

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Open Access



Immigrants and refugees, tourists and vagabonds: why and how they integrate differently

Çetin Çelik^{1*}

*Correspondence:
ccelik@ku.edu.tr

¹ Department of Sociology, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract

This paper investigates the integration of immigrants and refugees by drawing on Bauman's conceptual distinction of tourists and vagabonds. Through qualitative interviews with immigrants and refugees in Istanbul, the study highlights differences in their networks, perceptions of the city, the nature and conditions of their stay, and their sense of being welcomed. The study illustrates, differences in resources, status, and the host society's ethno-racial hierarchy result in different adaptation processes. The study's findings contribute to scholarship on ethnicity and migration by comparatively revealing potential variations in refugee integration.

Keywords: Immigrants, Refugees, Syrians, Tourists and vagabonds, Turkey

Introduction

Historically, refugee studies and sociology of migration scholarship have provided limited conceptual frameworks for an understanding of refugees' adaptation to host societies. The former has been institutionalized as present-oriented, depoliticized humanitarianism for temporary refugees, and the latter has derived exclusively from studies on the adaptation of the broad category of voluntary labor immigrants and their children—for example, Classical Assimilation Theory (Gordon, 1964), New Assimilation Theory (Alba, 1976), Segmented Assimilation Theory (Portes and Zhou 1993), and Comparative Integration Context Theory (Crul & Schneider, 2010). The mainstream integration research often does not attend to the nature of refugee integration and is insensitive to the views and opinions of refugees (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2020).

However, today, we observe essential changes in migration such as in the emergence of new countries of origin and destination (which do not follow historical ties or post-colonial channels) or in the mixed economic and political/security motivations of people on the move (Triandafyllidou 2018). This study aims to enrich the sociology of migration by comparatively examining immigrant and refugee integration. In what ways does their integration converge or diverge, specifically in the context of Istanbul? If they do diverge, what are the causes of such divergences? I draw on Bauman's conceptual distinction between tourists and vagabonds in order to respond to these questions.

Bauman (1996; 14) argues that “we are all plotted on a continuum stretched between the ‘perfect tourist’ and the ‘vagabond beyond remedy’ ...according to the degree of freedom we possess in choosing our life itineraries.” He explains that for tourists, status is a matter of ‘choice’ that can easily change, while for vagabonds, status is assigned and constraining. Tourists move because they want to, while vagabonds move out of necessity. Tourists may stay as long as their visa permits, whereas vagabonds are forced to either stay or move.

Bauman (1998) developed these ideal types by examining the decline of solid modernity and the emergence of liquid modernity within the context of globalization as resulting from advancements in information technology and transportation. This shift has significantly altered the relationship between time and space, creating new forms of mobility, flexibility, and freedom and generated tourism and vagabondism as social aspects of globalization. Movement is fundamental in the new era and, therefore, both tourists and vagabonds move. However, the former moves out of desire and the latter out of necessity as the fences, boundaries and rules limit their movement. In the transformation from solid space to liquid space, some social agents can manipulate the space by traversing it in time because they are in positions to using time this way (Kristensen, 2008). As the use of time and space requires certain capacities and resources, it is not only differentiated, but in terms of ethnicity, race, and social class, differentiating experience. In this context, tourists experience a place temporarily; they are *in* but not *of* the place—a phenomenon resulting in a ‘grazing behavior’ in tourists where they seek out pleasurable experiences and move on to another place once those experiences are consumed (Franklin, 2003).

Tourists utilize time to escape the constraints of physical space, while the same relationship between space and time restricts the vagabonds’ movement of freedom. In sharp contrast to tourists, vagabonds live in space and move not out of a desire for adventure or consumption but rather due to expulsion. “They can’t stay in a place as long as they want but they stay as long as they are wanted. They do not break the relationship because company of their partners no longer satisfies them, it is their relationships that keep broken because their own company is no longer desired.” (Franklin, 2003; 209).

Ritzer (2012) drew attention to the usefulness of this conceptual distinction in pointing out that voluntary migrants cross borders as a pleasant and rewarding experience, while forced migrants cross borders to either find work or escape poverty, war, or persecution. Ritzer theoretically associated tourists with whiteness, high-status ethnic groups, or males from the North, arguing that vagabonds are more likely to be poor, black, females from the South, or members of maligned ethnic groups. I use this distinction as the framework from which to explore the differing characteristics of immigrants and refugees, examining how these groups adapt to the host country.

In the following, I first introduce potential differences between economic immigrants and refugees by referring to relevant scholarship. I then briefly explain the legal schemes some foreigners use to visit and stay in Turkey, followed by a summary of the study’s context and methodology. Next, I empirically unpack how immigrants and refugees differ, showing how these differences configure different modes of adaptation. To conclude, I summarize the findings and discuss their theoretical implications for the growing refugee integration scholarship.

Immigrants and refugees

Historically, the upsurge of refugees as a modern phenomenon resulted from the collapse of multinational empires and the rise of modern nation-states with bounded citizenship, which created internal enemies who were forced to flee in order to survive (Gatrell, 2013). In recent decades, however, changes in the new international migration regime—a regime in which forced migrants and refugees are becoming important categories—have resulted in more heterogeneous immigrant flows than ever before. Approximately 89.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced in 2021, of which almost 27.1 million were refugees (UNHCR 2022). With varying status, networks, and resources that interact with different immigration and integration policies, these people may follow different pathways of adaptation (Çelik 2021).

Bevelander and Pendakur (2014) investigated the employment probabilities of family reunion immigrants and refugees from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the former Yugoslavia in Canada and Sweden. They found that differentials in the employment rates of these groups and countries of origin are much smaller in Sweden as compared with Canada, due to differential access to settlement services. In Sweden, these groups have access to roughly the same range of settlement assistance, whereas in Canada, refugees have access to settlement assistance, language training, and housing and income assistance, but family reunion immigrants only have access to language training, and therefore refugees adapt better than family reunion immigrants. Meidert and Rapp (2019) investigated how attitudes towards refugees (who migrate for different reasons) differ from attitudes towards immigrants from European Union countries, using data from the German General Social Survey. They suggest that refugees are perceived less positively than European Union immigrants, arguing that the origin of this negative perception mainly lies in increased feelings of threat that create a negative public climate and compromise refugee integration.

Vitus and Jarlby (2022) investigated the effects of Danish immigration and integration policies on young refugees by focusing on local integration policy workers' experiences with integrating young, newly-arrived refugees. They found that the dual political intentions of (a) explicitly deterring refugees from arriving and settling in Denmark through restrictive national immigration policies, and (b) integrating newly-arrived refugees locally, conflict, creating precarious temporary living conditions that undermine young refugees' ability to integrate. De vroom and van Tubergen (2014) studied the settlement intentions of immigrants and refugees in the Netherlands by combining data from large-scale surveys collected between 1998 and 2009. They did not observe any significant effects of legal status on intentions to stay but found that ties to Dutch majority members and cultural integration are essential factors positively related to settlement intentions. Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015) found that Iraqi refugees arriving in the UK at the same time were granted the same legal status and were afforded a similar package of support and assistance but settled in two different cities in England—Hull and Sheffield. They revealed that the same general operative processes of integration evolve differently due to the differential recognition of refugees in two different places; the refugees in Sheffield were reported to feel more recognized and integrated when compared to those in Hull, due to the history of accommodating diversity and difference in this city. Ullah (2011) researched the

experiences of Rohingya refugees who fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh. It suggested that while these refugees sought refuge in Bangladesh due to its proximity, porous borders, and shared cultural and religious ties, they lacked basic resources and protection. Furthermore, restriction of their movements has a profound psychosocial impact on them, as it limits the boundaries of their world to the refugee camps and degrades the social and economic value of men, and this way, hindering integration, even high number of them wishes to stay in Bangladesh. With this scholarship in mind, this study investigates the integration experiences of immigrants and refugees in Istanbul by examining the different characteristics of these groups.

Legal frameworks and status

Turkey provides various schemes foreigners may use to visit and stay in the country. By law, citizens from specific countries are exempted from visas and can stay up to 90 days within 180 days (RTMIGDS, 2021). The citizens from 15 of these countries, including several European Union member states, Georgia, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, can enter Turkey using their national ID cards without needing a passport (TCDB 2022). For some other countries, 15, 30, or 60 days of stay are allowed. Other travelers must ensure a visa for their passports before entering Turkey. If these foreigners want to stay longer, they are required to obtain a residence permit according to their purpose of stay. Articles 31 and 33 of Law No 6458 (Law on Foreigners and International Protection) and articles 28 and 29 of Law No 29656 (Regulation on the Implementation of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection) regulate short-term residence permits (DGMM, 2022b). Accordingly, those arriving for scientific research, language courses, education, tourism, or medical treatment may receive a short-term residence permit, which, though rarely occurring in practice, allows the person to stay for a maximum of two years. In 2022, 1,382,414 foreigners in Turkey held residence permits, with 1,027,599 of them being short-term (DGMM, 2022c). Neither short- nor long-term resident permits allow for work permits, which require a separate application.

In 1951, Turkey signed the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees with Geographical Limitation. Accordingly, Turkey was and still is not obliged to grant refugee status to asylum seekers from non-European countries (İçduygu and Millet 2016). Therefore, the presence of Syrians in Turkey was initially considered temporary. However, because of the protracted nature of the war in Syria, the number of registered Syrians rose to more than 3.7 million, approximately 4.36% of the country's total population (DGMM 2021). This change resulted in significant amendments to Turkey's national immigration policies. Adopted in 2013 and enacted in 2014, Law No 6458 (Law on Foreigners and International Protection) provided legal status to Syrians and stateless Palestinians from Syria by classifying them as persons under Temporary Protection Status (TPS). 'Temporary' indicates the expectation that they will eventually return to Syria, although the regulation provided Syrians with access to free health care services, public schools, and other social assistance programs (DGMM 2014). While the new law regulated the status and rights of Syrians at a legal level, it intensified concerns in public debates about the permanence of Syrians, stoking negative public opinion (Abrams et al. 2016).

The study's context and methodology

Istanbul accommodates a large number of international immigrants. The number of foreigners with a residence permit is 747,477 in 2022, more than half of the total foreigners with a residence permit in the country (DGMM, 2022c). Similarly, the city had 58,336 out of 123,574 foreigners with a work permit in the country in 2020 (MLSS 2022)—the low number of immigrants with work permit in proportion to the sizeable international immigrant population in the city is, as my data will imply later, a result of a high number of informal foreign workers. Recently, refugees have become a predominant form of migration in-flows to the city; with 536,708 Syrians granted TPS, Istanbul has the highest Syrian population in the country, comprising 3.39% of the city's population as of February 17, 2022 (DGMM, 2022a).

This study draws on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 10 immigrants (six females and four males) and 15 refugees (seven females and eight males)¹ conducted in a year-long duration spanning 2018 and 2019. The immigrants were short-term residence and work permit holders. Syrians with TPS exclusively represent refugees in the sample. Both groups included high- and low-skilled interviewees, measured by interviewees' level of education. High- and low-skilled profiles often did not correspond to income and occupation (specifically for refugees) because many high-skilled refugees had experienced bitter downward mobility as their qualifications and certificates are often not recognized in the host society; some former dentists and engineers worked as hotel concierges, shop assistants, and sweatshop workers. The immigrants' countries of origin were diverse and included Afghanistan, France, Greece, Pakistan, Syria, Sweden, the U.S, the Netherlands, and Uzbekistan.

I purposively sampled the respondents by snowballing only from immigrant and refugee categories. Immigrants were accessed primarily through my personal and institutional (Koç University Migration Research Center) contacts, while refugee respondents were accessed via institutional links with NGOs. Most immigrants had a middle-class background, as many had completed university degrees, and some even had MA degrees. Refugees come from a diverse range of socioeconomic backgrounds. While some had received a university education and held professional occupations such as teaching, others had only completed primary or middle school education in Syria. At the time of interviews, both refugees and immigrants were uniformly living in rented accommodations. However, refugees tended to live in impoverished neighborhoods in substandard housing, immigrants resided in apartments located in more affluent areas of the city.

Interviews with immigrants were conducted in English, and three research assistants (RAs) assisted in collecting data from the refugees in Turkish, English, and Arabic. I attended all interviews except some with low-skilled women, as my presence as a male could have affected their narrations. In such cases, and in the circumstance that the respondents did not prefer tape-recorded interviews, we compiled notes and

¹ The study draws on data from two studies on integration. The Koç University Committee on Human Research endorsed the first study, with approval number 2017.104.IRB3.057, and The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) internally regulated the second study's ethics approval process. In both studies, participants were informed of the study's purpose and data protection procedures, and interviews were conducted after receiving oral and written consent.

observations, wrote three to four pages summary of the interview, and combined these summaries with translated and transcribed recordings for analysis.

The interviews typically lasted around 55 to 60 min, with some lasting around 120 min. In line with the study's conceptual framework, the questions were designed to invite responses concerning how significant markers in the respondents' lives/identities affected their experiences in accessing the labor market and participating in social, economic, and cultural life. Transcriptions of the recorded interviews and summaries of the unrecorded interviews were coded for analysis. In the analysis, I identified thematic topics such as ethnic networks, motivations to stay or move, feelings of being welcomed, stigma, and response to stigma. I primarily focused on the first three themes, comparing them to the conceptual outline in order to extract a consistent structure in the analysis process. I used theoretical assumptions as an informing framework rather than a given.

Networks and contrasting representations of the city

Most immigrants in this study's sample were highly educated and spoke about Istanbul's attractiveness and sociocultural diversity. A male immigrant from the U.S. stated, "I came [here] because I loved this city... I met many people here and did not want to return to my country." In the immigrants' accounts, Istanbul was dominantly portrayed as exciting and cosmopolitan because of the opportunities to meet "new and interesting" people. The immigrants lived in socioeconomically wealthier parts of the city such as Kadıköy, Esentepe, Kuzguncuk, or central and historic districts such as Balat.

Specifically, western immigrants reported that they found accommodation through international and cosmopolitan networks and social media platforms.² Their flat mates were also high-skilled and came from various countries, including Turkey. When asked, one immigrant stated that she found her apartment "with the help of her co-national's international network, who were living in Turkey earlier." A high-skilled female Greek interviewee reported that she found her flat with the help of a Turkish friend in Kadıköy, and that her gender and country of origin played a role in accessing this valuable information. The data in the appendix suggests that because immigrants move back and forth between Turkey, their country of origin, and/or a third country, their cosmopolitan networks enlarge, refresh, diversify, and offer critical resources.

This study's participating refugees also portrayed the city as attractive, but in sharp contrast to the immigrants, they narrated its attractiveness in classed and gendered ways. Like the immigrants, the high-skilled refugees frequently stressed that Istanbul's sociocultural mix and cosmopolitan atmosphere was a significant motivation to stay. A narrower group of highly skilled employed female refugees mentioned that Istanbul's diversity allowed them to pursue an individual lifestyle because it offered niches from which to distance themselves from the ethnic community. One interviewee remarked, "I do not plan to live elsewhere than Istanbul in Turkey because I can live and work alone." While low-skilled refugees frequently considered Istanbul to be the best place to live, they did not focus on its cosmopolitanism or diversity but rather on its 'socio-cultural similarity' with Syria. According to their accounts, Esenyurt and Bağcılar, two

² The term "west" and western" in the Turkish context is loaded with social, political, and geographical constructs. I mainly use these terms to refer to immigrants from European countries and the Global North in this study.

disadvantaged districts populated by low-skilled internal immigrants and Syrians, were livable areas that offered solid networks. For example, one refugee interviewee remarked, "Esenyurt is a good place to live, as there are many Syrians, and the rents are relatively lower." Another said, "Bağcılar has many characteristics like Damascus, and therefore it is easy to live there." Still another remarked that he favored Bağcılar because "there are various mosques, and the people are helpful in the area." As many refugees mentioned similarities in culture, relations, and lifestyles between districts in Istanbul and Syria, I asked if they planned to migrate to western Europe. In response, one low-skilled male interviewee remarked, "Why should I go to the west? I am working here. I live in Bağcılar. It is like Damascus. If I go to the west, I would be a stranger there. I do not feel like a stranger here." Along a similar line, one high-skilled female interviewee justified her stay in Istanbul as follows:

Turkey is the best choice. The other choice is to go to Europe or Middle Eastern countries. They were not good choices for us. My relatives who went to Europe do not feel comfortable at all. Maybe social things are different there for our society. The way you and your children are raised is very different in Europe. I love being here because Turkish society is generally very close to ours. This is the most important thing for me, raising my children freely, not like in Europe.

Rottmann and Kaya's (2021) report challenges the popular media assumption that Syrian refugees want to reach Europe at any cost. Many Syrians actually prefer to stay in Istanbul despite their uncertain legal and social status because of the cultural intimacy and strong community networks they have built over time. Additionally, they have grown skeptical about the life they envisioned in Europe. Whilst it is impossible to know whether such statements are discursive rationalizations of a compulsory stay in Turkey, my data supports this argument, as some interviewees, like the above one, noted the cultural similarities between Syria and Turkey and common child-rearing practices as factors to stay in Turkey. Yet, in my data, high skilled refugees further spoke of the city's diversity, cosmopolitanism, and simultaneous existence of eastern and western characteristics in the city—the last one being the most repeated mantra also by the western immigrant interviewees that perhaps shows strength of orientalist cinema and media representing Istanbul with exotic allure and sociocultural richness, see, for instance, Koçak and Koçak (2014). Although not explicitly stated, some refugees' complaints about sectarianism in Lebanon also indirectly imply that Sunni Islam may have influenced their decision to move to Turkey.

The data also suggest that the sharply contrasting representations of the city as both cosmopolitan and socioculturally similar are strongly associated with different network structures. Immigrants have ethnically and religiously diverse networks that enlarge and diversify according to movement between countries. Immigrants use specific resources and networks that allow them to find jobs (such as in language courses) or give them access to flats or rooms in diverse, upper-class neighborhoods. In contrast, and as the data in the appendix suggests, refugees have one-directional networks, as they remain in the country after arrival. Their networks are mostly ethnically and religiously homogenous; for instance, refugees rely on their homogenous kinship networks to find accommodation and almost exclusively live in crowded households with their kinship

members or co-nationals. While for immigrants, cosmopolitan networks facilitate access to resources such as flats, rooms, or job opportunities, refugees use their ethnically and religiously homogenous networks to receive help and support. One high-skilled male refugee who had experienced bitter downward mobility after moving to Turkey spoke about the host society's solidarity:

We had nothing when we came here. The flat was empty. Then, one neighbor brought a refrigerator. Another brought a washing machine, then a sofa, couch, and cooking pots. Our Turkish neighbors brought everything.

As the above quote indicates, the city is attractive for both low-skilled and high-skilled/downward mobility refugees, as it possesses a similar atmosphere to Syria and absorbs support networks. In their research on Syrian entrepreneurs in the UK and Turkey, Alrawadie et al. (2021) found that, among other factors, co-ethnic networks and relationships with host communities contribute to the integration of entrepreneurial refugees, as these networks provide financial support and information to entrepreneurial endeavours, offering a source of hope, familiarity, identity, and genuine communication. My findings support these arguments for non-entrepreneurial refugees as well, indicating that identity and belonging in ethnic networks are significantly grounded and embodied in space and place. The refugees interviewed in this study felt a sense of recognition and belonging and were a part of wider networks in specific neighbourhoods, a point I will further unpack in terms of social and ethnic boundaries.

Status as opportunity and constraint

"The tourists stay or move at their hearts desire. They abandon the site when the new untried opportunities beckon elsewhere. The vagabonds, however—know that they won't stay for long, however strongly they wished to, since nowhere they stop they are welcome: if the tourist move because they find the world irresistibly attractive, the vagabonds move because they find the world unbearably *inhospitable*. They take to the roads not once they squeezed the last drop of amusement which the locals could offer, but when the locals lose patience and refuse to put up with their alien presence. The tourists travel because they want to; the vagabonds—because they have *no other choice*" (Bauman, 1996).

Immigrants

The immigrants included in this study's sample held either short-term residence or work permits. Unexpectedly, those holding short-term visas had been living in Istanbul for some years. They renewed their permits with multiple exits and entries into the country. This group initially explained that their purpose of stay was to "enjoy life" or "explore new cultures and people," remarking that they could return to their countries or enter another depending on circumstances. Nevertheless, it became clear that this group was also looking for informal employment during their stay; one remarked, "I am here to enjoy the beautiful city, but at the same time I'm looking for good temporary jobs." Compared to the immigrants with work permits and refugees with TPS, this group had the most flexibility concerning their stay in the country. For them, remaining in the country was a choice that could easily change if something more attractive emerged. A

highly-skilled French female interviewee, for example, stated: “I do not look for certain jobs. I mean, if I can find a good one, of course, I would work permanently, but it is not my first aim for the time being”. While the interviewees did not initially mention their employment status, they eventually remarked that they worked informally in specific sectors and received relatively good earnings. For instance, the above quoted interviewee further remarked that she earned “a good amount of money” working as a babysitter and language instructor:

I came here and found a job immediately. I worked as babysitter for a family and taught French to their child. Then, I taught French in a language course. I am still giving private courses.

The interviewed immigrants were mainly informally employed in sectors such as language instruction, nannyng, NGOs, and journalism, even without the necessary certificates documenting their qualifications. They pointed out that their mother tongue and the ability to speak fluent English strengthened their opportunities of finding jobs. Indeed, they appeared to benefit from a niche in the market created by positive valuation of and demand for their national languages and cultures in the country. One Greek interviewee accounted that while informally working as an instructor in an English language course, she and her co-workers from Balkan countries were told to introduce themselves to their students as either Greek American or Bulgarian British. Such an example points to the informalization of cultural capital acquisition sectors and the conversion of western national and cultural backgrounds into economic capital in the host society.

The informal labor market is strongly associated with Syrian and Afghan refugees and non-western immigrants in the garment and construction sectors (Tanrikulu, 2021). However, my modest data suggests that the market also includes service, communication, and education sectors that accommodate not only low- and high-skilled refugees but also high-skilled western immigrants. Informalization also occurs for those with tourist visas who are running a business for companies registered abroad. A high-skilled Swedish male interviewee said that he had briefly visited the city before deciding to return:

There were many things to do [here]. I worked for a week as a journalist and found it very interesting. I saw a kind of opportunity here. I could say, like, this is a place that is interesting for a person working in the media. Also, I was very eager to have an experience of living abroad...Presently, I am not doing anything here officially. I set up a company in my country, and I work for it from here. We can say that I am working for myself.

Researcher: I see. Do you pay tax?

Interviewee: No, I do not pay. I have my health insurance, and I regularly pay into the pension system in my country for my retirement; that's it.

He had not developed any attachment to the city but saw the country's political polarization as an opportunity (*I saw a kind of opportunity here. I could say, like, this is a place that is interesting for a person working in the media*) to experience life abroad—an experience that he could end at any time, and thus, conceptually reminding the ‘grazing behavior’. Because of their passports and status, those belonging to this group have the

freedom to stay or leave, and notably, their attachment to the city was therefore circumstantial, adventitious, and momentary.

Compared to this group, highly skilled immigrants from western and eastern countries with work permits had more concrete attachments to the region. They had Turkish partners, attended university in Turkey, or officially worked for NGOs. Unsurprisingly, they therefore had concrete, long-term plans to stay and live in the country. Two main themes emerged from the interviews conducted with these immigrants: the difficulty of renewing work permits and underemployment. While their employers applied for their work permits, the respondents were still burdened with heavy paperwork in a long and bureaucratic application process. A female immigrant from the U.S. working in an international academic environment spoke about the unclarity of the work permit application, saying, “I feel anxious in each renewal period, particularly in times of political tensions with the U.S.” All respondents noted that the bureaucratic and unclear application process was significant motivation to work for international companies that handle work permits institutionally.

Highly skilled immigrant interviewees struggled to find employment that matched their qualifications. A highly qualified female immigrant from the Netherlands stated, “I cannot find academic jobs in line with my CV. It is hard to find such a position in Turkey.” Another interviewee from the U.S. said that although he worked for an NGO, it was impossible to live on his salary, so he also worked as a freelancer. Despite these grievances, most immigrants were satisfied with their working conditions, mainly because of their working environment. One immigrant stated:

I started my current job one month ago. What satisfies me about it is the work culture. There are not many hierarchies. It is very transparent. The average age of the employees is like 25. People are motivated to create a success story. Also, there is a very multicultural environment there. There are employees from different countries of origin.

Although a few had a good command of Turkish, this group strongly preferred international workplaces so as to avoid cultural and linguistic isolation. Western immigrants, in particular, placed importance on multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism when speaking about the quality of their work environment.

Refugees

While refugees with TPS can access certain services, it significantly constrains their lives by making their futures vague and unclear. Although many refugees found Istanbul to be an “excellent” place, they appeared to live in prolonged limbo. One low-skilled male interviewee said,

I had big dreams before coming here, but they did not occur as I thought. But still, thanks to God. The people here are good. I started a new life here. Nobody knows the future. I do not know what will happen after three months.

As the above quote suggests, the refugees were often thankful to remain in Turkey but were uncertain about their prospects concerning permanency and employment. TPS dictates a temporal consciousness that hinders adaptation because of the fatal

discordance between temporality and the long-term nature of integration. Bourdieu (2013) argues that French colonialism devastated Algerians' thoughts and actions by atrophying the traditional ethos that guides such actions. Adaptation to social organizations requires predictability and calculability, both of which necessitate a definitive attitude towards time and the future. As such, I maintain that for refugees, TPS does not allow for structured time or an ethos that provides a foundation for rational action; instead, it imposes a temporal consciousness that obstructs one's ability to anticipate or plan. When asked about future plans, another high-skilled male interviewee remarked, "Plan? No plan. We now work and will see what will happen." Temporal consciousness causes refugees to think and live in the present by preventing them from calculating and forecasting the upcoming years, months, or weeks. As the following quote shows, TPS works to generate gratitude and dependency but strips refugees of the essential qualities of modern times, such as estimation and agency:

I love Turkey a lot. This place is better than anywhere else. I was in Lebanon. It is better here. I came here because I had my relatives here. I do not know what will happen next. No one knows what will happen. Next? we will wait and see.

While feeling gratitude, refugees in my study are forced to lower their expectations and experience a kind of ephemerality or 'waiting' for a new thing to happen—a phenomenon that signals feelings of despair. Thus, TPS entails a fatalistic contradiction: it expects refugees to invest in their adaptation without guaranteeing their stay. Integration requires long-term investments in the form of learning a new language, attending school regularly, and internalizing the values of a new social system. Yet, TPS requires refugees to make solid investments in an indefinite future. Yıldız and Uzgören (2016) and Arslan and Çavlin (2020) rightly suggested that because of the uncertainties surrounding their fundamental rights, Syrians are trapped in a prolonged limbo and permanent temporariness. My findings substantiate these arguments and further empirically document the legal ambiguity experienced by refugees.

The comparative character of my data also reveals that when compared to immigrants, refugees experience the darker side of the informal market. While no immigrant respondents complained of exploitation and unpaid salaries, many refugees stated that they worked long hours under unpleasant and heavy working conditions, mentioning that employers often saddled them with extra work without pay. Their experiences suggest that top-down market informality is inherent in TPS, making refugees more vulnerable to employers, though it is worth noting that refugees accept this status, as they perhaps feel obligations because of their access to certain services; no refugees complained about informality in my sample! One high-skilled male respondent remarked that he quit his previous job because:

He [employer] kept saying 'go there and work there,' then 'come here and work here.' He gave me tasks for two people, and I was doing them alone. This one ends, then he tells me 'Go to the other one.' The other one ends, then he tells me 'Come here.' One was in Esenyurt, and the other one was in Avcılar. I quit; it was difficult for me.

This respondent experienced both underemployment and exploitation simultaneously, despite his qualifications. In addition to irrelevant and heavy work, refugees also complained about low wages and non-payments. One such interviewee stated:

It is difficult to receive (your wage) because you do not speak the language. You go to the workplace to ask for your money, but they say, 'come next week, come next month,' then you cannot receive it. Then, you shout at them, but then you cannot receive it at all. Because they (employers) say, you shouted and disrespected us, so no money for you. I do not know what to do. One must be calm, but they do not give your payments.

These moving statements reveal that because of their fragile status, refugees often lack the tools to pressure employers to make them pay. Although some did not experience it firsthand, all respondents confirmed that cases of non-payments were frequent. Some said that they avoided workplaces where they may not receive their payments. When asked how they assessed this, one highly qualified respondent replied as follows:

Interviewee: It occurs. You work but you can't get your money. You get angry, but then you cannot get it at all.

Researcher: But then how do you choose the right place to work?

Interviewee: I look at them (employers) first. I can understand whether people are good or bad from their eyes. If I see that a person is bad, then I would not work for them.

Kaya (2017) rightly points out how refugees rely on social networks rooted in century-old cultural and religious ties between Aleppo and Istanbul to access resources such as job information and safety. Nimer and Rottmann (2022) successfully captured how Syrians demonstrated agency by mobilizing the goodwill of private individuals, including their fellow Syrians, when civil society initiatives were insufficient during the pandemic. However, my data, as the above quote poignantly suggests, like Ertorer's (2021) study, cautions against protectiveness of these networks, noting Syrians' limited bargaining power in the face of their precarious status that generates exploitation in and beyond the labor market. TPS leaves refugees vulnerable to market dynamics and forces them into a state of hyper-precarization. They are prevented from defending their own rights and often possess no means to assess situations other than with their own intuition. Additionally, as Pelek (2019) suggested, the fear of violence and death if deported also weakens their bargaining power against employers, labor intermediaries, and different groups of workers.

Perceived social and ethnic boundaries

Host society perceptions of immigrants and refugees are critical to the integration process (Portes and Zhou 1993). My data indicated that the immigrants from western countries felt welcome in Turkey. They shared no incidents of discrimination in state buildings, workplaces, or in finding accommodation. They also remarked that no one ever approached them in a discriminative manner. Only one male immigrant from the U.S. articulated that he felt uneasy about a growing anti-Americanism due to political tensions between the U.S. and Turkey, and, as a precaution, was cautious about meeting

new people and going to some parts of the city. When I communicated this to another high-skilled female immigrant from the U.S., she claimed that she shared the same feeling of uneasiness during political tensions. Other than such times, she felt warmly welcomed in the country. When asked why, she gave the following comments:

I have friends from many countries, but they are generally from western countries. Here, you are perceived as positive. I mean, I guess the majority do not see us as a threat. Maybe it is because of our small numbers. I do not know. I have never thought so far that people might think negative things about me, and I have never experienced negative attitudes.

This quote is informing in many ways. First, it shows that the western immigrants as part of rather socioeconomically privileged neighborhoods, multicultural working environments, and cosmopolitan friendships, do not forge many relationships with locals, others, and *vagabonds*; they are *in* place, not *of* place. Second, relatedly and importantly, this touristic illusion blinds them to their privilege in the host society. While a community's size undoubtedly plays a role in influencing the host society's attitudes towards immigrants (Esser, 2006), the interviewee, in speaking about being warmly welcomed, unconsciously equates her circle with western countries, using the words "us" and "our" to refer to this group, indirectly implying that a welcoming atmosphere is specifically contingent on western immigrants' higher status in Turkey's ethno-racial hierarchy. This favoured symbolic position is, echoing McIntosh (2003), like an 'invisible weightless knapsack' filled with specific privileges such as race, passports, visas, and money. The western interviewees refer to group size and other factors to explain why they receive more favorable treatment than non-westerners in the host society. However, in doing so, they fail to acknowledge their privilege, which they actually cash into larger cosmopolitan networks, better contacts and feelings of confidence in everyday life.

While anti-westernism can occasionally occur, Turkish modernization generally attributes positive meanings and values to the west; those who are highly educated, in particular, tend to associate the western identity with cosmopolitanism and therefore desire it (Altan-Olcay & Balta, 2020). Previously, I noted that the western immigrants identified multiculturalism as a positive feature of their workplace. Yet, the data suggests that non-western immigrants prioritized fairness, equality, and the absence of discrimination in the working environment. One high-skilled male immigrant from Afghanistan stated:

I am satisfied with my current job. I work with very qualified and talented people. Everyone is treated in the same way. It is a fair and peaceful working environment. There are not many hierarchies between employers and employees in my current job. But what I heard from other people is that there is a high level of discrimination and hierarchy among staff.

Non-western immigrants appeared to be more aware of potential discrimination than western immigrants were. The above interviewee was delighted to work in a place with no racist discourses but was still aware that such discourse can occur. The higher status of western immigrants in the ethno-racial hierarchy appears more evident in the commentary of a high-skilled female Pakistani immigrant who accounted her experience of seeking employment:

There was a German girl. She was applying and getting responses from everywhere. I was not able to get an answer. I did not understand back then... but I guess it is like that if you are from the lesser developed countries; you do not know anything, but if you are from a developed country, then people think you do better. But you know, this is not the case most of the time.

As the interview proceeded, she further explained that her company credited some solely because of their race and ethnicity, and that people in Turkey tend to perceive Westerners as more skilled and experienced:

... when [the name of the company] brings a white guy to meetings...[for a seminar or training], people think, 'ohh this is a very professional guy'. But he is sometimes just like a street guy, you know. So, there is this kind of perception.

Because western languages are valued and demanded, western immigrants have access to more resources that make finding accommodation and employment easier, and they therefore experience a welcoming atmosphere that shapes their interactions with the host society in positive ways. In contrast, non-western immigrants, though high-skilled, encounter strict boundaries. As the above quote suggests, they feel the negative attitudes and prejudices from the host society in various ways —a phenomenon indicating exclusionary effects of strong ethno-racial hierarchy in Turkey from non-western immigrants' perspective.

In my sample, Syrian refugees almost exclusively made positive remarks about the variety and quality of services provided by the host country. Those who had stayed in Lebanon compared their experiences there and Turkey, claiming that there were fewer religious boundaries in Turkey. A highly qualified male refugee respondent remarked, "Lebanon is too bad. They are Shia, and they do not like Sunnis. But there is no such thing here. Turkey is much, much better." While some respondents felt welcomed because of blurred religious boundaries, most refugees felt unwelcomed by the host society. Many remarked that the perceptions about Syrians are not homogenous and change from district to district. One respondent remarked:

In general, people are good. I mean, there are good and bad people, but mostly they are good. They are good in Esenyurt. They are good in Ümraniye, but not too good in other places. If you ask for an address, they will look at your face and walk away. So, then you do not go to these places. They do not answer or respond to you when you try to speak Turkish. They walk away. Therefore, not every place is good, but the majority is good.

Speaking of the perception of Syrians, another high-skilled female interviewee remarked:

Our image, in general, is an obstacle. Syria is a big country, and we come from different areas of Syria. Some of us are good people, some of us are wrong. Our image is becoming bad here. I do not know why. If Turkish people know you, and you are a good person, they deal with you differently. They do not like you when you [they] see the wrong person. I do not have problems with the Turkish people. But I do have problems with some places because there are maybe two million of us in Istanbul.

Refugees often choose certain districts in which to settle because of lower rents, chain migration, sociocultural similarity, and ethnic composition (Sauer & Kraus, 2022). As the above quotes demonstrate, refugees are aware of the sociocultural boundaries among districts and avoid certain districts in order to protect themselves from negative stereotypes and hostile attitudes.

As stated earlier, TPS constrains refugees in many ways and makes them vulnerable to informal, exploitative working conditions. Based on the data, it should nevertheless be argued that ethnic stereotypes override status and constrain respondents more. One of the respondents, a high-skilled immigrant from Syria with a diploma in English and literature, was working in an elite international company and held a work permit, not TPS. Despite his socioeconomically advantageous position and status, however, he felt discriminated against because of the negative stereotyping of Syrians. He remarked: "... I work in institutions, so, high-profile institutions. When you go, for example, to a real estate office, once you say 'I am Syrian,' then there is no apartment for you..." He explained further that once he was even not allowed to withdraw money from the bank because he was Syrian:

I feel discriminated against. I'm working here. I pay taxes like you do. I told them [the bank], I'm paying taxes, I'm not a refugee. I am a foreigner working in Turkey, and I'm paying taxes like you do. And I like this. I am happy to be like this. I don't sit and wait for my destiny or need someone to help me. I like to work...Again, I'm paying taxes, I have health insurance, I have social insurance, I have everything. She [the bank teller] said, 'alright, but still, you are Syrian, so you cannot get this money from this bank.'

While this respondent held a completely different status and socioeconomic position and presented his papers, the bank still denied his request because of his ethnicity.

Conclusions

Using Bauman's conceptual distinction between tourists and vagabonds, this study sought to analyze the different characteristics immigrants and refugees and how these characteristics affect their adaptation to the host country.

I have documented that immigrants possess cosmopolitan and diverse networks and prefer to stay in Istanbul because of the city's diversity. In contrast, refugees hold ethnically and religiously homogenous networks and prefer Istanbul because of the sociocultural similarities between Syria and Turkey. Immigrants with short-term visas develop a consumerist taste of the city, and their attachment to the place is largely volatile, evaporative, and temporal. While refugees' existence in the city is also temporal, it is not a choice, as they cannot leave the city without official permission. Informal work is generally a norm for both groups, although it is a preference for immigrants and a necessity for refugees. Immigrants selectively enter and exit informal cultural capital acquisition sectors; in contrast, refugees have no other option and are hardened by heavy and highly exploitative working conditions. Immigrants feel welcome, but western immigrants feel more welcome than eastern immigrants in Turkish society's ethno-racial hierarchy. Refugees often feel unwelcome and are aware of the polarization and differing public

perceptions about them; they therefore carefully navigate the urban space in order to avoid stereotypes and discrimination.

This study's findings corroborate the results of earlier studies on the dissimilarities of immigrant and refugee integration such as Bevelander and Pendakur (2014), Meidert and Rapp (2019), Vitus and Jarlby (2022), and Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015). They also endorse de Haas' (2021) argument regarding the equal significance of both cultural and structural factors in the occurrence of migration and adaptation. For immigrants, the desire for exploration and curiosity is accompanied by the possibility of converting their national and cultural backgrounds into economic capital and status in Istanbul. Geographical proximity, sociocultural similarities, shared religion, and informal job opportunities contribute to the refugee's movement to and settlement in Istanbul. Yet, they also indicate that these cultural and structural factors are taking shape, as Bauman suggested, in the context of globalization and his conceptual distinction of the tourist and the vagabond is extremely relevant to understanding different trajectories of immigrant and refugee adaptation —keeping in mind that, as Ritzer (2012) put it, there are exceptions, such as immigrants with disesteemed markers and refugees with esteemed markers.

Drawing on these findings, I argue that the factors shaping adaptation pathways, such as status, resources, and perceptions, do not operate independently but rather intersect, and that the context of reception plays a crucial role in determining which factor has the most significant impact. For instance, the fact that high-skilled Syrian and Pakistani immigrants with work permits experience more discrimination than western immigrants suggests that ethno-racial hierarchies play a more influential role than official status in shaping adaptation experiences. Thus, policies aimed at improving the status of refugees should consider working towards creating an equal ethno-racial system by targeting host society's perceptions.

Appendix 1 Respondents' characteristics

Age	Gender	Nationality	Employment status	Occupation	Date of arrival in Turkey (month/year)	Residence status	Last five entry to and exit from Turkey(month/year)
-	Male	Sweden	Self-employed informally	Journalist	January 2009	Visa	1.came: 12.17 left: 12.17 2. came: 01.18 left: 01.18 3. came: 02.18 left: 02.18 4. came: 03.18 left: 03.18
35	Male	Afghanistan	Employed informally	–	September 2006	Visa/Work permit/student Visa	"I was travelling a lot since I'm in Turkey"

Age	Gender	Nationality	Employment status	Occupation	Date of arrival in Turkey (month/year)	Residence status	Last five entry to and exit from Turkey(month/year)
31	Female	The Netherlands	Employed formally	Talent acquisition specialist	June 2015	Work permit	1. came: 07.17 left: 08.17 2. came: 12.17 left: 12.17 3. came: 02.18 left: 02.18
32	Female	USA	Employed formally	Editor	September 2013	Work permit	1. came: 12. 15 left: 01. 16 2. came 5.16 left 12. 17 left: 12. 17 3. came: 07.17 left: 08.17
39	Female	France	Employed informally	Freelancer	11.2011	Visa	Last one: 02.18 left: 03.18 "I do not remember how many times"
27	Female	Pakistan	Employed formally	–	08. 2012	Work permit	"I left and came around 15 times"
30	Male	USA	Employed informally	Executive coordinator	09.2016	Visa	1. came: 10.16 left: 12.16 2. came: 7.17 left: 9.17
42	Female	Uzbekistan	Employed informally	Childcarer	04/2016		1. came: 4.17 left:4.17
	Female	Greece	Formal student/ Employed informally	Language instructor	Presently student	Student Residence permit	
40	Male	Syria	Employed formally	Administrator	04/2012	Work permit	No info
25	Male	Syria	Employed informally	Translator	11/2013	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
29	Male	Syria	Unemployed	–	–	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
31	Male	Syria	Employed informally	Previous lawyer in Syria, working in garment sector in Turkey	09/2015	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
36	Male	Syria	Employed informally	Law (Arabic to Turkish translation)	12/2015	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
37	Male	Syria	Unemployed	Math teacher	06/2014	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
33	Male	Syria	Employed informally	English teacher	05/2014	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
33	Female	Syria	Unemployed	None (textile factory work)	07/2015	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
30	Male	Syria	Employed informally	Electrician	03/2016	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
24	Male	Syria	Employed informally	Shoemaker	10/2012	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
-	Female	Syria	Unemployed	Housewife	05/14	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
37	Female	Syria	Unemployed	Housewife	07/15	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival

Age	Gender	Nationality	Employment status	Occupation	Date of arrival in Turkey (month/year)	Residence status	Last five entry to and exit from Turkey (month/year)
36	Female	Syria	Employed informally	Accountant	2017	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
40	Female	Syria	Employed part time informally	Translator and public relations	2014	TPS	Left for only two days in 2014
40	Female	Syria	Employed informally	English teacher	2018 (9 months ago she arrived)	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival
35	Female	Syria	Unemployed	None	09/2013	TPS	Had not left Turkey after arrival

Acknowledgements

I thank the anonymous reviewers at the Journal Comparative Migration Studies for helpful comments and critiques. I acknowledge the contributions of Didem Sağlam, Nour Elmeddah, and Tuğçe Özdemir as research assistants in the data collection process.

Author contributions

The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Authors' Information

Çetin Çelik is an Associate Professor in Sociology. He completed an MSCA fellowship at Koç University, a Mercator fellowship at Sabancı University, and a visiting fellowship at Harvard's Weatherhead Centre. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Bremen and a BA in sociology from Middle East Technical University.

Funding

This research was partly funded by ICMPD—International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

Availability of data and materials

The qualitative data generated and analyzed during the current study are not publicly available due to ethical considerations and privacy issues.

Declarations

Competing interests

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

Received: 21 December 2022 Accepted: 1 May 2023

Published online: 08 May 2023

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