Ambiguous Policies, Varied Implementation and Fragmented Feedback: The Case of Gaziantep

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Introduction: Feedback Effects in an "Ad-Hoc" Landscape

The majority of feedback literature has focused on the Western context, where "government has an active presence in people's daily lives" (Hern, 2017: 583). However, the dynamics of feedback effects may differ in contexts where 'ad-hoc' policies give rise to differential implementation (Akcapar & Simsek, 2018; Betts et al, 2017; Memisoglu and Ilgit, 2017). Indeed, in the case of Turkey, the recent 'temporary protection regime' has somewhat eased refugees' "access to public healthcare, education of children, and participation in labor markets" (Akcapar & Simsek, 2017: 177). However, the ambiguity in outlining how to deliver the aforementioned services, coupled with increased demands from Syrian refugees at the local-level, have given rise to variance in implementation of social assistance sub-nationally (Betts et al., 2017; Elicin, 2018; Coskun and Ucar, 2019; Baban et al., 2017). This paper examines the case of Gaziantep, to show how local-level factors can shape policy implementation and allow for differentiated access to services and protections, impacting not only the interests of local and refugee populations, but also their expectations and engagement with the Turkish state. As Bloemraad notes, "communities and institutional structures do not merely offer contexts in which costs and benefits are weighed, but fundamentally shape perceptions of costs and benefits, as well as newcomers' interest[s]" (2006: 668). However, as this paper seeks to demonstrate, in the context of 'low and middle income countries,' ambiguities in larger policy frameworks interact with the local context to shape implementation, impacting such feedback dynamics (Moat and Abelson, 2011; Corabatir, 2016; Kiliçarslan, 2016; Betts et al., 2017; Memisoglu and Ilgit, 2017; Kaymaz and Kadkoy, 2016). Thus, the paper calls for a more thorough micro-level examination of how "administrative organizations… transform political relations," shaping the interaction between myriad groups and the state (Moynihan and Soss, 2014: 320).

Policy Feedback: An Overview

The policy feedback literature considers policies not only as the dependent variables, but also as "inputs into the political process," by examining the manner in which policies have "interpretive effects" or shape "material interests" of populations (Pierson, 1993: 595). Initially, the feedback literature was focused at the 'elite level,' suggesting the way in which policies were impacting "interests and choice among elected politicians, bureaucracies, interest groups, and other elite actors" (Campbell, 2012: 334; Beland, 2010). Within such literature, scholars demonstrated the impact of policies on shifting the preferences and interests of elite-level political actors, and how this shaped state capacity (Skocpol, 1992; Orloff and Skocpol, 1984; Campbell, 2012: 334; Beland, 2010: 571; Kay, 2003; Moynihan and Soss, 2014). Since then, there has been increasing interest in the manner through which policies impact interest groups and the mass public (Soss and Schram, 2007; Mettler and Milstein, 2007; Mettler and Soss, 2004; Gusmano et al., 2002; Campbell, 2011; Beland, 2010; Mettler & Welch, 2004; Mettler, 2002; Flores and Barclay, 2016; Ellingsæter et al., 2017), albeit among some renewed research interest in the impact of policies

on political elites (See, for instance, Karch and Rose, 2017). The work that focuses on the impact of policies on the interest groups and the mass public highlights the manner in which policies "alter the capacities and interests of affected publics" (Campbell, 2012: 335). For instance, in their earlier work, Mettler and Milstein look at "the federal government's presence in individual lives through" myriad public programs to demonstrate how this can "influence citizens' relationship with government in significant ways" (2007: 111-114).

While the literature has drawn attention to the positive feedback effects that result from increased political support or policy-associated incentives, scholars have also noted that feedback effects are not always positive, suggesting that self-undermining dynamics can also be at play, weakening policies in place (Weaver, 2010; Jacobs and Weaver, 2010 and 2015; Patashnik and Zelizer, 2009; Baumgartner and Jones, 2002). While at times, such dynamics can 'undo' the original policies, other times, the impact of self-undermining feedback effects are much more ambiguous and subject to institutional constraints and particularities of the political arena in which they are embedded (Jacobs and Weaver, 2015; Patashnik and Zelizer, 2013; Patashnik and Zelizer, 2009; Campbell, 2012). Examining such self-reinforcing and self-undermining dynamics has inevitably raised questions around what factors contribute to such feedback effects, prompting scholars to analyze myriad factors (Campbell, 2012). One such feature that has increasingly garnered scholarly attention has been policy design, and how certain features of policies, like wide-ranging benefits or concentrated costs, can impact the durability of policies (Jordan and Matt, 2014; Campbell, 2012; Pierson, 2000; Howlett, 2014). For instance, in their recent overview of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Oberlander and Weaver note that the policy was designed in a way to 'front-load' "concentrated benefits to individuals" to promote positive feedback effects, and 'back-load' other less popular features to discourage opposition (2015: 38). However, they demonstrate that despite such efforts in strategic design, policies can simultaneously be subject to positive and negative feedback dynamics due to the "policy environments" in which they are forged, making the ultimate fate of some policies 'uncertain' in the long run (2015: 39).

Timing of implementation has also been discussed as an important factor to examine in trying to understand when self-undermining or self-reinforcing feedback dynamics occur (Thelen, 2000; Pierson, 2000; Patashnik and Zelizer, 2009). For instance, in their recent overview of "unemployment insurance (UI), the Sheppard-Towner Act, Medicaid, and general revenue sharing," Karch and Rose show that it is the interaction between program design and timing that shapes feedback among elite political actors (2017: 48). They suggest that design features like the "open-ended matching grants and administrative flexibility" were not only important in generating elite-level feedback for Medicaid, but also timing of its implementation was key in garnering elite support (Karch and Rose, 2017: 61). Since Medicaid was implemented during the 1960s where there was higher "demand for government services and the explosion of federal grants and mandates," this gave political leaders' more "responsibilities and resources", allowing for their ability to resist retrenchment (Karch and Rose, 2017: 61). Conversely, their review of general revenue sharing highlights how 'unfavorable' timing can cause the eventual demise of a program, despite a seemingly beneficial policy design (Karch and Rose, 2017). Karch and Rose note that the program had "no strings attached and… offered recipient governments an unprecedented degree of spending discretion," suggesting that such design features should have prevented its retrenchment (2017: 62). However, since the program was implemented during a

time of "federal deficits, state surpluses, and intergovernmental tension over budget policy," political elites did not mobilize to protect the program from dissolvement (Karch and Rose, 2017: 62; See also Dagan and Teles, 2015). Such a comparative examination of when and how policies foster or fail to garner feedback effects, even when it seems likely they should, is key to further developing a comprehensive understanding of feedback effects (Campbell, 2012: 346).

In examining such instances of feedback, the literature has encompassed a broad range of areas, with a vast amount of work focused on social policy (eg. Soss and Schram, 2007; Kumlin and Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014; Jordan, 2013).[1] However, only a few scholars have focused on the feedback effects resulting from policies around migration (eg. Bloemraad, 2006; Breidahl and Fersch, 2018). In her comparative analysis of the US and Canada, Irene Bloemraad shows how "communities and institutional structures…fundamentally shape perceptions of costs and benefits, as well as newcomers' interest in and ability to acquire citizenship" (2006: 668). She suggests that different institutions and policies can have an 'interpretive' impact, whereby they shape migrant and citizen sentiments around newcomers' "legitimate political standing," while also 'instrumentally' impacting migrant "ability to participate and mobilize" in the destination country (Bloemraad, 2006: 677). Bloemraad demonstrates, for instance, that the differences in bureaucracies that manage citizenship, distinct settlement policies and variance in "ethno-racial diversity" policies result in differentiated political inclusion for migrants in the US and Canadian context (2006: 680).

While scholars have furthered understandings of how feedback can occur in various areas, an examination of feedback dynamics in the developing context remains understudied. Some scholars have drawn attention to how differentiated access to policies due to contextual and capacity concerns may impact the political participation of individuals, and in turn, the manner in which policy is shaped in such states (See Hern, 2017; Hern 2017b). For instance, in her examination of feedback dynamics resulting from basic service delivery in Zambia, Hern suggests that "even marginal access to state services" can result in increased political involvement among citizens (2017: 584). She shows that by "focusing on high-capacity democracies, policy feedback studies have generally not considered those citizens who are unable to access nominally 'universal' services, or how citizens' interpretation of marginal access to services might manifest in a low-capacity environment" (2017: 584). Thus, her work highlights how context matters in generating different feedback dynamics, as she draws attention to the absence of a strong state capacity in shaping differential inclusion within developing states (Hern, 2017). Similarly, in their focus on Ugandan health policy, Moat and Abelson also show that informal institutions can act in a "competitive" or "complementary" manner with existing policies and institutions, shaping resulting policy outcomes and feedback dynamics in "low and middle- income countries" (2011: 581-584). While such work expands our understanding of the reciprocal relationship between policy and politics, such understandings have been limited by the scarcity of studies aimed at analyzing feedback dynamics in non-Western, "high-capacity democracies" (Hern, 2017, 584).

The examination of the constantly-evolving impact of Turkish immigration policies on Syrian refugee participation has not been the exception to this. Indeed, the existing literature that has

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[1] Various other scholars have also focused on areas like education (eg. McDonnell, 2013; Karch, 2009) or biofuels (Skogstad, 2017).

examined the changes in immigration policy has largely focused on the outcomes for migrants, noting shifts in access to the labour market (Del Carpio and Wagner, 2015; Akgunduz, Van den Berg and Hassink, 2015; Tumen, 2016), education (Bircan, 2015; Culbertson and Constant, 2015), health services (Ekmekci, 2017) and other programs tailored to assist in integration efforts (Baban et al., 2017). While the existing policy frameworks impact the access Syrian populations have to such services, it is entirely likely that such policies are also shaping the manner in which Syrian refugees engage back with the state, in turn impacting the very policies that foster their access to services and protections (Betts et al., 2017).[2] Such a focus can assist in not only further illuminating contextual factors and their impact on feedback dynamics, but can also show how differences in state capacity, and gaps between policy and implementation, can have an important impact on such outcomes.

Turkey's Migration History: Shifts Until the Refugee Crisis

In order to understand the feedback dynamics that may be shaping the interests and actions of refugee populations in Turkey, it is important to primarily understand the country's existing policy frameworks and policy environment. While Turkey has not traditionally been seen as a migrant-receiving country, it has experienced periods of migratory flows historically. As Erdoğan notes, around 2 million asylum seekers that entered into Turkey since the founding of the republic in 1923 until 2011 (Achilli et al., 2017). However, much of this flow was of Turkish origin at this time, which made their integration into the larger society simpler and required minimal state intervention on this front as a result (Achilli et al., 201: 37). This reality has been foreshadowed by Turkey's 1934 Settlement Law (Law 2510), which only granted individuals of 'Turkish origin' the ability to immigrate and eventually gain access to citizenship (Woods, 2016: 12; Oner and Genc, 2015: 23). Through limiting the possibility of immigration to individuals of "Turkish descent/ethnicity and culture," the Law also outlines those groups deemed "suitable" for citizenship in the Turkish Republic at the time (Kirişci, 2000: 6).

However, amidst the maintenance of such barriers to citizenship, there have also been some changes, fueled by increasing emigration from, and immigration to the region. For instance, increasing migration and acquisition of a secondary citizenship of Turkish nationals in their countries of settlement during the 1970s and 1980s encouraged the amendment of the Turkish Citizenship Law (from 1964) to allow for dual citizenship (See Tiryakioglu, 2006; Kadirbeyoglu, 2009). Similarly, since the increase in migration to Turkey in 2000, the law has been amended another time to "address increasing trends in irregular migration, trafficking and fake intermarriages" (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018: 179).

More recently, other changes to Citizenship Law have been introduced in 2009, to remedy some of the "ethnic preference" provided to individuals of Turkish origin (See Woods, 2016: 12). Akcapar and Simsek have noted that amendments like allowing for naturalization after "three years of marriage," protections offered to stateless children, and pathways for citizenship for owners of 'immovable' property, investors and long-time residents, has "*de facto* changed the

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[2] In their examination of local dynamics around refugee engagement in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, the possibility of such feedback dynamics is mentioned by Betts, Ali and Memisoglu (2017). However, the authors note that their primary focus is on how policies have been implemented in different sub-national contexts, and not the "feedback loops" that may "occasionally occur" (Betts et al., 2017: 7).

citizenship concept from one solely based on Turkish descent" (emphasis in the original, 2018, 180). However, others have suggested that the prospects for citizenship should be noted in the context of interplay between the Citizenship Law and the Settlement Law, the latter of which maintains the acceptance of migrants based on Turkish cultural linkages (Parla, 2011). Despite such amendments then, the larger focus and preference on Turkish origin that has been maintained in the Settlement Law has shaped subsequent policy development and impacted the access individuals have to citizenship (Woods, 2016).

Discussions around migration status in Turkey adds yet another layer of complexity to these debates. Unlike the Ottoman Empire, which was relatively open to the receipt of refugees from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, the Republic of Turkey has maintained a largely restrictive posture towards refugees (Kirişci, 2000). As Kirişci notes, while Turkey has "acceded to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees," the particularities of the Settlement Law (Law 2510) has continued to limit permanent settlement and the possibilities of citizenship for refugees, despite some protections afforded to them by the Turkish state (2000: 6). Even with some protections provided, refugee status has not been assigned to individuals who are seen as unfit for immigration, resulting in various groups with Turkish origin being granted "refugee and immigration status," while others being excluded from settlement (Parla, 2011: 463; Kirişci, 2000). This suggests that while certain pathways to citizenship may be increasingly available for some migrants, "Turkish citizenship law specifically denies citizenship to refugees and asylum seekers" based on country of origin (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018: 180). Indeed, this is reflected in the fact that the Turkish Republic upholds a 'geographic limitation clause' in their ratification of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which means the "government will only accept legal responsibility to protect refugees coming from Europe," excluding Syrian refugees from this category (Baban et al., 2017: 41).

Responding to the Crisis: Refugees and Policy Change in Turkey

However, the situation that Turkey faces amidst the Syrian refugee crisis has brought about a different reality, exasperating the need for change. With over 3.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey currently, the Turkish government's posture towards such populations has shifted in recent years (UNHCR, 2019). In conjunction with this, the heightened 'integration anxieties' has resulted in many European states adopting an increasingly strict policies towards refugees, resulting in states like Turkey becoming "de-facto" migrant settlement countries (Norman, 2018; Lay, 2013; McCoy et al., 2016).

Perhaps one of the clearest manifestations of this phenomenon can be seen with the EU-Turkey deal in 2016, which stipulated that the Turkish government will reaccept "returned irregular migrants and in exchange will send Syrian refugees in Turkey to Europe for resettlement" (Rygiel et al,. 2016: 316). The deal was espoused to bring about a more "orderly resettlement process" through increasing Turkey's role in preventing "illegal migration" from its shores to EU countries (Rygiel et al,. 2016: 316). However, the deal has largely garnered backlash from human rights organizations, which have critiqued Europe for a failure to meet their "international obligations" towards these refugee populations (Rygiel et al,. 2016: 316). Moreover, the UNHCR and various "nongovernmental organizations have expressed concerns around the lack of

international protection" and services in Turkey for refugees, which raise questions about its ability to be considered a 'safe third country' (Poon, 2016: 1196).

Indeed, the national responses of Syria-bordering states, which host the majority of Syrian refugees, have been described as "indifference-as-policy," "ad-hoc" or "ambiguous," highlighting the gaps in accessing protection and social inclusion (Norman, 2019; Akcapar and Simsek, 2018; Memisoglu and Ilgit, 2017, respectively). However, the world's refugee population is increasingly becoming concentrated in developing states, which are marked by ambiguities in policy responses (Betts et al., 2017).[3] As such, the increasing number of refugees, coupled with international pressures to host such populations, has put pressure on these states to govern these flows, causing shifts in policy (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018).

Since the onset of the refugee crisis, there have been some changes to national policies that govern migratory flows in Turkey. For instance, the initial stages of the Syrian civil war were met with an "open-border" policy from the Turkish government, and refugees were labeled as 'guests' upon arrival (Yildiz & Uzgoren, 2016). Since the influx of a large number of refugees were initially seen as a 'temporary' situation, the earlier years of the Syrian civil war were marked by few policy initiatives, resulting in minimal opportunities for long-term Syrian integration (Achilli et al., 2017). However, when it became more evident that the population was likely to settle long-term, there were some legal changes in Turkey to accommodate this shift in perception (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018).

In 2013, Turkey's "first asylum law," Law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, categorized Syrian refugees under those in need of "temporary protection," triggering the development of Temporary Protection Regulation in 2014 (Kanat and Üstün, 2015: 29; Sağıroğlu, 2016; Akcapar and Simsek, 2018; Baban et al., 2017; Coskun and Ucar, 2018). Such regulation allowed for individuals under temporary protection to receive access to "basic services such as education, healthcare, and social support" (Coskun and Ucar, 2018: 108). Indeed, the idea that refugees under temporary protection should have increased access to the labour market was reinforced by the EU-Turkey deal (Rygiel et al., 2016).

The establishment of temporary protection status has "somewhat eased [refugee's] access to certain rights, including access to public healthcare, education of children, and participation in labor markets" (Akcapar & Simsek, 2017: 177). In tandem with these shifts, there were also various labour laws introduced to facilitate the incorporation of migrants into the labour market. For instance, the International Labor Force (Law 6735) was introduced in 2016 to attract skilled migrants to "increase productivity" in Turkey (Icduygu and Simsek, 2016: 64). Through issuing a 'Turquoise card,' which are given to eligible migrants, the Turkish government also started to provide "access to permanent work permits for those considered of strategic importance" based on skills and education (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018: 179; Icduygu and Simsek, 2016). Such privileges can also extend to the immediate family of the card holder (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018). Furthermore, the implementation of the Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection in 2016, also allowed for Syrian refugees to apply to "the Labor Ministry for work permits six months after their registration for the status of temporary protection"

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[3] Also see report by Amnesty International: Tackling The Global Refugee Crisis: From Shirking To Sharing Responsibility (2016).

(Icduygu and Simsek, 2016: 64). This regulation instills a ratio for the number of Syrian workers to Turkish nationals, whereby the number of refugees employed cannot surpass ten percent of the Turkish nationals employed (Icduygu and Simsek, 2016).

Alongside such shifts, there has also been some developments in the access refugees may have to citizenship. In a heavily publicized announcement in May of 2016, President Erdogan broached the possibility of citizenship acquirement for Syrian refugees (Reuters, 2016; Icduygu and Simsek, 2016; Kaymaz and Kadkoy, 2016). This announcement has coincided with an amendment to Turkish Citizenship Law in December of the same year (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018). Such an amendment has refined the "exceptional citizenship criteria" to make citizenship accessible to individuals making large "capital investments" in Turkey, providing employment for "at least 100 workers," and keeping large sums of money in Turkish banks, among other factors (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018: 180). Beyond such investments, individuals who have remained "in the country legally and have already contributed and/or have the potential to contribute to the Turkish society in the fields of science, economy, social life, sports, culture and arts" may also be eligible for citizenship (Akcapar and Simsek, 2018: 180). Indeed, according to the Ministry of Interior, around 55,000 Syrian refugees gained citizenship in Turkey since 2011 (Hurriyet, 2018). Such numbers show that gaining citizenship remains out of reach for many Syrian refugees, who may not fulfill this criteria. While some of these laws are in place to provide some protections and ease the labour market integration of refugees, the maintenance of the "geographic limitation clause" and the lack of access to citizenship, reinforces their 'liminal' position within Turkey (Rygiel et al., 2016; Also See Betts et al., 2017; Akcapar and Simsek, 2018; Baban et al., 2017). This can not only have a strong impact on migrant integration, but also can shape the manner in which such populations can interact with the state.

Importance of Policy on Migrant Populations: Beginning to Uncover Feedback

While the concept of migrant and refugee integration remains ill-defined, much of the literature has largely shown the importance of policies, suggesting that access to protections, rights, services and citizenship can be key to shaping such efforts (Ager and Strang, 2008; Ager and Strang, 2010; Fyvie et al., 2003). Within this literature, integration has been discussed through migrants' interactions with formal state institutions and policies and their resultant impact on such population, as well as through the socio-cultural linkages that impact such processes (Stewart & Mulvey, 2014; Engbersen, 2003). The literature has noted the "dialectical" nature of integration (Weiner, 1996; Skrbis et al., 2007: 261; Voloder & Andits, 2016). For example, in their examination of refugees in the UK, Cheung and Phillimore find that the inability to form social networks has a negative impact on individuals' access to work (2014). On the other hand, the literature has also drawn attention to the impact of unemployment or deskilling on building social linkages and fostering social exclusion, which can have a detrimental impact on individuals' perceptions around belonging (eg. Bergnehr, 2016; Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Kearns and Whitley, 2015).

Within the literature, the establishment of rights and policies are seen to underpin successful integration efforts, shaping the way migrants access health, education and labour market, and allowing them to foster social connections (e.g. Ager & Strang, 2008; Ager and Strang, 2010; Sainsbury, 2006). From this perspective, refugees are provided access social services to assist in

their settlement, and an eventual pathway to citizenship, which can be key in shaping public perceptions around refugee populations (Korac, 2003; Stewart and Mulvey: 2014). Even though policies are imperative to shaping integration efforts, migrants' status can also shape the outcomes (Da Lomba, 2010). Indeed, scholars have demonstrated how a precarious or temporary status can shape the views of citizens toward refugee populations, and can diminish their access to 'core institutions' (See: Bloch, 2000; Bloch 2002; Da Lomba, 2010; Stewart and Mulvey, 2014; Kibreab, 2003; Corluy et al., 2011; Koska, 2015). Comprehensive policy frameworks, rights afforded to refugees and pathways for citizenship then not only impact societal in/exclusion, but can also outline important privileges that go along with such definitions (Kibreab, 2003).

While well-developed policies for integration may increase and improve integration efforts, restrictive policies can also act as barriers in forming social bridges and networks that facilitate such efforts. For instance, in her comparative analysis of Dutch policy interventions and the non-interventionist position of the Italian government, Korac demonstrates that policies may be initially important in addressing the needs of refugees but can also hinder the later formation of socio-cultural ties among the refugee population and the wider citizenry (2003). As she notes that while refugees in Rome faced initial disadvantages due to a lack of "organized programme of assistance and integration," the absence of myriad policies that sometimes constrain migrant action allowed refugees a higher level of agency and promoted the building of social linkages (Korac, 2003: 62).

The presence of policies are not only integral to shaping the integration of migrant populations, but in the feedback literature, it is evident that such policies can impact various groups, shaping the way in which migrants and refugee populations gain "membership in the political community," and in turn, engage back with the state (Mettler and SoRelle, 2014: 156). For instance, some literature has examined the impact of welfare state policies on the general public and their perceptions around the intake of refugees. Boräng argues that countries with generous welfare policies have a positive impact on 'solidaristic' "norms in society and politics," expanding the admission of forced migrants in such states (2014: 227; Boräng 2012 Also See Mau and Burkhardt, 2009). However, as Boräng notes, such an acceptance may come alongside restrained policies toward other migrant groups (2014). For instance, she suggests the relatively restrictive posture of Sweden towards migrant labour, despite a relative openness towards refugees during the period studied in her analysis (Boräng, 2014). Similarly, Banting shows that while expansive welfare states may readily provide benefits to migrant groups, they can still result in restrictive policies around the attainment of citizenship, for instance (2001: 31). Such results draw attention to other factors, like framing, that may be impacting public perceptions and reactions to different migration policies (Boräng, 2014; See also Dagan and Teles, 2015 for impact of framing).

While such literature focuses on the mass population, some studies have also paid attention to how policies impact migrant perceptions and values, and therefore, behavior. For instance, Breidahl and Fersch theorize that "the design and broader principles of welfare state institutions" can have an impact on the values of migrants (2008: 102). Taking family policies as an example, they draw attention to various mechanisms through which such policies can impact migrant attitudes around women's paid work (Breidahl and Fersch, 2018). Similarly, through looking

beyond the particular characteristics of migrant populations, scholars have also noted how policies and institutions can impact the political participation and behavior of migrants. For instance, Jones-Correa finds that the institutional context, along with laws around dual citizenship, can affect "immigrants' propensity to naturalize and vote" (2001: 50). Furthermore, some authors have also noted that institutional "opportunity structure[s]," like citizenship policies, shape migrant naturalization, showing that 'policy matters' in migrant decision-making (Vink et al., 2013: 12; Dronkers and Vink, 2012; Rallu, 2011). Even so, such policies interact with individual-level factors, like migration status, and the larger policy context, in shaping migrant choices and attitudes (See Bocker and Thranhardt, 2006). While such studies are imperative in showing the effect policies have on politics, it is important to complete the feedback process by demonstrating the impact of such populations on policy outcomes (Campbell, 2012: 347). In this regard, Bloemraad's account outlines that after policies "mobilize newcomers," these groups can then "reinforce, undermine or modify existing policies or institutional practices via feedback loops" (2006: 677). Yet, studies that examine such feedback dynamics in the context of immigration, especially in developing countries, remains underdeveloped.

Furthermore, the larger focus on policy and legal frameworks within these studies tends to apply a 'top-down' approach, mainly focusing on the impact of national policies, and at times, missing important micro-level nuances that can illuminate the impact of prescribe on individuals (Korac, 2003). While national policies and integration frameworks may dictate central state goals, the manner in which these are implemented may differ at the sub-national levels (Hupe & Hill, 2016; Hupe, 2014; Lindqvist, 2019). As such, micro-contextual factors can impact not only the manner in which policies impact integration, but also how refugees engage back with the state.

Battling Through Context: Sub-National Variation in Policy Implementation

The Turkish state consists of 81 districts that are tied to a relatively strong central government. Perhaps some decentralization has occurred in 1984 with the introduction of a "two-tiered metropolitan municipal system (Büyük Sehir Belediyeleri)," which transferred some power to local metropolitan municipalities (Guney and Celenk, 2010: 250). Similarly, there was also exogenous pressure from the EU for the development of regional governance for accession, especially after 2002, when Turkey showed substantial "commitment… to fulfilling the EU criteria for membership" (Loewendahl-Ertugal, 2005). However, due to historical tradition of a unitary state and contemporary "fears of separatism," the central government in Turkey has been, and continues to be, strong (Loewendahl-Ertugal, 2005: 33; Achilli et al., 2017). Much of the local power is 'administrative,' in the sense that local level of government takes direction from centre government when taking action (Guney and Celenk, 2010). As such, the policy-making role vis-à-vis the status and integration of refugees, largely rests with the central government (Betts, et al., 2017).

However, as noted by the UNHCR in 2017, majority of Syrian refugees in Turkey do not live inside of refugee camps, with over 90 per cent residing in "urban and peri-urban" regions (UNHCR, 2017). While the "national legislation dictates that the basic needs of refugees, such as education and healthcare services, are to be provided by national governmental agencies" the responsibilities of local-level governments remain ill-defined, despite many refugees seeking

services at this level (Coskun and Ucar, 2019: 104; Betts et al., 2017). As such, the ability and willingness to provide such services at the municipal level has depended on myriad factors, and has resulted in "variations in municipality's role, from marginal involvement to active engagement" (Betts et al., 2017: 23). Despite the lack of authority afforded to local-level governments from the centre, some of these actors have responded to local-level demands, and have played an increasing role in shaping Syrian refugees' access to important services, albeit in varied ways (Coskun and Ucar, 2019). For instance, in her study of three municipal neighborhoods of Istanbul, Elicin notes that local-level responses to Syrian refugees was marked by differences in resource allotments and capacity (2018).

Indeed, the recent scholarly attention paid to Syrian refugees' access to integral services and protections have noted such sub-national differences, and have alluded to myriad factors that may be impacting these dynamics. For instance, networks or "kinship relations" can be geographically situated, impacting not only settlement patterns, but also the decision-making of local authorities at provincial and regional levels (Betts et al., 2017). For example, apart from its close proximity to Syria, the province of Urfa received many Syrian refugees due to existing "family and kinship ties" (Kavak, 2016: 50). Similarly, the "solidarity networks" built among Syrian-Kurdish refugees and local Kurdish populations in Istanbul was seen to be a factor that shapes the access of refugee populations to integral services and the labour market (Kiliçarslan, 2016). Historically marked by "unregulated economic exchanges and financial relations" across the border, years of such connections have resulted in the building of networks that has encouraged the settlement of a vast number of Syrian refugees in Kilis (Şenoğuz, 2014: 32; Korkut, 2016). Furthermore, formerly established economic relations and trade linkages in places like Gaziantep can shape current economic prospects for some refugees (Betts et al., 2017). In his interviews with local level Governors in Kilis and Gaziantep, Korkut demonstrates the willingness of local-level political actors to provide assistance to Syrian refugees, despite a lack of thorough "financial and administrative capacities" (2016: 12).

Additionally, party affiliation, especially at the local level, can be an interesting factor contributing to the delivery of services in municipalities (Betts et al., 2017). This is because, in the Turkish state system, the locally-elected municipalities are largely funded by the central government (Coskun and Ucar, 2019; Betts et al., 2017). However, the election process can yield municipal governments that are in line with the incumbent government, or could also yield a municipal governance that is from an opposing party. Such dynamics may shape the manner in which municipal capacities are developed and what projects are prioritized and where, impacting local-level variation in policy delivery.

However, such dynamics are not solely impacted by domestic factors, like pre-existing kinship ties or party politics. The presence of external actors, like international non-governmental organizations and the economic activities of Syrian refugees can also shape local-level nuances (Memisoglu and Ilgit, 2017). For instance, the growth in number of new Syrian entrepreneurial activities in some regions, and the reliance of existing businesses on such labour, seems to have shaped relations among local and refugee populations (Gursel, 2017; Coskun and Ucar, 2019).

Overall, these various factors shape the context through with policies around Syrian refugees are implemented. Indeed, as Betts, Ali and Memisoglu note, "irrespective of national legislation and

policy statements, the practice of everything from refugee-status determination to the right to work is influenced by sub-national politics" (2017: 3). As such, increased attention should be paid to regional differences and how policy implementation at such levels of governance impact the everyday realities of migrants (Betts et al., 2017: 3, Caponio & Borkert, 2010). While such policies may have an impact on how migrants settle and integrate into Turkish society, the (non)access Syrian populations have to services and protections can also shape their interests, and the manner in which they engage back with the state (Betts et al., 2017). Such is a possibility that has not been developed in the literature examining Syrian integration in Turkey, albeit it is also poorly understood in the Western context.

In the Turkish context, the mix of a strong central government, ambiguities in the implementation of national policies, and local level factors may be resulting in variance in Syrian refugee's access to social services and protections. As such the feedback effects from recently-expanding citizenship policies may be experiencing a mix of self-reinforcing and self-undermining dynamics based on the fragmented nature of implementation and contextual particularities of Turkish provinces. However, such a conclusion necessitates a thorough examination and understanding of regional dynamics. In order to demonstrate these dynamics, this paper will delve into the case of Gaziantep to show the mix in local level responses to Syrian refugees.

Local Interests and Dynamics: Examination of Complex Feedback in Gaziantep

Gaziantep province is located in the South-Eastern region of Turkey, and it shares a border with Syria. Due to geographic proximity along with family and economic relations, many refugees have settled in Gaziantep, with numbers totaling over 300,000 (UNHCR, 2019b; Woods, 2016). Gaziantep, like Istanbul, is also considered one of the thirty metropolitan municipalities (Buyuk Sehir Belediyesi) in Turkey (Woods and Kayali, 2017: 9). The current locally elected mayor of Gaziantep is Fatma Sahin, and she is a part of the AK Party (Justice and Development Party). The province has nine smaller districts (Ilce), which are also locally-elected and share local responsibilities with the metropolitan municipalities (Woods and Kayali, 2017: 9).

Scholarship has noted the efforts of local governments in assisting the economic integration of Syrian populations in Gaziantep. Despite the same overarching national policy framework, some of the South-Eastern provinces have been identified as "more receptive" to refugee populations (Corabatir, 2016: 15). Conversely, scholarship has also drawn attention to the presence of public resentment in Western provinces, where expanding national policies have not resulted in increased participation by municipal governments in fostering access to comprehensive support for Syrian refugees (Corabatir, 2016: 15; Betts et al., 2017). The formerly established economic relations and trade linkages, alongside party politics, and identity-based factors have been cited as contributing to the relatively positive response of local actors to refugee groups in the South-Eastern region of Turkey (Kaya, 2016, Betts et al., 2017; Corabatir, 2016, Korkut, 2016). And indeed, in the literature, some have drawn attention to local-level initiatives that include assistance from municipal-level government actors (eg. Gaziantep Buyuksehir Belediyesi) in fostering educational opportunities, improving food security and health conditions in Gaziantep (Paksoy, 2016; Erdogan and Tarlan, 2016; Betts et al., 2016; Memisoglu and Ilgit, 2017; Sebestyen et al., 2018). For example, Paksoy notes the municipality's role in establishing a

Syrian Knowledge and Education centre, alongside a Community Centre in Ensar to assist Syrian refugees (2016: 144). The local government has even "systematized its informal assistance mechanisms and set up a sub-directorate migration affairs unit in early 2016" (Betts et al., 2017: 23). This directorate oversees such local initiatives, and seeks to "coordinate more effectively between the municipality and public institutions, NGOs, and international organisations" (Betts et al., 2017: 23). Such municipal initiatives can be imperative in not only shaping interests of migrant populations, but can also impact the success and formation of other local organizations.

Indeed, the response of such municipal actors has also been complemented by the presence of assistance from NGOs and local organizations that seek to improve the social and economic integration of migrants. For instance, the establishment "of a Syria desk at the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce," can not only facilitate the founding of Syrian-owned businesses but can also impact the interests of Syrian refugees and local populations (Icduygu and Diker, 2017: 28). Moreover, as Betts, Ali and Memisoglu note, there is cooperation between members of local government, NGOs and other such economic organizations to spur economic activity and ensure the "employability of Syrian refugees" (2017: 24). The recent growth in the number of Syrian-run NGOs in the region also reflects the involvement of such populations in shaping integration efforts. [4]

The presence of local-level initiatives and assistance from municipalities, NGOs and other regional organizations can assist refugee populations in overcoming important challenges like financial access, maneuvering "bureaucratic complexity" and "legal status restrictions" in establishing businesses (Rashid, 2018: 1). According to the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV), there has been a steep increase in the establishment of Syrian owned businesses in Turkey, and notably so in the South-Eastern provinces that border Syria (Ozpinar et al., 2015). Indeed, the number of "Syrian-owned firms in Gaziantep has reached over 700, accounting for 17% of the total number of businesses" (Icduygu and Diker, 2017: 28). During this time, exports across the border have also increased, surpassing even 2010 levels in border regions (Ozpinar et al., 2015; Cagtay and Menekse, 2014).

While the differentiated subnational implementation of national legislation seems to give rise to the establishment of businesses in Gaziantep, the generally ambiguous policy environment has also resulted in ambiguity over the future of Syrian businesses in Turkey. Syrian entrepreneurs have expressed the need for "better integration into the financial system in Turkey and improved ties with Turkish business groups and private sector actors" (Memisoglu, 2018: 22). As such, with the help of local actors, Syrian entrepreneurs "expecting support" from the national government to ease their transition have put forth lobbying efforts to shape policies (Memisoglu, 2018: 21). For instance, the Syrian Economic Forum (SEF), a Syrian operated think tank in Gaziantep that seeks to strengthen "economic opportunities and education" for Syrian populations, is a notable organization in this regard (Baban et al., 2017: 52). The organization has "launched campaigns…to formalize Syrian businesses in the area" by providing them with local knowledge and 'technical' aid (Akcali and Gormus, 2018: 16). Most notably, to spur

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[4] As Memisoglu and Ilgit estimate, "Şanlıurfa and Gaziantep there are already more than 60 NGOs run by Syrian refugees, suggesting that the Turkish asylum debate will include even more diverse actors in the near future" (

investment, the SEF has "established an economic free zone in Gaziantep, where at least 85% of the production will be tax free and produced for export outside of Turkey" (Baban et al., 2017: 52). The SEF also made agreements with the Turkish government to ensure that "Syrian companies can legally hire Syrian workers outside of the normal 10% quota system" in this Economic Free Zone (Baban et al., 2017: 52).

As such, while national legislation can provide an overarching framework for services and protections that Syrian populations receive, myriad factors can shape the manner in which policies are implemented and what type of assistance is provided to refugee populations. In the case of Gaziantep, the relatively positive stance of the local government toward Syrian refugees has been shaped by such factors (Betts et al., 2017; Korkut, 2016; Erdogan, 2014). These initiatives by local governments have also been coupled with the presence of active NGOs and other organizations to shape the interests and opportunities available for Syrian populations (Erdogan, 2014). Indeed, organizations like SEF have not only been key in shaping local responses, but have also lobbied nationally to expand the reach of Syrian businesses in Turkey (Pereira Valarini, 2015). Such engagement from Syrian communities in "negotiating their access to social services and employment," shows how Syrian populations may be impacting legislation at the national level (Baban et al., 2017: 53-4).

While the relatively permeable local dynamics have shaped and strengthened interests of certain Syrian populations, this has been subject to "class-based" dynamics that have yielded more access to protections and rights for refugees with "economic resources" (Simsek, 2018: 5). Despite local-government initiatives around education and skills training, there are still local concerns over labour market competition, raising rents in neighborhoods and shared access to various services like health care and education (Woods, 2016). Notably in the labour market, local small "artisan" businesses and labourers have suggested seeing a "downward pressure on wages" and increased competition due to the presence of Syrian refugees (Hoffman and Samuk, 2016: 17). Such assertions can make the expansion of policies geared at labour market integration more difficult. Indeed, in their study of examining barriers to the formalization of Syrian workers, Sebestyen, Dyjas and Kuyumcu note that municipal-level government officials in Gaziantep have "confirmed that the fear of losing political capital is a defining factor for the quota legislation," suggesting that parts of the recently expanding labour policies may subject to opposition from Turkish labour (2018: 82).

Conclusions and Further Research

In the province of Gaziantep, the temporary protection given to Syrian populations has been met with a mix of responses from different stakeholders, with some pushing for the expansion of legal protections offered by the state, while others calling to limit and regulate the benefits Syrian populations receive. The paper has drawn attention to how local-level factors, like shared identities, party affiliations, and competition over economic and business resources, can influence local interests when implementing policies (Kaya, 2016; Shneikat & Alrawadieh, 2019; Kaymaz and Kadkoy, 2016; Kılıçaslan, 2016; Betts et al., 2017). Indeed, the ad-hoc and relatively ambiguous national frameworks can allow local dynamics to impact implementation, thus shaping policy outcomes. As such, while the influx of Syrian populations may have shifted national frameworks, the manner and direction of policy shift can depend on local initiatives and

responses. Indeed, the "political effects of policy implementation" can work alongside, and interact with, the "social and economic" factors that impact policy feedback effects (Moyinhan and Soss, 2014: 320). While such dynamics may be present across the globe, ambiguous national policies in the context of "low and middle- income countries" may be more prevalent, giving rise to subnational variation and resulting in complex feedback effects (2011: 581-584).

In line with emerging research on the Syrian refugee crisis, this paper has shown the importance of sub-national dynamics in shaping not only integration efforts of migrants, but also the interests of Syrian refugees and local level actors. Examining such interests is imperative in understanding national-level policy shifts that may occur through feedback. However, to be able to better develop these theories, a thorough comparison of local-level dynamics is necessary. For instance, Gaziantep province may be an interesting case to show the economic interests at play that may be shaping national frameworks (Betts et al., 2017). However, other provinces in Turkey, especially those in the South-West, may be missing such economic incentives, resulting in them functioning more as "transit hubs," rather than sites that foster the integration of Syrian refugee populations (Yildiz and Uzgoren, 2016: 196; Corabatir, 2016). As such, "the relatively passive role" of some Western provinces could not only impact the manner in which policy is implemented, but also can shape the interests of local and refugee populations, resulting in different feedback effects (Betts et al., 2017: 26). As such, the comprehension of what occurs at the national level necessitates an understanding of different sub-national dynamics.

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