigration Politics and the Syrian Refugee Crisis," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, (2016): 4.

¹⁰ On 3 July President Erdoğan announced that Syrian refugees living in Turkey could be granted citizenship. On July 11, the Deputy Prime Minister declared that only some of the refugees would be allowed this right (the selection criteria remains unknown). The same day, the new Prime Minister Yıldırım delivered a speech announcing a policy of rapprochement with Syria (and other neighbouring countries)."

¹¹ Diego Cupolo, "Syrian shops in Ankara hit in post-coup riots", DW 22 July 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/syrian-shops-in-ankara-hit-in-post-coup-riots/a-19416521>, accessed 27 July 2016.

1.2. Conceptual clarity

1.2.1. Civil Society and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Civil Society is an ambiguous term open to a diverse array of concepts, actors and dynamics. For the purpose of this research, we define civil society as all non-state actors working with Syrian refugees. This includes non-state groups operating along various political ideological lines, 'rights based' groups, humanitarian service providers, 'faith based' groups, labour unions, solidarity groups, volunteer initiatives, Syrian initiatives, expat collectives and individuals. We acknowledge that these groups do not constitute the entirety of what might be considered to be civil society, and which might include groups such as associations (particularly Bar Associations and Teachers Associations), foundations, trade unions, chambers, cooperatives and federations and confederations. Throughout this report we use the term Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to indicate all formal and informal groups which we have interviewed. These may refer to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), but they also include groups, such as solidarity groups, volunteer collectives, activist groups and religious groups, which do not necessarily identify as NGOs. The term CSO is therefore broad enough to include a spectrum of organisations. However, the term does not claim to speak for all civil society – rather, CSOs form part of civil society but do not individually constitute it.

It should be emphasised that civil society is not necessarily a positive analytical term. Rather it should be understood as a newly emerged form of power that restructures society and introduces

new forms of sociability and subjectivity.¹² In Turkey there are debates over the extent to which civil society should be taken as a given positive development;¹³ the relationship between civil society and religion; and whether the existence of a strong state necessarily undermines the potential for a strong civil society. 'Civil society' is characterised by the significant role of religion in providing a structure for the associations, welfare groups and civic movements; and for the role of the state in its attempts to shape its own perception of civil society. There is also the separate, but related issue, of minority groups (most obviously the Kurdish community, but also members of other minorities such as Christians, Shi'ites, Alevis) fostering their own civil society which may either complement, or exist in isolation of, other Turkish civil society groupings. Most civil society organisations in Turkey are not issue-based in scope – instead they are embedded in big societal visions such as Kemalism, a 'modern' Turkey, the protection of contemporary civilised life, the secular-democratic Turkey or Islamic order, or a socialist Turkey. And while civil society organisations institutionally take place outside the state, they can have strong normative and ideological ties with state power,¹⁴ or indeed be working as subcontractors of the state. Some argue that civil society organisations in Turkey have traditionally acted as an additional voice to at the service of the 'father state', conceptualised as part and parcel of the state's national security project.¹⁵ "Both civic forces and representatives of the state are present in the so-called autonomous public sphere," and "[...] discourses of civil society and state [are so enmeshed] on the ethnographic ground that the analytical

¹² Daniella Kuzmanovic, "Refractions of Civil Society in Turkey" (Palgrave Connect, 2010), 24.

¹³ E. Fuat Keyman & Ahmet Icduygu, "Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey: Actors, Boundaries and Discourses", *Citizenship Studies*, 7:2 (2003): 221.

¹⁴ E. Fuat Keyman & Ahmet Icduygu, "Globalization, Civil Society and Citizenship in Turkey: Actors, Boundaries and Discourses", *Citizenship Studies*, 7:2 (2003): 221.

¹⁵ Alper Kaliber and Nathalie Tocci, "Civil Society and the Transformation of Turkey's Kurdish Question," *Security Dialogue*, 1:2 (2010): 197.

distinction is obsolete."¹⁶ It can be generally concluded that there is neither a 'presence' nor an 'absence' of civil society within Turkey, but merely the presence of some of its characteristics.¹⁷

1.2.2. 'Needs based' versus 'rights based' CSOs

Throughout the report we use the terms 'needs based' and 'rights based' to refer to the activities of CSOs. Those organisations which are 'needs based' are usually focused on providing material assistance, such as food, shelter, education and healthcare, while those which are defined as 'rights based' are focused on advocating for the rights of Syrians – the fulfilment of their legal rights, their empowerment and their ability to break the cycle of poverty and dispossession. A 'rights based' approach is commonly referred to, as defined by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as containing the following constituent elements: 1) linkage to rights 2) accountability 3) empowerment 4) participation 5) non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups.¹⁸ A 'rights based' approach thus treats the individual refugee as an empowered actor in their own future with a self-securing potential. It recognises the importance of transparency over who is providing aid, the conditions under which it is given, how long it will last. And it is intrinsically determined by the localised settings within which it is being given.¹⁹ While a 'needs-based' approach focuses on securing additional resources for delivery of services to marginalised groups, a 'rights based' approach calls for existing resources to be shared more equally, and assisting the marginalised people to assert their rights to those resources, thus making the process

explicitly political. The distinction between the two approaches impacts on the way their services are conceived and implemented.

However, this distinction is often not so neatly divided in practice in response to Syrians, with many CSOs providing both 'needs based' and 'rights based' services. Often this blurring has been prompted by the reactive response to the emergency situation prompted by Syrians – a situation with multiple layers owing to the consistent arrival of 'new' refugees who have emergency needs alongside those with longer-term entrenched welfare concerns. Some material assistance is being provided along 'rights based' lines – with recipients fully aware of where the assistance is coming from, how long it will last and their rights concerning the conditions under which it is being given – while other material assistance is not being provided down rights lines. Some organisations, which have previously been purely 'rights based', are extending their work to include material assistance, but this is also often provided down 'rights based' lines.

1.3. Research Questions

- How are CSOs in Turkey responding to Syrian refugees at local levels across Turkey – in Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara and Gaziantep?
- How are CSOs in Turkey and other non-governmental initiatives changing as a result of assisting Syrians?
- How is this assistance impacting on CSOs and other non-governmental initiatives – in particular their relations with each other, their relations with the state and their capacity?

¹⁶ Daniella Kuzmanovic, *"Refractions of Civil Society in Turkey"* (Palgrave Connect, 2010), 136.

¹⁷ Metin Heper & Senem Yildirim "Revisiting civil society in Turkey", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 11:1, (2011): 1–18.

¹⁸ Munzoul Assal, "Rights and Decisions to Return: Internally Displaced Persons in Post-war Sudan". In, Katarzyna Grabska and Lyla Mehta (ed) *"Forced Displacement: Why Rights Matter"*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008):145.

¹⁹ Michael Posner and Deirdre Clancy, *A Human 'rights based' Approach to Refugee Assistance*, Human Rights First, https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/approach_refugess.pdf, accessed 15 July 2016, 4.

- How might these changes in the CSO sector impact on the future inclusion of Syrians in Turkey in the intermediate to long term?

1.4. Outline of report

This report takes the form of a field-observation report, which does not include a theoretical framework. It focuses on the quotes of our participants of focus groups and interviews, round-table discussions, and desk based research. The outline of the report is as follows. The first section will document the 'CSO response' to Syrians in Turkey. It will discuss which actors have been involved in responding to Syrians, the ways in which they have been operating, and the changes that the sector has undergone as a direct result of the Syrian presence. Among the actors to be discussed will be INGOs, and how their work fits in to the matrix of Turkish actors, Syrian actors and other local groups. It will also highlight general perceptions of how successful the civil society response has been, and the large disparities which exist across locations in the concentration of both Syrians and CSO support.

The second and third sections will focus on how relationships between different actors are being influenced by the response to Syrians. The second section will discuss relationships between CSOs of different agenda and background, and discuss whether their common purpose of responding to Syrians is altering their collaborations. The third section will focus on changes in the relationship between the state and CSOs and the perception of the roles and responsibilities of both in relation to the other. Of particular importance for both sections are the areas of negotiation and contestation between them, and the implications for such negotiations.

The fourth section will discuss how changes in civil society in Turkey are impacting on Syrians

living here. It will discuss the transitory forms of organisation and civic initiatives which Syrians are developing, and the impact that these are having on existing and new civil society structures in Turkey.

1.5. Methodology

Two strands of research were used in this study – empirical and desk based. Desk based research was conducted as a means to select interview subjects, to provide background context on how Syrian refugees have been previously dealt with in Turkey, and as evidence of what strategies CSOs are employing to assist them. Within this data set was included journalistic accounts, INGO and CSO reports, and policy reports written by both international and domestic think-tanks.

The empirical research was conducted through a mix of interviews and focus groups. Interview subjects were found through a combination of desk based research and snowball sampling. Many CSOs were accessed via journalist reports documenting their work. Another important source of information for CSOs and informal volunteer groups was social media, particularly Facebook, where many of these groups coordinate and connect with each other. Facebook groups such as 'Volunteer in Istanbul', and 'Syrian Refugee Helpers in Istanbul', are the only means of connecting individuals wishing to volunteer with Syrian refugees, and provided an easy means of contacting individuals involved directly. The method of snowball sampling was also used, particularly among more informal and smaller groups of volunteers, who did not have a large online presence and could only be accessed through word of mouth.

Interviews were semi-structured, face-to-face, based on open-ended questions. Interviews were largely conducted in the offices of participants, or

in locations arranged by interviewees – this also allowed for ethnographic observations of human interaction in the context of the specific social setting. The nature of open-ended questioning allowed the interviewees to bring up topics which they believed to be relevant and the interview focus to more thoroughly engage in the particularity of the subject. It therefore produced a more incisive and rich data set than could be gained from rigid interview structures.

Focus groups were held in four locations – Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Gaziantep – with 12-15 participants attending each, including a mix of academics and CSO workers. The focus groups were broadly structured around the questions of the moderator and themes devised by the researchers, and the conversations were fluid. Focus groups were also useful to observe and analyse the interaction between participants with different agendas and different experiences, which is a critical part of the research, and to understand why a particular issue is salient.

As part of our research we also participated in many conferences, workshop, meetings, and other events organised by CSOs, INGOs, or state institutions in order to observe interactions between the actors, and compare their agendas. We also attended various internal meetings of CSOs, as well as volunteering for various local CSOs. Finally, we also used questionnaires to reach a wider sample, including CSOs from different cities, to understand whether it is possible to generalise our findings.

Data analysis was conducted using a combination of the three forms of content analysis outlined by Hsieh and Shannon – 'conventional' (in which

"coding categories are derived directly from the text data"), 'directed' (in which "analysis starts with a theory or relevant research findings as guidance for initial codes") and 'summative' content analysis (which "involves counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context").²⁰ A set of directed codes were devised prior to data analysis, and these were supplemented with conventional codes which emerged from the text. During the coding process these codes then evolved into a mix of 'categories' and 'codes'. The categories were formed out of organising the codes which emerged from the data-set into similarly coded groups or 'families' because they shared some characteristics. Each unit of data within the transcripts of interviews and focus groups was assigned its own code – a summative, salient, essence-capturing attribute. This process of codifying enabled the data to be "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation."²¹ Due to the length of transcripts a form of simultaneous coding was used – this applies two or more codes within a single datum.²² Simultaneous coding therefore allowed us a more nuanced and in-depth analysis of the data.

There are a number of methodological limits as a result of the immediacy of the research. Firstly this is a constantly changing situation which means that the data which is produced will inevitably be outdated by the time it has been collected and analysed. It also leads to an absence of precise information about numbers of individuals involved. Finally, some of the participants may have suffered from research fatigue as a result of a number of similar oriented pieces of research being carried out.

²⁰ Hsiu-Fang Hsieh & Sarah E. Shannon, "Three approaches to qualitative content analysis." *Qualitative Health Research*, 15:9, (2005): 1277.

²¹ Carol Grbich, "Qualitative Data Analysis," (Sage Publications, 2007): 21.

²² Johnny Saldana, "Coding manual for qualitative researchers," (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008).

2. CSO RESPONSE

Actors, Modality, Change

The CSO response to Syrians in Turkey has been multi-faceted. In responding to the large scale presence of Syrians in the country, the highly fragmented and complex CSO sector in Turkey has both operated along existing trends, whilst also responding in ways which highlight changes in capacity and relations, between CSOs and between CSOs and the state. The debates which are occurring (if they are occurring) within and between CSOs, over 'rights based' versus 'needs based' service provision, whether assistance to refugees should be aligned along charity or solidarity divisions, and the way these debates are manifesting themselves in the context of the clear line of the state, is of significance for understanding future CSO-state relations, future CSO-CSO relations, and the extent to which such negotiation and contestation will be allowed to operate within future civil society space.

Of the many key issues to have emerged for civil society in Turkey as a result of responding to the Syrian presence in the country, two will be focused on here. The first is how the existing divide between 'rights based' and 'needs-based' service provision CSOs has been exacerbated, eroded, or shaped down new configurations. The second is debates between CSOs of different ideological backgrounds about the concept of charity and the extent to which the response towards Syrians should be aligned down the traditional 'aid giving' ideology or through solidarity and mutual cooperation. This is, itself, part of the 'rights based' versus 'needs based' debate, since a 'rights based' approach recognises the need for the empowerment and participation of refugees as subjects, as opposed

to the power dynamics inherent in aid giving. But in Turkey this also reflects other debates, such as over the strength of religion in civil society and the position of civil society in relation to the state, since both the state and 'faith-based' CSOs are largely operating through 'needs-based' charity provision, in contrast to other 'rights based' groups and service provision CSOs which are operating down 'rights based' aligned policies. These issues reflect to some degree the ambiguous division between short term and long term responses to refugees, a division which has often been assumed inevitable in refugee provision as the initial emergency stages provide different challenges to more entrenched and sensitive issues of welfare and inclusion within a host community. But the distinction between 'rights based' and 'needs based' operations is not as acute as such a binary implies, and is being blurred in many instances in the response to Syrians in Turkey.

The divide between short term and long term provision also has implications for the CSO sector in Turkey, particularly given that debates arising around them are often in direct tension with the line which the state has consistently been following in its response to Syrians – that of 'needs based' service provision oriented charity. Arguably the Turkish government has, through focusing its funding and resources solely on the refugee camps, sidestepped sensitive issues of 'integration' and inclusion within the wider host community, where the majority of Syrians are living and, simultaneously, kept its assistance aligned down charity lines, with the simultaneous highly entrenched power dynamics. But the

government has also allowed, although not necessarily encouraged, the existence of Syrian run programs, such as schools and clinics, which attempt to address longer-term realities of the Syrians' stay in Turkey while giving Syrians a degree of ownership over their lives here. This section will outline the response of CSOs in Turkey towards Syrians. It will detail the actors involved, the way in which they are assisting Syrians, and the changes which the CSO sector as a whole, and individual CSOs within it, are going through in the five years since Syrians started arriving in Turkey.

2.1. Cannot detach from other contexts

The response to Syrians cannot be understood outside the context of the existing domestic socio-political situation in Turkey – this is also true for the civil society sector. *"Syrians are articulated into every problem in Turkey: women's rights, labour issues etc."* said a member of Mülteciyim Hemşerim solidarity group collective in Istanbul. According to representatives from Halkların Köprüsü, a solidarity group collective in Izmir – *"Civil society in Turkey is not very developed. It's eclectic; is confused; mimicking... We are sharing information [with the public] and we have a political stance which touches the problems at the core of Turkey."* Since the character of civil society in Turkey is heavily shaped and stratified by ideologies, religion, ethnicity and class, its response to Syrians, and the resultant changes it is undergoing forged by this response, is also delineated down existing stratifications. Serhat Tok, from International Middle East Peace Research Center (IMPR), said *"We are following problems in the state system."*

In this way, broadly, we see the government taking a very active 'needs based' charity oriented

approach to Syrians – mainly concentrated in the camps, but also through their policies towards refugees; Islamic CSOs, as with the Turkish government, are following the line of Islamic fraternity between the *"ansar"* and *"muhajir"* as mentioned in the Quran.²³ In contrast, blurred lines between 'rights based' and 'needs based' provision and organisational and community-based protection has permeated other, largely secular, CSOs working on the issue. This lack of clarity is particularly prevalent between the many CSOs who had previously had poor relations owing to operational or ideological differences.

Syrians are becoming absorbed into existing struggles within the country, and the ways in which they are being assisted also reflects these struggles. In many ways civil society is a microcosm of these struggles. Minority groups (most obviously the Kurdish community, but also members of other minorities such as Christians, Alevis and Shia) are fostering their own civil society which may either complement, or exist in isolation of, other civil society groupings. Soner Çalışkan, from Mülteciyim Hemşerim, explains how, when visiting hospitals in Şanlıurfa city he asked if the hospital signs could be written in Arabic as well as Turkish. But the response he received highlighted that responses to Syrians are being impacted by entrenched politics – *"if we do this then the Kurds will ask for the signs to be in their language too."* Meyman Serdar Morsümbül, a teacher working in a school with large numbers of Syrians described how – *"I contacted an administrator in Esenyurt and together we wanted to collaborate with Anadolu Culture Foundation, universities such as Bilgi, and a Danish institute to establish a library with Arabic and Kurdish books. However the provincial directorate of the Ministry of National Education refused it*

²³ The word 'ansar' (Arabic الأنصار), or 'the helpers', refers to the local inhabitants of Medina who took the Islamic Prophet Muhammad and his followers (the Muhajirun) into their homes when they escaped from Mecca (hijra).

categorically when we mentioned Kurdish and the books we had ordered were sent back.”²⁴

Existing stratifications within the Syrian refugee population are also impacting on their relations with civil society and their self-securing potential. Not only do Syrians exist in a patchwork across Turkey, with accordingly different experiences related to geographical location, but differences in socio-economic background, religion, access to familial or other support networks, proximity to existing CSO Centers and social capital impact on their experiences in Turkey and their relationship with state and civic initiatives in the country. The experiences of Syrians in Turkey are often unequal and hierarchized. The relationship between Syrians and Turkish individuals and civic initiatives also fluctuates over the passage of time and cannot be understood outside the context of externalities, such as state policies, media representations, or international politics such as the EU-Turkey Readmission Agreement. This is also not a fixed or easily documented relationship. The extent to which civil society initiatives choose to align themselves with political or religious ideologies will also heavily impact their response to such externalities, and to Syrians of different backgrounds.

2.2. Disparities across locations

There are big differences in both the coordination between actors and levels of assistance for Syrians across the geography of Turkey, and between localities within different cities and districts. In general the major concentration of support for Syrians has remained in the border areas in the South East – in terms of both investment in the 26 AFAD camps, referred to as

Temporary Protection Centers (TPC)²⁵ which are all concentrated in these areas, and also the numbers of CSOs, INGOs and Syrian led CSOs which have based themselves here, largely in Gaziantep. Areas with the highest numbers of Syrians in the South-East include Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Kilis, Adana, Osmaniye, and Kahramanmaraş. Other areas with heavy concentrations of CSO support for Syrians are major metropolitan hubs – particularly Istanbul which is an attractive location for Syrians hoping to find employment, and Izmir, which is attractive both owing to its tourism jobs and geographical location to the Mediterranean coast where many Syrians board boats bound for Greece. Support for Syrians in Turkey outside these locations, in terms of both established CSOs operating there, volunteer initiatives starting up to provide some assistance, and Syrian-led initiatives, are more scarce.

There is also great diversity in where Syrians are located within cities and, as a direct result, where CSOs are concentrated. There is a pattern of Syrians fitting into existing contours of the city, concentrating according to their occupation or hometown in Syria or religion. For instance in Istanbul, Zeytinburnu has a higher concentration of Syrians from Aleppo owing to the textile industry in both places, Yedikule has a higher concentration of Christians, and Aksaray in general is known as 'little Syria' owing to the existing concentration of Arabs there, with large numbers of existing Arab shops. The highest concentrations of Syrians in Istanbul are on the European side – in Fatih, Küçükçekmece, Başakşehir, Arnavutköy and Zeytinburnu districts. In these areas Syrians are mainly working in restaurants, small shops, light industries, textile

²⁴ Meyman Serdar Morsümbül, "A major test for the Turkish education system: Immigrant children", interviewed by Merve Erol, *Saha* 4 (2016): 43.

²⁵ Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Introduction, <https://www.afad.gov.tr/en/>, accessed 7 September 2016.

workshops or begging.²⁶ Economic insecurity in these places is very high. Municipality support for Syrians also varies largely between spaces, and this is a reflection of existing policies – again in Istanbul there is little support for Syrians in Tarlabası, in Beyoğlu district, or Okmeydani, between Kağıthane and Şişli districts, where there are existing fraught relations between residents and government over land use and property redevelopment. In contrast the municipalities of Zeytinburnu, Fatih and Esenyurt, are providing much support in general, both financial and in opening spaces for Syrian civic initiatives.

But even within geographical areas the level of municipality support varies depending on the identity of who is asking for the support. For instance, in Fatih the municipality is providing help to a Syrian women's Center, in the form of a bus service to transport them to a weekly workshop on 'success' given by a University on the other side of the city. However they have shown no support for a small community Center set up by a group of ex-pats to provide language courses and women's handicraft training – despite the Center approaching them for assistance. While one doctor's clinic in Zeytinburnu has government support, others which exist in the same locality do not. According to a journalist account, an anonymous Syrian doctor working in a clinic in Fatih is unlicensed and "at any moment, the municipality can come and close us down,"²⁷ Also, as will be discussed in 'Filling in the gaps of the state?' section, community mobilisation over services for Syrians can also prompt different policies at local levels – for instance, media advocacy orchestrated by civil actors from Okmeydani led to Syrian primary school students who did not have identity cards being registered

in school as guests within that locality, but this policy was not introduced in other areas.

2.3. Perceived success of CSOs

There is disagreement over the 'success' and effectiveness of CSOs in responding to Syrians among interviewees – some think CSOs are doing as well as can be expected, others that they are failing, others that they reacted quickly and efficiently, others that they reacted too slowly but have since improved.

Bülbülzade – *"We were not prepared. But despite this fact one can observe very successful work in the field. The burden of Syrians living in cities is completely on CSOs. Every CSO that has a budget and human resources has carried the burden of this issue until now. We created bridges between hearts. We can't say 'we didn't do anything'. CSOs in Turkey haven't improved well, most of them are only signboards. But we have to consider the fact that we have achieved a lot despite all of these problems. I'm not saying that we shouldn't discuss our weaknesses, but don't say that we haven't done anything."*

Talip Çelik, İyilik Der – *"The system and the state were too late to answer these needs. People were devastated and CSOs have taken on most of that burden. The state left these people to the CSOs – it landed in our lap [appeared all of a sudden and became our responsibility]. Since CSOs are volunteer organisations and they are not motivated by money, but because of their beliefs, they worked day and night to create this environment. Actually, thanks to this CSO work, Turkey has completed work that should make both the government and opposition groups proud."*

²⁶ Deniz Genç and Merve Özdemirkıran, "Local perceptions on Syrian migration to Turkey: A case study of Istanbul neighborhoods". In Güven Şeker et al, "Turkish Migration Conference 2015 Selected Proceedings," (London: Transnational Press London, 2015):106-117.

²⁷ Zia Weise, "Underground Care: Syrian Doctors Quietly Fill Treatment Void in Turkey", *Newsweek* 19 June 2016, <http://europe.newsweek.com/syrian-hospitals-turkey-refugees-471744>, accessed 31 October 2016.

Mülteciyim Hemşerim – *“When the crisis erupted they [civil society] became involved very quickly, particularly in the border areas. They were successful in crisis management. Otherwise they failed [because of centralisation, dependence on funds].”*

Ulaş Sunata, Bahçeşehir University – *“I don't think that CSOs adapted themselves quickly to the Syrian issue – in sum they failed. For example, feminist CSOs have had no success, they don't know what to do.”*

Gaye Sağlam, ASAM Izmir – *“The refugee wave is huge and hard to handle. The first responses were 'cross-handed'[ie. inexperienced, uncomfortable]. But I think civil society has been successful in this issue. The level of getting organised has increased – everybody is trying to do their best.”*

A few participants from various ideologies made the point of comparing the response of Turkey towards Syrians to that of Europe –

AFAD Officer, Urfa – *“I consider CSOs to be very successful. If this many people went to Europe, Europe would have dissolved. But look at us!”*

Bülbülzade – *“When 400 [Syrians] went to Germany they didn't know what to do, they were so surprised. In Germany 5,000 children are missing.”*

Different perceptions are created by a lack of information about what CSOs are doing – Ali Güneş, The General Counsel of the Migration and Humanitarian Help Administration of the Prime Ministry, said he *“assumed CSOs were doing a good job because the government is not active outside camps [therefore it is only CSOs who are working with refugees].”* Many, particularly Islamic based organisations, cite the 'invisibility' of the CSO sector in Turkey, caused by humility,

as a reason for lack of knowledge of their work and suggest there needs to be greater pride in advertising themselves. There are also differences in opinion in terms of success, particularly the role that CSOs should be fulfilling, in relation to whether they are performing services which should be being provided by the state.

The lack of visibility of CSOs was raised in a number of different contexts – either in terms of many Syrians finding it difficult to know where to seek assistance, the lack of transparency within CSOs, or the idea of 'faith-based' CSOs operating along lines of Islamic 'humility'. 'Faith-based' CSOs frequently mentioned the Islamic saying *“what your one hand gives, your other hand shouldn't see,”* highlighting the belief that the perceived subtlety with which such 'faith-based' CSOs are operating is to their detriment. A similar sentiment was expressed in terms of a 'lack of transparency' by non-'faith-based' CSOs – *“Transparency of CSOs is problematic”* said one worker for Mavi Kalem. Another academic suggested that there is a vacuum of information for Syrians to know how to access assistance. This invisibility was mentioned by The General Counsel of the Migration and Humanitarian Help Administration of the Prime Ministry, who responded to a question about the success of civil society in Turkey by saying *“I'm not sure because most CSOs are not visible.”*

The extent of success which respondents described was often related to their background. Representatives of AFAD, both in Ankara central office and Şanlıurfa, and IHH were those most effusive in their praise of the CSO sector. In Ankara the AFAD representative said *“Yes I think they [CSOs] are very successful. No one, including me, was expecting such a performance, organisation and sensitivity.”* An IHH representative in Istanbul said *“I believe 95 percent of CSOs are fulfilling their mission.”* In

contrast solidarity groups, feminist collectives, individual volunteers and other associations less closely aligned to the government are more critical of the response of civil society, often for different reasons. According to a representative from Mazlum Der, *"Despite the fact that there is a huge expenditure of effort in the field, it is far from ending the pains of these people or answering the needs of them."*

There are also incidents of resentment between CSOs of different size and access to financial resources, which is impacting on perceptions of success. This is highlighted by the Director of Okmeydanı Derneği (OKDER), who drew a comparison between the work of 'big CSOs' and the actions of individuals within communities, often impoverished themselves, who give small scale help where they can. The disparaging tone indicates some of the resentments between organisations of different size and scope over their perceptions of the levels of assistance being given to Syrians.

Songül Dede, OKDER – *"These big civil society organisations, those who have opportunities, I haven't seen them much. Actually those who don't have money, just like us, associations like us, are trying to help [...] We are sharing our poverty with refugees; I mean we share things that we ourselves don't have. People saw lots of refugees and they brought clothes; people saw the need for stoves so they brought stoves and coal. They brought food and we distributed it in an orderly fashion. But we haven't seen such things from CSOs. When we first started we thought that 'the state is supporting them'. The neighbourhood, or maybe the whole of society, is thinking in this way. But this is not true."*

Actors employ different criterion to define

success, which are broadly reflective of their specific agenda, and this inevitably leads to different evaluations. It is generally agreed that CSOs are successful in providing material assistance given their capacity, which is still relatively limited given the scale of the issue. However, it is disputed whether material assistance should be CSOs' primary objective.

2.4. Actors

Civil society in Turkey has been the core responder to Syrians outside the refugee camps, where the government is concentrating the majority of its attention. Their assistance has been necessitated largely by the vacuum left which would otherwise have been filled by the state, the UNHCR and INGOs – who are the traditional respondents to emergency refugee situations across the world. The government's hesitation in allowing large numbers of INGOs to operate in the country, which they have subsequently eased to a degree, resulted in a shortage of actors responding in the earlier years of the Syrian presence in Turkey.

In 2014, under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP), which Turkey adopted in April 2013, a new civilian Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) was created to centralise all migration and asylum matters in Turkey. The DGMM is the responsible authority for the registration and status decisions for Syrian refugees, who are registered under the scope of the 'temporary protection' regime.²⁸ While the UNHCR assumes a key role in Turkey as a 'complementary' protection actor, and continues to undertake refugee status determination (RSD) activities of their own, it does not deal with the registrations of Syrians, and its decisions do not have any direct binding effect. Under

²⁸ Refugee Rights Turkey, "Introduction to the Asylum Context in Turkey", <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/introduction-asylum-context-turkey>, accessed 7 September 2016.

the leadership of the central government a field government coordination structure is established at the governorate level, with the provincial governors taking the lead in field coordination, with the field presence of AFAD, DGMM and other concerned ministries. The government has concentrated the majority of its assistance and attention to the 26 camps, referred to as Temporary Protection Centers (TPC),²⁹ managed by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and TPC personnel, which UNHCR estimates will host 300,000 Syrians by the end of 2016.

Prior to 2014, the Turkish government was wary of letting any INGOs operate in the country. By the end of 2013 only 10-12 CSOs had been allowed to register and there had been many cases where applications for registration had been rejected by the Turkish government.³⁰ For other INGOs, such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the Norwegian Refugee Council, and Norwegian's People's Aid, they were only allowed to register in the lead-up to Turkey's parliamentary elections on 7 June 2015.³¹ By June 2015, according to Kaan Yıldız, an emergency expert at the Turkish government's disaster agency AFAD, the total number of international CSOs registered in Turkey and working on Syria was 42.³² They government have since eased restrictions on their operations, although they still attempt to exercise a degree of control over their movement and activities – suggesting, for instance, the best locations for INGOs to operate to try and prevent their

concentration in one particular place. However, relations between INGOs and the government remain complex, particularly following the failed coup attempt on 15 July which has led to colder relations between the Turkish government and Western governments, although it's currently not clear whether this is having a direct impact on policies towards Syrians. Even prior to faltering relations after the failed coup attempt there were examples of mutual sensitivities over the activities of INGOs in Turkey. In May 2016, for instance, the US government suspended millions of dollars worth of funding to 14 entities and individuals providing aid for Syria from Turkey, after discovering they were systematically overpaying Turkish companies for basic goods with the collusion of some staff members.³³

2.5. Modality

There are a range of CSOs which are working across different humanitarian and 'rights based' fields. The type of assistance they are providing include basic aid provision (such as food, healthcare, clothes), social services (such as education, psycho-social counselling, information exchange, legal aid), relief targeted at community harmonisation, cultural and art projects, research and reporting, and coordination efforts. There is a divergence between the professional CSO sector, including those small scale CSOs which were started by individuals but which have become more professional as a result of the necessity to align themselves to the donor culture, and the

²⁹ Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Introduction, <https://www.afad.gov.tr/en/>, accessed 7 September 2016.

³⁰ Osman Bahadır Dinçer et al. "Turkey and Syrian Refugees: The Limits of Hospitality", November 2013, Brookings Institute, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Turkey-and-Syrian-Refugees_The-Limits-of-Hospitality-2014.pdf, accessed 2 August.

³¹ IRIN, Turkish NGO move boosts Syria aid delivery, <http://www.irinnews.org/news/2015/06/25/turkish-CSO-move-boosts-syria-aid-delivery>, 25 June 2015, accessed 2 August 2016.

³² IRIN, Turkish NGO move boosts Syria aid delivery.

³³ Emine Kart, "US gov't suspends 14 aid programs in Turkey upon corrupt practices in aid to Syria," 10 May 2016, *Hurriyet Daily News* <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-govt-suspends-14-aid-programs-in-turkey-upon-corrupt-practices-in-aid-to-syria.aspx?PageID=238&NID=98977&NewsCatID=352>, accessed 2 August 2016.

informal civic volunteers. The latter are only a very tiny proportion of the residents of Istanbul – around 400, as estimated by a coordinator of such volunteer groups – and composed of international as well as Turkish individuals. There is no interaction or coordination between the two. The civic volunteers receive their funds through personal fund-raising efforts, which lead to smaller scale finances but also the autonomy to spend the money as and where it is deemed necessary – they can thus be considered an important source of social capital since they're taking the initiative to carry out their idea of civic duty within a space which is free from government control or market imperatives. In general, smaller-scale initiatives are focusing on basic humanitarian provision and inclusion efforts within local communities, such as language courses and providing inclusive community Centers. Many CSOs provide a mix of different services. Many CSOs (of all type) are working in quite specific geographical areas and servicing people within a small radius of their Center. There is also an increase in local initiatives, solidarity groups and volunteer collectives in Istanbul. Many of these are privately funded or reliant on online crowd-source campaigns.

Many of the CSOs which have been founded since the influx of Syrians in the country are focusing on social services. This is also the target area for existing CSOs who have shifted or expanded their operational focus in response to Syrians being in the country, and for the number of Syrian civic initiatives which have been set up. Social services include language classes, psycho-social counselling, information sharing about access to services, women's groups, information about how to find employment, legal aid. These are operating along mixed lines of 'rights based' and 'needs based' service based provision. A number of CSOs already working with migrant and refugee groups have opened second Centers in locations with a

higher concentration of Syrians – these Centers provide a range of social services and often have particular activities for women. Some individual volunteers are also attempting more sustained social service provision which blurs the lines between service provision and rights provision, providing both access to information and language classes, or spaces for children to play.

A large number of CSOs are focused on cultural and art projects, which have the dual purpose of being a form of psycho-social relief for Syrians, as well as a platform for mutual cultural exchange and creative production between Syrians and Turkish individuals. Izmir Müzik Derneği (IMD) CSO hosts music nights for children, workshops to make toys to send to Diyarbakır, events at children hospitals and juvenile detention Center visits. One of their volunteers, Oktay Çaparoglu, described how –

"We organized nights for children – I am able to play music in 3-4 different languages. I think this provides a sphere for people of different societies to come together. Those children, when they listen to similar music in different languages and enjoy it together, they realise how similar they are....But we are not only making music. We also have a workshop for making toys. We send the toys that Syrian children make here to Suriçi (Diyarbakır). This is a bridge of people, is it not? We go to children's hospitals and juvenile detention Centers and organise events there. Now we are establishing a Children's Choir for peace in every language, for example."

Another cultural platform, Anadolu Platform based in Gaziantep, exhibits the work of Syrian artists, screens Syrian directed films and prepares reports with universities and academics. Several Syrian run cultural Centers in Istanbul, such as Ad.Dar, Hamiş and Pages Bookstore, provide a space to produce and exchange with Turkish and other nationalities – through film and music

nights, workshops, discussion nights, and open language courses. 'Rights based' groups are often working as intermediaries between refugees and the state, making Syrians aware of their legal rights, and how to access them.

Mustafa Rollas, IHD – *“Most of the time we follow cases and try to help Syrians when they go to state offices. For example when a Syrian goes to the migration management office and tries to solve a problem, officers working in there never take them seriously. But when we go and tell them the related articles, laws and rights, they take us seriously and solve the problem. Additionally we release reports and do press meetings together with other organisations.”*

There are a range of civil society groups which are operational in direct response to Syrians – these include solidarity groups which were focused on other issues but shifted to include Syrians; individual volunteers working in small groups or through online based platforms; and small community Centers, which have been set up by volunteer individuals or are offshoots of more established CSO. These groups, who do not make up a significant proportion of those CSOs assisting Syrians but which nevertheless represent a notable trend, are largely reactive in the manner in which they respond to Syrians. Since they are often formed of volunteer collectives and are funded privately rather than being dependent on donor aid, they have no fixed projects or institutionalised way of working. Rather, they try to respond to whatever problem they see, in whatever way they believe is the most inclusive, sustainable and effective within a highly localised setting. From our interviews it seems that the government believes that they're taking control of the situation, but in reality they're not dealing with the macro situation – only the micro situation of their specific contexts.

Shahla Raza is an Indian woman who set up Yusra Community Center in Istanbul after a community Center she was working with in Antakya was closed down by the government. She describes how the Center tries to address the specific issues which she has identified from volunteering with Syrians over a period of time –

“We decided to rent a space in Balat to streamline our distribution process [of clothes for women]. [Before, when we were just distributing items randomly] We weren't sure if we were giving women exactly what they wanted or needed – the idea of the Center is that they can come in and choose the right size of shoes, what clothes they want, what pots and pans etc. It will also be a space where there are databases for medical help (which hospitals provide them services for free, which doctors to go to for specific eye treatments, heart treatment etc), and information about which schools will accept their children.”

Mülteciyim Hemşerim is a solidarity group which works through neighbourhood associations, currently in five districts in Istanbul. Its work in each neighbourhood varies depending on the specific context of the area, but in general its work includes having spaces for children's activities; making home visits to Syrians, using local individuals from the neighbourhood associations who know Kurdish or Arabic; a furniture and material cooperation, in which every fifteen days a truck visits homes which want to donate materials, and then distributes the materials to other homes in need; distributing coal.

Another solidarity group, Okmeydanı Derneği (OKDER), describes itself as an 'intermediary institution' –

“We don't have any [financial resources]. We are a kind of intermediary institution. For example we say 'there is need for food for Syrians!' And we create a campaign on our facebook page. Many

people who see this campaign want to contribute. They call us and say 'I brought food', and we call a family of 30 people and when they bring the food they distribute it with their own hands. We're just intermediaries."

The services this institution provides ranges from trying to register Syrian children to school and providing Turkish lessons to all age-groups through Şişli national education Center; distributing stationary and other educational materials; helping individuals from the community access healthcare and vaccinations for children.

A representative from another solidarity group, Yıldırım Şahin from Halkların Köprüsü, based in Izmir, described the eclectic nature of the work they do –

"There is no special group that we help. Wherever there is need, we go there. We don't receive any help from the state or any institution in order to protect our independence. We have health, fieldwork, translators, culture and art groups."

Very few CSOs are providing services which incorporate both Syrian and Turkish, or Kurdish, citizens – this is largely owing to the practical difficulties created by the language barriers between the two groups. Those coexistence activities which do exist are largely targeting children. But a few solidarity groups and CSOs, of different background, are attempting co-existence and integration targeted relief. IHH Izmir has a 'sibling families' program in which a local Turkish family is responsible for a Syrian family, helping them with their problems and encouraging them to socialise. In Istanbul Turkish individuals, who speak Kurdish or Arabic, from a solidarity group connected to neighbourhood associations make home visits to Syrians, wanting to show they're friendly and also to determine the needs of Syrians. They also volunteer to go to school with children to help with their registration process,

and teach basic health care to both Syrians and local people to encourage them to help each other. Another group of Turkish volunteers in Izmir discussed the importance of doing activities which involved direct exchange between them and Syrians –

"We, the volunteers, started to help them [Syrians] and make them visible. We said to our neighbours – go and knock on their doors. If someone brings aid material, we say 'don't leave it here but let's go and visit these families together. You should see who you are helping!'"

In summary, the CSO response to Syrians in Turkey has been multi-faceted. In responding to the large scale presence of Syrians in the country, the highly fragmented and complex CSO sector in Turkey has both operated along existing trends, whilst also responding in ways which highlight changes in capacity and relations, between CSOs and between CSOs and the state. There are a range of CSOs which are working across different humanitarian 'needs based' and 'rights based' fields. Broadly, the government is taking a very active charity oriented approach to Syrians and Islamic CSOs, as with the Turkish government, are following the line of Islamic fraternity. In contrast, blurred lines between 'rights based' and 'needs based' provision and organisational and community-based protection has permeated other, largely secular, CSOs working on the issue.

2.6. Filling the gaps of the state?

Registered Syrians are technically provided with many rights, including access to health care, education, legal protection and other public services. However, accessing these legally assigned rights is quite challenging. Lack of experience about hosting refugee populations, ad hoc solutions, and inappropriate mechanisms leave the Syrian population in a vulnerable position. In health care, for instance, while there

is technically open access for registered Syrians, and access to emergency services for all Syrians regardless of their registration status, there are a number of obstacles in their way of securing it. Language problems, the cost of transport to hospitals and clinics and the strain placed on services by millions of new patients provide barriers. Problems between AFAD and pharmacies over the payment of prescriptions have denied Syrians' access to drugs in many cities.³⁴ And, in the case of Syrian babies born in Turkey, it takes at least six months for them to be issued with identity cards,³⁵ and until that time their access to medical assistance is impeded. Legal protection is also restricted in some instances. Syrians technically have access to courts and the same legal procedures as Turkish people. However, this is often contingent on their having identity cards. Many marriages between Syrian women and Turkish men are not officially registered since they require the Syrian party to have a residence permit in Turkey – if women want to take their husbands to court over abuse, neglect, divorce, they cannot legally prove they are married.³⁶ Having rights and exercising those rights are therefore not necessarily synchronous and gaps in the infrastructure of rights are, in many cases, equivalent to not having them at all. This is where civil society comes into play – civil actors and institutions are acting as cement to fill the cracks in the bridge between rights and people.

The attempts of civil actors to alter policies, expand them to include the Syrian population, and enable refugees to exercise the rights provided by the laws have been observed quite

frequently within our research, although they are not always successful. These attempts have two different, contrasting, implications – on the one hand challenging the state's authority and on the other hand solidifying state authority through filling the gaps in their application of rights and services. The relationship between governance, at levels ranging from the state to municipalities, and civil society actors is often an arena of constant negotiation, where power is contested in different ways depending on specific geographical contexts, actors, politics and other factors. Often this negotiation is undertaken despite unequal power dynamics, and in many cases the civil society actors who are engaging in such contestation are individuals rather than institutions. Such areas of negotiation are significant for demonstrating areas where various manifestations of civil society perceive state support for Syrians to be lacking, their attempts to fill these gaps (including the tools of negotiation they employ) and the resulting impact on assistance for Syrians.

Four such case studies will be discussed here, which each demonstrate different actors, different fields of negotiation, and different results.

2.6.1. Süt Kuzusu Campaign

During our fieldwork in Izmir the "Süt Kuzusu" (Milk Lamb) campaign was repeatedly mentioned by various civil society actors. The campaign has been running since 2005, and involves Izmir Metropolitan Municipality distributing milk to families with children between the ages of 0–5 years. By 2008 the amount of milk being

³⁴ Eczacılar Suriyelilere ilaç vermeyecek, 20 April 2012, *Milliyet*, accessed 19 October 2016; AFAD'dan ödeme alamayan eczacılar mültecilere ilaç vermeyecek!, 23 March 2016, *SağlıkAktüel*, accessed 19 October 2016.

³⁵ According to the Ministry of Interior, the procedure of issuing cards to babies requires security checks on their parents.

³⁶ Marga Zambrana, Marrying a Turkish Man to Survive, *The Equal Times*, 15 March 2016, <http://www.equaltimes.org/marrying-a-turkish-man-to-survive?lang=en>, accessed 18 October 2016.

³⁷ İzmir'in "Süt Kuzuları"na haftada 2 litre süt, 19 September 2012, İzmir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, accessed 24 October 2016.

distributed had increased to four litres every two-weeks for each child. Families who want to benefit from the campaign must apply to the municipality with their family registration document and identity cards. The campaign is also beneficial to milk producers since it provides an outlet for surplus milk. However, Syrians are not able to benefit from it since they do not have Turkish citizenship, despite the large numbers of Syrian children in desperate need of milk and the large quantity of milk which is left surplus. This situation has created a sense of injustice among civil actors. Yalçın Yanık, Kapılar Association, told us -

"Izmir Municipality distributes milk to Turkish children who go to school. But they don't give this to Syrians, they say they are distributing it through [citizen] identity numbers."

And, according to Birgül Aktay, Izmir Mazlum Der -

"The state distributes milk to all students within the framework of the 'Süt Kuzusu' (Milk Lamb) campaign. However despite the fact that Syrian children and families are needier, they don't give them this milk."

Birgül Aktay continued by explaining the specific situation in her neighbourhood -

"But they have more than enough [milk to go around]. All of a sudden in my neighbourhood I realised something weird was happening - everyone was making milk desserts and yogurt and offering it to each other. They were doing this because they weren't able to consume all the milk being given to them by the state. I talked to my neighbours and suggested to them to give their extra milk to Syrians. And it worked. However one day a guy working in the milk lorry saw me doing this. He came and told me that this was forbidden - it was only for the consumption of the 'given' child. I told him there was more than enough. He replied - 'then we shouldn't give milk to you again!'"

This is ridiculous - we are not even able to decide how to use milk within our own homes."

It is not clear whether this incident of refusing to allow beneficiary mothers to share their milk amongst themselves reflects the general policy of the municipality or whether it was the personal attitude of this particular member of staff. However, the incident is an example of possible contestations among civil and formal actors to the application of policies.

2.6.2. OKDER Emergency Health services

Songül Dede, the Director of OKDER (Okmeydanı Association), related an incident of how she had tried to get adequate medical assistance for a newborn baby boy but found her way blocked by bureaucracy, which prevented the baby receiving surgery for an umbilical hernia owing to him not possessing an identity card.

"Here they register every newborn as being born in Aleppo, no matter that they're born in Turkey. Because of the fact that he didn't have an identity card, no hospital wanted to do the operation... If the doctors let the babies jump the queue, they get questioned by inspectors."

They wrote us a prescription saying 'an operation is necessary'. They took his blood, and told us to get a bar code for the narcosis. But when we went to take the bar code, they said 'we can't operate this surgery without an identity card'. I asked them whether they could provide us with a birth certificate which we could use instead of an identity card. They told us to go to the police station to get this. When we went to the police station they gave us a paper and told us that he could have surgery with the paper. But the hospital didn't accept the paper. They said he must have an identity card."

They told us - 'wait another three months, and

come every month to check. If the muscle ruptures suddenly and if the baby goes purple, then we can do an operation because then it's an emergency situation'. But if the muscle ruptures, he will have a lifelong problem – he would need a catheter for his whole life."

This example highlights both the obvious gaps in service provision to Syrians, despite the theoretically open access to healthcare, and the ways in which ordinary Turkish individuals are filling in those gaps by trying to secure assistance in individual cases. This is not a case of individuals 'filling in the gaps of state support' – in this case the attempts to ensure the baby was given surgery were not successful – rather it illustrates instances of a willingness to contest government policies, and to take personal responsibility for trying to solve the problems of Syrians. The example also highlights poor coordination or interaction between different authorities and public services providing for Syrians – the mixed messages given by the hospital and the police station regarding the necessity for identity cards is emblematic of a more systemic confusion, between different personnel, different branches, different services and different districts, regarding procedures for Syrians.

2.6.3. OKDER education request

Songül also narrated how OKDER had mobilised the media to try and secure school registration and Turkish language lessons to Syrians living in Okmeydanı, in another instance of attempting to secure services which were not otherwise being provided by local authorities.

"First we went to Şişli national education Center. They said 'bring them [the Syrians] here so we can find out their level, and decide which grade they should enter.'

They said 'we will call public education program

[life learning] because our demand was not only registering them to schools, but also teaching them the Turkish language. After that, the district national education directorate, head of public education Center, principles from schools including secondary and primary schools also joined us [for a meeting]. Approximately one hundred men and women attended.

In that meeting they explained the situation, and they asked 'do you want to learn any profession?' and distributed forms. More than 70 people stated that they wanted to learn a profession, and learn Turkish. But then the public education Center faced problems in finding Arabic speaking teachers. This issue lasted one to two months like this."

As a result of this meeting, a Turkish course was started after 1 or 2 months, but it was only open for 20-30 people, despite the demand being for 100 people.

One of the Syrian children, Imet, appeared on CNN to publicise the need for registration. Syrian students had not been able to register for schools because they did not have identity cards. Following the national media publicity, the District National Education Directorate told principles in Okmeydanı that they should register the children as guests – seventy students were registered as a result of these discussions. They also gave Turkish classes to those children in the school. After one semester the Lions Club wanted to distribute food, and the school principle asked OKDER to provide them with a list of which students needed the most help. OKDER decided to use the incentive of food to encourage parents to register their children to school – an incentive which proved successful, and resulted in the registration rates of primary school children increasing.

The incident highlights the mobilisation of the national media as a practice of advocacy by civil actors. It indicates the agency of such individuals, and the networks of collaboration formed to effect change. It also gives an example of how such mobilisation can be successful, with direct implications from the national authority on education for Syrians in Okmeydanı. But this points towards the regional disparities in service provision to Syrians, and highlights one way in which such disparities are created – through mobilisation of individuals within communities leading to reactive, geographically specific, changes which are not being transferred to a systemic level.

2.6.4. Solidarity groups mediating between AFAD and pharmacies

There are also instances where solidarity groups are mediating between different actors to ensure that services for Syrians, which have been promised by the state but are not being implemented in practice, are being provided. One example of this is Halkların Köprüsü, which spoke with pharmacies in Izmir to convince them to give medicine to Syrians for free. The government, through their disaster management agency AFAD, had reached a deal with pharmacies across the country that they should provide medicine to Syrians for free and would be reimbursed by the government. But prior to the intervention of the solidarity group, pharmacies had been unwilling to implement this since they did not trust that they would be reimbursed as promised.

A representative of Halkların Köprüsü outlined their role –
"AFAD had no contract with pharmacies in Izmir but they said that Syrians should be given medicine for free by pharmacies, and AFAD would

reimburse them. Pharmacies were refusing to give medicine to Syrians because they were afraid that they would not be reimbursed. So we visited pharmacies in Izmir one by one and convinced 6-7 of them [to give free medicine]. The numbers increased gradually."

As a result, since the pharmacies saw that AFAD was reimbursing those who were providing medicine *"now, every pharmacy in Izmir gives Syrians medicine for free."*

This example indicates the lack of trust between local service providers and the government, represented in this case by AFAD. It highlights the agency of solidarity groups to use their position of trust as a means to mediate between the two, and thereby increasing the legitimacy of the state as service providers for Syrians. The solidarity group is thus using the influence and position it has as a result of being a solidarity group to streamline service provision from the government.

2.7. Change

Discussing the change in civil society must take into account a lack of consensus over what civil society is changing from, and previous evolutions in its identity, purpose and relationship with the government. Civil society in Turkey reached a peak following the 1999 İzmit earthquake in the North-West of the country, which killed 17,000 people. The earthquake prompted a vibrant humanitarian response from a hitherto hidden civil society, despite an authoritarian political system.³⁸ During this period, for the first time in Turkish politics, civil society started to articulate and represent the interests of various social segments and managed to transmit these demands to political actors and state elites

³⁸ Rita Jalali, "Civil Society and the State: Turkey after the Earthquake". *Disasters*, 26:2 (2002), 130.

relatively effectively. Up until 2010, when the government recognised the space which had been opened by civil society, the number of CSOs grew and played a big role in the liberalisation of politics. Arguably the civil society response to the Syrian refugee presence in the country constitutes an equally definitive moment for its galvanisation, motivation and shape in Turkey.

However discussing changes in terms of numbers of associations is likely to produce an inaccurate account of the complexities of such fluctuations. The increase of CSOs in response to Syrians should be understood in the context of a concurrent and sustained increase as part of a government project to use CSOs as a tool of engineering in their political framework. Therefore a general increase in numbers of associations may be expected, but delineating this increase is more difficult. A substantial increase in the numbers of associations registered by the government, who provides the main source of data, gives no indication about what type of associations are being established – what role they are performing, and their relationship with the state.

The numbers of registered CSOs has increased in the five years since the Syrian influx. This increase has been noted both anecdotally, in interviews with academics, CSO workers and government officials, and empirically in the official government records which show the numbers of registered CSOs. These official figure, available from the Ministry of Interior Department of Associations (*Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı*) indicate that, while the number of registered CSOs have increased in all of the five major cities of Turkey – Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa – the increase is most pronounced in the south-eastern border regions of the country

– Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa. In the other cities the increase has been in line with the general trend of rising CSO numbers since 2000, when data is publically available from.

This data shows that, across the whole of Turkey there are 109,482 associations active in 2016, in contrast to 88,646 in 2011 (a 19 percent increase).³⁹ The years 2013–2014 witnessed the biggest upsurge in association numbers. In Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa the change is most pronounced. The number of associations in Gaziantep increased from 1,148 in 2011 to 1,870 in 2016 (a 38.6 percent increase). In Şanlıurfa the increase is from 679 in 2011 to 1,100 in 2016 (a 38.3 percent increase). In Istanbul and Ankara the increase has been slighter, although not insubstantial – increasing from 17,990 in 2011 to 21,981 in 2016 (an 18.2 percent increase) in Istanbul; in Ankara from 8,371 in 2011 to 10,342 in 2016 (a 19.1 percent increase). In Izmir, which has a concentration of Syrians seeking to travel to Greece via boat, there has been a slightly higher increase – from 4,824 in 2011 to 6,203 in 2016 (a 22.2 percent increase). These numbers indicate that although the south-east has a concentration of CSOs working with Syrians, their numbers are still very small in comparison to Istanbul and Ankara.

The difficulties in delineating what the rise in numbers of associations represents is reflected in the disagreement between various academics, CSO workers, government officials and other actors involved with Syrians about the extent to which civil society has altered, and the extent to which this alteration can be directly attributed to the Syrian refugee presence. This range of opinion varies between geographical locations but also between actors working in the same field

³⁹ All figures according to the T.R. Ministry of Interior Department of Association (T.S. İçişleri Bakanlığı Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı), <https://www.dernekler.gov.tr/en/default.aspx>, accessed 28 October 2016.

along similar remits – clearly the changes are therefore ambiguous, open to interpretation, and dependent on very specific personal experiences and measures of expectation. There are some common themes which emerge when discussing changes in civil society in Turkey – the increase in professionalism and marketization of CSOs in Turkey and the lack of cooperation among civil society actors are widely described. But other key areas of change are open to debate – these include changes in the relationship between civil society and the state; the extent to which the INGO presence is beneficial for local civil society; and the extent to which existing stratifications of civil society are being exacerbated or eroded by the response to Syrians.

According to some interviewees there is a slight change in the willingness of people in Turkey to volunteer and create change. Murat Erdoğan, who works for Hacettepe Üniversitesi Göç ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Merkezi (HÜGO) research think tank, said *“Gathering together and doing something logical has appeared in our society... Civil society organisations are saying ‘there is money, we should found a new organisation’. This is a new kind of trend.”* Another volunteer, Zeynep Kurmuş Hürbaş, who organises aid distribution on Facebook, stated *“there are about 400 volunteers in Istanbul who contribute regularly. For most of these people this is the first time that they’re volunteering.”* However, this is not a view shared by all our respondents. One worker for a CSO suggested that civil society is changing but not because of Syrians, and others suggested a general malaise among the civic population regarding Syrians.

Anecdotally the increase in numbers of CSOs, projects, volunteers and members of associations is mentioned universally. Metin Çorabatır of IGAM, described how – *“Today, there’s a huge change in terms of*

numbers and profile of CSOs. Classical aid CSOs are continuing their activities. ‘Human Rights based’ CSOs were only involved with individual applications at first. But now they are not involved so much. Those who are not ‘religious based’ are involved in this field also.”

Metin Çorabatır, IGAM – *“Until 2012, before the crisis, there were only a few organisations working in this field and their capacities were very low. There were less than 13 organisations and most of them were ‘rights based’ ones. Today, 8 providing CSOs have been established [in response to] the Syrian refugee situation. Between 2014–2015 the crisis became visible. Foundations and platforms in the West of Turkey increased. They have good intentions but they don’t know who refugees are.”*

Mehmet Güllüoğlu from Ankara Red Crescent also described how *“Other than aid provision there’s an accumulation of civil society organisation in other contexts. They are mostly examining the situation (the international professional ones).”*

Anecdotal information also highlights an extensive increase in the capacity of projects in the past few years. IMPR, which is working in the south-east, said *“in the last two years the projects we’ve received have been doubled or tripled”*; Refugee Rights Turkey, an Istanbul based CSO working with legal provision for refugees described how *“there are a couple of new members [at Istanbul coordination meetings] each session, so it seems that the CSO field is expanding very fast”*; a Syrian doctor working in a Syrian run clinic in Zeytinburnu, who wished to remain anonymous, described how two years ago there were three clinics and three doctors, and today [in 2016] there are ten doctors within the Zeytinburnu locality; HDRF in Istanbul outlined that *“last year [2015] 10–12 health Centers opened for only refugees in the whole of Istanbul.”*

2.7.1. Capacity not changing in other groups

However, capacity is still not changing among other groups in response to Syrians. Some CSOs, particularly smaller groups and collectives such as feminist collectives, do not wish to increase their capacity, since this often requires exposing themselves to the inflexible demands of the donor industry. Özgül Kaptan, Director of the feminist collective KADAV based in Istanbul, described how *"Feminist groups have not tried to increase their capacity. [Another feminist group working in the South-East of the country] is the only other CSO opening up to Syrians – they were already working in the border cities, so they got the international support from INGOs."*

The low capacity of local CSOs is frequently mentioned in relation to INGOs – either in relation to local capacity being too small to compete with the resources of INGOs, or their inability or lack of desire to work in partnership with INGOs as a result of low capacity. One CSO working with the women right's organisation KAMER in the South-East outlined that *"many funds and fund-giving organisations offer us funds but we don't accept – we are picky because of our capacity and scope of interest."* Mülteciyim Hemşerim solidarity collective admitted *"we don't have enough capacity to coordinate with [INGOs or other CSOs]."*

Chloe Poncholet, from the U.S. based The Fund for Global Human Rights, suggested that INGOs were dismissive of local CSOs owing to their perceived lack of capacity. Another INGO worker, Paulo Lubrano from Plan International, underlined the perception that local CSOs haven't increased their capacity dramatically – *"In general, local CSOs have kept the same structure and added on a separate unit for refugee work – they haven't expanded or changed their structure in any way, or taken on extra staff. This just means that existing staff are working double."* This statement

indicates a disjuncture between impressions of the international humanitarian community and local CSOs.

Another context in which low capacity was raised was the difficulty of incorporating volunteers into CSO programs. Volunteers interviewed highlighted the difficulties they had faced in offering their services to CSOs, even if the demand for their work was high. One individual volunteer, Zeynep Kurmuş Hürbaş, who had written an online guide for people wishing to volunteer with CSOs said that *"some CSOs actually wanted to have their names removed from the list – they'd been overloaded with volunteers contacting them and wanting to help, and they didn't know how to handle it. We wanted to attach ourselves to CSOs, but CSOs do not have the capacity to deal with 'civic volunteers.'" This comment was corroborated by the director of a CSO platform, C@rma, which seeks to connect professionals wishing to offer their corporate services pro bono to CSOs, who outlined the difficulties of connecting volunteers with CSOs. *"In general it is difficult to be a hands on volunteer in Turkey. Very few CSOs here know how to use volunteers – they don't have time to think about how to incorporate them. CSOs are not willing to answer questions, they're scared to expand. They're very busy and the idea of taking on more work for a few months in order to make them more efficient in the long run is unattractive to them."**

2.7.2. Shift in existing groups increasing or changing activities in response to Syrians

There is a pattern of existing CSOs adapting their work to deal with Syrians – either through increasing or changing their activities. In some cases these adaptations have been quite obvious – associations working with other groups of refugees or migrants have incorporated Syrians into existing programs or have opened new Centers in areas where Syrians have

concentrated. In some cases groups focusing primarily on research or reporting have also started humanitarian projects. And in other cases, associations or solidarity groups focusing on other issues, such as urban regeneration, have started working with Syrians, incorporating them into their existing focus. But the numbers of groups which have shifted their focus completely are relatively low. Some solidarity groups working in localised settings, which are not bound by donor demands or the strictures of specific projects, are trying to address all problems they find within specific localised settings – these include Syrians, but also other minority groups and social issues such as urban regeneration, ecology issues and gender equality.

Serhat Tok, a member of International Middle East Peace Research Center (IMPR), based in Gaziantep, described how they had shifted their work as a result of the Syrian influx – *“In 2010 our foundation established by academics in order to make academic research. When we saw the lack of humanitarian help we established a charity for humanitarian aid giving and entered the field. Since 2013 we have helped 43,000 Syrians in Turkey and cross-border. We have social Centers, we are working on information sharing, inter cultural development, and our women and children Centers are more visible.”*

Yıldırım Şahin, member of Halkların Köprüsü solidarity group based in Izmir, described how their group had changed in response to Syrians – *“We established our organisation to monitor the [Kurdish] peace process with the aim of embracing peace by ordinary people in the civic sphere and the political sphere. We are not a civil society organisation but a solidarity group. However when refugees arrived in Izmir we couldn't close our eyes, and started to work on this topic.”*

Nursen Sağlam, Mazlum Der – *“We are not working as an organisation under an institutional framework, except reporting. However we consider this to be a humanitarian duty and members of our organisation help Syrians individually (i.e. not directly). We are releasing reports and articles on Syrians, making field research, press releases and last year we arranged Iftar with Syrians and local people.”*

A number of groups which were already working with migrant communities describe the changes they've undergone. The director of KADAV women's collective based in Istanbul, Özgül Kaptan, said – *“women's groups were initially for other migrants but are now for Syrians too. These started as advocacy groups, but we're now providing Turkish lessons in Yenikapı to African ladies and legal aid to those women being deported to camps.”* Talip Celik, of İyilik Der, a humanitarian CSO based in Gaziantep said – *“Before the Syrian influx we were working with Palestinians, Afghans, and Peshmerga. But after Syrians arrived, the importance of this work became much more visible.”*

In summary, although there has been a general increase in the number of associations, this is happening concurrently to a government project to use CSOs as a tool of engineering in their political framework. Anecdotal information highlights an extensive increase in the capacity of projects in the past few years, but capacity is still not changing among other groups in response to Syrians. There is also a pattern of existing groups increasing or changing their activities. The changes civil society is undergoing as a result of the response to Syrians are delineated down existing stratifications.

3. CSO-CSO RELATIONS

Cooperation= Communication, Coordination, Competition

The sudden increase in the number of refugees and CSOs working with refugees has necessitated cooperation in order to produce sustainable outcomes – both in terms of advocacy-making and aid-provision. The issues that CSOs are trying to resolve are immense. Networks, roof organisations, platforms, partnerships, and coordinated actions make a meaningful difference in the field. Despite varied motivations, different methods, and different perspectives on the ideal long-term outcome of Syrian presence, CSOs with a range of ideologies – religious (Islamic, Christian), labour unions, solidarity groups, 'rights based' CSOs, 'needs based' service-provision CSOs – are all addressing the same situation in unprecedented circumstances.

In some instances divisions between CSOs with clear ideologies and agendas are sharp, and are reflected in the 'charity' versus "rights based" discourse. Simultaneously, however, there is a blurring of the division between these two discourses within and between CSOs as many CSOs are responding in a reactive manner to the influx of Syrians, or expanding their existing remit in new, and often unforeseen, ways. This blurring has two implications. Firstly on assistance for Syrians – in some cases it is impacting negatively on their rights since assistance is not always provided along a 'rights based' manner. Related to this, in other cases, the manner in which some assistance is being given is preventing Syrians from practicing their own self-securing capacity – which will have longer term ramifications for Syrians living in Turkey, and Syrian society in general. Secondly, it is having an impact on roles within the civil society sector in

Turkey – which were never clearly delineated in the first place. Rather, the main point of interest is how such blurred divisions will impact on how issues other than Syrians, such as other minority and vulnerable groups, as well as poverty and related social issues, are perceived and dealt with.

But there are contradicting trends in the CSO-CSO cooperation phenomenon. On the one hand, the potential power and capacity of a fruitful cooperation among CSOs is acknowledged and praised by actors in the field. On the other hand, almost all stake-holders identify problems with cooperation. This section will document how different ideological groups are working together (or not), and where areas of negotiation and contestation are being played out.

The problem of a lack of cooperation among CSOs is raised frequently by CSO workers. According to Kemal Vural Tarlan of Kırkayak Kültür Kültür Derneği based in Gaziantep, *"There are 200 organisations in Antep but there is no coordination among them. In August 2015 these 200 organisations came together – did we achieve anything? No."* Another CSO, Sosyal Gençlik ve Kültür Derneği, highlighted that *"Most of the CSOs are working on projects – there is no proper cooperation among them. Cooperation and working together is one of the most important problems."*

A representative from GAP Çatom [Multiple Purposes Social Center, part of the South Eastern Anatolian Project] said *"Cooperation should increase. The most active ones [CSOs] should see each other. Activities shouldn't repeat themselves."*

Everybody shouldn't just distribute food."

If everybody believes in the importance of cooperation and wants to increase the level of it, why is there still a lack of it and how can it be increased? Based on our field work, cooperation problems are associated with a lack of coordination and communication. Competition among CSOs is seen as the primary barrier to overcoming these difficulties, which are preventing the ideal level of cooperation.

Support to Life – *"The biggest problems are lack of coordination and communication. We are trying to overcome this problem through CITUS – Civil Society Humanitarian Platform. We have problems regarding who is doing what and where."*

ASAM – *"Cooperation is not enough. There are coordination meetings, but competition among organisations is creating problems. This is sectorisation. There is also a problem with information sharing – whoever is involved first, becomes the most prominent and doesn't cooperate with others."*

Deniz Sert, academic – *"The problems are still the same as before – there is still a lack of communication between civil society organisations because of competition."*

Merve Özdemirkıran, academic – *"There is competition behind the lack of coordination. Not a lack of CSOs. The environment that CSOs are working in is problematic because it's based on competition."*

Competition between CSOs has different layers and reasons. Funds (both national and international), the finding of international partners, status, and access to resources and information are the prominent areas of competition. As an example about some of these

competition issues, some advocacy-making CSOs working on the refugee issue refused to attend our meetings, despite our requests, by giving the excuse that they did not want to be seen as being part of hCa. Similarly, during our interviews many CSOs complained about other CSOs being "famous" without, in their view, doing anything meaningful.

Despite these problems there is still cooperation among CSOs – evidenced by the fact that most of the organisations based-in Turkey covered in this research are cooperating with other organisations in some form. The extent of this cooperation differs along a spectrum of project-based limited cooperation with one actor, to full cooperation with several actors.

Oktay Çaparoğlu, IMD – *"We cooperate with Bridges of People (Halkların Köprüsü) and Kapilar Solidarity. We frequently visit Syrians' associations here."*

IHD – *"We release reports and do press meetings together with other organisations. Additionally we have an active cooperation with Halkların Köprüsü. We always help each other in the field."*

Political divergences are effective in cooperation. Roughly it can be said from our research that those ideologically similar are more inclined to cooperate with each other.

Ayşem Biriz-Karaçay – *"Political competition between CSOs is effecting the field in a very serious manner. They took a huge responsibility in the field and they have de facto cooperation with local administrations (they acknowledge each other) but it doesn't turn into a concrete working relationship."*

Halkların Köprüsü – *"How CSOs see each other is crucial to understanding and analysing the barriers*

to cooperation. We are open to cooperating with everyone. However, sometimes we have to be selective. Our criteria for this selection is 'not supporting the war'. For example I personally wouldn't want to be in the same photo as IHH. But of course if we see each other in the field trying to help people, we try to help each other too. What I mean is a general institutional cooperation. For example we have this kind of cooperation with IHD (Human Rights Association) – we are actively cooperating with them. Besides we are a member of the People's Democratic Congress (HDK) [Union of various left political movements and parties] which means that we're also politically active. We have cooperation in this context as well. But as a general summary we can say that, despite the fact that we have many criteria, we are open to everyone who wants to cooperate with us in the field and defend the rights of people."

In general there is consensus that the level of cooperation among CSOs is not enough. CSOs are aware of the necessity of increasing cooperation. The lack of cooperation is generally associated with competition, communication, and coordination. Those CSOs working in the same neighbourhoods do not know each other. They complain about repeating their activities: giving material help to the same families, providing similar assistance. Communication is seen as a solution to solving these coordination problems. CSOs who participated in our research were very eager to expand their channels of cooperation with other actors – in almost all of our meetings participants asked us to share email addresses to enable the exchange of information. This suggests that these encounters are increasing the opportunity for communication, in a way which would not otherwise be realised. However, the competition issue complicates communication and coordination. For one thing the influx of international funds and INGOs is leading to a marketization of the CSO sector, but competition

is not restricted to access to material resources, or funds but also about reputation – CSOs place great importance on who is the most prominent actor in the field, and this makes many of them hesitate about sharing their success with other actors.

In summary, despite the increasing number and activities of CSOs there is a lack of communication among these actors. The problems of cooperation and coordination are widely acknowledged. Competition between CSOs is regarded as the primary reason for such problems. There is competition for a number of reasons, ranging from rivalry for funds to political differences and differences of world view.

3.1. Discourse as a reflection of divergence

Competition remains the root cause of divergence between CSOs – not necessarily over who is doing what is in the field, although competition also exists in this regard, but between those who regard themselves as agents of a particular world view, and those whose stance is in opposition towards those who are agents of that world view.

CSOs working with Syrians have various approaches to the refugee issue and different agendas; divergences are also reflected in discourses on the issue and how CSOs define themselves. These divergences are also expressed in how CSOs define Syrians, which varies between 'guests', 'muhajir', 'refugee' or 'co-habitant'. Although these differences are inevitable in a heavily bifurcated sector, they create barriers to cooperation in the field – those with different discourses in general choose not to cooperate with each other, while those who have shared discourses are more likely to cooperate with each other. The divergences, which may originally have been between clear ideological differences, are

now manifesting themselves in new ways, most particularly in the mode of assistance to Syrians – which can most obviously be observed in a 'charity' versus 'rights' based approach.

The 'charity' discourse is one of the most contested subjects among CSOs. Islamic oriented groups employ the example of the Prophet Muhammed and his followers, who helped the Medina people, flee from Mecca, to explain their motivation to help Syrians by saying *"Our prophet was a refugee once."* In replicating this help they define themselves as *ansar* and Syrians as *muhajirin*⁴⁰ and employ the discourses of charity (*hayır*) and kindness (*iyilik*). Much of the rhetoric employed at high levels of government has also reflected this policy, referring to Syrians as 'our brothers' – *"We regard you as our brothers and sisters. You are not far from your homeland, but only from your homes and your land ... Turkey is also your homeland,"* President Erdoğan told a group of Syrian refugees in Kilis on the same occasion as announcing plans to offer Syrians citizenship in the beginning of July.⁴¹ The arguably increasing prevalence of Islamic discourse across politics in Turkey in the five years since Syrians have been present in large numbers in the country has been both reflected in the official response to Syrians, and encouraged by them.

The divergent discourses displayed by CSOs in Turkey are operating in the context of entrenched confusion across the refugee-oriented world about the placement of protection in humanitarian responses to refugees, the shift from short term emergency provision to long term welfare needs of refugees and the self-securing potential of refugees and their position as 'subject' or 'actor' in their own future. The Syrian

refugee issue continues to expose these paradoxes and contradictions. Many CSOs working with Syrians are operating along both a 'needs based' service provision and 'rights based' approach.

Needs can be met out of charitable intentions, but rights are based on legal obligations (and in some cases ethical obligations that have a strong foundation in human dignity even though they are only in the process of being solidified into legal obligations). Many traditionally 'rights based' platforms are focusing on research and reporting of the needs of Syrians, rights abuses, and bringing together practitioners, policy makers, academics and Syrians in seminars to discuss strategy. Some of these research platforms are linked to international organisations – one local CSO which provides women's shelters, for instance, has been cooperating with the Population Fund of the UN for the past year, releasing reports and mapping safe regions based on the UN criteria. Other CSOs which were formally solely research based have extended into humanitarian work – one 'faith-based' CSO based in Izmir said *"actually we were only reporting, but then we thought that this was both a humanitarian and Islamic situation and we wanted to help."* There is some resentment among humanitarian organisations about their perception of the 'ineffectiveness' of research oriented organisations – a representative of the Red Crescent in Ankara described how *"other than aid provision there's an accumulation of civil society organisation in other contexts. They are mostly examining the situation (the international professional ones)."* Another 'faith-based' CSO, IHH Izmir, criticised those CSOs who wrote reports but were absent in the field.

⁴⁰ Muhajir Arabic term for migrants; muhajirin plural form.

⁴¹ Aljazeera, "Erdoğan: Syrian refugees could become Turkish citizens", 4 July 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/Erdoğan-syrian-refugees-turkish-citizens-160703133739430.html>, accessed 15 August 2016.

Those CSOs that would be defined as closer to the left of the spectrum strongly refute the charity discourse employed by other CSOs and the state. According to them this understanding of charity inherently imposes a hierarchy between the *ansar* and *muhajirin*, and makes the *muhajirin* subject to the mercy of *ansar*. The assistance becomes 'aid' and 'charity, and rights become a 'favour', which come with their own inherent power dynamics. According to Şenay Özden from Hamiş – *"A perspective based on mercy, which pities these people... 'Oh, these poor Syrians have fled the war, let's offer our aid.' The aid perspective is not based on human rights either. It creates a hierarchy between citizens on the one hand and refugees on the other. 'The poor Syrian immigrants need assistance from the citizens.'"*⁴² They underline the importance of a 'right-based' approach that is blind to the religion of people, instead of an understanding based on Muslim fraternity.

Halkların Köprüsü – *"First we started to adopt the issue of the people on the streets. This was not 'for' refugees but 'with' refugees. They should be subjects and we should support them. Refugees will be actors in our society tomorrow. They are an ethnic underclass now. We shouldn't make refugees only demanders. We are not separate from politics but we are pro-life."*

Mülteciyim Hemşerim – *"We don't use the word aid, we think it's a political issue."*

Cem Terzioğlu, Halkların Köprüsü – *"We are against the understanding of charity because this idea is temporary and makes the receiver the dependent object [...] These people are refugees and everything we give them is their right. The refugee issue should be seen as a political issue not a charity issue."*

These groups are very sensitive to the language of material assistance, preferring to use 'solidarity materials', 'cooperation' and 'sharing' concepts to explain their assistance. For example a Mülteciyim Hemşerim representative said – *"We are a solidarity movement so we are more concerned with mutual cooperation."* While these groups see material assistance as an aid-band and unsustainable they also recognise it as necessary because of ineffective policies. Those who refute the charity understanding combine material assistance with advocacy-making. They criticise charity-based CSOs for following the government's ineffective policy that turns the refugee issue into, in their view, an intractable problem.

Firat Genç, hCa – *"Today since 2002 the AKP have developed a 'charity based approach'. They are following this very deliberate stance towards Syrian refugees. This is a conscious decision not to empower Syrians in Turkey. Those Syrians who had a very strong revolutionary approach in their own country fled to their camps and have now become dependent on the charity of the state. Syrians are not empowered – they are being kept in a weak situation. If CSOs are to have a role it should be about empowering Syrians."*

Emel Kurma, hCa – *"The discourses of charity-help turn people into insecure objects; we should shift to different social organisations."*

IHD – *"[...] They [the state] thought that they could take the crisis under control with charity work. But it didn't happen like this. We are in the fifth year of the war in Syria, and it's not likely to end soon. Now we have to discuss providing rights to people coming from Syria. We are even late for this."*

⁴² Şenay Özden, "The opposition failed bitterly in the refugee issue", interviewed by Ayşe Çavdar, *Saha* 4 (2016): 37.

Yıldırım Şahin, Halkların Köprüsü – *“Civil society organisations in Turkey do this help with a charity orientation instead of ‘rights based’ orientation. However, the main battle should be based on rights. That’s why we can talk about a success for aid distribution but we cannot talk about success for ‘rights based’ battles.”*

Kemal Vural, Kırkayak Kültür Derneği – *“There are two types of CSOs – charity oriented, which has this mercy logic; and rights-oriented who claim to be human rights oriented, but always sees people as needy and acts with this logic. We should change these two logics. We should use international law as the base of our strategies.”*

Anadolu Platformu – *“Our perspective is this – we are not a charity organisation but we are working on these questions.”*

These political divergences are not always about high level political competition, but also about agreeing on basic terms – and these tensions manifest themselves in very localised settings.

ASAM – *“For example [from the Urfa meeting group] – we were discussing giving traumatised children dance classes in the park. One CSO rejected this – saying that this park is a holy place and children shouldn’t be dancing there since it’s disturbing to us [...] Differences between organisations are a barrier to cooperation.”*

Oktay Çaparoğlu, İzmir Müzik Derneği (IMD) – *“Several leftist groups protest against us for going to different organisations [events, including nonleftist, official celebrations] but we don’t care. We are trying to do our best – whoever calls us – and try to give enjoyment to these people.”*

Refugee Rights Turkey – *“There are different reasons why it is difficult to act together (such as a disjuncture in missions, philosophies etc.). There*

are divisions between ‘rights based’, humanitarian based, ‘faith based’ organisations. The priorities, relationships with the government changes as a result. An organisation based in Killis providing humanitarian assistance to large numbers of refugees versus a ‘rights based’ CSO providing legal advice to refugees – they’ll have different agendas, issues etc. Bridging these differences in CSO society is a big issue.”

This in turn is impacting on how CSOs are understanding, and criticising, each other. The same negative ideas about different kind of organisations appeared frequently throughout our research: many local CSOs criticise big CSOs for not doing anything effective; some CSOs blame others for being shell organisations; those working in the field criticise advocacy-making CSOs for exploiting the situation and writing reports that would make no direct impact to the field and therefore ‘not doing anything real’. Their criteria for being effective is doing something observable in the daily lives of people. This negative attitude was observed quite frequently, along with the stereotype of ‘the advocacy-making, report-writing CSO’. Small-scale aid-giving CSOs were particularly suspicious of our research aims, frequently asking us the meaning of the research and how it would impact on the daily lives of refugees. When we invited them to our round-table meeting they did not want to participate, saying they were bored of ‘fancy-hotel meetings’. One aid-provider CSO asked detailed questions about our budget and its usage, calculating how much aid-material could be distributed with that amount of money.

IHH İzmir – *“There are those organisations working in the field and those shell organisations that do nothing. There are meetings under the coordination of the Prime Minister’s office. But mostly those who don’t exist in the fields were present and those who were active in the field*

were not present at these meetings. It should have been the other way around [...] These other CSOs write reports, like the Bridge of People (Halkların Köprüsü) for example, but they are absent in the field. There are many cases like this. No one helps, they just run after cases for advertisement."

Yalcin Yanik, Kapılar – *"You can't see any big CSO here. Some of the big CSOs distribute [special lokma sweets] in front of mosques – what the hell is this? Ordinary citizens do this already. They print out a business card and they come here. This is why Syrians think that we work for the state because we're the only ones helping them."*

Mardin Gençlik ve Kültür Derneği – *"We have no cooperation with local CSOs. We are doing projects and there are CSOs that dissolve after they've finished their project. After the liquidation of the Gülen congregation new CSOs came up which have good relations with the state [...] Most of the CSOs are working on projects."*

Such debates about the perspectives of CSOs towards each other are related to a bigger fundamental question – what should the role of civil society be? Should it be that of an aid-provider filling the vacuum in humanitarian assistance or should it rather be monitoring and pushing the state to fulfil its duties?

3.2. Blurred lines between 'rights based' and 'needs-based'

In some instances divisions between CSOs with clear ideologies and agendas are sharp, and are reflected in the 'charity' versus 'rights based' discourse. Simultaneously, however, there is a blurring of the division between these two discourses within and between CSOs as many

CSOs are responding in a reactive manner to the influx of Syrians, or expanding their existing remit in new, and often unforeseen, ways. This blurring has two implications. Firstly, on assistance for Syrians – in some cases it is impacting negatively on their rights since assistance is not always provided along a 'rights based' manner. Related to this, in other cases, the manner in which some assistance is being given is preventing Syrians from practicing their own self-securing capacity – which will have longer term ramifications for Syrians living in Turkey, and Syrian society in general. Secondly, it is having an impact on roles within the civil society sector in Turkey – which were never clearly delineated in the first place. Rather, the main point of interest is how such blurred divisions will impact on issues other than Syrians, such as other minority and vulnerable groups, as well as how poverty and related social issues, are perceived and dealt with.

The humanitarian response to refugees is in general founded on two inextricably linked pillars: assistance and protection. 'Humanitarian assistance' is aid which primarily seeks to save lives and alleviate human suffering. 'Protection' of refugees, in contrast, aims to ensure full respect for the rights of this refugee population in accordance with international human rights law and refugee law.⁴³ Solidarity groups and other collectives are rejecting the concept of aid and charity in the context of responding to Syrians. A representative from Halkların Köprüsü, said *"First we started to adopt the issue of the people on the streets. This was not 'for' refugees but 'with' refugees. They should be subjects and we should support them. Refugees will be actors in our society tomorrow. They are an ethnic underclass now. We shouldn't make refugees only demanders. We are not separate from politics but we are pro-*

⁴³ Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop, UNHCR and CSOs: Competitors or Companions in Refugee Protection? Migration Policy Institute, February 2004 <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/unhcr-and-ngos-competitors-or-companions-refugee-protection>, accessed 18 July 2016.

life." Another solidarity group based in Istanbul said "we don't use the word aid, we think it's a political issue."

Many of the volunteers who are helping Syrians are choosing this basic service assistance as the easiest and most direct way to engage with Syrians – and because they perceive there to be a gap in this provision. One volunteer in Istanbul, Zeynep Kurmuş Hürbaş, described providing basic services such as food distribution, and information about where to access health networks and legal advice in a relatively ad hoc manner to groups of Syrians she met on the streets. *"On our first trip 17 volunteers went and took diapers, lentils, tea etc. We were almost attacked by the numbers of people who wanted assistance," she said. Another volunteer said "I heard that there were a lot of families around Suleiman Mosque. So we went there and talked to them, they took us to their homes, we started giving them some food and clothes. Word spread among other families about us. So we extended our supply to Balat and Fener."* Many of these volunteer groups connect via social media, particularly on Facebook where there are plethora of groups designed to coordinate volunteer activities. The work of such volunteer demonstrates the "enduring tensions within the 'system' – between people and institutions, voluntarism and enterprise, norms and practice, diversity and control."⁴⁴ But the extent to which these community Centers and volunteer groups are operating along 'rights based' lines is ambiguous – this is often a result of practical obstacles, and inexperience of the individuals who founded them, rather than active decisions.

A 'rights based' approach treats the individual

refugee as an empowered actor in their own future with a self-securing potential. It recognises the importance of transparency over who is providing aid, the conditions under which it is given, how long it will last. And it is intrinsically determined by the localised settings within which it is being given.⁴⁵ In some cases aid is irregular and often not specific to particular situations. For instance, one recently founded community Center provided language classes for female refugees, but no space for their children to play, which meant that many young mothers opted to stay at home with their children rather than leave their children behind. Another community Center, which was set up explicitly to provide specific assistance to the context of Syrian women's lives, had one half of its space inoperable after receiving a large amount of donated clothes which were unwanted by Syrian women. The activities provided by some of these Centers may also not be in the best interests of the people they're trying to help – for instance one volunteer teaches Syrian women how to make earrings which are then sold in America. But, as another volunteer at a different community Center critiqued, this incurs the cost of packaging and does not equip the women with the tools of how to market themselves or set up their own business. It may also not address the specific concerns or desires of the women in the community. These operational problems are often a reflection of these groups attempting to do too much, with limited resources and experience.

Many of the charity based modes of assistance practiced by 'faith-based' organisations, of all religions, are not aligned down a 'rights based' line – assistance is often given with conditions attached, which goes against the basic rights of

⁴⁴ Christina Bennett, "Time to let go: Remaking humanitarian action for the modern era", Overseas Development Institute, April 2016 <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/10422.pdf>, 7.

⁴⁵ Posner and Clancy, A Human 'rights based' Approach to Refugee Assistance, Human Rights First, https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/approach_refugess.pdf, accessed 15 July 2016, 4.

aid recipients. Sometimes the conditions or biases within these organisations are not explicitly advocated in their official agenda. For instance, despite one 'faith-based' CSO advocating equal and inclusive assistance to members of all faiths, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, an employer interviewed, who wished to remain anonymous since they did not agree with the work of their CSO, said that, in practice, aid was being given preferentially to members of the Christian faith. *"We give priority to Christians, but in an indirect way. For instance, they will try and write a report for a Christian man to bring him to the attention of the UNHCR, even if he does not match their criteria."*

Other conditions are more obvious. Quomsho Christian social Center in Istanbul provides education only to members of that faith.

"The Christian community reached an agreement with Caritas [a Christian CSO] which says – these people can receive food vouchers from Caritas, but they must go to Church every week. If they do not go to church for three weeks in a row their financial assistance will be stopped."

3.3. CSO and state relations with INGOs

INGO interest in Turkey boosted following the Syrian influx, and increased particularly after the drownings in the Mediterranean became more heavily publicised in the summer of 2015. Existing CSOs in Turkey have been sceptical about the arrival of INGOs and their impact on the civil society sector. While admitting that they have had some positive impacts, the negative effects are also underlined, often more frequently, with the question "what will happen when they leave" raised by almost all actors. Some actors think they are beneficial for now but their inevitable departure will create a crack in civil society sector; others believe that INGOs

will leave fertile sediment for civil society to grow. INGOs providing support to Syrian refugees are being funded to provide social services to a specific group (Syrians), not to strengthen Turkish society, or the society resultant from both groups living together, whether permanently or temporarily. They are therefore not oriented towards increasing social capital but are a short term reaction to a seemingly 'abnormal' event of a refugee crisis. As the market pressures them to become more competent at jobs such as project management and more attentive to the strategic demands of their industry, there is a tension evident in the extent to which they can be beneficial to existing and nascent civil activities in Turkey.

One of the recurrent topics to emerge from discussions of the impact of the increase of INGOs in Turkey is the marketization of the CSO sector in Turkey, which has intensified in response to the Syrian crisis. It is argued by many of our participants that civil society networks in Turkey have developed into a professional CSO sector, and this sector is working like a market in which competition has become the defining characteristic. One academic participant of the Istanbul focus group suggested that it is not the lack of CSOs which is a problem, but the environment which they are working in, which is based on competition for donor funding. Such a need to align with donor standards and requirements influences the type and duration of projects which CSOs can focus on and results in a sector which is actively opposed to coordination.

3.3.1. Positive impacts of INGOs

Due to the new accreditation system and various operational problems (see the section on "state policy") INGOs operating in Turkey are likely to look for local partners in the field. Cooperation between local CSOs and INGOs is, in many senses, mutually beneficial. One of the

most acknowledged positive outcomes of the INGO presence is their impact on the capacity-development of local CSOs. According to local CSOs, they are learning new concepts, techniques, and dimensions from the INGOs they cooperate with. These lead to capacity development, and are likely to improve civil society in the longer term.

Undersecretariat of the Prime Minister's Office – *"For quality, they [local NGOs] start to use the working styles of INGOs as a model. INGOs start to have connections with local associations. And local associations have learnt things from INGOs."*

Murat Erdoğan, HÜGO – *"There is a know-how effect. They don't just give something – but they teach a skill. With this crisis INGOs coming with different formulas have shown us there are different dimensions to the issue, such as post-trauma, education, disabled people etc. Before, civil society in Turkey had been focused on feeding people... There are different forms of cooperation with local CSOs and this brings administrative and financial capacity to our local CSOs."*

Metin Çorabatır – *"Despite the fact that we're very worried about their [INGO] existence, I believe that it is good that they're [INGOs] coming. We can learn visibility, capacity development, fund-raising, finding donors and expertise from INGOs."*

Support to Life – *"Those who are working with INGOs are having problems because of their capacity. But they've also learnt how to improve their human resources, account their budgets and improve their funding."*

The boost in the number of INGOs has also impacted positively on the economy. INGOs operating in Turkey hire local staff, which increases the trained, experienced, and professional people in civil society and results in an increase in employment.

IMPR – *"We are training staff for the humanitarian help sector. In Urfa we trained 200 volunteers. We sent them to our donor training. We made 150 previous volunteers work in INGOs. If we answer the needs of the field with an education model that starts from the bottom, then we can make a difference."*

Another perspective on INGO operations in Turkey is of their potential role as witness to developments in the country and their potential to create monitoring mechanisms for state policies, with the possibility that their presence could create pressure on the government. Some CSOs believe such pressure could create transparency in the policy level and liberalise policy-making process.

Halkların Köprüsü – *"Turkey has this risk of closing itself to the world. This is why it's good that INGOs are coming in."*

3.3.2. Negative impacts of INGOs

Poaching

Local stake-holders are critical about the attitudes and activities of INGOs, despite their positive capacity-development impacts. INGOs who employ local expert staff are creating hardships for local CSOs to sustain their activities. Local CSOs do not have enough resources to compete with INGOs. And, worse than contracting, they may even be left worse off than before if their expansion to deal with the Syrian crisis has undermined their previous work, or redistributed resources. The Undersecretariat of the Prime Minister's Office highlighted the negative effects – *"International CSOs take qualified Syrians and Turkish citizens into their own organisations,"* leading to brain drain. This view was shared by another worker of an INGO who, speaking in general terms, said *"INGOs operating in a new country need expertise – they hire local staff, 'poaching' from local organisations."* She outlined

the paradox of INGOs needing the assistance of local staff to understand the nuances of the particular settings, but creating a void as a result. *"For local organisations it's hard to replace these expert staff and salaries in the market increase. For this there is no easy solution. If you pay a person in Turkey less than a person who is doing the same job as the person in the U.S., this is inequality – they have to be paid the same. This leads to inequality in the local market and some local CSOs cannot afford the payment once donors leave."*

Despite all the capacity-development impact of INGOs, local stake-holders are very critical about their attitudes and activities. INGOs who take local expert staff are creating hardship for local CSOs to sustain their activities. Besides, local CSOs do not have enough resources to compete with INGOs. This problem, known as poaching, is one of the biggest problems for local CSOs.

Amnesty International – *"No, I don't agree [about INGOs bringing new concepts]. We've conducted research separating local and large CSOs. We found that INGOs are getting local CSOs' qualified staff – suddenly INGOs who have huge amounts of money came to the same field as local CSOs (doing the same thing). Local CSOs had neither the capacity nor the resources to compete. Qualified staff are employed by INGOs."*

Refugee Rights Turkey – *"There is a brain drain of local CSOs – as more qualified local professionals go to INGOs."*

Plan International – *"International CSOs are exploiting local CSOs without investing in them for capacity building – once the Syrian issue is over they will discard them."*

Lack of local knowledge

Participants frequently raise the issue that INGOs are not acquiring local knowledge, although this

is viewed as inevitable and not necessarily a problem in itself. Local CSOs provide necessary information, although they often suspect they're being exploited by INGOs in this process of information sharing.

KAMER – *"I think INGOs are learning from us. We know the problems and actors. We are in incredible traffic, but we are also learning methods from them."*

Bülbülzade – *"We had many visitors but it has no impact in the field. When they receive information from us, they never say 'ok let's do this together!'"*

But the lack of local knowledge becomes a problem when donors or international partners close themselves off to feedback from locals. The bureaucratic processes required in large INGOs restrict flexibility. On many occasions, when realities in the field do not match with the demands of donors, local CSOs are not in a position to make even the slightest changes in operations. Local CSOs complain about being stuck between realities in the field and the demands of donors.

İyilik Der – *"But the problem is, they don't open themselves to us. First they learn what we are doing; second they try to make us conduct their projects... We are not able to question or discuss their criteria or project or curriculum."*

Mülteciyim Hemşerim – *"INGOs – but they have very different criteria, we don't support their checklist. For us the only criteria for support is the declaration of that person."*

Lack of local knowledge also becomes a problem in the way INGOs select their partner organisations. INGOs in need of a partner for a certain project go to a CSOs they know, rather than a CSO with particular expertise in that field.

Kemal Vural, Kırkayak Kültür – *“Not every CSO is picky. They have this logic – I can do everything. But we direct these INGOs to the specialised CSOs in that field.”*

KAMER – *“Because they have other different criteria. Many funds and fund-giving organisations offer us funds but we don't accept. We are picky because of our capacity and scope of interest.”*

Mavi Kalem – *“Later, when international CSOs were seeking partners they chose randomly.”*

Halkların Köprüsü – *“INGOs say ‘give us a sad story so we can get more donations! They see this as temporary and this is not a sustainable way to approach the issue. They are too professional and they are too loyal to the ‘open-door ideology’ [of the government].”*

Despite the many criticisms directed towards INGOs, and concerns about their impact, expectations that INGOs will regulate the field remain – there is still a belief among the civil society sector that INGOs can facilitate cooperation among local CSOs. If they require cooperation with various actors when they are distributing funds, CSOs would need to create channels of communication for coordination and start to work together to receive funds.

Özgür Ünlühisarcıklı, GMF – *“The donors should have a condition for funds – you should have a partnership with different civil society organisations.”*

However, one INGO representative we directed this suggestion towards strongly refuted the idea, claiming *“forced marriages never work.”*

Chole Poncholet, The Fund for Global Human Rights – *“If donors force locals to create a coalition with other CSOs it won't work. The*

process should be natural – if you force it upon them it won't work. If donors force them, they will make a coordination to please donors but in the end it's a catastrophe. Maybe a solution would be if individuals cooperate from different organisations. A donor could select individuals with similar concerns to coordinate – ‘you from this CSO and you from this CSO share similar concerns – you should discuss them etc.”

Professional(ism)

Professionalism in the CSO sector is generally seen as negative by local CSOs. Most of the time they claim that CSO work should be done through voluntarism – this is seen as a shield against degradation. And INGOs are seen as the agents of professionalism through their partnerships and funds.

IHD – *“International CSOs are subcontracting local CSOs and professionalization in CSOs is suppressing volunteering. This has changed the nature of CSOs.”*

This perspective towards professionalism induces anxiety for some about cooperation with INGOs. A local solidarity group explains why they are not cooperating with INGOs –

Mülteciyim Hemşerim – *“We don't have enough capacity. We don't want money to be involved in our association because when money comes there will be competition and professionalism. If we have 6 volunteers and we can only afford to pay 3 of them, the other 3 volunteers would lose their motivation to work with us.”*

Yıldırım Şahin, Halkların Köprüsü – *“We are not a civil society organisation but a solidarity group. We don't write projects because it limits the amateur spirit. It limits volunteerism.”*

3.3.3. Possible future impacts of INGOs

What will happen to the CSO sector in Turkey when INGOs leave and funds decrease? This is not an easy question to answer, and many CSOs have conflicting opinions.

Murat Erdoğan, HÜGO – *“We are experiencing a cultural change too. If the crisis continues, more INGOs will arrive. They will not leave in one day – they will leave their culture as residue. It won’t be like a giant came and ate everyone and left – there will be things left behind.”*

Amnesty International – *“The real risk, maybe not now but tomorrow, is with the logic of exploiters. What is going to happen when these associations withdraw from Turkey? They’ll leave some chairs and lorries and unemployed qualified refugee experts. Local CSOs cannot handle this.”*

Chloe Poncholet, The Fund for Global Human Rights – *“When INGOs leave, what will happen to these people – their former employees? It is very hard to answer, there is no answer – they were earning higher money before, they have higher expectations, they are less satisfied with lower salaries.”*

Özgür Ünlühisarcıklı, GMF – *“There are increasing capacities of local CSOs [because of INGOs] but when they finish their partnership the local CSOs are not able to continue in the same capacity.”*

Paolo Lubrano, who works for Plan International INGO, which operates in the field of education, contextualised the local CSOs in Turkey within the international humanitarian framework. He suggested that, in general, CSOs are not currently focused on the long term perspective because the funding is focused on humanitarian rather than development assistance, necessitating short term planning. CSOs in Turkey are therefore being guided by the imperatives of the international

funding market, and are being forced to align themselves with their agenda rather than an agenda which may be of most benefit to Turkey in the long term. This means that many of the civil society initiatives that are being formed in direct response to the Syrian crisis do not have sustainable roots in Turkish society which will allow them to embed themselves in the long term. And those existing CSOs and civil society groups which have expanded as a result of assisting Syrians have not been expanded in a sustainable manner and will likely contract once funding for Syrians diminishes.

In summary, INGOs have become more important actors in Turkey since the refugee crisis. This trend is having both positive and negative impacts on the CSO sector in Turkey. They are increasing the capacity of civil society through funding and partnerships but, through this process, they are also creating competition and marketization in the field, which is driving CSOs from voluntarism to professionalism. International organisations are creating new job opportunities, but by doing so they are also 'poaching' local expert staff from local CSOs. According to the perception of local CSOs, their role as a third party in disagreements between the government and local actors, is being compromised by their attitude of 'not offending the government' to keep their accreditation.

4. STATE–CSO RELATIONS

When millions of people in need of food, shelter, treatment, education, and financial resources entered Turkey it was clear that the state would not be able to solve all the problems in isolation. For the first time since the 1999 earthquake, CSOs were necessitated in the field, and the state was forced to accept the involvement of civil society. Carrying out the duties of the state outside of the camps, has given CSOs a certain leverage. Cooperation and communication with state institutions has naturally increased. However, many problems still exist. The relationship between the state and CSOs is not a zero-sum binary but rather an arena of constant negotiation, where power is contested in different ways depending on specific geographical contexts, actors, politics and other factors.

Has the combined involvement in the Syrian issue affected relations between the state and CSOs? There are two areas of analysing their relationship – recognition, whether they know of each other, whether they trust each other, and whether they understand the role that each is expecting the other to play; and cooperation, including how this cooperation is implemented in practice, and who has control over specific areas of coordination. This section will cover the main problems and different perspectives of actors on these problems.

4.1. Mutual suspicions: State-favoured CSOs vs. bias towards the state

The lack of trust between the state and civil society is the most fundamental problem – participants from state institutions and civil society underlined this as the main barrier for increasing cooperation between the two. However, almost all participants view the lack of trust as embedded in political culture and

institutions, and are pessimistic about the prospects for overcoming the issue.

Ali Güneş, from The General Counsel of the Migration and Humanitarian Help Administration of the Prime Ministry, explains the lack of trust with the political culture in Turkey and the reflexes of the state as such – *“There is an increase in connections between state and civil society. This is obligatory. But the state has this reflex – its afraid CSOs will create trouble later for the state [...] We don't have the culture of trust. If someone has a different way of thinking to us, we see them as an enemy. This is the main problem with the political culture [...] There is the approach that – the CSO and the state have to keep their distance. This is hard to work on. We have this question of where to apply participatory democracy. In the West, they are professional in this and participation in decision making mechanisms is high.”*

Another interviewee from civil society shared this belief about political culture, exemplifying it thus – *“In our political culture CSOs are generally considered suspicious. After the law against foreigners was issued in 2014 and given to inspectors, they were told to create associations. They told us this and said ‘we don't know anything so we're going to talk to everybody’. They shared one or two drafts with civil society. Now we have monthly meetings but the strict reflex of the state is still dominant. This is a one sided relationship. There is a problem in the state's mechanism.”*

Nilgün Toker, Halkların Köprüsü – *“The state's perspective on CSOs wouldn't change. The state always sees CSOs as barriers/as a spy. This is so engrained.”*

Despite the relative consensus about the lack of trust, actors don't agree on the root of the problem, or the primary actors responsible. Public institutions don't regard the state as solely responsible for the uncooperative situation, if indeed they view it as such, whereas many civil society actors believe it's the duty of the state to take the initiative towards organising coordination.

4.2. Myth or reality: State-favoured CSOs and the case of X⁴⁶

The lack of trust manifests itself in different ways. A government bureaucrat argues that civil society organisations have stereotypes about the state, and that as a result they avoid cooperating with public institutions – *"They try to not communicate with us – they have a bias."* The "bias" referred here manifests itself in different ways. One of the most frequently mentioned statements from CSOs during the research process was that the government has its favoured-organisations and only cooperates with them. The categorisation of 'state-created CSOs' and 'state-favoured CSOs' is taken as fact among the CSOs that participated in our study.

K.F. – *"There is a new dimension in civil society. Small associations are being established under roof organisations, as in the case of X. They are being established by the government. X have easy access to camps. And when other CSOs complain about lack of access due to state restrictions, X say 'why don't you come to us, we can let you in'[...] It'll make a contribution – the government creates its own CSOs like X, Y, the government says 'get these materials and distribute it'. This process is a hard one for those who are not government supporters, especially after the priority and vision changed in Europe."*

N.S. – *"X is acting as the civil society organisation of the state. They are structured differently in different places. For example in the Kurdish regions, ex-HUDAPAR [known as the legal party of Hezbollah] members are joining them."*

T.H. – *"In the 2000s they [the state] were listening to us. But now they have created their own CSOs and they are listening to them."*

According to another participant, the state keeps a black-list of CSOs – *"They [state officials] say – 'not everybody can come here. CSOs criticise the state and then they want to come to our meetings'. Who gets invitations from the state? The high ranks. They don't think about others. Once we heard the state say – 'We have a blacklist. Today if you try to write something on rape, sexual assault in camps you would never be accepted by public institutions again!'"*

P.V. – *"Organisations that are supported by the state became active, or became existent."*

S.E. – *"The state gives money to whoever it wants."*

But the relationship between those CSOs who are categorised as 'state-favoured' and the state is not necessarily as simple as the label implies. In some cases those CSOs reject the implication that this has for their own autonomy. X is a good example of this dynamic – while it was regularly cited by other CSOs as being state-favoured, it regards its own relationship with the state as being more nuanced.

"Actually we are not close to the state. We are in a fix. We are not ingratiated by Jesus nor Moses [Turkish saying – you are not ingratiated by either side]."

⁴⁶ The names of respondents and institutions have been replaced with code names in this section.

In many cases X representatives are critical about the state and provide examples of problems they have had with public institutions, while outlining ways in which they are not being favoured. Discussing a meeting between state officials and CSOs in Izmir, one X representative said – “Every CSO was asked to send one representative. We asked to send two or three experts but they [state officials] didn't accept this. But when we went to the meeting we saw that Y had six people there. They were castigating the state but they are not in the field themselves. They were saying what we should be saying. But still, the state looks after them.”⁴⁷

A participant from X in the Istanbul focus groups also highlighted the operational difficulties they had faced attaining documentation. “[...] Our most important work sphere is the field but for example, when we need a document it's too hard to get. When we are trying to send food to the buffer zone we face problems in customs. If you don't personally know someone in customs it's too hard to follow through.”

Representatives from public institutions also reject the idea of favoured-CSOs.

Ali Güneş – “But we are working with every CSO. For example there's a [left wing] researcher in Istanbul. I asked her to write a project but she said 'no, I'm really busy.'” He rejected the belief of various CSOs that that state only cooperates with its favoured-organisations – “If civil society organisations think that the state only cooperates with its own supporters and stays away from us, we cannot interact with him and we cannot solve problems.” To support his point, he gave

the example of Halkların Köprüsü Association, which is part of *Barış Meclisi* [Peace Assembly] and an open critic of the government. “I went to Izmir to a meeting of Halkların Köprüsü. They thanked me at the end. They said ‘CHP [Republican People's Party, the main opposition party] never comes to our meeting, but this is a state official who has come to support us.’”⁴⁸ He continued by explaining the difficulties faced by a head-scarfed officer who had tried to visit and communicate with so-called 'left-wing CSOs', contrasting these difficulties with the openness he'd demonstrated.

But the state also understands that civil society is very important for it. “There are two kinds of barriers [to civil society becoming permanent]” says the same bureaucrat – “First, sensitivities of public institutions; and second, sensitivities of civil society organisations. If both sides [state and civil society] understand that this is not harmful for them it [civil society] would be permanent. Interaction would make cooperation permanent. The state says ‘we can discuss with you but we are the final decision making mechanism.’”

When the same concern about favoured-organisations was raised with a bureaucrat from AFAD, he replied – “No, we are working with everyone. Our best partner is the Norwegian Refugee Council for example. We only expect our partners to be successful and disciplined. Whoever brings the aid, we take it – it doesn't matter who gives it. CSOs are trying to create excuses for their failures. In our meetings they say this to us as well. I tell them – ‘on this date I gave you this amount of aid materials. You didn't deliver me its delivery receipt, but I know that you delivered it because I know everything you do!’”

⁴⁷ When asked about this meeting, and if they attended with six representatives, Y said they'd only attended with one. They said that they are present in the field but do not carry any banners or anything with the name of the association.

⁴⁸ Halkların Köprüsü's response to this was – “We were really happy that he [Prime Ministry officer] came [to our meeting]. He listened to us. But it didn't change what we were supposed to say. We made him make the first speech as a show of respect.”

The General Counsel of the Migration and Humanitarian Help Administration of the Prime Ministry – *“After collecting CSOs based on this criteria, if there is a CSO that has a low performance or has offered no solution we take them out so that new CSOs can enter. This criteria is so flexible and the lists are shaped by work. The criteria will be financial transparency and administrative structure.”*

A fieldworker from AFAD – *“We are open to every CSO. Before the coordination meetings we didn't know each other. If you don't know someone you cannot trust them – this is a mutual thing.”*

4.3. The problem of trust and its alternatives

Many of the issues between the state and CSOs seem to arise from differing opinions about the roles and responsibilities of both. When the bureaucrat's open point of view was mentioned to our participant representatives of CSOs, they were asked if they agreed that CSOs are avoiding cooperation with public institutions, and whose responsibility it was to take the first step. Many of the answers were similar, claiming that it is not a trusting relationship which is needed, but a professional one which is based on equal ground –

Oktay Çaparoğlu, IMD – *“What [the state officer] said – ‘they [leftist CSOs] should trust us, they should make the first step’ – these are very unnecessary things. Why should I trust him? You are the state, you have the power.”*

Halkların Köprüsü – *“Why the hell should I have a trusting relationship with the state? I'm conducting a civic movement because I don't trust the state. If I trust it, there's no need for the civic movement. Besides if I have to create a trusting relationship with the state then it should do something to make it happen. If I don't trust it, the*

reason is the state itself. What have you done to make me trust you?”

Birgül Aktay, Mazlum-Der İzmir – *“If you are the state then you have to fulfil the state's duties. I am civil society, and I have to fulfil civil societies' duties. Why do they have to have such an emotional relationship? We don't need a trusting relationship with the state in order to do our job. The state is not my mother, not my father, not my brother, so why should I have a trusting relationship with it? I only want to meet in certain mutual points and not to have a barrier to my work.”*

Cem Terzioğlu, Halkların Köprüsü – *“The question is wrong. The state is not a mechanism that would get on well with civil society.”*

Those participants who did not follow this line of argument, that there is no requirement for trust between the state and CSOs, instead regarded the state as being responsible for the hesitancy of CSOs to trust them.

Ö. Ünlühisarcıklı, GMF – *“The state should take the first step [towards reaching out to CSOs].”*

Sinan Gökçen, HCa – *“There is a problem with trust in state authority. This is why the authority would perceived it as if they're trying to run away from it. However it is the state authority's duty to solve this problem.”*

A participant from a research Center, Murat Erdoğan, underlines the lack of trust among actors with an example – *“I published a report, and weeks later I saw it in the news under the title ‘perception changing operation (algı operasyonu).”* He continued by joking, *“I was surprised that I was able to conduct a perception changing operation by myself.”*

The view was also repeated that the state is suspicious of civil society, and has no intention of cooperating with it.

Mustafa Rollas, IHD - *"The public institutions have no intention of cooperating with civil society. They invite us to their meetings but we just listen to them, we're not able to talk about our criticisms."*

Metin Çorabatır, IGAM - *"The state says 'I do everything', and they're always suspicious about the betrayal of civil society."*

If the state does not trust civil society and wants to have control over all operations, what is their opinion about the assumed role for CSOs? One particular concept was a dominant response to this question among our participants – that of sub-contractor.

Halkların Köprüsü - *"The state wants to give its public obligations to civil society. In this way it tries to make civil society its subcontractor – rewards those which are useful for itself."*

Murat Güreş, journalist and activist - *"[Discussing the state's perspective of the role of CSO's] A tool that it uses to convince the public of its policies. Like a bugle [borazan] – there is a small whistle at the mouth, and it becomes amplified. The state uses the civil society to amplify the point it's trying to make."*

Özgür Ünlühisarcıklı, GMF - *"The state is following a tactic which makes civil society organisations the subcontractors of the state."*

Talip Çelik, İyilik Der - *"We are doing the donkey work ['hamallık' – the hardest but most invisible work]. What is the importance of CSOs in the eyes of the state? [...] Kamer [referring to another participant in the focus group] can do as much research as it wants. Who will implement*

their reports? We should know our place, our institutions and we should decide in our own words on this basis."

Mustafa Rollas, IHD - *"The state funds their own associations, subcontracts them and then leaves the burden that it's not able to carry to them."*

CSOs believe that the state is cooperating only with those who are ideologically close to it. But the state institutions we talked with argue that they are open to cooperation with anyone. However, this desire to cooperate does not appear to reach the refugee camps – the state still preserves sole control here. For CSOs this is an indicator that the state does not want to cooperate with CSOs but is forced to subcontract them since it is not able to cover all the needs of non-camped refugees; if the real intention was for cooperation and increasing democratisation then, many CSOs believe, the camps would also be open to CSOs.

Mustafa Rollas, IHD - *"When we demand access to the camps, they don't let us do this since they say they're protecting the privacy of the refugees. Once when we asked to enter a camp they told us 'this is not a zoo. You cannot throw peanuts at refugees!'"*

Mardin Gençlik ve Kültür Derneği - *"State institutions are talking about regulations and CSOs are asking why they're not able to enter refugee camps."*

Murat Erdoğan, HÜGO - *"Sexual harassment of children in a camp was reported on CNN – the AFAD camps should be open to the control of CSOs. AFAD is afraid that CSOs would criticise everything and create a negative image, just for the sake of criticising. Of course ordinary citizens shouldn't be able to have access to the camps but the presence of CSOs there would increase transparency."*

Especially of the sexual harassers, exploiters etc. If an institution is isolated there is this tendency to cover up negative events."

4.4. Case study: Mazlum-Der and the impact of the state on CSO-CSO relations

The discourse of the state has a tangible impact on relations between CSOs – either through creating suspicion and paranoia or by dividing loyalties in new ways. This was demonstrated by the reactions of CSO participants to a speech which President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made. Referring to a Mazlum-Der report of 6 April and a TİHV report of 5 April, which condemned human rights' violations in the South-East region during the curfew in 2016, Erdoğan blamed CSOs for being tools of dark forces. *"Their known (malum) CSOs came to together and released a report. Those who are prepared these reports should be blasted away. You are releasing report about what?"*⁴⁹ A little over two weeks after the release of the report and Erdoğan's statement, our researchers went to Izmir to conduct interviews and a focus group. Several days before the focus group, when our venue was confirmed to be Mazlum-Der's Izmir office, many of our confirmed participants refused to attend, with some of them directly stating that they would not attend any event in the Mazlum-Der office. Those who suspected an organic relation between us and Mazlum-Der, asked us not to contact them again – we conducted individual interviews with others instead. Almost all of the attendees in the focus group were pro-leftist organisations' representatives who, while not sharing the religious motives of Mazlum-Der, did not hesitate to attend. Before the focus group started and

during the breaks they showed solidarity with Mazlum-Der. From this specific example it can be concluded that the attitude towards the government is the most important factor of divergence between CSOs, instead of other ideological components.

The Izmir focus group enabled us to directly observe the impact of Erdoğan's statement in the field. The fear of being one of "those", or of showing cooperation with CSOs that are not favoured by Erdoğan and the government was visible. It exemplified the power that the government has in influencing effective cooperation among CSOs, and the extent to which domestic political concerns limit the development of an interactive state-CSO relationship. The differences between aid-giving and 'right-based' organisations make more sense in the context of their inability to criticise government policies. Being critical about the policies of the government, not necessarily limited to refugee matters, also creates barriers to channels of communication and cooperation with the government, as well as with other CSOs. In this context Emel Kurma, the director of the hCa says – *"Aid-providing and advocacy-making should be conducted by separate CSOs. Because you cannot both criticise the government and cooperate with it, it would not let you to do so."*

Although it is not necessary to have a seamless relationship between civil society and the state for democracy, biases and suspicion between these actors in Turkey are creating insurmountable barriers for minimum cooperation. Many CSOs believe that the state is cooperating only with those who are ideologically aligned with it, or even creating its own CSOs. The traditional

⁴⁹ "Sen neyin raporunu yayınlıyorsun", *IMC TV*, last accessed 7 April 2016, <http://www.imctv.com.tr/Erdoğandan-stklara-sen-neyin-raporunu-yayinliyorsun/>; "Erdoğan STK'ları hedef aldı", *BIANET* last accessed 7 April 2016, <http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/173724-Erdoğan-stk-raporlarini-neden-hedef-aldi>.

roles and relations of the state and CSOs are enduring in this regard despite increasing levels of cooperation in the field. The response to Syrians by the state and civil society is prompting renewed questions about what position civil society should hold in relation to the state.

4.5. Taking back control?

It is not only the restricted access to camps which indicates the state's intention to control, or subcontract, CSOs. The state is also expanding its power outwards from the camps to the civil society sector as a whole through institutions and new regulations. The creation of AFAD, EYDAS, the planned Accreditation scheme and the role of municipalities are part of the state's strategy to regain some control over refugee assistance. Each will be discussed in the following sections.

4.5.1 AFAD

The Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) was established in 2009, in order to create a single Center for the state's disaster management. It is an amalgamation of the General Directorate of Civil Defence under the Interior Ministry, the General Directorate of Disaster Affairs under the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, and the Directorate General of Turkey Emergency Management under the Prime Ministry.⁵⁰ AFAD has a very particular role in state-CSO relations. It acts as the face of the state in humanitarian assistance and is thus the organisation that CSOs in the field communicate with when trying to reach the state. AFAD also organises monthly meetings with CSOs under governorates in various cities. This supports its position as the intermediary actor. However AFAD is also blamed for creating a monopolisation in the field by taking various CSO activities under its control. Two plans in particular have increased

tensions between civil society and the state – EYDAS and the Accreditation scheme.

AFAD's role in cooperation among CSOs

AFAD plays a significant role in creating connections and increasing communication between CSOs. AFAD has also established a platform in Şanlıurfa including 157 CSOs under the leadership of the governorate and AFAD's Şanlıurfa office. Monthly AFAD meetings within governorates are considered important and useful by different actors. An officer from the Şanlıurfa office of AFAD explained the purpose of these meetings – *"We are working not to duplicate each other's help."* However, interviews with other actors from the city revealed that meetings go beyond this agenda and create networks among CSOs. Their success in this regard is debatable. While actors in the field are given the opportunity to know each other, it does not seem to have a drastic impact on state-CSO relations. *"We come together every month under AFAD – but there is still no improvement in state-CSO relations."* Another respondent criticises the method of the meetings – *"Public institutions make presentations and others listen."*

Ulaş Sunata from Bahçeşehir University says – *"AFAD is experienced in humanitarian help, but inexperienced about migration!"* Different accounts from other actors reiterate this opinion. A representative from the IHH Istanbul office said – *"When a refugee gets stuck in the airport there is no one to understand what he is saying. Once a boy needed to have surgery but no one from AFAD knew the health regulation. They said 'we are helping CSOs, CSOs should do this!'"*

The need for a qualified and capable bureaucracy was stated often by our participants. Deniz Şenol Sert from Özyeğin University summarised this

⁵⁰ Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığının Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun, 5902 (2009).

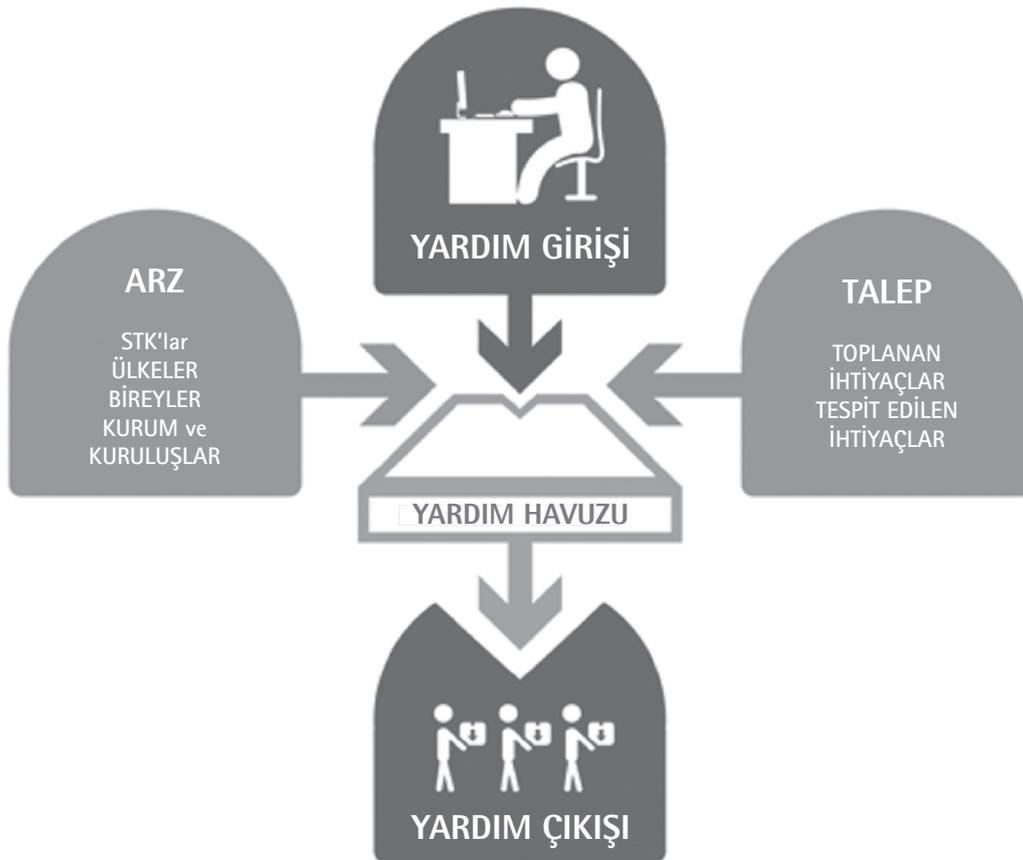
call - "We all need migration administration."

The lack of stability is also one of the weakest points of the bureaucracy underlined by the actors. Academics described how they had been invited to Ankara several times to consult with AFAD, and then had suddenly received invitations from someone they had never heard of and from a department they were not aware had been established - the Migration Consultancy of the Prime Ministerial Office.

AFAD is blamed for creating a monopolisation in the field through taking the CSO activities under its control. There are two plans in particular which have increased tensions between the civil society and the state: EYDAS and the accreditation scheme. Both will be discussed here -

4.5.2 EYDAS: Electronic Aid Distribution System

In the fifth meeting between AFAD and the Humanitarian Aid Platform, which includes The Union of NGOs of the Islamic World with more than 300 member organisations from 63 countries, it was stated that "Within the framework of the Disaster Management Plan, AFAD and NGOs will work from one single Center. After research under the coordination of AFAD, the domains of responsibility of every institution and organisation will be determined in order to distribute aid faster and better."⁵¹ The system is known as the Electronic Aid Distribution System (EYDAS). AFAD defines the system as "a bridge between the giving hand and the receiving hand". Its purpose is to document, coordinate, monitor,



⁵¹ İnsani Yardımda Devlet ve STK'lar tek bir merkezden çalışacak", <http://www.memurlar.net/hab.last> accessed 29 June, 2013.

and manage the aid distributed by CSOs. The system has three pillars – demand management, supply management, and aid management. Demand management is about determining those in need, and what is needed. AFAD finds the addresses of those in need of help, registers their personal information, the information required about the type of aid (size, weight, height etc.), and logs a request into the system about the aid material required.

The supply management's objective is to eliminate repetitive assistance through coordination. CSOs who are willing to help fill out the "Donor Help Information Document" and send it to AFAD. AFAD then registers the donor registration and authorisation which enables CSOs to see what is needed in each part of Turkey, and what amount.

The aid management is the final step. After the demands and supplies are registered in the system the software matches the needs with supplied materials, and analyses the needs. The poll system is described through an illustration.⁵² In the software all the aid is collected in a poll, but there is no mention of who will distribute the materials in the poll. There are important questions to be answered – What is the role of CSOs in this distribution process? Do CSOs have any mechanism to control the process? Is it possible to stay out of the system but continue providing individual aid?

This system is criticised by different actors on different grounds – these include concerns about monopolisation in the field through transforming CSOs solely into the role of fundraiser, and ineffectiveness. Metin Çorabatır from IGAM explains the system and the CSOs' role in this system – "AFAD is creating a database. It will

show what is needed in a certain place, and it will raise money from civil society organisations (and material help)." In other words, CSOs will not be able to directly help people that they determine.

Suna Gülfer Ihlamur-Öner from Marmara University says, "AFAD wants to regulate the field. They said 'give us the money and materials and we'll distribute it in the field'. This affected the competition and lack of communication." The state will be the only one that decides who will receive help. And since, as Mustafa Utku Güngör from hCa says, many Syrians prefer not to register in Turkey, it is very likely that these people will not receive material help distributed by the system.

In addition, according to several respondents, the database also has technical problems. Talip Çelik, from İyilik Der in Gaziantep says, "That project [AFAD database] is named EYDAS but it was a complete failure. You could only write what was needed in the field." Another CSO's representative, from the same meeting agrees with him agreed, saying "This didn't work at all."

4.5.3 Accreditation

The government's plans to introduce an Accreditation scheme was revealed during an interview with the Under Secretariat of the Prime Minister's office. During our discussion, the officer complained about the capacity problems of CSOs in Turkey which, he argued, necessitated international organisations. On the other hand, he argues, it is hard to find a capable CSO when an INGO wants to cooperate and/or needs support. He outlines the projected outcomes of this scenario – "In the medium term we wouldn't need INGOs. In the long term we want to create our own INGOs. There will be an accreditation of existing

⁵² "Elektronik Yardım Dağıtım Sistemi", <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tr/3641/Elektronik-Yardim-Dagitim-Sistemi-EYDAS>, last accessed 25 September 2016.

CSOs – after the capacity development training.” This capacity development will include sending experts, conducting training, and providing financial help. According to the plan, after the capacity development, and based on the criteria of financial transparency and administrative structure, CSOs will be accredited.

In the interviews and focus groups which followed this interview, the accreditation issue was also raised as a measure to understand the non-state actors' perspective about whether or not they trust the state.

Gaziantep Focus Group (collective demand) – *“The state should be transparent. And some CSOs shouldn't be favoured. Accreditation is one of the results of this favouring (as a solution to a lack of cooperation).”*

IHH Izmir – *“It [accreditation issue] would be very negative. CSOs are volunteer organisations. Accreditation would lead to the otherisation of volunteers. It would decrease their willingness to help. CSOs are like fillers which fill wall cracks. We reach where the state cannot reach. There are CSOs like us. For example İnsan Derneği (Human Foundation) is distributing food to 1,500 people every day.”*

Bodrum Kadın Dayanışması – *“Don't believe that accreditation would have a positive impact, even gathering three people together is a big deal. We even pay our rent by ourselves but what we produce is a lot compared to our capacity. If accreditation happens CSOs will turn into subcontractors of the state. This would not stop us, it would just increase the pressure on us. The logic behind it is managing the 3 billion euros [coming from the EU-Turkey deal] and they will do this through their own foundation and CSOs. They are creating a labour hierarchy among CSOs – those CSOs founded by the state are on the top*

and those who only criticise it are on the bottom. Another aim of accreditation is to create a barrier to CSO capacity building.”

The future of EYDAS and the accreditation plans are still not certain. But these two cases are crucial for understanding state-CSO relations. Despite attempts from officials to justify these plans, CSOs remain sceptical. They are always suspicious, whether justified or not, about the perceived hidden plans of the state. Whatever the intentions are, EYDAS and Accreditation will undoubtedly increase state control over the CSO field. The exclusion of civil actors from the decision-making processes of these plans and possible deteriorating impacts shows that the concerns of CSOs about further state control are not without foundation.

4.6. Role of municipalities

According to Suna Gülfer İhlamur-Öner from Marmara University, the role of local administrations is very limited. *“In one example municipalities starting providing İftar to refugees, but the Supreme Court investigated the municipality and told them ‘this is not your responsibility, you can't do this.’”* The domestic political concerns of various actors are also impacting on their cooperation with other actors. Municipalities governed by opposition parties face problems cooperating with other actors. A representative from Amnesty International gave this example – *“There were some refugees in one municipality. The municipality was trying to help them overcome their problems with their limited resources. They called me and I tried to reach out to various INGOs. The INGOs said ‘this would be very minor work for us but if we help them, we will lose our work permits.’ The municipality was DBP [Democratic Regions Party] – if we were to work with them it would jeopardise our dynamics under our bigger operations.”* This phenomena is not

specific to the big CSOs who are trying to protect bigger projects. Murat Erdoğan, HÜGO, states that – *“Gathering together and doing something logical has appeared in our society. This dis-empowers central authority. However, these local CSOs discovered that if they get close to the state they can find more resources. They say – we are a small CSO, we shouldn’t have to struggle with the state. So they don’t.”*

He went on to say that, *“With the union of municipalities of the Marmara region we are able to work together – you know it’s easier [to justify] when there are no Kurds involved.”* Mülteciyim Hemşerim solidarity group explained its reason for not cooperating with a municipality – *“They can defame us. Why? When we resisted urban transformation they can go to people in the neighbourhoods and say ‘you trust these people, but we gave money to them to create Centers, they are with us but now they’re exploiting you.”* They think that cooperation with municipalities makes the work they’re doing unnecessarily political – consequently even if municipalities offer cooperation, they reject it.

There are also cases where municipalities are choosing not to cooperate with CSOs in order to avoid turning their regions into ‘attraction Centers’ for refugees. Yıldırım Şahin from Halkların Köprüsü gives an example – *“We talked with Konak municipality [in Izmir] and convinced them to put mobile toilets for free around the municipality. They tried to close off access to the ‘Kultur Park’ to Syrians. There’s a huge place within this park that people can stay... The main concern is keeping these people out of Izmir and not presenting Izmir as a place where refugees feel comfortable. In this way Izmir won’t be an attraction Center. It tries to protect its touristic attractions but for this they cover the bad living conditions of the people suffering and they even make these conditions worse by doing so.”* They

underline the political motivations behind these actions – municipalities do not want to alienate their voters by spending money on refugees.

Municipalities in Istanbul vary in the levels of support they provide, depending on the actors involved. According to one newly established community Center in Fatih, set up by a group of expats, *“We tried to reach out to the municipality. If they’d responded it might have been a useful link. But Fatih Municipality didn’t respond – they’re trying to discourage refugees from coming to Fatih and didn’t want to support initiatives.”* However, another interviewee, a representative of a CSO run by and for Syrian-women, mentioned that they had received help from Fatih municipality.

While further research is required on the reason for municipalities’ differentiated treatment, this may be caused by the different profiles of CSOs, personal traits of bureaucrats, or the particular demands they are making. It can be concluded that there is no unified attitude among municipalities in their response to the refugee issue. While some are more cooperative, others deny any communication. While HDRF CSO in Istanbul says that they have good relations with the municipality and are distributing food and clothes to the refugees, others complain that municipalities are denying the existence of refugees. A CSO that works in several regions in Turkey supports this point by saying: *“In several cities we have good [relationship with public institutions]. But we cannot talk about a regional pattern. In some Western cities sometimes they hang up the phone and even though our first office is in K. we still have serious problems there.”* Another example is given by a CSO representative known as being close to the government: *“Even official institutions don’t support us – neither the governorate nor the prime minister’s office in Izmir, only the prosecutor’s office in Izmir.”* He explains that they have close contacts with someone in

that office and it was only thanks to this contact that they were able to receive help. Implications of this phenomena should be discussed and researched in more detail.

The need for an excessive amount of manpower and resources in responding to Syrians has opened up a new space for CSOs. The policies of the government to regulate CSO activities, such as AFAD's expanding role, EYDAS and accreditation, are regarded as an infringement of this relatively autonomous space.

5. FUTURE INCLUSION

The previous sections of the report have focused on changes to civil society in Turkey resultant from dealing with the Syrian presence. Discussing the changes which civil society in Turkey may be undergoing as a result, directly or indirectly, of the Syrian refugee presence in the country is incomplete without recognising the transitory forms of organisation which Syrians are developing, and the impact that these are having on existing and new civil society structures in Turkey. Firstly the Syrian civil society which is developing, both autonomous from and intertwined with, existing civil society groups is adding a new component to the identity of civil society in Turkey, which will have implications for the future Syrian presence in the country. Secondly, understanding whether, or how, Turkey (in terms of both the government and civil society initiatives) is responding to Syrians at localised levels, in relation to how they are concentrating their lives geographically, economically and socially, will determine to a degree the space in which Syrian-led initiatives are allowed to operate, and the degree to which they are embedded within Turkish laws and society. This will have a significant impact on the medium to long term co-existence of Syrians in Turkey, the future of Syrian society both inside and outside Syria, and the way that Turkey responds to outsiders.

The ways in which Syrians are organising themselves, or not, outside of camps has an impact on the ways we understand the nature of what it means to be a refugee and how a refugee-host community relation develops over time as refugees try to find new ways to organise and build new lives, whether transitory or permanent. Its significance for this particular research lies in the ways it impacts on Turkish society – including

marginalised groups within the existing host society – and how CSOs in Turkey understand the challenges not only of refugee needs, but the needs of the new community being formed by the entrance of Syrians into other communities. These may be direct impacts caused by intermingling and exchange or, more often since such exchanges still seem relatively limited, indirect impacts.

Four key areas can be identified to understand the main issues which Syrian communities are dealing with in Turkey – the extent of recognition between Syrians and individuals in Turkey; Syrian civic initiatives and networks; the extent of cross-socialising between Syrians and individuals in Turkey; and the insecurities of Syrians. These four areas are heavily inter-related and require further research to understand complexities. But they must be considered within the context of Turkish society, which is divided in its relationship to Syrians along religious, political and socio-economic lines. The issues that Syrians face, the way they adapt to them and the consequences of this adaption are therefore contingent on the particular context within which they are practiced. This is, itself, in flux.

5.1. General insecurities among Syrians

Insecurities may be a reason for the low profile of some Syrian organisations, and lack of cooperation between Syrian groups and between Syrian and Turkish groups. For instance according to one CSO based in Istanbul which was trying to communicate with Syrian CSOs, they said that while some of their communication channels were open there were many small scale CSOS which could not be reached owing to language barriers and lack of address or telephone indicated.

Syrians across Turkey are exposed to a range of insecurities, both directly imposed and administered, such as legal insecurities and economic insecurities caused by lack of employment and exploitative rent prices, and related indirect insecurities such as social stigma, language problems, and fear of the future. Insecurities impact upon all aspects of Syrian's lives in Turkey, particularly their access to assistance and self-securing initiatives. Many Syrians are retreating into private spaces. There is a separate social space operating online, which is very important for information sharing and emotional support, but this also hierarchises those who are able to access it, depending on their ability to navigate such new media. In general the ways in which Syrians are able to respond to insecurities depends on their socio-economic background, social capital and support networks – these often mean that the most marginalised groups, who have the greatest level of insecurity, also have less means to navigate those insecurities or become self-securing. These groups may also be the ones less able to access information about what support is available.

There are also social insecurities caused by the fear of stigma, as much as by the experience of stigma itself. One young woman working for Ishraqat Syrian women's CSO said – *"For me I feel afraid here. You always have to show that you're a peaceful person that you wish good for Turkey. But in general the situation here is ok."* Heightened insecurities are also caused by a lack of everyday interaction and exchange – this is happening to some degree at very individual levels but is hindered by language barriers and does not extend beyond the individual, even within a community. Spaces which might be places of exchange – the mosque, outside the school yard, the doctor's waiting room, are not being used as such. Either because they are not actual spaces where individuals from the two communities

interact or because there is a mutual division enforced between the two communities. *"We go to the mosque to pray and we see other Turkish people there, but we do not interact with them,"* says a Syrian doctor who has founded a small clinic in Zeytinburnu which services Syrians in the area. And, according to a Syrian businessman working in the import-export industry – *"Syrians try to keep closed in their community. They only use Syrian services."* The ways the Syrian population are living within Istanbul appears fragmentary and highly dependent on networks from home towns, or religious communities. The Christian community from Syria are connected to churches in Istanbul by their local church in Syria. They immediately enter into the communal support network of that religious network. However the religious connection is not necessarily a unified environment. One Syrian Christian woman describes how –

"We speak with Turkish Kurds who live here, because we speak a bit of Kurdish. And Turkish Armenians who live here too. But we don't like to deal with Turkish people."

Lack of socialising does not only affect relations between Syrians and local people. *"There is a little bit of socialising, but not like when we were in Syria",* say a group of Syrian school-teachers working in a Temporary Education Center (TEC) in Zeytinburnu. *"Syrian people here are under a lot of pressure – we don't feel like we should have to socialise, or go out a lot."*

5.2. Extent of recognition between Syrians and institutions in Turkey

'Recognition' between Syrians and local representatives refers to a range of markers, such as institutional – Syrian organisations being recognized by local institutions – the recognition of Syrians as actors in their own future rather

than mere recipients of aid, and the basic social recognition occurring in everyday exchanges which indicate whether Syrians have been accepted as co-inhabitants of space. While some forms of recognition are easier to document, particularly institutional, other forms are more intangible and research which aims to document it is reliant on anecdotes which are susceptible to personal interpretation. This research is most focused on institutional recognition, particularly between the government representatives and CSOs in with Syrian organisations. However mention of other forms of social recognition were made throughout our interviews.

In general it can be said that there is a lack of recognition of Syrians across multiple levels – institutional, regional, local and individual. Two clear points emerged in our research. Firstly, there are slow and bureaucratic relations between state and Syrian institutions which are often interpreted by Syrians as indicating a lack of desire by Turkish officials, from both the state and CSOs, to interact with them. Secondly Syrians are often not being recognised, by a range of actors, as stakeholders in their own future.

At the institutional level slow and bureaucratic relations with Syrian institutions are not unnatural, nor limited to Syrians. Nevertheless, they are often interpreted by Syrians as indicating a lack of desire by the officials to interact with them. The relationship which these institutions have with the government, local municipalities and local individuals also varies – across location, but also between institutions and between different the state authorities. The government is aware of the existence of these Syrian institutions in most cases, but only in some cases are the institutions officially registered. While in some areas the municipalities are supportive, offering financial assistance, spaces to operate or other forms of assistance, in other areas there is no

relationship with the municipality at all. For instance one Syrian CSO based in Gaziantep described creating an intensive and fast learning program for Syrian children who had lost school years. But the ministry of education did not recognise it. All Syrian professionals wanting to work in Turkey require certificates to prove their qualification under Turkish law – this is a time-intensive process. The Syrian clinic in Zeytinburnu, for instance, has been open for two years and is still not registered with the government – their application is in process. Once they become registered all their doctors will have to receive certificates to prove they are doctors under Turkish law. It is generally acknowledged that the government is either turning a blind eye to their otherwise illegal activities, or in a few cases, trying to support them directly. Certainly the government is aware of the existence of these institutions – The General Counsel of the Migration and Humanitarian Help Administration of the Prime Ministry described how *“Syrians have established many associations and schools. They have their own health Centers.”* The criteria of whether the government supports Syrian initiatives or not is very ambiguous.

5.3. Syrian civic initiatives and networks and their relations with local CSOs

While there is no official data available for the exact numbers, there are many Syrian CSOs in Turkey, including a mix of CSOs, and other public services such as schools, hospitals and shops. These are mainly concentrated in those areas with the most Syrians – mainly in specific districts of Istanbul and Gaziantep – so it is impossible to talk of general trends or of a widespread and inclusive phenomenon. The relationship which these institutions have with the Turkish government, local municipalities and local individuals also varies – across location, but also

between institutions and between different local authorities. These CSOs help Syrians overcome their daily problems, provide legal information, do translations from Turkish to Arabic, establish schools and hospitals, and even run newspapers and radio stations. On the one hand there are many Turkey origin CSOs that work to help Syrians and many Syrian origin CSOs that are active in the fields that Turkey origin CSOs focus on. However, these layers of the CSO sector have very limited communication. They almost constitute parallel civil societies - without touching each other, yet operating along the same tracks. Syrians are often not being recognised as actors in their own future. There is still a tendency to work 'for' rather than 'with' Syrians, and the ideology of charity and aid giving dictates their position to be one of victim rather than actor. Some associations are trying to reject this ideology and this is increasing the level of cooperation with Syrians. Despite the fact that there are certain differences in Turkey and Syria culture, using these differences as a barrier for cooperation becomes more like a black-box that actors group different excuses into, particularly considering that CSOs in Turkey have developed relations with CSOs from many countries that have more distinct backgrounds and cultures. There are many Syrian CSOs and activists in Turkey. Why are they not visible within the CSO sector in Turkey? Why are CSOs not cooperating together?

Equality problem

Being equal partners in relations with each other is a big problem for CSOs and Syrian CSOs. Syrians believe that they are seen merely as objects and not taken as political actors. CSOs in Turkey try to determine the problems of the Syrian population, and create solutions for those problems without taking Syrian institutions as actors. In the very early stages of this research we asked a representative of a Syria-origin roof organisation,

of several CSOs and political parties, about their demands from the civil society in Turkey - he said *"We want them to visit us, know us."* Further interviews and meetings with Syrian organisations confirmed that this is a common demand among Syrian organisations.

Cemal Mustafa, Minber Sam - *"I don't think that Turkish CSOs have this exploitative vision for Syrians. Maybe newly founded CSOs would be doing this. But I should add this - they are making decisions about Syrians, but they don't ask Syrians. It would be more useful to ask Syrians about these activities and laws. Our expectation from Turkish CSOs is to support Syrian institutions. Instead of working for Syrians, its better if they support Syrian foundations, because there is a huge cultural difference between us."*

Bülülzade - *"They don't take us as interlocutors. In Şanlıurfa we have this roof Syrian platform organisation, the governorate supports it, but there is still a problem in the common sense."*

Cemal Mustafa, Minber Sam - *"They are providing education for 6 months but there are no books, no interlocutors. We are not even able to control the schools that they opened. We don't even know how teachers are instructing. The governorate makes meetings about Syrians, but there is not one Syrian institution present. I attended once accidentally by luck."*

Merve Özdemirkıran - *"We haven't seen a process whereby Turkish CSOs tell Syrians 'Come on my brother, this fund is for you, and you should become your own provider'. Instead local CSOs say 'I am your provider' because they still believe in the temporariness of refugees."*

Şenay Özden, Hamiş - *"We are citizens and therefore superior, the poor refugees are needy individuals who require our assistance." Nothing*

could be farther from the truth. These people are not poor victims. We strive to explain this fact, and working against the discourse of assistance, try to create channels from the grassroots up. Currently there are over two hundred CSOs active in Gaziantep, but most of us have never even heard of them. They have their radios and newspapers in Turkey, in Arabic. They are demanding a pluralistic, democratic and secular Syria." ⁵³

Deniz Şenol Sert – "Civil society sees them as victims and tries to help them."

Paulo Lubrano, Plan International – "There is a chain of exploitation between CSOs – the International CSOs are exploiting Turkish CSOs, and the Turkish CSOs are exploiting Syrian CSOs. These partnerships are purely financial and not about building quality."

Language barrier

The problem of communication is exacerbated by the language barrier. This remains a huge barrier between communication, and cooperation. Most of the CSOs do not have Arabic-speaking employees and most of the Syrians do not know Turkish.

Ishrakaat – "The main problem is the language barrier. We are working for Syrian schools and we don't have much communication with Turkish people. Even if we cooperate with Turkish CSOs it is the administrative board of our CSO that has the communication. There are many CSOs who are trying to help refugees but the refugees don't know where to go because there are so many, and refugees get lost."

Support to Life – "There are many small scale Syrian CSOs in Fatih which we can't reach because of the language barrier. Even if we know about

them, it's hard to reach cooperation. I don't know how it works in the field, but we contacted them for our society Center project. There is a problem. For some of them their communication channels are open but for example in Fatih there are many small scale CSOS which we can't reach. We have language barriers. There's no address or telephone indicated. There are schools in Fatih but you can't find them, it's hard for Syrian CSOs and people to live in a foreign country and adapt their work system in the meantime."

ASAM – "Another problem is the language problem – two different issues. Firstly local CSOs don't speak Arabic and secondly they don't speak English to cooperate with INGOs."

Cultural differences

Participants many times stated cultural differences among Turkish and Syrian societies as a reason for a lack of cooperation and communication with each other. Civil initiatives were discouraged in Syria, both during the years of conflict and also prior to that, and this is having a consequent impact on the concept of 'civil society' which is being developed in exile in Turkey. Certainly the forms of civil society initiatives which are being led by Syrians in Turkey are very different from whatever form of civil society existed in Syria, while also being different to their Turkish counterparts. In many cases Syrian and local individuals noted the different 'logic' of operating as a reason for the lack of coordination between Syrian and local institutions. However, they did not give specific examples of how culture is different or how it is impacting relations. What actors mean by 'culture' may also vary and is therefore an ambiguous metric.

Ishrakaat – "Syrian CSOs are working here as if they're working in Syria, even though they were

⁵³ Şenay Özden, "The opposition failed bitterly in the refugee issue", interviewed by Ayşe Çavdar, *Saha* 4 (2016): 37.

established in Turkey, not Syria. The concept of civil society is different in Syria."

Support to Life – *"It's difficult for Syrian CSOs and people to adapt their working system to a new environment, when they're already adjusting to personal change."*

IHH- Istanbul – *"There are lots of CSOs but their practices are problematic. Though we have cooperation with all Syrian institutions here. ("Syrians are lazy, they have this bad logic of working, they are not as hard working as us"). There are problems in cooperation, in distributing health – we can't understand if people are really needy or not. It's a difficult boundary."*

One Syrian CSO in Istanbul suggested that CSOs in Turkey are supporting Syrian CSOs to be like them and share their ideology, particularly regarding education. Another worker for a large CSO suggested that Syrians are not used to receiving help, but there is now a culture of dependency being developed.

Syrian and local CSOs' have the potential to ease the inclusion process of Syrian refugees through their activities. However, the relations between these institutions remain quite problematic. Hierarchical relationships, language barriers and cultural differences are listed as the main traps blocking higher levels of cooperation. Considering the fact that these civil society actors, both Syrians and locals, are a microcosm of society in general, these problems are likely to be a barrier to future inclusion in wider contexts as well.

6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CSOs and Human Security in crises associated with refugee flux in Turkey

Given the protracted presence of Syrians in Turkey, the inevitable duration of their stay, and the permanence of the move here for a substantial number, it is no longer adequate to talk of Syrians as a group distinct from the host communities in which they are embedded. Social policies must address the human securities of refugees and the host society, paying attention to insecurities within the host communities which have been created or exacerbated by the refugee presence. The sheer volume of Syrians, the number of conflicts being engaged in both inside and outside Turkey's borders, which make for an increasingly insecure environment, and the controversy of Syrians in the labour markets mean that the way Syrians have been living in Turkey in the past five years will not necessarily continue unchanged.⁵⁴ Indeed the divisive reaction of local social media users towards suggestions of granting citizenship to Syrians in Turkey is a small indication that their protracted future stay is highly sensitive among the public.⁵⁵

Whereas a 'needs-based' approach focuses on securing additional resources for delivery of services to marginalised groups, a 'rights based' approach calls for existing resources to be shared

more equally, and assisting the marginalised people to assert their rights to those resources, thus making the process explicitly political. In general it can be said that there is a lack of recognition of Syrians across multiple levels – institutional, regional, local and individual. In order to address the presence of Syrians in Turkey in the most sustainable and inclusive way, which also encompasses the long term impact on the host society, these different levels – from the international community to national government to local authorities – must cooperate.

Since the 1990s there has been a growing awareness of the multiple range of insecurities which refugees face, not just physical violence but threats to their human freedoms and fulfilments. This shift accompanied new concepts of human security, defined by a 2003 Commission on Human Security as "protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations [...]".⁵⁶ It means that human rights do not just cover political and civil rights but economic and social and cultural rights too.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ A good point of comparison here may be the attitude of Pakistan host communities towards Afghan refugees who, having been received with tremendous generosity for five years, then began to be resented owing to increasing threats to societal security. Susanne Schmeidl, "(Human) security dilemmas: long-term implications of the Afghan refugee crisis". *Third World Quarterly*, 23:1 (2002): 7-29.

⁵⁵ The hashtag #ÜlkemdeSuriyeliİstemiyorum (I don't want Syrians in my country) hit the worldwide Twitter trending topic list on July 3. Hurriyet Daily News, "Turkish Twitter users criticize Syrian citizenship proposal as hashtag becomes TT", 3 July, 2016, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-twitter-users-criticize-syrian-citizenship-proposal-as-hashtag-becomes-tt.aspx?pageID=238&nid=101188&NewsCatID=338>, accessed 13 September, 2016.

⁵⁶ United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, "Human Security Now: Commission on Human Security", New York 2003, http://www.un.org/humansecurity/sites/www.un.org/humansecurity/files/chs_final_report_-_english.pdf, accessed 15 September 2016.

⁵⁷ Mary Kaldor, Human Security, *Society and Economy* 33: 3 (2011): 441-448.

A fundamental component of human security is the concept that processes "build on people's strengths and aspirations [...]".⁵⁸ This recognises the self-securing capacity of individuals, as well as the importance of the embedded social, economic and cultural networks in which they live in host communities, and exercise their daily rights. Former High Commissioner of the UNHCR, Sadako Ogata noted the importance of building effective networks with a range of individuals – "coalitions around individual issues are important; making coalitions effective, through viable operational mechanisms, is even more important."⁵⁹ With this in mind, the context of civil society responding to Syrians in Turkey should be analysed from its ability to build effective operational mechanisms which are able to both protect Syrians and vulnerable host societies along lines of human security. That is, which recognises both that Syrians are actors in their own future and that their own future is intrinsically related to their relationships within local host community settings, alongside all its internal stratifications and power struggles. But such an ambition for securing the rights of Syrians and their hosts can only be achieved through the coalition between civil society, and the embedded institutions of the state and local authorities.

A 'rights based' approach, as defined by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), contains the following

constituent elements: 1) linkage to rights; 2) accountability; 3) empowerment; 4) participation; 5) non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups.⁶⁰ It thus recognises the importance of transparency over who is providing aid, the conditions under which it is given, how long it will last. And it is intrinsically determined by the localised settings within which it is being given,⁶¹ including the vulnerabilities of the host community.

At the heart of a human security focus is shifting the understanding of refugees and hosts as being separate groups and understanding that social capital isn't something constant or static.⁶² Rather, the fluid and constantly changing character of cities influences the urban forms of social capital. Addressing the blurred reality between the simple binary of refugees as dependent 'victims' versus empowered actors would also go some way to recognising mixed layers of vulnerability and capacity existent within the refugee and host population, which does not necessarily decrease over time. Entrenched poverty and social discrimination based on religious, ethnic or economic lines within host societies are impacting on how Syrians are being recognised within localities. The recognition of refugees as empowered participants demands an understanding of how they practice civic life – including their religious, socio-economic and cultural habits, which may influence what they perceive their rights to

⁵⁸ Human Security Now: Commission on Human Security, New York 2003, 4.

⁵⁹ "Human Security: A Refugee Perspective" – Keynote Speech by Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, at the Ministerial Meeting on Human Security Issues of the "Lysoen Process" Group of Governments, Bergen, Norway, 19 May 1999 <http://www.unhcr.org/admin/hcspeeches/3ae68fc00/human-security-refugee-perspective-keynote-speech-mrs-sadako-ogata-united.html>, accessed 15 September 2016.

⁶⁰ Munzoul Assal, "Rights and Decisions to Return: Internally Displaced Persons in Post-war Sudan". In, Katarzyna Grabska and Lyla Mehta (ed) "Forced Displacement: Why Rights Matter", (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008):145.

⁶¹ Michael Posner and Deirdre Clancy, A Human 'rights based' Approach to Refugee Assistance, Human Rights First, https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/approach_refugess.pdf, accessed 15 July 2016, 4.

⁶² Madhavan S., Landau L.B. Bridges to nowhere: hosts, migrants, and the chimera of social capital in three African cities. *Population Development Review* 37:3 (2011): 473-97.

be and how their participation is enacted. This makes for an extremely complex configuration of interests, which impinge on how rights talk is articulated as well as how it comes to inform what is actually done.

International community – Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs) and INGOs

The international community has played an important role in assisting Syrians outside the official Temporary Protection Centers (TPC), mainly in a partnering capacity with the government and local CSOs. The UNHCR is working as a 'complementary' protection actor in Turkey, although it does not deal with the registrations of Syrians. IGOs such as IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and OCHA have all improved coordination with the government in the past five years. There are a number of further steps which they can take -

- **Recognition of Syrian civic bodies in Turkey.** International communities should empower local Syrian run initiatives being fostered across Turkey, and provide the Turkish government with financial support to assist them financially where necessary.
- **Syrians as stakeholders in their own assistance.** Syrians should be represented in policy meetings at international levels.
- **Recognise that host society also has vulnerabilities** (and minority and ostracised groups within) which shouldn't be ignored, and that addressing these vulnerabilities should be as much a focus as the Syrian population.

- **Empowering existing civil society in Turkey** through training programs; partnership rather than direct brain drain. Recognise the difficulties which will be caused by the exit of international resources and funds, and make provisions for this through.

- **Inclusion schemes** which focus on both Syrians and host society (including marginalised groups within society in Turkey).

- **Better distribution of resources** across a range of localities, stakeholders and levels.

The central government

The government has been the main responder to the Syrian population in Turkey. The DGMM is the responsible authority for the registration and status decisions for Syrian refugees, who are registered under the scope of the "temporary protection" regime.⁶³ The government has concentrated the majority of its assistance and attention to the 26 camps, referred to as Temporary Protection Centers (TPC),⁶⁴ managed by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and TPC personnel. The state is also expanding its role in refugee management outside the camps through institutions and new regulations – particularly the heavily reliance on AFAD (created in 2009), creation of the Electronic Aid Distribution System (EYDAS), and the planned Accreditation scheme.

- **CSO proposals and ideas should be discussed in Ministries and in the Assembly**—their suggestions shouldn't be taken as only recommendations but they should be

⁶³ Refugee Rights Turkey, "Introduction to the Asylum Context in Turkey", <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/introduction-asylum-context-turkey>, accessed 28 July 2016.

⁶⁴ Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Introduction, <https://www.afad.gov.tr/en/>, accessed 7 September 2016.

implemented. CSOs should be considered as interlocutors in decision making meetings, and they should be invited to official meetings.

- **Syrian CSOs should be better supported.** Bureaucratic barriers to receiving money from abroad should be reduced; there should be greater financial assistance; there should be formal recognition at the government level.
- **The state should be transparent.** And some CSOs shouldn't be favoured. Accreditation is one of the results of this favouring.
- **Investment in language training** with funded courses which are accessible to all across different segments of society. Particular provisions should be made for women – separate classes and spaces should be provided for their children to play where necessary.
- **Discussions about future of Syrians should be debated in the public arena,** across all political parties, with representatives from all segments of society, at all levels of governance, so that various social groups and citizens can express their opinions and start to debate among themselves. This should be the basis for formulating a more inclusive and clear-cut asylum policy.
- **Laws concerning Syrians should be translated into Arabic and Kurdish.**
- **Education** – there should be a greater understanding of trauma. Teacher training should be provided to teachers about how to teach traumatised children.
- **Committees with representatives of** places of exchange within local communities (mukhtars, doctors, etc.) and different

segments of population about best ways for coordinating within communities.

- **Information Campaign** – Launch an information campaign to better inform Syrians about their rights, services, available assistance.
- **Recognition of Certificates** – Address certification-registration issues ranging from school and teachers' diplomas to marriages and births, and seek means to receive international recognition for these certifications.
- **Ease of access for refugee researchers** conducting work in camps and institutions should be improved.

Municipalities

Municipalities hold a crucial responsibility in terms of creating a bridge between the central government and local stake holders; and also among local stakeholders. Currently, we cannot talk about any shared attitudes being held by municipalities across Turkey towards Syrians; some municipalities tend to ignore the existence of refugees or even have a hostile attitude, while others give full support.

- **Increasing local cooperation, and communication** – Multi-sectoral stakeholder meetings are necessary to solve the communication and organisation problems in the field. Syrian organisations should be included as well.
- **Municipalities' network** – Networks among municipalities are necessary for information sharing and cooperation. Already existing networks should form migrant and refugee commissions at local, regional and national levels.

- **Constant channels of communication with civic actors** – In addition to regular meetings with CSOs, constant channels of communication should be established. These channels should be open to both refugees and CSOs to answer the acute needs.

- **Monitoring and documentation** – Documenting number of refugees and their profile (such as occupation, age, and education) is a vital but largely unattended issue. Having these figures at the municipality scale would guide all stakeholders in their activities.

- **Support for CSO activities** – Many local CSOs suffer from a lack of resources. Access to municipalities' facilities and other types of direct or indirect support would have a drastic impact.

- **Events for social cohesion** – Local communities may be, and in many cases have been, aggressive towards refugees. Generally, municipalities are more respected than CSOs. Events organised by municipalities to bring local community and refugees together have the potential to solve this problem.

- **Telephone information and complaint lines for refugees** – Registering at schools and procedures in hospitals are complicated for refugees, and they face many human rights violations in these processes. Despite there being a telephone line set up by DGMM to answer this need, a local line would be more effective and faster to respond.

- **Free public transportation for refugees** – Refugees tend to create closed communities. Free public transportation would enable them to move around the city and be more active in the city life.

- **Public transportation maps' translation** – Especially big cities like Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, can be very complicated for anyone let alone refugees who do not have language-skills. Transportation maps translated into Arabic and Kurdish would make the city more accessible.

- **Multilingual traffic signs** – Languages should be determined according to the local demographic necessities.

- **Multilingual direction signs in hospitals** – Languages should be determined according to the local demographic necessities.

- **Life-long learning courses** – The life-long learning centers of municipalities should be open to refugees. They would function in various ways. First, these centers should provide Arabic and Kurdish courses for local people and Turkish language courses for refugees. Secondly, these centers should help refugees gain necessary skills to find jobs in the market.

Local Civil Stakeholders – CSOs, Media and Academics

Given the fact that the government has focused most of its resources in the camps CSOs and other civil actors are carrying most of the burden in assisting Syrians outside of the camps. CSOs have hitherto been relatively successful at dealing with an issue of unprecedented size and duration but there are a number of issues which remain in the way they are operating. The media has a fundamental role to play in how Syrians are understood and perceived by the general population. Academics have the potential to be influential in researching solutions to protracted refugee issues, and they hold influence as advisors to the government and CSOs.

CSOs

- Recognise the importance of the way we talk about and understand Syrian population – i.e. agency, not 'victims'.
- Recognise the importance of the way rights are articulated and understood.
- Syrians should be represented within CSOs (at least in the formulation of projects concerning them).
- There should be an emphasis on formulating a long term strategy.
- Increasing coordination and cooperation among each other – one way can be online forums, or community centers that CSOs ' have representation.
- Mediation role between host population and refugees through collective activities.
- Lobbying with the government and international stake-holders.
- Monitoring activities should be increased.
- A data pool should be formed to reduce "research- fatigue" for Syrians- e.g. different CSOs visit same people for their research.

Media (Newspapers, Television, Online, Radio)

- Recognise the position of the media in influencing the general perception of Syrians among the population, and therefore the importance of the way they report on the Syrian population.
- Media should refrain from inciting resentment or tensions against the Syrian population.

- Media should be used as a platform to host inclusive debates about the Syrian presence – from all segments of society.

- Media should be translated into different languages. There should be public service adverts to provide information to refugee populations.

- Recognise the importance of the way rights are articulated and understood.

Academics and Researchers

- More academics should recognise the important role they have in understanding and formulating ideas for offering models about protracted refugee situations.

- Provide more expertise to CSOs and government institutions.

- Information sharing with international academic colleagues who have experienced protracted refugee situations.

- Help to change the discourse around refugee stereotypes of vulnerability and disempowerment.

7. CONCLUSION

Starting with an acknowledgment that the construction of categories is a central aspect of the makings of civil society,⁶⁵ which therefore takes into account the negotiations of identities, the response to Syrians can be seen as a moment of self-reflection for civil society actors in Turkey. This is a dual layer of questioning. Not only are Syrians prompting questions of the categories of rights and entitlements which are attached to various groups within the host society. But there are also questions regarding the placement of civil society in an increasingly politically centralised society, and the attitude towards migrant groups in an environment which has traditionally sought to become increasingly mono-ethnic and inclusive.

There is confusion, from both the Syrian's perspective and at macro levels, about the responsibilities of the state and CSOs in their response to Syrians – much of this confusion is prompted by the unprecedented nature of the situation, but it also owes something to the political flux which governance in Turkey is currently undergoing, with increasing centralisation at all levels, and the fact that the identity of civil society is something which has never been well defined, or had a specific public space, in Turkey. As a result of these factors, and simultaneously to the immediate urgency of responding to Syrians, questions about the identity of civil society and its relations with the state are being asked alongside dynamics being forged by the necessities of responding to the immediate issues at hand. These are further complicated by several paradoxes manifest in

the state's response to Syrians – alternating between offering citizenship to certain Syrians while restricting movement and entrance to the country, and depoliticising Syrians through the charity approach to assisting them, whilst securitising and politicising their presence in the country on international and domestic platforms. Such actions from the state have ramifications for how civil society is organising itself in relation to Syrians and in relation to the state. There is confusion at the refugee level as to who it providing what services, and these are prompted in part by perceptions over what role the state should be filling, along with misinformation, or poor availability or access to information.

CSOs are organised political environments, which should not necessarily be understood as a positive analytical category reflective of civic participation and increasing democracy, nor as something directly opposite to the state. Discussing changes in parts of civil society in Turkey in response to Syrians must acknowledge that they are happening concurrently to a government's project in the past decade to increase the numbers of CSOs as part of their own political framework. The ways CSOs are responding to Syrians is a good lens through which to understand the relationship between different elements of civil society, and with the state, and how these are being reconfigured. Our research indicates a general trend of those CSOs who are smaller and less organised, and with fewer relations with the state, providing more embedded, context specific assistance to Syrians.

⁶⁵ Daniella Kuzmanovic, *Refractions of Civil Society in Turkey*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 34.

Power dynamics between the state and CSOs should not be viewed as a binary – rather power is negotiated differently by different actors and within different contexts to give variegated relations. Our research has highlighted cases where CSOs are stepping in to either 'fill the gaps' where there is a lack or mismanagement of state services, or complementing state services, or advocating for different services. From the perspective of civil society actors and government officials, there are a range of opinions about their dynamic with the state. The government official who said he *"assumed CSOs were doing a good job because the government is not active outside camps [therefore it is only CSOs working with refugees]"* indicates an expectation that the duties of the state are being filled by civil society actors in the absence of the state operating outside camps. This particular view, which may not be shared by other government officials, indicates that the perceived role of CSOs is to directly complement state services where the state's capacity is not great enough. But there remains an issue with the state doing little to assuage the inevitable distrust which exists from some CSOs. And many CSO actors do not share this perspective of their role vis-à-vis the state.

These negotiations are happening within the context of various other stratifications within the refugee response, such as the competing trends of professionalism and volunteerism and the disjuncture over how to handle the shift from short term to long term refugee management. These are not clearly defined stratifications, and it is rather the blurring between them, and the blurring between how they are manifested differently through different actors, that are prompting negotiations.

The increasing, and unprecedented, penetration of the international humanitarian community into Turkey is also bringing with it an increasingly

marketised system of aid distribution. It is widely claimed by interviewees that the entrance of INGOs to Turkey and the donor culture of the aid industry is leading to the marketisation of the CSO sector in Turkey. INGOs are perceived to be exploiting local CSOs by taking their most qualified local workers. Local CSOs are critical of INGOs for not providing greater training to local staff and focusing solely on Syrians – the donor industry perpetuates very reactive and short term responses.

The research has attempted to provide a picture of interactions, which are mostly manifested as power negotiations, between actors and the long term impacts of those interactions on the accommodation of Syrian refugees, which indicate that, despite common objectives, elements of civil society are still preoccupied by existing divisions. State-CSO relations, in the context of the response of CSOs to Syrians; local CSO relations with each other; INGOs impact on the CSO sector; and local CSO interactions with those CSOs which are led by Syrian people have been analysed. The problems between these actors, their cooperation and non-cooperation, have been addressed together with their own proposals of solutions. Part of the focus of the research has been to understand whether the common platform created by the Syrian presence has the potential to unify previously disparate, and often hostile, elements of civil society in Turkey in a way which other common interests, such as resources, water, urban regeneration, has not been able to achieve. Clearly such an endeavour requires more in-depth research over a longer time period. The report avoids presenting any actor as solely responsible for the problems, or any actor as being more successful than the others. Rather, one of the most surprising outcomes has been seeing the parallels between different actors' approaches – not in terms of their discourses, but their common complaints about communication and cooperation

and similar proposals to overcome these issues. This indicates two things – firstly, it should not be insurmountable to achieve a compromise and secondly the lack of communication between actors, given their similar approaches, is worse than it seems.

However, according to the recommendations suggested by interview participants, every actor is aware that they have duties to fulfil in order to attain a better level of cooperation. Cooperation and communication among actors are not only crucial to answering material needs in the field – Turkey has now entered a phase where the inclusion of Syrian people should be actively discussed and planned. Neither state institutions nor local civil society is experienced in such a process and this makes the accumulation of different actors' experiences and knowledge more crucial. Considering the already fragmented and problematic social structure of Turkey, extra attention should be paid here to ease this process.

Researching the interaction of certain civil society actors at this stage of the response to Syrians in Turkey has highlighted further areas which might be researched. There is a need to understand the role of municipalities, and different social groups' (such as Kurds, Alevities, Christians) engagement with the Syrian population. It would also be noteworthy to compare the response of those civil society actors which we have focused on in this research, largely the formal and informal groups, to those semi-professional bodies, such as the Teachers Association and Bar Association, which also make up elements of civil society. This research has noted the initial policies of the government to try to take control of the way in which Syrians are being dealt with by civil society organisations, such as through the accreditation scheme and the introduction of EYDAS. The ramifications of these schemes should be monitored. And the impact of the large disparities

of assistance across locations should also be monitored.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Timeline: Important Events Regarding the Syrian Population in Turkey, Number of Active Associations & INGOs

2011

Active Associations: 88, 582

INGOs: 67

Syrians: n.a.

April: First groups of people from Syria start to arrive at the Turkish border.

May: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) designated to coordinate the response. Basic services are provided by AFAD, as is stated in Disaster and Emergency Situation Centers' Regulation which released on April 2011.

June: Turkey announces an open-door policy

November: The Minister of Interior of Turkey declares that Syrians are under the temporary protection of Turkey in a UNHCR- hosted meeting. The temporary protection has three core principles - non-refoulment, open borders and providing basic humanitarian need.

December: Turkey spends up to \$15 million on building six refugee camps for thousands of refugees and military defectors.

2012

Active Associations: 99,545

INGOs: 72

Syrians: 14, 237

February: Officials say Turkey will accept all Syrian nationals.

March: "Regulation on Reception and Accommodation of Syrian Arab Republic Nationals and Stateless Persons who reside in Syrian Arab Republic, who arrive to Turkish Borders in Mass Influx to Seek Asylum" is issued. The regulation is not publicly available.

August: Turkey announces that it will not take in more than 100,000 people.

2013

Active Associations: 97,448

INGOs: 96

Syrians: 224,635

April: Law on Foreigners and International Protection is issued. The Directorate of Migration is established.

- Biometric identity cards start to be distributed

August: Access to health and other services extended via a circular (2013/08) - services are now provided in 81 provinces, rather than the original 11 provinces

October: Syrian students provided with the right to attend universities without university entrance exams.

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs: "Our red line regarding the numbers of Syrians has been crossed"

2014

Active Associations: 103,456

INGOs: 109

Syrians: 1,519,286

May: EU Turkey Readmission agreement ratified by the EU

September: 5,000 people fleeing from ISIS are allowed to cross the Turkish border.

-“Circular Regarding the Services of Education Provided to Foreigners” issued. The circular standardises the education provided to Syrians and allows them to attend schools in Turkey.

October: Temporary Protection Regulation is issued.

October 2: Mürşitpınar check-point closed

October 6-7: Kobani protests and clashes start

2015

Active Associations: 107,336

INGOs: 129

Syrians: 2,503,549

March: Bab El Selam and Bab El Hava air borders are closed.

May: Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) fully takes over foreigner cases from the National Police.

-INGOs become a part of the emergency response systematically

July: The protocol on technical regulations was signed between the Ministry of Health and AFAD, “The protocol between AFAD and Ministry of Health about health service procurement based on a lump sum price”.

August: Turkey starts to build a wall along the Turkey-Syrian border.

September: Syrian refugees walk to the Greece border from Edirne.

October: Turkey temporarily closes a number of borders with Syria before closing them permanently to all but the most seriously injured Syrian asylum seekers

2016

Active Associations: 109,695

INGOs: n.a.

Syrians: 2,736,032

January: Regulation on Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection" is adopted.

-Turkey introduces a visa requirement for Syrians arriving from third countries via air or sea.

-Syrians now have to get a travel warrant to be able to travel within Turkey

March: EU-Turkey refugee deal signed.

July: President Erdoğan announces that steps to provide citizenship to Syrian nationals are being taken.

Appendix 2. Participants

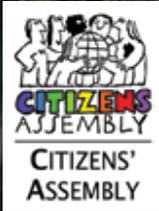
Interviewee	Institution	Location	Date
Chevan Hussein	ENKS	Istanbul	23.02.2016
Sandrine Ramboux	Carma	Istanbul	01.04.2016
Markus Ketola	The University of Ulster	Istanbul	03.05.2016
Dr. K.A.	Syrian Hospital	Istanbul	04.06.2016
Yakup Aktuğ	Quomsho	Istanbul	06.03.2016
Sema Merve İş	HDRF	Istanbul	08.01.2016
Kumru Cılgın	Mülteciyim Hemşerim	Istanbul	08.04.2016
Chole Poncholet	Global Human Rights	Istanbul	13.05.2016
Shannon Kay	Small Projects Istanbul	Istanbul	14.01.2016
Songül Dede	Okmeydanı Solidarity	Istanbul	14.06.2016
Nur Özkut	Refugee Rights Turkey	Istanbul	15.03.2016
Dr. K.A.	Alamal Almoushreq (Syrian School)	Istanbul	16.06.2016
A.A	Caritas	Istanbul	17.06.2016
Ece Çiftçi	SosyalBen	Istanbul	22.03.2016
Özgül Kaptan	Kadav	Istanbul	25.05.2016
Weam Shabook	Ishraqaat	Istanbul	27.02.2016
Shahla Raza	Yusra Community Center	Istanbul	27.03.2016
Zeynep Kurmuş Hürbaş	Volunteer in Istanbul Facebook Group	Istanbul	27.03.2016
Paolo Lubrano	Plan 4 Education	Istanbul	29.02.2016
Murat Erdoğan	HÜGO	Ankara	13.05.2016
Mehmer Güllüoğlu	Red Crescent	Ankara	23.03.2016
Ali Güneş	Prime Ministerial	Ankara	23.03.2016
Özgür Ünlühisacıklı	German Marshall Fund	Ankara	24.03.2016
Hasan Anlar	Human Rights Association	Ankara	25.03.2016
Murat Güreş	Journalist	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Serhat Tok	IMPR	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Pınar Şenoğuz	Gaziantep Üniversitesi	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Deniz Şenol Sert	Özyeğin University	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Kemal Vural Tarlan	Kırkayak Kültür	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Talip Çelik	İyilik Der	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Mahmut Kaçmazer	Anadolu Platform	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Cemal Mustafa	Minber Sam	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Abdurrahim	Mazlum Der	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Aynur Yıldırım	Kamer	Gaziantep	07.05.2016
Rasim Çalar	IHH	Izmir	21.04.2016
Dr.Cem Terzioğlu, Yıldırım Şahin, Prof.Dr. Nilgün Toker	Halkların Köprüsü (Bridge's of People)	Izmir	21.04.2016

Yalçın Yanık	Kapılar Derneği	Izmir	21.04.2016
Feyha Karslı	Bodrum Kadın Dayanışması	Izmir(via Skype)	02.05.2016
Gaye Sağlam	ASAM	Izmir	22.04.2016
Nursen Sağlam	Mazlum Der	Izmir	22.04.2016
Birgül Aktay	Mazlum Der	Izmir	22.04.2016
Mustafa Rollas	Human Rights Association	Izmir	22.04.2016
Murat Aktaş	Izmir Müzisyenleri Derneği	Izmir	22.04.2016
Oktay Çaparoğlu	Izmir Müzisyenleri Derneği	Izmir	22.04.2016
M.A	AFAD	Şanlıurfa	05.05.2016
Emre Erdoğan	Bilgi University	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Metin Çorabatır	IGAM	Şanlıurfa	05.05.2016
Serap Madenli	GAP	Şanlıurfa	05.05.2016
Questionnaire	GAP Gençlik Derneği- Şanlıurfa	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Questionnaire	Mardin Gençlik ve Kültür Derneği	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Questionnaire	Siirt Gençlerin Eğitimine Destek Derneği	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Questionnaire	Habitat Youth	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Questionnaire	Sosyal Gençlik ve Kültür Derneği	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Questionnaire	ASAM	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Questionnaire	ERG	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Questionnaire	GAP Çatom	Şanlıurfa	04.05.2016
Kaya Heyse	Açık Toplum Vakfı	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)*
Umur Çoşkun	HYD	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Stefan Stefanovic	SeCons	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Nikolai Apostolou	Journalist	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Nammour Jihad	EIUC- USS	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Idil Türkmen	Nirengi Derneği	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Emine Uçak	HYD	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Av.Gülsüm Karacan	Halkların Köprüsü	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Anna Krestava	CERMES	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Dicle Çakmak	IHOP-MHK	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Fırat Genç	HYD	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Ahmet Insel	HYD	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Aws Jubair	Small Projects Istanbul	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Mert Onur	FES Turkey	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Gülden Gürsoy-Ataman	Ankara University	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Hakan Ataman	HYD	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Andrea Karlsson	Consulate Sweden	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Jasmina Golubovska	Open Society Foundation	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)
Soner Çalış	Mülteciyim Hemşerim	Istanbul	25.06.2016 (RTM)

* RTM: Round-table meeting

Appendix 3. Events and Meetings Participated in

Event	Organized by	Date	Place
'Istanbul Summit on Syrian Refugees'	Bahcesehir University	3 March, 2016	Istanbul
Conference on Work Permits for Foreigners Under Temporary Protection in Turkey (Participant observation and Questionnaires)	Ministry of Labour and Social Security, UNHCR and IMPR Humanitarian	10 March, 2016	Ankara
The Situation of Syrians in Turkey: from Temporariness to Permanence	GAR (Migration Researchers' Platform)	16 April, 2016	Istanbul
Workshop on the Identification of the Areas for the Empowerment of the Syrian Youth and Children	UNICEF and GAP (Southeastern Anatolia Project Regional Development Administration)	4-5 May, 2016	Şanlıurfa
'International Society and Refugees: Responsibilities, Opportunities and Violations of Human Rights' (conference)	ICRC	13-14 May, 2016	Istanbul
NEAR - Network for Empowered Aid Response's (networking event)	SITAP	22 May, 2016	Istanbul
World Humanitarian Summit	UN	23-24 May, 2016	Istanbul
Refugees and the Open Society	FNF	31 August-1 September, 2016	Belgrade
Belgrade Human Security Conference	Human Security Research Center/ Belgrade University/ SeCons/ Citizens' Network	4-5 November	Belgrade



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