



PSYCHOSOCIAL STORIES OF WOMEN MIGRATED FROM SYRIA TO TURKEY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Migration has become among the most emerging topic as escalating local conflicts and poverty in the World. In this study, specifically, it is aimed at understanding and revealing Syrian women's psychosocial states and their effects, living in Turkey which hosts the most refugee and asylum seekers in the World because of conflicts and war in the neighboring Middle East. 13 Syrian women have been interviewed in order to gather information and insight on these women's experiences and lives of premigration, during migration and after migration. Syrian women have experienced problems of adaptation, language, finding someone to look after their children, being a foreigner, social and psychological stress. Also they have had deep sorrow about leaving their country, families, relatives and children. In Turkey they've faced problems with shelter, education, food and employment, and safety needs have been the most urgent one. It's also founded out that the Syrian women have developed their own managing strategies and maintained gender based roles.

Keywords: Migration, Women, Gender, Psychosocial Well-being.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the International organization For Migration (IOM), migration is "the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition, and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification" (2017). The concept of migration can be thought as the movement of people from a geographical place to another at first glimpse but it has a more complicated and long-established structure (Aksu & Sevil, 2010). In today's World as because of fastly changing environmental, politic, economic and societal conditions, more and more individuals or groups migrate and settle down in different places.

It's known that migration has emerged two basic factors as pushing and pulling. Pushing factors can be wars, hunger, oppression, low inflation, and low wages which can be named as causes for migration while good job opportunities, better education, freedom of thought, stable economies can be pulling factors (Tuzcu & Bademli, 2014). Furthermore different demographical features between states, cyclical depressions of capitalism, income differences between regions and economies under globalism can be considered as the main causes of migration (Güllüpnar, 2012).

Turkey's Current Status on Migration

Turkey has witnessed the forced migration the most since regional conflicts in neighboring states. Forced migration is defined as "A migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes" by IOM (2009). As considering migration roots, Turkey has a geographically central position for migrations roots to Europe and is a transit country. Especially migrants from Africa, Asia, and Middle East countries use Turkey as a transit country or final destination (Kolukırık, 2014).

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Turkey has signed to Convention Relating to Status of Refugees of UN General Assembly (Geneva Convention) but Turkey was chary of granting refugee status. Therefore Turkey has been stated that refugee status can be granted for individuals who come to Turkey because of events in Europe before 1st January of 1951. There are both time and geographical limitations concerning granting refugee status. Similarly, Turkey continues with the same reservations on granting refugee status also in New York Protocol in 1967. But in 2011, in One of Turkey's neighbor state Syria approximately five million people forced to leave the country due to internal conflicts and war (UNFPA, 2015) and approximately three millions of them have been migrated to Turkey (Directorate General of Migration Management [DGMM], 2018). This created a legal gap for migrants coming from the east of Turkey. For this reason Turkey, with the collaboration of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has passed a new law named "Law On Foreigners And International Protection" in 2013 (Kaiser & Kaya, 2016) with the aim of regulating "the principles and procedures with regard to foreigners' entry into, stay in and exit from Turkey, and the scope and implementation of the protection to be provided for foreigners who seek protection from Turkey" (DGMM, 2013). In this law, different protection status (refugee, conditional refugee, subsidiary protection, temporary protection) has been defined. Also, Turkey has been prepared Temporary Protection Regulation for Syrian migrants in terms of 91st article of Law on Foreigners and International Protection Law. According to that regulations, temporary protection is a protection status granting to the mass influx of people forced to leave their country and come to Turkey's borders and demand urgent and temporary protection from Turkey and also in this regulation Syrian migrants considered as mass influx and all of them has been granted temporary protection status. This specialist status provides health, education and working rights and services to Syrian migrants. The main aim of the temporary protection is to help people to reach safety immediately and protect human rights of them (Çiçekli, 2009) but it should be in mind that temporary protection status does not grant rights as refugee status grant.

1.1. Women Syrian Migrants In Turkey

In the last decade, Turkey has become the number one host country who have the most number of refugee or asylum seekers in the world's mostly because of the conflicts and war in the Middle East and especially in Syria. According to the Turkish Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM), there are 3,587,930 Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey by the date of October in 2018 (DGMM, 2018) and 1,641,884 of them are women.

Although especially migrant women have been experienced some psychosocial problems because of hardships in migrated place, domestic roles, and responsibilities, women do not seek help for their psychological problems because they are reluctant to share emotional problems outside the family (Kirmayer et al., 2011). It's also known that Syrian women have negative experiences like rape, torture, kidnapping, witnessing murder and mass murder, all of them can cause huge mental health injuries (James et al., 2014).

Being a migrant can cause broken families, decreasing social network connections and psychosocial stress. Adaptation stress to a new culture may cause anxiety and depression for individuals. Reasons for this stress are adaptation problems, not able to reach health services, language problems and education (Hiott et al., 2008). Also, societies experienced war, torture, economic problems, hunger, and other disasters can experience violence, stress, and lack of food and health service. In forced migration, the mental and physical status of individuals, conditions at the migrated area, length and hardship of distance traveled affect the health of migrants. Moreover, exposure risk to new disease in the migrated area, overcrowd, insufficient food supplies may cause epidemy (Kahn et al., 2003; as cited in Tuzcu & Bademli, 2014).

Adaptation process to the migrated area can be affected by social network status, gender, age, language skills, education levels, religious believes, reasons for migration and welcoming styles in the receiving country. In areas of receiving migration; insufficient health services and professionals, migrants having low income and experiencing economic problems, insufficient food supplies, not having anyone to look after children of working women, irregular working hours, language problems, not having health insurance, having traditional life view, insufficient local services, being stranger, law and social and psychological stress may affect health negatively (İldam Çalım, Kavlak & Sevil, 2012).

In the last half of the century, women migration has been increased. Women migrate because of familial reasons and also because of exploitation caused by wars and conflicts (IOM, 2014). It's stated that women, children, and elders are in need of protection more during the migration processes (Hemmasi & Prorok, 2002). Women migrants have faced stressors like social isolation, loneliness, language problems, and



cultural differences. Based on these stressors and quality of managing mechanisms determine the risk of having physiologic and psychological health problems of women migrants. Women migrants' mental health affected by language problems, psychosocial adoption to a new culture and lifestyles and losing social support networks (Knipscheer & Kleber 2006). Besides fall in productivity, behavioral problems, substance abuse, the tendency to crime, and neurotic, psychotic and psychosomatic problems may be observed in migrant women (Akdeniz & Öz 2009; Adanu & Johnson, 2009; Lindstrom & Munoz-Franco, 2006).

In the process of migration, women have traumatic experiences like violence, hard living conditions, domestic conflicts (Measham et al., 2014). Apart from that not understanding a new language and cultural differences which bring social exclusion and labeling can cause psychological problems. Individuals psychosocial well-being is a whole with the parts of physical and physiological. In migration asylum processes gender roles create different problems for men and women. Especially in the asylum-seeking process, alone women try to manage to raise responsibilities and roles; also they experience more problems finding a job and working. It can be said that women have affected negatively than men in migration and asylum seeking processes (Buz, 2008). Similarly in one study concluded that women migrants' mental health affected negatively than men migrants and women experienced more emotional problems (Akdeniz & Öz 2009). In another study, it is stated that women have unsuccessful than men in managing stress (Topcu & Başer, 2006). In another international study, 65% of the women migrants reported their health weak or bad and the most frequent health problems are psychological and gynecological ones (Schoevers, Muijsenberg & Largo-Janssen, 2009).

Migration has been affecting individuals physically, psychologically and socially in the whole World (İldam Çalım, Kavlak & Sevil, 2012). In this study, it is aimed at understanding and revealing Syrian women's premigration, migration and after migration life experiences and hardships with their own narratives. Therefore problems of being a woman migrant in migration processes can be put forward and can be enabled the future interventions and policies concerning women migrants.

2. METHOD

Qualitative research design has been used in this study because the aim is to determine the problems of Syrian women with their own narratives and perception. The phenomenological approach has been used in this study. This approach ensures determining individuals' ways of expressing their own perceptions and interpretations of "things" (Patton, 1990).

2.1. Study Group

The study group of this study consists of adult Syrian women migrated Syria from Turkey. The reason for studying with only women is that women are one of the disadvantaged group before, during and after migration and they are affected the most psychosocially and economically. Participants are reached with snowball sampling in purposeful sampling methods. Thirteen women have been interviewed in-depth and interviews have been ended when the interviews repeat itself and interviewer has satisfied with the interviews. Also during the interviews, an interpreter and a reporter have been present. The analysis of interviews has been conducted with the reporter, the interpreter and the interviewer.

2.2. Participants

Firstly it seems that Syrian households are very crowded with an average of at least 6 people in one home. The reason for this can be understood when considering the weekly income of these households. Family weekly income is between 0 and 375 Turkish liras (approximately 70\$ and 60€) while two participants expressed that they did not have any income and they only relied on social aids from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and municipalities.



Table 1. Information on The Participants

Participant No	How many people living in one household?	Who works in the household?	Education Level	Income (Weekly Turkish Lira- TL)	Residence Area	Social Aids
1	10	Father, brother	Primary School	300 TL	-	-
2	4	-	Middle School	-	Önder Mah.	NGO: cash aid
3	7	Son	High School	300 TL	Siteler	NGO: cash, cloth aid
4	8	Husband	Primary School	200 TL	Siteler	NGO: food aid Municipality: food, cleaning supplies aid
5	6	Husband	Bachelor Degree	225 TL	Önder Mah.	NGO: food aid Municipality: food, cleaning supplies aid
6	6	Son	Primary School	200 TL	-	NGO: food, cloth aid Municipality: food, cleaning supplies, coal aid
7	6	Husband	High School	275TL	Ulubey Mah.	-
8	9	Husband, son in law	Primary School	250 TL	Önder Mah.	-
9	6	Non	Middle School	-	Hüseyingazi Mah.	NGO: food aid
10	7	Husband	Middle School	200 TL	Siteler	NGO: food aid Municipality: food, cleaning supplies
11	9	Son	High School	340 TL	Ulubey Mah.	Mosque: food aid
12	3	Husband	Bachelor Degree	375 TL	-	-
13	7	Husband	High School	200 TL	Bostancı	NGO: food aid

In all households men, husbands and sons are working. This can be interpreted as in Islam there are some limitations on working of women but the participants expressed otherwise. Also, the participants have no education to be able to work and most of them have several children to look after. Even some participants expressed that they could not go out of the house most of the time. The gender roles are very dominant and affecting women's social life.

I do not encounter with so many Turkish people since I do not go out of the house. And I do not speak Turkish, even if I encounter with them I can only say hi to them. That's all. (13)

In this case, it can be said that gender roles have become dominant in Syrian asylum-seekers. Women stay home to look after kids and domestic work and men are out to earn a living.

10 of the women reside in the same area while 3 of them did not want to share residence information. This area is Altındağ district and it's one of the lowest socio-economical statuses in Ankara. This district can be categorized as ghetto. In the district, rents are lower and there are many branches of industry and ateliers where both Turkish and Syrian people can easily find a job. But these jobs do not come with health or safety insurance for Syrian asylum-seekers. But it can be said that it is easier for Syrians to find a job in Altındağ than any other districts of Ankara because managers are preferring Syrian asylum seekers since they do not have to pay insurance for them and make them work a lot cheaper than Turkish



workers even if it is illegal. Therefore it is not surprising that Syrian asylum-seekers chose to reside in Altındağ.

2.3. Data Collecting Tools

Data has been collected with a semi-structured interview form prepared by researchers. Also, observation notes of the reporter have been used. In semi-structured interview forms, there are questions about sociodemographic and familial features and psychosocial problems of pre-, during and post-migration.

2.4. Data Collection Process

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted in order to understand Syrian women's experiences of pre-, during and post-migration with their own perceptions, emotions, and thoughts. During the interviews, the participant's approval for voice recording has been granted and explained the aim of the study. Also, the participants reassured about confidentiality and real names of the participants were not shared and they all be given numbers instead of names.

Before the start of interviews, 3 Syrian women interviewed with the semi-structured interview form and after these pre-interviews unfunctional questions have been changed, reorganized or removed. After that data collection has begun. The average duration of the interviews is between 45 and 60 minutes. Since none of the participants knew Turkish, an interpreter knew both Turkish and Arabic supported the interviews.

During the interviews, it's been observed that some participants eased after telling about their emotions and thoughts and expressed themselves while several of the participants were staid about sharing emotions and thoughts. But in general, it can be said that the participants had emotional relief after the interviews. Also, it's seen that the interpreter's being women and Syrian has helped the participants to feel safe and relax.

2.5. Data Analysis

Voice recordings of the interviews were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. After that, all of the text was read by the researchers, the reporter, and the interpreter. The researchers decoded the text with thematic analysis method and themes and sub-themes has been emerged. All data has been analyzed with Maxqda 2018. After the analysis, all findings have been discussed and reconsidered with the reporter and the interpreter.

3. FINDINGS

According to the analysis of this study, two main themes and seven sub-theme have been emerged about the Syrian women's life before, during and after migration.

3.1. Life of Syrian Women in During and After Migration to Turkey

It's clear that Syrian women have painful experiences in leaving their country and coming to Turkey. There have been many problems during living in Syria with struggles against the consequences of conflicts and war and also during migration and after coming to Turkey.

3.1.1. Processes of Coming to Turkey

Internal conflicts and war atmosphere in Syria lead many families to run away from their country and to take refuge in different countries. Hardships of war especially affect children and women severely. The participants expressed that some of them were forced to leave their children, families, and husbands behind while some of them could only take their youngest children. The participants felt fear, desperation, hope, and uncertainty at the same time on their way to another country.

We had to run away. At that moment I could only think about my children, I did not think of anyone else... There was a memory I've never forget. One day we were sitting at our home and a bomb fell from the roof into the home but thank Allah (God) it did not blow up. If it was blown up I would be dead now. (3)

My own family is still in Syria. I came here with my husband and their family. My family is at back there. I've heard they all are alright, we can talk one or two times a month. But I'm so afraid. There is ISIS where they live and the conditions are so bad. They can't come here since they are in Halep which is very far away. (9)

Some of the participants expressed that in order to go to another country people should need economic wellness (money) and luck. The participants stated deep sadness about leaving their children, sisters, brothers, and families behind.



In order to escape from there, you should have money and also luck. Some of my acquaintances stayed back there didn't have much money, maybe they had more money they would come with us. (8)

I came with my husband and his siblings. My siblings stayed back there but we had to leave. (12)

Some of the participants stated that after they crossed the borders, they stayed at a camp for a while but they said living conditions of the camps were very hard and challenging.

The camp is hard. The hardest things were restroom and bathroom needs. Very crowded. There were only one restroom and bathroom for women and men. We were alone there and nobody saw/recognized us. It was so crowded. The moment we got out of our rooms there were many men and they laughed at us. (9)

The participants have felt fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and hope after deciding to leave the country and began a migration trip. The participants expressed their fear, hunger, tiredness, negative thought and emotions during their walking to borders.

First, we were carried by bus to another city. We were so scared but we had to run away. Since we did not have passports, we crossed borders secretly. We walked so long and after that, we could get on a bus. (10)

The hardest thing for me was to cross the border. My hardest days. . . There were hunger, misery, and fear. We reached Turkey by walking from a village near the Turkish border. After that, we got on a bus and went to Ankara. (12)

Since we didn't have passports we crossed the border illegally and we were taken into custody for 5 days. After that, we spent some time in villages near the border. At least we could come to Ankara. (7)

We came with 9 people. My 6 children, my husband, my daughter and her husband and their 2 kids. Also, my daughter was pregnant. The hardest thing was to cross the border and we had so many problems. After crossing the border we got on a bus and we all relaxed and could sleep (smiles). (8)

The reasons for leaving their country were undoubtedly war and problems came with it. But some of the participants stated that they wanted to stay but they had to leave.

Before the war our lives were good. I and my husband were working, we were teachers. We had nice salaries but after the war, we couldn't work. Because of that, we came. (12)

In those days I always said to my husband we could go to Turkey. But he did not accept. One day a friend of his told that he could find a job in Turkey. We sold all our belongings and came to Turkey. (2)

I came here for my son. It's very dangerous to live there. My son was in the army but he escaped. We ran away in order for them not to find my son. But we had no money and my son didn't find any job. So we came to Turkey. (6)

3.1.2. Syrian Women's Motives to Prefer Turkey

Motives for preferring Turkey is the geographical closeness of Turkey to Syria and the participants' have relatives come to Turkey before.

My big brothers and sisters have been in Turkey and then I came. (10)

My son and my sister have come before me. (11)

Some participants said that they learned from their relatives that Turkish people's attitudes towards Syrians were positive and also Turkey had similar cultural aspects to their own culture. These are motives for preferring Turkey for the participants.

We decided to come to Turkey since the attacks in Syria and positive behaviors and attitudes of Turkish people. In here people are nice and they treated us well (She was crying and went silent for a moment). (12)

Our acquaintances have come here first. They told us about the better life here and Turkish people were nice towards Syrians. Because of that, we didn't go to any other country and we came here. Even now we do not consider going to another country. (7)

Turkish culture is very similar to Syrian culture. Because of that, we do not want to go to another country. (5)



Also, some participants come to Turkey because of hopes for job opportunities. Some women expressed that they knew finding a job here was rather easy and come to Turkey since its job opportunities.

My neighbors have come to Turkey and they said my husband could find a job in Turkey. So we came here. (2)

Some participants learned that Syrians living in Turkey had better conditions than Syrians living in any other countries. Because they knew that they choose to come to Turkey.

As we compared the other countries' conditions Turkey was better and we came here. (1)

3.1.3. Syrian Women's Considerations of Their Life in Turkey

Syrian women have evaluated the attitudes of Turkish people and Turkish neighbors, problems on finding a job and their expectations after coming to Turkey.

Some of the participants expressed positive attitudes and behaviors of Turkish people while some of them told about being exposed to discrimination.

Generally, Turkish people have treated us nicely but sometimes they have not. For example one day we were walking on the road and some Turkish youths with a car intentionally rode very closely to us. Sometimes we experience some behaviors like that. (9)

Thank to Allah we are very glad about the Turkish people. At least in here, there is peace and there are not any attackers. (13)

We heard that some Turkish people like us but some of them didn't like us from our uncle living in Turkey. While we were looking for a house to rent, they (Turkish landlords) did not want us to rent their homes even if they had available houses. But we knew about these problems before coming to turkey, it was expected. (1)

When we said hello to them, they did not answer. (2)

According to the participants' remarks, women having functional social support systems have adapted more to life in Turkey.

My husband's family is here also. They came before us. When we need something we can ask them what to do. (8)

Of course, we are looking for support and if there isn't, everything becomes harder. My neighbors are not good. Sometimes we knock on their door but they don't open the door. They look from the peephole and when they see us they don't open the door. (7)

Some participants expressed that some Turkish people treated them well but since they do not know Turkish, communication is hard and they feel alienated.

One of the biggest problems is not knowing Turkish. For example, when I go out shopping I don't know what to say. (5)

Thanks Allah we're living a good life here but even so we feel like a stranger here since we do not speak Turkish. We can't expressed ourselves. I can't feel good as in my own country. (7)

Only expectation of some participants is to feel safe while some of them expressed problems of being employed and it creates so many problems.

In here life is hard but we are safe. (10)

Yes, we are safe in Turkey but in order to live we need money. My husband is working but he earns so little. Sometimes it is not enough. (12)

3.2. Psychosocial Problems of Syrian Women

Forced leaving one's country and trying to live in a different country create cognitive and physical problems as well as psychological and social problems. In order to determine the psychosocial problems of the women, it's highly important to understand past psychosocial problems of them. In this context, the participants' psychosocial problems before and after migration have been evaluated under the theme of "Psychosocial Problems of Syrian Women".

3.2.1. Past Psychosocial Problems

Syrian women expressed that since their safety was comprised during the war, they had sleeping problems and sounds of bombing had been created traumatic effects on them and on their families.

There was no sleep. Here, at least I can sleep when I go to bed. We know that we sleep then we will wake up the next morning. But in Syria maybe we couldn't wake up to new mornings. (13)



Every day there was bombing from the planes. During bombings we ran away from our houses and when we saw it was not hit we returned home. Every day passed like this. (7)

When I gave birth to my child, there was a bombing and my child cried a lot. I will remember that day for all my life. It happened when my child was two months old. (7)

The participants had been anxious all the time in case of an attack and bombing. They stated that they slept with their clothes and they did not go out of the home unless they had to. They expressed that they also were anxious about their children all the time.

There is so much to tell but even if how much we told we can't tell about those feelings and we will not be able to tell all. When we were sleeping we were wearing our clothes because at any time an attack could start and our house could be crash down. (cried)(8)

I was scared of everything because of the war. For example, my daughter wet herself when she heard the voice of an airplane. But thanks God we can sleep here without fear. There is nothing to afraid of here. (6)

One day there was an attack. We were leaving our house to move to another place but we saw a shattered foot. . . am I clear!? When we were walking on the streets bombing were proceed. Planes were above us and they were dropping bombs. We were sleeping with our daily clothes every day that we could run easily in case of an attack. Our house might crash down on us. (1)

Some of the participants stated that during the war they couldn't even supply their fundamental needs and they were unable to manage the problems.

When the war started my psychology was terrible, I felt so bad that I can't able to tell about. It' was not just me, everyone felt the same way. I even started to use tranquilizers. But I felt better when I came here. (4)

In Syria, there were many days I lived without food. My husband couldn't work for a year. We did not have money and also we did not have so many opportunities to go out to buy some food. (2)

3.2.2. Psychosocial Problems of Syrian Women during and After Migration

It's seen that the Syrian women participated in this study have experienced a great number of problems during the war, migration and after migration according to their own narratives. Nevertheless, it's also understood that all of them have created their own managing strategies.

The participants stated that experiences and observations of them during the migration have affected their psychology and this created several psychological problems. At this point, the participants expressed that they felt despair, uncertainty, fear, and guilt.

One day I had to go to school and there was a road to school that I had to cross. It was very crowded. We had to cross that road with our heads down in order not to be shot. We had to run. Even there was a sick person he/she had to run regardless of his/her illness. We all just wanted to save our lives. Almost every day I experienced that. One day attacks were the more intense, there was no bus. Someone with a big truck came and stopped. He said, "got on the truck I could give you a ride". We all got on, there was so crowded inside. It was a horrible scene. One child was crying and yelling his mother that he was so afraid. It was a terrible memory of mine. (12)

I have bad psychology but I don't want any help. I don't think that no one can heal me apart from myself. I don't trust anyone. (2)

I had a passport but my children did not have. I could pass the border legally but they passed illegally. It was horrible, I don't want to remember. We could pass the border but one part of me stayed behind in Syria and living in danger. He does not have money to come here and we don't have either. We can't send money. We can't do anything. We are in despair. (6)

Almost all of the participant expressed that even after they came Turkey their and their children's traumas and their effects have been continuing.

In Syria, the bombs were falling everywhere. We didn't harm but my children were so scared. My daughter is 3 years old and every time she hears a plane, she throws herself to the floor. I didn't teach her that. She reacts like this because of fear. (10)



I don't feel at ease. I can't feel at ease wherever I go. My children are still afraid of planes. They ask "will this plane drop us any bombs?". When they are sleeping, they awake suddenly and started to cry. (13)

I have only worried about my children. I have been crying for them. I have come here for them. I don't even remember what we experienced back there. When a plane passes by, my children are scared and run to me. Because back there planes mean something terrible. There's so much to tell. . . (8)

Yes, I feel a little bit better here but I still feel anger and stress. There are sometimes I can't sleep with the fear of an attack.. (8)

Some of the participants stated that they had peaceful and happy lives before the war and now they don't have anything to live on. It's seen that nostalgia and comprising past and present lives affect their managing of styles.

We were alright financially. My husband was working. We had gardens and a house. But we lost them because of the war. (8)

All the family was together before. Now some of them came here and some of them stayed there. I always wonder them. I'm always worried and sad. (2)

My life before was a beautiful one. Even if we properly live here, we will always be strangers and I'm very sad about this. (1)

3.2.3. The Syrian Women's Own Evaluations on Their Psychosocial State

During the war and after migration the participants have developed managing strategies in order to overcome negative feelings and experiences. It's seen that some of them deny and ignore the problems and because of that some of them become estranged themselves and their social environments. But some of the participants expressed easily their negative experiences and social support systems of them positively affect them.

I don't receive any psychological support and I don't want to receive any. Because I don't need it. (9)

The past is the past. If I had a problem I would tell maybe, I don't know. But I tell my husband about my problems. That's enough for me. (12)

It's stated that the participants who share their negative experiences with their social environment have been managing more easily.

I tell about my problems with my siblings, we can solve them together. Sometimes I go and tell to my Turkish friends. It makes me feel good. (11)

After migration, some participants stated that they had serious adaptation problems. Not being able to overcome past life, trying to adopt the unknown culture and living conditions bring psychosocially negative experiences for the women.

Since I've newly got here, there are so much that I don't know. I can't fully adopt but I'm gradually getting used to. When I compare the first day I've come here and today, I'm better now. (12)

It's seen that women use several managing strategies in order to overcome past problems and adopt their new livings. Believing in God and destiny and having hope are among the most used strategies. But some participants stated that they didn't share their problems with anyone and repress them and experience chronic crying fits.

I don't ask any help from anyone. I only ask for help from Allah. It comforts me. (13)

Usually, when something bad happened, I repress and do not tell anyone. When I feel suffocated, I cry and relax. For a short time I feel good but then I live the same problems again. (5)

If something is meant to be happened or lived, it will happen anyway. We cannot change anything. I get used to it. Allah is mighty and there is always a solution. (4)

I have hope and I think everyone should be hopeful. When I feel so bad I cry and relax. Now my family and relatives are here I can tell about my problems. (6)

I'm looking at the future with hope. Besides we have to. Because if we are not hopeful we will die. We will die in despair. (8)



Some of the participants stated that after the war it was good and safe to live in another country but homesickness sometimes brought negative emotions. They also stated that all the things they've experiences create anger, fear, sadness, stress, despair, and uncertainty.

After the war and the things I've endured, I become a very angry person. Because I've been feeling despair and fear all the time. I don't know what will happen tomorrow and it consumes my desire to live. I get angry even for insignificant things. (3)

Here I feel safe but in Syria, I've felt better. Because it is my own country. (11)

3.2.4. Future Expectations of Syrian Women

Future expectations can be considered as an indicator for being hopeful. More than half of the women participants expressed they have future expectations.

Some of them expressed that they hoped that the war would over and they wanted to go back to Syria.

All I think about the future is the ending of the war and we will build our country again. (11)

Also, the women expressed their concerns about their children's future and they wanted them to have a better future than themselves.

I want this war to end and I want to return to my country. I want my children can have a better life than me. I want them to go to school. (13)

I hope that my children live a better lives and can have better education.. (2)

But some of the women stated that they had no future expectations because of their negative experiences and uncertainty.

Future? (laugh) Even our basic needs are unreachable, for example, I can't go to school. What can I expect from the future? (1)

There is nothing left for future plans. We cannot think about anything about future... (10)

More than half of the participants stated that they wanted to have better income and better jobs in the future.

More subsidiary payments should be more. Because in here everything is so expensive. The rent, water and electricity bills... When my little children get sick, we need medicine but we shouldn't spend much money. (11)

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

During migration, the women have to bear the negativenesses caused by war and migration more. Syrian women face psychological problems caused by gender-based violence, economic deprivation and negative effects of war (Asaf, 2017). Especially the war deeply affects women (Baksh-Soodeen, 2005).

The factors affecting people in migration areas are not being sufficient health organizations and manpower, the low socioeconomic status of migrants, economic deprivation, insufficient nourishment, obstacles to transportation, not having someone to look after the children of working women, irregular working hours, language barrier, not having health insurance, having traditional living styles, insufficiency of local services, being a foreigner, laws, social and psychological stress (Asaf, 2017; Başer, 2012; İldam Çalım, Kavlak v& Sevil, 2011 as cited in İldam Çalım; Kavlak & Sevil, 2012). It can be said that all these negative factors are valid for the Syrian women participated in this study. The participants frequently stated that language barrier, not having someone to look after their children, being a foreigner, social and psychological stress have been affecting them.

The Syrian women expressed that they have encountered many obstacles and problems before and during migration. They have had deep sorrow about leaving their own country, families, relatives, and children. Alongside they also stated that after they came to Turkey, they've faced problems with shelter, education, food and employment, and safety needs have been the most urgent one.

Adaptation process has been affected by social network, gender, age, language skills, education level, religious believes, reasons for migration and reception at migration area. In this context, women are among the most affected groups. Especially women have face psychological problems caused by adaptation hardships and domestic roles and responsibilities. Nevertheless, the women are not seeking help and support concerning their psychological problems as in Kirmayer and colleagues' study and the reasons of that are lack of information and unwillingness to share emotional problems without family (2011). In this current study, it's also founded out that Syrian women haven't sought any help and support and they share their problems with family and Syrian friends and relatives. The effects of these behaviors have been



observed during the interviews. It's observed that the women's psychological states are not well and some of them give physical responses to the problems. Also, it's thought that since these women are in the close community and they cannot leave the house frequently, their psychological states have been affecting negatively. Further speaking different language than citizens, cultural and social differences, social exclusion and labeling can cause several psychological problems (Measham et al, 2014). Küçükşen (2017) has stated that unmet socioeconomic and cultural needs can create obstacles to community integration and because of that individuals experienced social exclusion face physical and mental health problems.

Studies show that reasons for migration, life experiences during the migration process and effects of migration differ between women and men in the context of reaction to migration and attitudes of migrants Asaf, 2017; Baksh-Soodeen, 2005; Kirmayer et al, 2011). The basic reasons for this difference are different domestic roles and collaboration practices and traditional women and men gender roles (Yılmaz, 2005). In this study also individuals who are working in this household are all men and generally they are husbands and sons of the women participants. This finding can be interpreted as Islamic lifestyle but there are no limitations for women in joining working life in Syria. But all women in the sample of this study have been unable to reach education (Table 1). Besides participants have many children to look after and generally, children's are tender age (toddlers). It causes women to stay at home for children care. Participants expressed that they mostly couldn't able to go out of the home. In the study of Mamuk and Hotun Şahin (2016), among all 138 women migrants, only a small amount of them had a job in Syria but this amount decreasing when they started to live in Turkey.

The language barrier, adaptation to a new culture and not having social support networks are among the factors affecting women migrants mental health (Knipscheer and Kleber, 2006). In this study, women also stated their most important problems are economic and language. Not being able to speak Turkish has been prevented the women's joining the social life and Turkish social support systems. It's clear that these women have serious adaptation problems since they are only interaction with Syrian individuals. Yalçın (2004) has stated that satisfying the needs only in migrant society can hinder the adaptation processes. Also, Kara and Nazik (2018) have pointed out that not being able to adapt to a new culture, lack of social support and language barriers can affect the women migrants psychosocial states.

Some of the women in this study stated that Turkish people welcomed them well but some of them mentioned about negative attitudes and behaviors of Turkish citizens. These negative attitudes and behaviors lead to problems of shelter, joining social like and employment. In a study conducted by Barın (2015), it's founded out that Syrian women have serious problems with finding a house to rent and joining the social life.

Findings on psychosocial problems of the women show that the women have experienced serious traumas, especially during the war.

The participants stated that they faced many psychosocial problems during war and migration and after the war. It's seen that almost all participants have developed their own managing strategies. The Syrian women stated that they have been feeling despair, uncertainty, fear, and guilt because of experiences after and during the migration. Also, it's seen that some of the participants have denied negative experiences and problems. This leads to social and personal isolation but the other participants had strong social support systems have been managing effectively. Şahin (2001) stated that migrants feel negative emotions like loneliness, alienation, longing, guilt, and insecurity. Also, other studies show that most of the migrants have faced psychosocial problems because of negative life experiences and emotions (Etiler & Lordoğlu, 2010; Demir & Anöz, 2014; Mamut & Hotun Şahin, 2016). Problems of adaptation to a new culture and people, language barrier, employment, and shelter are among the problems the migrant women experienced. Küçükşen (2017) also stated that women migrants try to manage negative conditions imposed by just being a woman. Mamut and Hotun Şahin (2016) founded out in their study that women migrants face language, religious and gender-based discrimination problems.

In this study, it's seen that believing in God, religious rituals and faith in destiny and hope are very effective managing strategies for the participants.

The participants have future expectations and hope after the migration. Some of the participants expressed concerns about their children's and their own futures. It's also founded out that especially feeling of uncertainty has affected negatively the future expectation of the women. Some of the participants stated in their future expectations that they wanted to go back to their country. Similarly, in another study, it's put out that most of the women migrants wanted to return their country (Mamuk & Hotun Şahin, 2016).



In this study evaluating the lives of Syrian women migrants before, during and after the migration with their own evaluations and narratives, it's seen that these women experienced serious hardships and problems and their psychological states had been effected severely. It's highly important to conduct this research with qualitative method since the researchers could participate in these women's problems, emotions and thoughts even if there was a language barrier between them. Almost more than half of the participants stated that interviews made them feel better.

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