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# THE ROLE OF MUKHTARS IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (PVE)/ COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE)

ANKARA 2019



# The Role Of Mukhtars in Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE)/ Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)



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Ortadoğu Araştırmaları Merkezi  
Adresi : Mustafa Kemal Mah. 2128 Sk. No: 3 Çankaya, ANKARA Telefon:  
+90 850 888 15 20 Faks: +90 (312) 430 39 48 Email: orsam@orsam.org.tr

Tasarım: beyzaerden.com



terrorist groups for not less than 4 decades make studying on radicalization, violent extremism, foreign terrorist fighters an inevitable need for Turkey.

Within the context of the project titled "Improving Effectiveness of Measures to Tackle the Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Radicalization Threat" which funded by European Union, this research report will focus on the interviews conducted with mukhtars regarding their awareness about radicalization, violent extremism, and foreign terrorist fighters and would provide recommendations due to their quite important role as gatekeepers.

The interviews conducted with the mukhtars in the project were carried out with the snowball method, which is frequently applied in the scientific researches, starting with a key question and people who can have the most reliable information about this subject which would in turn channels us to other interlocutors to reach the right people and information in a more detailed manner.

The selection of the mukhtars to be interviewed was made primarily by taking into consideration the criteria such as whether there was a terrorist, foreign terrorist fighter or refugee violence in their neighborhoods as well as any major economic, social or political potential for tension.

There are 11 cities in the project. Various criteria are considered for selection of the cities:

- **Adiyaman:** The city was chosen as the existence of ISIS cell called Dokumacılar in Adiyaman, Alagöz Brothers who were part of ISIS militant cadre, and heterogeneous and moderate nature of the city.
- **Ankara:** Due to the metropolitan, both the terrorists and foreign terrorists have the demographic heterogeneity necessary to hide the warriors, as well as the terrorist organization PKK and ISIS in the last few years.
- **Bursa:** One of the biggest cities in Turkey, an industrial city, due to high migration movements social mobility is easy. The multiethnic culture of the city provides opportunity for hiding options especially for foreigners.
- **Diyarbakır:** Terrorist organization PKK's most important given that in the city located in Diyarbakır, but also because it is the city that has taken the organization a

terrorist organization and throughout the 1990s, Turkey's Hezbollah has been one of the cities given the importance of the terrorist organization.

- **Erzurum:** The city was chosen as the transportation hub for the eastern region in Turkey. Also, several counterterrorism operations conducted against ISIS in the city, and the southern part of the city close to the area where PKK active.
- **Gaziantep:** It was chosen as the border town where ISIS was attacked and affected by Syrian refugee mobility with the start of the war in Syria.
- **Hatay:** It was chosen as the border town where ISIS was attacked and affected by Syrian refugee mobility with the beginning of the war in Syria.
- **Istanbul:** The city with its very complex demographic nature provides safe havens for radicals and terrorist to hide them among this heterogeneous population. Also, the international airport in Istanbul (Atatürk Airport) was a transportation hub for both domestic and international flights that all passengers arrived at firstly this city to reach city located along Syrian borders. Besides, a terrorist organization with different background uses the city as a recruitment pool from different universities and marginalized neighborhoods.
- **Izmir:** The city, which is seen as escape point to Europe by especially from different countries of asylum seekers/refugees but also in Turkey, stands out as a city also had an impact on migration movements within its borders. For this reason, it is important to examine whether the differences triggered a radicalization in the context of violent extremism and foreign terrorist fighters.
- **Konya:** The city was chosen being as the moderate and religious city with its social structure. Also, several ISIS-connected cells detected, and then counterterrorism operations conducted in the city.
- **Şanlıurfa:** It was chosen as the border town where ISIS was attacked and affected by Syrian refugee mobility with the beginning of the war in Syria.

## 2 Radicalization and Violent Extremism

Radicalization, which is one of the most controversial concepts of international security, refers to the “transformation of the individual, the group or the mass as long as it participates in the legal, political process or uses it for political purposes.”<sup>1</sup> The concept of radicalization refers to a process of cognitive transformation. This transformation of the individual, the group, or the community can be triggered by many reasons from personal traumas to collective economic and social marginalization and to the lack of sense of belonging to an individual’s search for an adventure. This transformation, even though not following a linear or deterministic line, might lead to terrorism or violent extremism.<sup>2</sup>

In a document published by the European Commission, it has been referred to as “a phenomenon of people embracing opinions, thoughts, and ideas that may result in acts of terror”. Radicalization is defined as “the process in which an individual's beliefs are no longer the mainstream and sought a radical change in society” within the study published by RUSI.<sup>3</sup> In the study titled *Radicalization, Violent Extremism and Turkey's Fight*, written by Sönmez, it is defined as the “expression of opposing views or attitude and the discourse of freedom and these opinions and the individuals have the attitude situated on the extreme tip of an opinion on the level of conspiring to life in freedom”.<sup>4</sup>

In order to understand the process of radicalization and its merger with violence, it is necessary to analyze the individual's life, intergroup relations and the social, economic, cultural and political conditions of the communities. In the process of radicalization of the individual, the group, or a community, there may be different factors that push or pull them. Push factors can be defined as structural causes, and pull factors can be defined as individual

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<sup>1</sup> Chuck Crossett & Jason A. Spitaletta, (2010), *Radicalization: Relevant Psychological and Sociological*

<sup>2</sup> Asta Maskaliūnaite, (2015), *Exploring The Theories of Radicalization, Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal*, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 12

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, (2018), *Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Regional Training Curriculum*, p. 8

<sup>4</sup> Göktuğ Sönmez, (2017), *Radicalisation, Violent Extremism, and Turkey's Fight*, ORSAM Analysis No: 209, p.9

causes.<sup>5</sup> The push and pull factors, according to Magnus Ranstorp's *The Root Causes of Violent Extremism*, are:<sup>6</sup>

**Push Factors:** Social, political and economic problems; personal problems and tragedies, disappointment, alienation, admiration of violence, search for answers to the meaning of life, identity crisis, social exclusion; marginalization, the frustration of the democratic process, polarization.

**Pull Factors:** Ideology or social network; power and control, commitment and sense of attachment, excitement, and sense of adventure, romanticized ideology, and purpose, the possibility of heroism.

When we look at the process of radicalization, it is possible for the individual to be concerned with the interruption of the routines that have an important place in the flow of daily life. The rise of concerns is a trigger in the emergence of different processes in terms of the identity of the individual.<sup>7</sup> Because everyday life has countless social action chains that shape individual identity.<sup>8</sup> The breaks experienced in these chains are an important factor in the radicalization process of the individual.

Individuals may be looking for other alternatives, following a disappointment or a breakdown of belief in something.<sup>9</sup> When frustration occurs due to inequality and if that inequality is perceived as directing at a certain group for a particular reason, the individual may resort to political violence due to the difficulties experienced.<sup>10</sup> Also, the inability to access equal opportunities in the political sphere is also considered as an important motivation in the acts

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>6</sup> Magnus Ranstorp, (2016), "The Root Causes of Violent Extremism", RAN Issue Paper

<sup>7</sup> Giddens, 2016: 99).

<sup>8</sup> Berger & Luckmann, 2015: 24

<sup>9</sup> Eric Fromm, (2016), *Sevginin ve Şiddetin Kaynağı*, s. 20

<sup>10</sup> Talip Küçükcan, (2010), "Terörün Sosyolojisi: Toplumsal Kökenleri Anlama İmkânı", *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*, Cilt 6, Sayı 24, s. 46

of violence and terror.<sup>11</sup> Relatedly, Hoffer said that we were not reluctant to connect the causes of our success and failure to our environment; "Those who think that they live in a good world want to preserve this world, and if they are disappointed, they want to change this world fundamentally".<sup>12</sup>

According to Giddens, violence "usually arises from conflicts of interest and embracing arms for the sake of power; therefore, there are many material conditions that must be changed to counter violence and to reduce violence."<sup>13</sup> Fromm argues that people resort to violence because of jealousy. Because according to Fromm, "people can display hatred and enmity because they do not own it, but because of what other people have."<sup>14</sup>

In the researches, conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), it is mentioned that radicalized individuals misinterpreted the environment, in which they live, and then they begin to think that they suffered unfair as a result of this misinterpretation, and therefore blame and enmity another group.<sup>15</sup>

As a result, in the process of radicalization, the individual can go through a cognitive radicalization process depending on the circumstances in which he/she lives in. Therefore, providing the individual with a preferable socio-political and economic ecosystem is regarded as one of the most important steps to combat the radicalization that leads to violence. This also shows the importance of tailor-made policies carried out and by and applied to the right people and designing effective intervention policies. Relatedly, the next section will focus on how to counter and prevent these phenomena and elaborate on the concepts of PVE and CVE.

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<sup>11</sup> Küçükcan, (2010), "Terörün Sosyolojisi: Toplumsal Kökenleri Anlama İmkânı", p. 46

<sup>12</sup> Eric Hoffer, (1993), *Kesin İnançlılar: Kitle Hareketlerinin Anatomisi (The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements)* Akran Yayıncılık: p. 12

<sup>13</sup> Giddens, 2009: 26

<sup>14</sup> Eric Fromm, (2016), *Sevginin ve Şiddetin Kaynağı*, p. 20

<sup>15</sup> Randy Borum, (2003), "Understanding the Terrorist Mindset," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, p. 7–10

### **3 Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)**

After the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the increasingly popular line of argumentation has been that steps taken in the context of the fight against terrorism could not be achieved only by applying military methods. Rather, the fight against terrorism needs to be strengthened with the policies in education, development, economy, social and cultural areas besides law enforcement and military elements.<sup>16</sup> At this point, the concepts of PVE (Preventing Violent Extremism) and CVE (Countering Violent Extremism) emerged. In spite of the occasional interchangeable uses of the concepts, mainly the concept of PVE is preferred by the European Union,<sup>17</sup> whereas the US prefers CVE which also covers elements of counter-terrorism.<sup>18</sup>

PVE focus on the process before radicalization and the process of radicalization, while it is stated that CVE is a policy that focuses on the process after radicalization. In a study entitled “Exploring CVE policy and practice in Australia,” it is seen that the CVE approach is handled in close proximity to the PVE approach. In this study, the adaptation of a method known as The Public Health Model to CVE is adopted, consisting of three stages in the fight against violent extremism. Here, there are three different stages in the CVE, as in PVE, the process before radicalization, the process of radicalization, and the process after radicalization. In

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<sup>16</sup> Anne Aly, (2014), “Countering violent extremism: Social harmony, community resilience and the potential of counter- narratives in the Australian context”, Counter Radicalization: Critical Perspective, Christopher Baker-Beall, Charlotte Heath- Kelly and Lee Jarvis (Eds), Routledge, p. 71

<sup>17</sup> European Commission, (2018), Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Regional Training Curriculum, p. 5

<sup>18</sup>European Commission, (2018), p. 5

these stages, the way of intervention requires different tools and methods.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, there are also approaches that consider CVE as a combination of hard and soft tools, unlike PVE.<sup>20</sup>

Some substances come to the fore when fighting against violent extremism. These can be listed, such as education, making youth more active and strengthening them.<sup>21</sup> Considering that these items should be taken into consideration not only by the state institutions but also by the non-governmental organizations, it will be seen that the P/CVE process represents a hybrid model.

While the methods of the monopoly of the state in terms of the use of violent means are subject to strict state control, there is no state monopoly in terms of P/CVE efforts. In that light, some particular individuals and institutions can quite effectively take part in P/CVE processes. The individuals who can play a role here are referred to as “gatekeepers”. Gatekeepers can be guidance counselors, school teachers, sports coaches, religious figures, parents etc. These people have the ability to act as early detection points, too, since they share the same environment with targeted vulnerable audiences. Here, *mukhtars* or reeves, who are the administrators of the neighborhood, has a direct access to the people and groups in their neighborhoods and can touch the people on the ground quite easily. For this reason, the close contact of the reeves with the families and social centers in the neighborhoods can play a role in solving the problem by contacting the local governors and law enforcement agencies in the neighborhood, in any threat they perceived is growing in their particular area.

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<sup>19</sup> Shandon Harris-Hogan, Kate Barrelle ve Andrew Zammit, (2016), “What is countering violent extremism? Exploring CVE policy and practice in Australia”, *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Agression*, Vol. 8, No 1, p. 9

<sup>20</sup> Anne Aly, Anne-Marie Balbi & Carmen Jacques, (2015), “Rethinking Countering Violent Extremism: Implementing the Role of Civil Society”, *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, Vol. 10 No: 1, p. 8

<sup>21</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/preventing-violent-extremism> (Date of Access: 15.02.2019)

#### 4 Mukhtars

The role of the mukhtars as an institutionalized administrative position, has been present since the Ottoman era, and still has an important role within the current Turkish Administrative System, even though they are the lowest tier of the Turkish Administrative System. Neighborhood residents accept that mukhtar is the first point of contact for the solution of the problems encountered by themselves, due to mukhtars' administrative role in the system since they can point to those problems during their contacts with other officials and institutions as a bridge between the people and the higher-levels of administrative system. Even though mukhtars, to some extent, lost their influence both socially and administratively due to e-Government applications, in many areas, it would be valid to argue that this role is still respected.

In 1829, for the first time in Istanbul, the mukhtar mechanism was established. However, the mechanism found its legal basis in 1864 with the "Regulation on the Formation of Provincial Governorates." Then, in 1876, the "General City Administration Law" described their roles in more detail as the text is an upgrade of its predecessor.<sup>22</sup> In 1913, the "General City Administration Law", including the mukhtar mechanism was annulled.<sup>23</sup> However, despite the legal elimination of the mukhtar mechanism, it continued to exist due to its role in practice. In 1933, with the law no. 2295, the mechanism of mukhtar was totally eliminated. With Law No. 4541 on the Establishment of District Mukhtar and Elderly Committees in the City and Towns, which was issued in 1944, it gained a legal basis once again.<sup>24</sup>

When we go beyond the legal debates in the development of the *mukhtarship* mechanism, we see that there have been significant changes. Since the 1950s, Turkish people in a gradually increasing way, started to move from rural areas to urban areas. Hence, mukhtars' workload

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<sup>22</sup> Rasim Akpınar, (2017), "Halka En Yakın Birim Olan Muhtarlık Müessesesi: İzmir Karşıyaka İlçesinde Nitel Bir Araştırma", *Yalova Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Year 8, No 13, p. 101

<sup>23</sup> Hikmet Kavruk, (2018), *Mahalle Yerleşimi ve Yönetimi*, Nobel Kitap: Ankara, p. 121

<sup>24</sup> Erbay Arıkboğa, (1999), "Yerel Yönetim Açısından Mahalle Muhtarlığına Bakış", *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler Dergisi*, Volume 8, No 3, p. 108

started to increase because of the rapid change in economic, cultural, and administrative circumstances.

The internal migration from rural to urban areas can take place within the current province as well as to other provinces. As a result, neighborhoods, which are the most basic unit of urban life, underwent significant demographic changes. Thus, in many cases heterogeneous areas became more heterogeneous or homogenous areas turned into heterogeneous ones. It is easier for the mukhtars, who work in more homogeneous neighborhoods, to recognize the residents of the neighborhood, while the newcomers resulted in a more time and effort-demanding atmosphere. In this process mukhtars could play an important role in the social and cultural problems that arise in the neighborhoods. by taking on the role of a bridge in the solution of problems in their neighborhoods in many areas such as education, public order, social assistance, and health by contacting the relevant authorities.

For this reason, interviews with mukhtars are of great significance. Mukhtars, as the first contact point in the solution of the problems in their responsibility area, and mostly are respected state representatives who have direct access to the neighborhood residents can play a major role in C/PV efforts. Thus, raising their awareness as well as offering recommendations to give a more effective fight at their capacity is essential.

## 5 Research Findings

Following results were obtained as a result of interviews with 450 mukhtars within 11 cities. In this study, social structure, education, economy, security, bureaucracy, and politics are considered as related to the radicalization process.

Our interviews during the field research shows that;

- In the places where Turkish social structure is either homogeneous or heterogeneous, despite the occasional tensions among the local population, people live in peace and harmony, and any tension between local populations do not lead to major events with spill-overs.
- Unemployment among the youth population in Turkey is seen as a key issue. Hence, the youth go astray due to the lack of sufficient social policies, and drug addictions are one of the main consequences.
- Women who are another important part of the social structure are variably visible in daily life in different areas, but almost everywhere, they are highly interested in the programs designed for them.
- The importance of foreigners in the social structure as an important trigger in Turkey since the risk of radicalization is more likely to manifest itself in response to refugees/asylum seekers.
- In the context of education, it is stated that schooling rate is increasing day by day, but access to job market is a worrying concern for many people. Also, it was stated that there were occasional quarrels among refugee/asylum-seeker children and Turkish children in schools. At this point, it is stated that it is important to follow a program for both students and parents in schools.
- Although unemployment is expressed as the main problem economically, it has been stated that as the refugees/asylum seekers entered the local employment markets, the citizens of the region experienced job loss and therefore complaints are getting harsher, too.

- Considering the general situation from security point of view, after the coup attempt of July 15, 2016, there is an increasing level of cooperation and dialogue between mukhtars and law-enforcement agencies and civil administration authorities.
- As a result of the expansion of the geographical area of responsibility of the mukhtars due to the changing local regulations, it was stated that their chance of knowing the residents in their neighborhoods decreased. Mukhtars are also aware of the security threats arising from refugees/asylum seekers.
- Regarding bureaucracy and politics, the Mukhtars stated that both they and the citizens wanted to reach out to the politicians more easily and frequently in order not to feel politically excluded.

From the next chapter onwards, the results of the interviewed provinces will be discussed in detail before summarizing the common issues detected in various cities and policy recommendation.

## **5.1 Adiyaman**

According to 2018 Turkish Statistical Institute data, 624.513 people live in 8 districts and 175 neighborhoods in the province of Adiyaman. Adiyaman comes to prominence with its conservative nature. With the rise of ISIS, the city started to be part of news at the national level due to the presence of militant Salafi cell, Dokumacılar in the city, and perpetrator' connection of the terrorist attack in Suruç (Alagöz brothers). Thus, the city attracted law-enforcement's attention which also underlines the need to be included in this research.

### **5.1.1 Social Structure**

Mukhtars state that different religious groups live together, and they added that there is no tension between them. In the interviews, it was stated that the family structure and kinship relations are strong and significantly contribute to the solution of the problems in the neighborhoods. However, due to the weakening of the family structure, mukhtars stated that problems started to arise in neighborhoods. They added that the social control mechanism is stronger in neighborhoods where traditional family ties are protected. Also, they expressed that the problems, in general, occurred in the context of non-urbanization and that they faced more problems in the suburbs.

Mukhtars also stated that, number of people left Adiyaman to move to another city is increasing day by day. In parallel with the explanations of the mukhtars, it is seen that outgoing migration has been an important phenomenon since 2007 (Table-1). Mukhtars said that the limited employment opportunities in the city plays a major role in this and that the youth unemployment figures and the stagnation in the employment market forced young people to go to different cities.

Table 1- Population and immigration data of the city of Adiyaman<sup>25</sup>

Year	ABPRS <sup>26</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	624,513	22,034	22,897	-863	-1.4
2016-2017	615,076	18,040	22,741	-4,701	-7.6
2015-2016	610,484	18,789	21,201	-2,412	-3.9
2014-2015	602,774	18,523	24,064	-5,541	-9.2
2013-2014	597,835	16,578	24,330	-7,752	-12.9
2012-2013	597,184	15,715	24,077	-8,362	-13.9
2011-2012	595,261	14,323	22,591	-8,268	-13.8
2010-2011	593,931	13,873	23,939	-10,066	-16.8
2009-2010	590,935	14,150	20,135	-5,985	-10.1
2008-2009	588,475	12,091	18,295	-6,204	-10.5
2007-2008	585,067	12,155	20,971	-8,816	-15.0

#### 5.1.1.1 Youth and Women

Mukhtars stated that any social facility that young people can benefit from is not located in the neighborhoods mainly, but facilities are serving throughout the city. It is stated that the biggest problem among the youth is “unemployment.” Strong family ties which prevented young people from joining radical groups and terrorist organizations is the strength in terms of P/CVE efforts. At this point, the family structure of the ISIS member, Orhan Gnder

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<sup>25</sup> Data is accessed via TIK’s website. For population and immigration data of Adiyaman and other cities, 2018 data is not taken into consideration. Because, while foreigners, who reside in Turkey, are included in the 2018 data by TIK, it was not the case for previous years. Therefore, data for last 10 years was used.

<sup>26</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

(marital conflict among his parents) should be noted, and his family status can be taken as a reason behind his radicalization.

Mukhtars expressed that traditional social roles are still preserved in Adiyaman. They stated that the participation of women in social life is very limited, and in some places, women work in small ateliers.

#### **5.1.1.2 *Foreigners***

The low number of Syrian refugees in Adiyaman leads to comparatively low levels of reaction towards foreigners. Nevertheless, mukhtars stated that there is still a conflict between the local population and Syrians based on lifestyle and labor force participation. Mukhtars added that social conflict over lifestyle is an important issue. Because Adiyaman is one of the most prominent cities with its conservative atmosphere in Turkey, and people living in the city perceive these different lifestyles as a threat to their lives.

Mukhtars stated that even there was a general tolerance towards Syrians, they were still seen as a problem. Mukhtars think that the tension between the local population and Syrians in the current situation is low, but if this situation does not change, conflict in the future is inevitable. Also, they added that concerned people in the civil administration should pay attention to the issue before it is too late. Mukhtars stated that they have a working relationship with officers at the local office of Directorate General of Migration Management about the conditions of Syrians living in their neighborhoods.

#### **5.1.2 Education**

Mukhtars expressed that the schooling rate for secondary education is high. However, they stated that the number of students at the university level is lower. Also, they added that there are some physical problems in schools.

There is another problem experienced related to the economic problems of the region. Mukhtars stated that the children, whose families went out of town as seasonal agricultural

workers could not continue their education. Roma community is hesitant to send their kids to school even though no mukhtar mentioned a major problems caused by this community or their kids. Mukhtars expressed that the MEB (Ministry of National Education)-supported courses opened throughout the city also attract students.

### **5.1.3 Economy**

Although the neighborhoods are generally diversified, it is stated that the number of neighborhoods with moderate income is not high and that neighborhoods with lower income levels are more common. Animal husbandry and tobacco farming are among the main livelihoods of the region and the civil servant class has a significant positive effect upon the city's economy.

It was stated that youth unemployment presents a fundamental problem. At this point, almost every interviewee (mukhtars), complained about the problem. It is stated that Syrians are mostly employed in the industry, and this increases the unemployment rate among the young people of Adiyaman. It was added that the difficulties experienced by the youth caused problems and fights between the Syrians and local residents, and mukhtars are stated that the Syrians are seen as the crux of the problem by the youth.

### **5.1.4 Security**

Although Adiyaman is a city with a conservative identity, it is said that radical ideas do not have much ground among young people. During the period when ISIS became a center of attraction, it was stated that few young people came together in a few cafés (kahvehane) and they were affected by the propaganda of the terrorist organization. However, it is said that the number remained very low. Mukhtars stated that people of Adiyaman are very uncomfortable with news about the city which link ISIS and Adiyaman. Despite the news of earlier involvement of several people from Adiyaman in ISIS, it is widely stated that there is no tendency to join the organization among the youth in Adiyaman now. There are several reasons for this. The first one is the taking of security measures in Adiyaman. With the

detection of the few places where the terrorist organization ISIS made propaganda, operations were carried out. Secondly, a small number of recruiters who made propaganda for the joining terrorist organization were arrested and imprisoned. Thus, the existence of a limited level of ISIS capacity has been deactivated.

Mukhtars stated that there are minor public security problems in the city. Firstly, they stated that drug addiction is the biggest problem. Secondly, they added that there are PKK sympathizers in some neighborhoods, but they did not display a militant profile. They also emphasized that the crime rate is generally associated with the economic situation of the neighborhoods.

Mukhtars stated that the effect of the events in Ayn al-Arab (Kobane) in 2014 caused a spill-over effect on the region, but there are no problems at the moment. Mukhtars, who was pleased with the results of the current anti-terrorism policy, added that they are aware of the threat of foreign terrorists in the region.

Also, it is observed that mukhtars are in close contact with the law-enforcement agencies in order to solve the problems experienced in their own neighborhoods. The best example in this respect is the disappearance of drug dealers and drug addicts to a great extent, which are frequently seen in neighborhoods until recently, thanks to the cooperation with law-enforcement agencies.

### **5.1.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

Mukhtars stated that they did not experience any serious issues in channeling the issues faced by the public to the relevant public institutions and they have been able to notify the law-enforcement agencies and the relevant local authority about the problems they encountered in security area. They stated that their relations with the bureaucracy were generally good and they had close cooperation with law enforcement officials, in particular in the fight against drugs. They state that their relations with the public institutions have strengthened after the coup attempt of July, 15, 2016, but that they have difficulties in reaching the politicians.

Mukhtars said that, people in neighborhoods think that politicians do not care about what people need, and mukhtars added that this thought cause desperation among people.

## **5.2 Ankara**

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2018, 5.503.985 lives in 25 districts and 1422 neighborhood in the province of Ankara. Turkey's capital, Ankara, which is the second largest city, is also known as the city of government officials, politicians, and students. The city, even though not as much as industry-intensive cities, can attract people from other cities, too, due to the fact that many state institutions offer a wide range of employment opportunities.

In recent years, terrorist attacks in Ankara (October 10, 2015 Train Station Attack, the attacks carried out in 2016 Merasim Street and Güvenpark) caused increasing number of counter-terrorism operations<sup>27</sup> against different terrorist organizations which highlighted the risk of radicalization and terrorism either in the city or directed at it. For this reason, interviews done with mukhtars have been carried out in some neighborhoods where law-enforcement agencies carried out CT operations.

### **5.2.1 Social Structure**

As the capital city, Ankara has a very complex demographic structure. In the city, with arrivals from different cities and countries, there is no homogeneous cultural structure, and it is rich in terms of ethnic and religious diversity.

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<sup>27</sup><https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1153501-ankarada-isid-operasyonu-baslatildi#>;  
[https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/12/151230\\_ankara\\_bomba](https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/12/151230_ankara_bomba);  
<https://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1287947-ankarada-isid-operasyonu-17-gozalti>

In the interviews with mukhtars, when asked about the situation in their neighborhoods, it was stated that some homogeneity could be found in certain neighborhoods, but most of them present a more diverse picture. Demographic change in Ankara (Table-2), both received and outgoing population can be seen in the graph below.

Table2– Population and immigration data of the city of Ankara

Year	ABPRS <sup>28</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	5,503,985	184,382	221,747	-37,365	-6.8
2016-2017	5,445,026	188,100	156,058	32,042	5.9
2015-2016	5,346,518	177,166	159,915	17,251	3.2
2014-2015	5,270,575	204,048	153,001	51,047	9.7
2013-2014	5,150,072	203,621	163,612	40,009	7.8
2012-2013	5,045,083	186,642	153,791	32,851	6.5
2011-2012	4,965,542	160,235	137,834	22,401	4.5
2010-2011	4,890,893	191,864	137,385	54,479	11.2
2009-2010	4,771,716	182,845	133,440	49,405	10.4
2008-2009	4,650,802	168,193	131,114	37,079	8.0
2007-2008	4,548,939	156,760	126,198	30,562	6.7

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<sup>28</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

### **5.2.1.1 *Youth and Women***

Among the neighborhoods where interviews were carried out, regarding youth and women, most preferable circumstances were told in the Altındağ Municipality. Mukhtars stated that centers had been opened for youth and women in every district of Altındağ. These centers offer different courses for the youth and women. It was stated that young people mostly participates in computer courses and courses designed for helping students to the school syllabus. It was added that vocational courses were organized for Turkish women in these centers. Also, Turkish language courses were opened for Syrian young people and women in order to help their social integration. It is seen that there are such centers in Yenimahalle, Çankaya, and Etimesgut districts, too. Mukhtars stated that the most important problem of the youth is the unemployment problem, and mukhtars said that the young people did not have the sufficient number of community centers to benefit from.

Regarding the conditions of women the conditions mostly change depending on the income level of the neighborhoods, and women's desire to participate in the labor force in the neighborhoods where the income level is lower is quite high even though they struggle to find an employment market for themselves.

### **5.2.1.2 *Foreigners***

During the interviews, mukhtars stated that the public did not have any problems with the Turkmen people from Iraq and Syria and the foreigners from the Central Asian Turkic states. They stated that they experienced adaptation problems with Syrians at many points, especially due to cultural issues. Because of the large number of Syrians, mukhtars expressed particular concern due to changing the public's social structure. Mukhtars expressed that both themselves and residents in neighborhoods believe that Syrians will continue to stay in Turkey and the government should organize a program for Syrians to integrate them into Turkish society. Mukhtars stated that the psychological support centers in some neighborhoods started to be useful for the social harmony of the Syrians, but that this support alone was not enough.

Mukhtars state that the biggest problem between Turks and Syrians is the reaction of the citizens living in neighborhoods with low income to the social aid received by Syrians. In addition, it is stated that idle Syrian youth who are unemployed and who do not attend school in recreational areas causes reaction in the eyes of the public. Foreigners generally have a low-income level, and their living conditions are not good.

### **5.2.2 Education**

Mukhtars stated that schooling rate and physical facilities were mostly sufficient in their neighborhoods. Mukhtars believe that foreigners should be encouraged to join education. In the case of learning Turkish, foreigners who have language capabilities can communicate more easily with the public, and the problems experienced in the cultural point can be overcome this way. However, it is stated that problems are arising from disharmony between refugee children and Turkish children and that there are occasional events related to hate speech and quarrels, too. They added that, until now, this hatred among children did not spread to wider communities.

### **5.2.3 Economy**

Regarding the unemployment problem, one of the main issues in the economy is originated from Syrian migrants, mukhtars stated, since there is a belief that Syrians take Turkish citizens' jobs due to their employment in the labor market as cheap labor. Although there has been an increasing reaction accordingly, no violent tension between the parties has so far experienced.

Mukhtars stated that the neighborhoods were uncomfortable with the workplaces opened by the Syrians and repeatedly complained about them. It is stated that the questions about their taxes and how they pay them causes reactions from the shop-owners in their neighborhoods.

On the other hand, some mukhtars say that the Syrians work without any selection criteria in terms of the kind and sort of the job and work in many jobs not preferred by the local

community. Therefore, they argue that this situation does not cause unemployment for the domestic population, but rather it provides support for economic growth by employing in jobs that others do not want to take.

#### **5.2.4 Security**

In other cities where the research was conducted, drug addiction appears to be an important problem. Mukhtars in Ankara stated that the problem of drug addiction was a relatively low rate in neighborhoods where officers and retired people live. However, mukhtars added that drug addiction problem was seen often in places, where lower economic conditions exist, and where Syrian refugees and young people live.

Mukhtars stated that there are minor problems threaten public order. They do not face too many incidents in the context of crimes related to radicalization and terrorism and that such problems are seen in areas where discrimination and diverse ethnic demographics exist. In Mamak, a mukhtar stated that threat in his responsibility area comes from radical leftist groups in Tuzluçayır Neighborhood. In some neighborhoods, it was stated that the operations against ISIS were carried out, and the militants captured in these areas were mostly foreigners, but in some places, Turkish police neutralized the cells composed of Turkish citizens.

Mukhtars state that terrorism threat is not limited to ISIS or PKK. They added that they are aware of DHKP-C threat as well. They stated that DHKP-C is trying to recruit militants, especially from university students and high school students. On the other hand, the lack of detailed information or limited information about the previous life of Syrians is also another concern for residents in the neighborhood, as mukhtars stated.

#### **5.2.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

The number of neighborhoods in several districts was reduced, and after 2019 local elections there will be a second round of reduction and merger. Therefore, the average population per

mukhtar is increasing, making more difficult to closely monitor the developments in neighborhoods. However, it is expressed that close cooperation mukhtars and law-enforcement agencies can prevent this problem. According to mukhtars, it is mentioned that the law-enforcement agencies and the mukhtars communicate frequently. It is stated that good practices by police, such as frequently patrolling in neighborhood, decrease the crime rate in the neighborhoods and now patrolling officers or *Bekçis* (Watchman) would even strengthen this instrument. Although there is a cultural difference with the Syrians, it is mentioned that with the intervention of civil administration, serious incidents are prevented between local residents and Syrians.

## **Bursa**

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2018, 2.994.521 people lives in 17 districts and 1054 neighborhoods in the province of Bursa within the metropolitan status. Bursa is an important city in the Marmara Region and owned industrial and commercial structures with sub-immigration stand out as one of the cities in different parts of Turkey.

### **5.2.6 Social Structure**

Textile industry, automobile industry, high capacity factories requires qualified labor force. Due to industrial development, Bursa become a target city of migration and this multiethnic richness created a new culture. The ethnic diversity always seen as a positive factor for development but also consists risky factors. Bursa faced with ethnic based problems in recently. The increasing population of Syrians in the city caused some protests. One of the mukhtar stated that “old migrants are not welcoming the new ones”.

Table3- Population and immigration data of the city of Bursa<sup>29</sup>

Year	ABPRS <sup>30</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (‰)
2017-2018	2,994,521	80,940	80,086	854	0.3
2016-2017	2,936,803	86,119	64,905	21,214	7.2
2015-2016	2,901,396	84,458	63,812	20,646	7.1
2014-2015	2,842,547	84,253	64,558	19,695	7.0
2013-2014	2,787,539	80,717	65,027	15,690	5.6
2012-2013	2,740,970	75,518	61,744	13,774	5.0
2011-2012	2,688,171	67,736	61,520	6,216	2.3
2010-2011	2,652,126	74,243	58,258	15,985	6.0
2009-2010	2,605,495	72,640	57,220	15,420	5.9
2008-2009	2,550,645	66,615	56,368	10,247	4.0
2007-2008	2,507,963	82,964	47,370	35,594	14.3

### 5.2.6.1 Youth

It is reported by the mukhtars that different problems in different parts of the city can be encountered. Mukhtars in the underdeveloped parts of the city who complain about the lack of social activities and sports for young people. Mukhtars of the developed parts report that the most important problem of young people is the future anxiety and psychological pressures. However, unemployment is the common problem of both developed and underdeveloped regions. It was emphasized that in the city of Bursa, where the business areas are wide, young people have more unemployment problems because of the intention to work as an officer

<sup>29</sup> Data is received from TÜİK's website.

<sup>30</sup> Address Based Population Registration System

instead of a laborer. It is seen that the majority of young people are in high demand for public training courses organized by their municipalities. Young people participate especially in school-assisting courses and vocational training, computer and technology courses. As in all segments of the society, there are two bases that contrast with the viewpoint of Syrian refugees among young people. Especially for Çarşamba Neighborhood, it is mentioned with the new name of Aleppo. Young people believe that increasing unemployment problem and economic instability is emerged because of the Syrians and Afgans in Bursa.

#### **5.2.6.2 Women**

In Bursa, women representation in the market is higher than other Anatolian cities because of the textile industry. The situation in women does not differ much from young people. In addition to vocational training courses in municipal courses, it also participates intensively in handicraft courses.

As for the situation of women, it is concluded that the conditions change depending on the income level of the neighborhoods. It is observed that the rate of women's participation in the labor force is higher in the neighborhoods with higher income levels. Although Bursa is a metropolitan city, it is stated by the mukhtars that the traditional female approach is not in the background as in other Anatolian cities.

#### **5.2.6.3 Foreigners**

The hottest issue in Turkey is the Syrian problem and Bursa is one of the most affected cities because of the high population of the Syrians in the city. This situation caused a negative perception especially in the neighborhoods where Syrian refugees live densely. City benefits from the cheap labor of migrants and this situation is not welcomed by the unemployed young Turks. In addition, it was stated that wealthy Arabs and Europeans bought summer and winter vacations and houses.

#### **5.2.6.4 Education**

The mukhtars interviewed stated that the schooling rate and physical facilities were sufficient in their neighborhoods. In some neighborhoods, mukhtars complain about the crowded classrooms and the Syrian students. Again, it was emphasized that the physical and educational conditions between the schools in the developed parts of the city and the schools in the underdeveloped regions are not equal.

#### **5.2.6.5 Economy**

Bursa is a highly industrialized city. Automobile, textile, energy, transportation industry etc. creates huge financial support to the city economy. International firms have factories in Bursa and this creates side economies but the global crises especially in economy directly affects Bursa. If a crisis in textile or automobile industry emerges somewhere in world, it affects Bursa in a short term. Mukhtars state that all social harmony and social cohesion in the city is economy based and during the crisis times Bursa turns to a bankrupt city.

#### **5.2.6.6 Security**

In Bursa, where there are no major problems as public order it is stated that people feel themselves in an environment of trust. But the drug use is an important problem especially for the young people of the city. Mukhtars don't want their regions known as problematic especially about the drug use because the unsecure conditions directly affects the quality of life in that region. The complaints of mukhtars from developed and underdeveloped regions intersects about the drug. There is always risk about radicalization and terror but mukhtars find the government policies affective to handle with the problem.

#### **5.2.6.7 *Bureaucracy and Politics***

Social welfare and collaboration creates a secure atmosphere especially in industrial cities. Bursa always represented in the cabinet in the minister level. Political situation and economical force provided new investment opportunities for the city. The competition between municipalities and metropolitan municipality raises the service quality and mukhtars find new ways to obtain maximum benefit from this rivalry.

### 5.3 Diyarbakır

Due to its geographical location, Diyarbakır has been an important settlement for many states and empires in the history.<sup>31</sup> Today, in the city of Diyarbakır, where the population is predominantly Kurdish, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute's 2018 data, a total of 1.732.396 people resides. There are 17 districts and 1048 neighborhood in the metropolitan province.

Even though Diyarbakır is deemed as the “Istanbul of the southeastern Anatolia”, the city's security problems prevented the Diyarbakır from reaching its well-deserved position for many years. Since the 1980s, the PKK terrorist organization, and from 1990s until the mid-2000s, Turkish Hezbollah<sup>32</sup> saw the city as their headquarters. Therefore, it is considered that the city has fertile ground for terrorist organizations.

#### 5.3.1 Social Structure

It is stated that even if the population in Diyarbakır is becoming urbanized day by day from the cultural point of view, however, there is a social structure that preserves its close links with the rural culture. It is expressed that, in the city where traditional family ties are strong, economic problems target these ties, too. It is stated that there has been an increase in the number of divorces recently because of economic problems. Risk of fragility in terms of social, economic, and security dimension in Diyarbakır may threaten future of children over

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<sup>31</sup> İbrahim Yılmazçelik, (2014), XIX Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında Diyarbakır (1790-1840), Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları: Ankara, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, p. 11

<sup>32</sup> The organization, known as Turkish Hezbollah, ideologically emerged in 1970s, but completed its institutionalization at the beginning of the 1980s. The group was led by Hüseyin Velioğlu, and designated as a terror group. The group was known with its pro-caliphate stance and objection to democracy and secularism.

inter-parental conflict. As a consequence of this inter-parental conflict, divorces may increase, and this can play a role in the radicalization process of children.<sup>33</sup>

It is also stated that in certain neighborhoods which attracts migrants more have some security problems. Depending on the quality and quantity of migration, the level of significance of these problems vary. It is said that the migration due to terrorism from Diyarbakır to other provinces has decreased considerably. It has been stated that still there are people leaving Diyarbakır to neighbor cities and Western cities, and they have experienced adaptation problems in social and economic terms in every city they go to. At this point, mukhtars stated that people left Diyarbakır were trying to maintain the connection with the people they left in Diyarbakır. This shows that mukhtars have a high level of awareness regarding the problems of the residents in their neighborhoods.

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<sup>33</sup><https://www.ictyn.org/index.php/publications/online-content/172-radicalisation-and-violent-extremism/579-what-lessons-can-be-learned-from-mohamed-merah-s-radicalisation> (Date of Access: 24.03.2019); Avraham Jager, (2018), “The “Shoe Bomber” Richard Reid - His Radicalization Explained”, IICT, p. 7

Table4 – Population and immigration data of the city of Diyarbakır

Year	ABPRS Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	1,732,396	43,836	50,822	-6,986	-4.0
2016-2017	1,699,901	40,493	48,983	-8,490	-5.0
2015-2016	1,673,119	39,177	55,604	-16,427	-9.8
2014-2015	1,654,196	36,124	56,025	-19,901	-12.0
2013-2014	1,635,048	36,920	48,019	-11,099	-6.8
2012-2013	1,607,437	35,466	47,949	-12,483	-7.7
2011-2012	1,592,167	30,789	47,575	-16,786	-10.5
2010-2011	1,570,943	36,622	46,834	-10,212	-6.5
2009-2010	1,528,958	34,810	44,858	-10,048	-6.6
2008-2009	1,515,011	32,384	43,918	-11,534	-7.6
2007-2008	1,492,828	31,677	47,777	-16,100	-10.7

Due to the reasons arising from the security problems in Diyarbakır, it is stated that the social and cultural texture remained under the shadow of terror for many years. However, it was stated that the social and cultural texture of the city started to improve due to increasingly effective fight against terrorism. It is stated that the number of social facilities in the city started to emerge; however, it was stated that these facilities were not adequately presented to the attention of young people and citizens and expressed that there was a communication problem at this point.

Mukhtars are stated that Diyarbakır has a bad reputation because of terrorism. However, it is expressed that it is actually a false perception. Because the city has a very dynamic life with social areas, restaurants, touristic/religious venues. Diyarbakır, which offers both ethnic and culture richness, is said to be a city where different identities lived together.

### **5.3.1.1 Youth and Women**

In the interviews, it was stated that unemployment started to become a big problem. It was stated that unemployment emerged not only in urban areas but also in rural areas, too, and this increased the unemployment rate.

Mukhtars stated that the unemployment in rural areas had forced young people to move to the city center of Diyarbakır in the first place, then forced them to migrate to the Western cities where the young people see an alternative life for themselves. Mukhtars stated that although the young people came from rural to urban areas, they tried to preserve their traditional values and that the urban-rural connection obstruct young people's integration.

Drug addiction, just as unemployment, is seen as a problem, and mukhtars stated that it should not be disregarded. Mukhtars are expressed that unemployed young people are more vulnerable to drug addiction; however, there is a decrease in this threat with the steps taken by the Turkish Police.

There are important data about women population in Diyarbakır. During the period after 2015, when the terrorist organization PKK was vandalizing public properties in the period defined as the Trench Events, women in several neighborhoods' support centers (Family Support Center) which were established under the umbrella of the *Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services*, acted against the attacks of the terrorist organization. Related with this case, it was stated that the women living in Diyarbakır reacted to PKK attacks to their centers, where they are attended for courses. It is known that PKK recruited women for its militant cadres, and almost one-third of the terrorist organization consists of women. Thus, women living in Diyarbakır are aware of how PKK instrumentalized women in the city, so they are trying to protect the centers that empowered themselves.

### **5.3.1.2 Foreigners**

It is stated that there are very few foreigners in Diyarbakır compared to other cities. It was also added that the distribution of the Syrian population in the city did not result in concentration in any neighborhood. However, mukhtars stated that the people were

uncomfortable about the presence of even few Syrian refugees. It is stated that Syrians work in daily jobs, especially in industrial works, and this caused the removal of the local people from the labor market.

### **5.3.2 Education**

In the interviews, mukhtars stated that the rate of participation of children and young people in education has increased in families with middle-and higher-income levels. In the neighborhoods where the income level is low, it is added that the participation rate of the children and young people in education has decreased. It is stated that decrease in schooling rate is related to families going to Western cities as seasonal workers due to low income. Considering the relationship between education and radicalization, it is concluded that there is no risk at all except for children and young people whose education is unsustainable.

### **5.3.3 Economy**

It has been observed that the security problem in Diyarbakır has been solved to a great extent, and the stability of the economy has shown serious improvement. It was stated that Sur (district) in the city center of Diyarbakır, which is the lifeblood of the economy, was largely destroyed due to PKK terrorism after 2015. On the other hand, it was stated that both Sur and the marketplace in Sur were rebuilt with much better conditions than the old version and the economy in Sur improved significantly. However, the common opinion of all the interviewed mukhtars is that the city is still unable to fully utilize its economic potential due to terrorism. They also stated that despite Diyarbakır had an impressive cultural heritage and religious tourism potential; the potential was not utilized because of terrorism.

While the people of Diyarbakır were working mainly as construction workers and seasonal agricultural workers, it was stated that civil servants have an important place in the city, too. However, as in other cities, mukhtars complained about youth unemployment.

As in other provinces, it is stated that there is no serious damage to the labor market in Diyarbakır by Syrians. It is stated that the real problem here is caused by the lack of investment to create employment, and the damage by the terrorist organization PKK The Solution Process and the Trench Events.

Mukhtars also stated that the terrorist organization PKK frequently benefit from economic difficulties during the militant recruitment process, and PKK tries to stay in touch with the families of terrorists by financial aid.

#### **5.3.4 Security**

The most important security problem in Diyarbakır is terrorism, and the city has become the focal point of different terrorist organizations. This requires taking into account the different motivations of terrorism. The city became the focal point of PKK since the 1980s and Turkish Hezbollah since 1990s. Therefore, due to terrorism, people in Diyarbakır left the city to move to another city. Even though the presence of Turkish Hezbollah was prevented; PKK's presence in Diyarbakır shows an increase due to regional and international developments.

During the years 2013-2015 in Solution Process, PKK wanted to turn Diyarbakır into a terrorist HQ by stocking arms and equipment and recruiting and training militants. Then, PKK withdrawn from the The Solution Process and re-launched terrorist attacks as of July 22, 2015. With the new process initiated, PKK subjugated a large number of neighborhoods and established temporary checkpoints. However, as a result of the successful joint operations of the Turkish police and the gendarmerie, the PKK organization failed to reach its goal.

It was stated by mukhtars that the terrorist organization also abduct children and young people from their families to recruit in PKK camps. Besides, PKK follows a strategy based on hard power and threatens residents in the neighborhood with the so-called "armed public order" teams.

The threat of terrorism in Diyarbakır has fallen as much as it has ever been before, with the state's transition from a re-active counter-terrorism approach to a pro-active counter-terrorism approach. Despite terror threat and ongoing counter-terrorism operations, mukhtars are stated

that the presence of Riot Control Vehicles (RCV) and tactical armored vehicles in the city shows that security is still fragile and create mistrust among civilians.

It is observed that the signs of religious radicalization are very weak, but ethnic radicalization is stronger. However, as a result of the steps taken by the state, it was expressed that the threat of ethnic radicalization started to weaken and declined to very low levels. The first reason was neutralizing recruiters and killing high-level terrorist cadres. The second reason was that the social and economic life started to revive in the city due to the security environment provided by the police following the intensive fight against terrorism. It was stated that the people of Diyarbakır wanted to avoid the conflicts and to benefit from the opportunities in a safe and stable environment. The third reason is that the people of Diyarbakır stated that security forces were very careful in their attitudes and behaviors towards the local people and that a strong dialogue ground was established.

It was stated that due to the relationship between the PKK terrorist organization and FETÖ-linked public officials, the people of the region experienced many difficulties during the Trench Events. In this process, because of the lack of grievance mechanism, it was stated that the people were under the pressure of terrorist organizations. They stated that PKK was forcing people to join terrorist group.

It is concluded that general security problems change depending on the economic circumstances of the neighborhoods. It is stated that theft is one of the main problems of public order. Drug addiction was also expressed by mukhtars, which was discussed as a common problem as the youth unemployment problem. However, it was seen that there were fewer complaints about the problem of addiction compared the some other provinces such as Şanlıurfa and Adıyaman

### **5.3.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

According to mukhtars, the first of the main expectations of the people in Diyarbakır is to be represented correctly in the political sense and to able to convey the problems to the relevant official institutions at both local and national levels. However, the public has significant

complaints about the HDP. The first of these is related to the people's political preference; they are believed that HDP does not effectively represent themselves in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA). Because in the period known as the Solution Process, the majority of people disappointed to see their expectation that HDP must criticize PKK attacks did not realize.

According to them, the functioning of the political mechanism is seen as one of the most effective ways to combat the terrorist organization PKK. For this reason, mukhtars stated that both Demirtaş's imprisonment and nominating trustee as a candidate for metropolitan mayor caused a reaction by people. Because, as mukhtars stated, people believe that their political choice is not taken into consideration.

Mukhtars also stated that they were faced with serious problems at the point of reaching politicians. After the coup attempt on July 15, mukhtars pointed out that a stronger dialogue ground was established with public institutions as a consequence of the removal of FETÖ-linked officials from civilian and security institutions.

## **5.4 Erzurum**

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2018, 767.848 people lives in 20 districts and 1187 neighborhood in the province of Erzurum which has the metropolitan city status. In the past, Erzurum played a significant role as a trade route in the eastern Anatolia and Black Sea Region. However, due to the migration flow from Erzurum to the Western cities as a result of the decrease in livestock trade, which is the main source of income in the city, the economic situation in the city has worsened. Due to the worsening of the economic situations and the rise of the unemployment in the Erzurum, where different ethnic identities live in peace and harmony, terrorist organization PKK aims to generate ground for recruitment.

### **5.4.1 Social Structure**

The population of Erzurum is generally defined as conservative and statist. In the city where the Turkish and Kurdish populations live together peacefully, it was stated that the Kurdish population was trying to maintain its lifestyle with a tribal basis. It is stated that the contribution of the tribes who have a traditional role in the solution of the problems that arise in daily life is high. For example, it was said that the existence of the tribes in Horasan prevented the PKK from penetrating the region. The city's conservative settings and strong family ties, was said to be an important factor in preventing recruitment to radical groups despite the weak economic conditions.

Table 5- Population and immigration data of the city of Erzurum

Year	ABPRS <sup>34</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	767,848	32,501	35,431	-2,930	-3.8
2016-2017	760,476	26,624	37,358	-10,734	-14.0
2015-2016	762,021	26,957	36,340	-9,383	-12.2
2014-2015	762,321	29,624	41,803	-12,179	-15.8
2013-2014	763,320	27,994	45,209	-17,215	-22.3
2012-2013	766,729	23,398	39,997	-16,599	-21.4
2011-2012	778,195	22,551	33,234	-10,683	-13.6
2010-2011	780,847	27,719	33,599	-5,860	-7.5
2009-2010	769,085	23,294	35,711	-12,417	-16.0
2008-2009	774,207	24,830	33,681	-8,851	-11.4
2007-2008	774,967	18,999	43,585	-24,586	-31.2

#### 5.4.1.1 Youth and Women

It is stated that there is a significant amount of young population in Erzurum and about 60 percent of the general population is made up of young people. However, it is stated that the qualified young population in Erzurum migrates to the Western cities and Erzurum receives poor quality migration. Young people do not want to stand where they live. The most important factor in the outgoing migration from Erzurum is expressed stemming from the loss

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<sup>34</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

of the sense of belonging. It is added that everyone wants to work in the office and looking for a permanent job.

There is no male and female gap among young population. Approximately 30 percent of women are said to have joined the education and labor force. Even young women are said to work more than men. Also, schooling rate among girls is rising day by day.

Mukhtars stated that young people do not have any problemz with religion and belief, but in some places, there are mosques without imams, and these seen as an important problem in the city. Families stated that they had trouble at the point of the Qur'an courses to send their children. Because even youth have no problem with religion, they do not want to attend Qur'an courses, and as mukhtars said.

Mukhtars expressed that unemployment is the biggest problem for young people. It is stated that there are no opportunities and investments to increase the life quality of young people. Because of unemployment, young people killing their own time in cafes, outdoors, parks, or streets. It is stated that young people succeed when they have any social opportunities. The success story can be seen in the district of Erzurum, called Narman. "Ice hockey" team has been formed in Narman, and the team in Narman gradually improves their performance. Thanks to this kind of opportunities, young people are avoiding harmful habits and having the feeling of living for a purpose.

The economic structure is based on agriculture in the districts, and agricultural working conditions are severe. It is stated that there is no participation of women in the labor force; however, because of the conservative structure and insufficient social facilities, it is stated that women do not have social interaction and they usually stay at home.

#### **5.4.1.2 *Foreigners***

There are refugee families, especially in neighborhoods of city center. Syrian and Afghan refugees are reported to be predominant. While the people more complaining intensively about Syrian refugees, they do not complain about Afghan refugees.

Some Syrian refugees have been involved in petty crimes such as drug trade/usage, prostitution, and theft. Mukhtars stated that there was many complaints about begging activities by Syrians in the city and is expressed that there were some violent quarrels among Syrians in certain neighborhoods. According to mukhtars, the number of people joined any terrorist organization in Syria is quite low.

#### **5.4.2 Education**

According to mukhtars, it is stated that there is a schooling problem in some neighborhoods, and physical insufficiency affects school participation rates.

In connection with the economic conditons of the family, families have difficulty in meeting their children's needs. Mukhtars state that people strongly complain about cultural change as a result of the Mobile Teaching System (MTS). “He/She travels to from village the district, where he/she brings the culture to home. This is also culturally troublesome. It can ruin traditional life.” Besides, people believe that the family structure is changing and the relationship between men and women is changing as a consequence of MTS.

In Erzurum, where girls' enrollment rate is high, it is stated that girls who see city life do not want to return to the town or village. Children who go back and forth between the districts are not accepted by the children of the district where they go. As an example, a mukhtar stated that the students from Horasan, who went to Köprüköy for education, were excluded. In addition, many young people are living in suburbs which cause them to move away from education or at least making it significantly difficult for them to continue their education life.

It has also been reported that young people who have been expelled from schools for different reasons have been circulating in gangs around schools, which has a negative impact on youth in general. Another problem related to schooling is the residence of children in rural areas. Here again, it is stated that there is exclusion due to children' coming from a different region.

However, even if the mobile teaching system is sustained, there are other factors such as physical, financial and moral reasons that decrease the participation rate in education. This situation creates emotional and mental issues among young people. For this reason, it has

been seen that terrorist organizations like FETÖ make education a priority for organizational aims and sustainability. FETÖ terrorist organization, which kept a close eye on successful students with low-income level, used weaknesses of these students by providing scholarship and financial aids to raise and to train them as loyal militants. Mukhtars stated that they are aware of how FETÖ strengthened, and they said the state was too late in regard to preventing this threat. According to mukhtars, those people that could not participate in the education process go astray in the mental level because of an insufficient number of youth centers and public education centers.

### **5.4.3 Economy**

The region's main source of livelihood is agriculture, and it is stated that farmers face serious economic difficulties. It is expressed that the average income of the people of the region is around 2.000 TL per month. In the region, families mostly have high numbers of kids, and most of them study outside the district or their children studying at the university. So, families face serious economic problems. There is also a serious inequality in social assistance stated by mukhtars. Due to the high unemployment rate, the migration wave still continues from villages to district, from district to city center, and from the city center to another city.

### **5.4.4 Security**

During our interviews, no major problems with security was mentioned. The city's demographic diversity has nevertheless might bring ethnic-based radicalization risk because of weakening economic conditions in the city.

Erzurum's Horasan, Karayazı, Hınıs, Karaçoban, Tekman districts are the districts where the Kurdish population is dominant. It is said that the terrorist organization PKK tried to influence Kurdish citizens in these districts. In particular, it is said that Karayazı is hometown of one of the members of the PKK's mountain cadres. In the 1990s, the highest number of people joined the PKK is said to be from Hınıs. Among these districts, Horasan differs from the other four districts. Apart from the individual level participation to PKK, it is stated that

there is no organizational support from Horasan to the PKK. According to the mukhtars, the political life also verifies this case. While the mayors of HDP were in power in the other four counties, the mayor was elected from the AK Party in Horasan. The people of these four districts have a closer relationship with Tunceli, Muş, and Ağrı than Erzurum. This situation carried the PKK effect in these provinces to these four districts. For example, at the entrance of Hınıs, it is stated that there is a “Welcome to Hınıs” sign in Kurdish, but this would not be possible in Horasan. In addition, the Mevlit (an Islamic ceremony celebrating the birth of the Prophet) in Horasan is held in Turkish and the other four districts it is are held in Kurdish.

It is stated that the leading families and strong groups of the region play a very important role in the establishment of peace in the region. Mukhtars state that the financial situation of the people who have participated in FETÖ is not good (again highlighting the relationship between radicalization and economy). It was said that the child of a taxi driver had joined ISIS before and could not get any news from him. However, this kind of cases are mostly at the individual level and no other cases were mentioned. Public order problems in the neighborhoods may vary depending on the location and the welfare of the neighborhoods. The neighborhoods in the east are poorer, but the neighborhoods in the west are richer.

#### **5.4.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

After the Metropolitan Law, it was stated that the responsibility area of mukhtars was expanded due to the neighborhoods that were merged. Mukhtars said that they are trying to learn the situation of the neighborhood by visiting each and every house. It is stated that the residents in neighborhoods complained to mukhtars, because politicians did not listen to the problems of the people.

Mukhtars stated that people complained about the fact that they could not receive proper services considering the proportion of the votes they gave, and that the places that voted less for the ruling party received more services and that the presence of different ethnic identities in these places caused discomfort in public.

## **5.5 Gaziantep**

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2018, 2.028.563 people lives in 9 districts and 787 neighborhoods in the province of Gaziantep, which has the metropolitan status. Since the beginning of the civil war in Syria, the city attracts attention with hosting thousands of asylum seekers/refugees and being the transit point of foreign terrorist fighters. Thus, the city became the focal point for law-enforcement agencies' fight against radicalization and violent extremism. ISIS-linked cells threatened public order, so the Turkish Police intensively carry out counter-terrorism operations in Gaziantep. Therefore, conducting field research in Gaziantep due to these reasons is important in order to understand whether any sign of radicalization in this demographically quite dynamic atmosphere is there.

### **5.5.1 Social Structure**

It is stated that there is a social and cultural transformation due to the migration from Şanlıurfa, Mardin, and Diyarbakir in the city center and that the demographic change experienced with the developments in Syria has accelerated. It is stated that the urban transformation process in the city, which is prominent as an industrial and agricultural city, caused a distorted social transformation. However, it is stated that the outgoing migration has started due to the influence of the Syrian population.

**Table 6-** Population and immigration data of the city of Gaziantep

Year	ABPRS <sup>35</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	2,028,563	44,704	62,206	-17,502	-8,6
2016-2017	2,005,515	47,431	50,485	-3,054	-1,5
2015-2016	1,974,244	45,726	50,003	-4,277	-2,2
2014-2015	1,931,836	46,435	48,858	-2,423	-1,3
2013-2014	1,889,466	46,438	44,415	2,023	1,1
2012-2013	1,844,438	41,978	42,291	-313	-0,2
2011-2012	1,799,558	41,672	39,410	2,262	1,3
2010-2011	1,753,596	45,991	38,634	7,357	4,2
2009-2010	1,700,763	40,380	36,327	4,053	2,4
2008-2009	1,653,670	36,075	34,125	1,950	1,2
2007-2008	1,612,223	37,184	36,229	955	0,6

#### **5.5.1.1 Youth and Women**

It is stated that various religious and ethnic communities try to win the youth by inviting them to social activities. Mukhtars say that social assistance should be conveyed to the youth. Mukhtars, who stated that the unemployed youth fell into a psychological depression, say that even if they receive unemployment benefits, it is not enough.

Mukhtars also said that although there are free sports facilities for young people in certain districts, however, they added that there are young people that do not have the budget to buy training equipment to go to these centers.

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<sup>35</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

Mukhtars expressed that women in Gaziantep generally do not participate in business life. They added that some of them contribute to the household economy by their work in their homes. Families are disbanded due to financial difficulties. Women are not socialized due to the lack of social facilities and the insufficient number of women-centric NGOs.

#### **5.5.1.2 *Foreigners***

Mukhtars who state that the Syrian youth can cause a problem in Turkey, adds that young residents of the city getting increasingly irritated this high numbers of Syrians in the city and they worry about their future more than they did in the past.

At the same time, the people living in low-income neighborhoods in the city are irritated by the Syrians who settled in the city and according to them, having their rights at the expense of residents'. Mukhtars also mentioned the complaints of the people about the Syrians who opened their workplaces and their participation in the labor market as a reason of diminishing salaries.

#### **5.5.2 Education**

Mukhtars stated that Gaziantep is facing various problems. The first one is those young people who cannot participate in the education process. Although many schools were opened during the period of the former Governor, Ali Yerlikaya, in Gaziantep, there were still serious physical problems, but the mechanisms of bureaucracy and politics were working together to solve these problems.

#### **5.5.3 Economy**

In Gaziantep, where the central districts have an industrialized structure, there is an economic structure where agricultural production takes place in other districts. It has been stated that the wages have fallen following the participation of the Syrians into the labor market, and this situation has irritated the local people. In addition, it is stated that there is an increase in the rents of the workplaces and houses. Mukhtars reported that seven percent of the companies

registered in the chamber of commerce belonged to Syrians and that the commercial share of these companies remained below seven percent.

#### **5.5.4 Security**

Mukhtars stated that there are problems of public order in the central districts, and most of them have problems with drugs and theft. Mukhtars argue that the law-enforcement agencies' insufficient authority is the cause of the security weakness.

ISIS or similar terrorist organizations have not been able to accommodate in large scale in Gaziantep because the security apparatus is already quite alarmed and making use of all necessary measures, but it is stated that there are ISIS sympathizers in certain neighborhoods. It was expressed that the terrorist organization Hezbollah tried to have an influence in some neighborhoods of Gaziantep, but law-enforcement agencies succeeded in avoiding this.

Mukhtars stated that they are aware of the neighborhoods in which PKK had a presence and that they worked closely with the police forces. At this point, they have pointed out the neighborhoods of Güzelvadi and Vatan. As the struggle with FETÖ proceeds effectively, the people's confidence in the state is increasing in the fight against all terrorist organizations.

Mukhtars also stated that the public complained about the existence of foreign civil society organizations operating in Gaziantep. As a result of the government's investigation, many NGOs have ceased their activities, and it has been stated that there are now around 150 NGOs.

#### **5.5.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

Mukhtars stated that the relations with the bureaucracy became stronger after July 15, 2016 even though they had difficulties in reaching the politicians in the past. They stated that they could easily share the problems of the public with the law-enforcement agencies and the local administration and that they had seen the support of the units attached to the Ministry of

Interior in the fight against drugs. However, they stated that the complaints raised about the Syrian refugees were not taken into account.

## **5.6 Hatay**

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2017, 1.575.226 people live in 15 districts and 592 neighborhoods in Hatay. Security threats started to increase within the city, which is highly multicultural in ethnic and religious terms, due to the beginning of the civil war in Syria. Since it is a city adjacent to the war zone, it has become an inevitable necessity to study Hatay.

### **5.6.1 Social Structure**

In the city where there are serious problems with urbanization, it is stated that there are important problems in a social sense. Hatay is a city that different identities live together. While the local population ethnically consist of Turks, Arabs, and Kurds, it is stated that the religious structure of the city is made up of Sunni, Alevi, and Christian citizens. It was also stated that there is a village where the Armenians live. Despite all the heterogeneity of the population, social harmony has been in play among the local population. Despite the ethnic and religious differences in Hatay, inter-cultural marriages are common. Similarly, the marriages are made between the people of Hatay and Syrians. Despite there was no conflict between the different groups of Hatay, some ethnic tensions might potentially erupt.

Hatay received migration from Turkey's eastern cities. Despite the migration from different cities, it is said that there is no tension between the local residents. On the other hand, Kırıkhan district also receives immigration from Syria.

Table 7- Population and immigration data of the city of Hatay

Year	ABPRS <sup>36</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	1,609,856	36,499	42,655	-6,156	-3.8
2016-2017	1,575,226	33,745	40,623	-6,878	-4.4
2015-2016	1,555,165	34,195	37,627	-3,432	-2.2
2014-2015	1,533,507	32,868	41,519	-8,651	-5.6
2013-2014	1,519,836	32,678	39,181	-6,503	-4.3
2012-2013	1,503,066	29,067	39,315	-10,248	-6.8
2011-2012	1,483,674	27,260	35,139	-7,879	-5.3
2010-2011	1,474,223	29,509	37,164	-7,655	-5.2
2009-2010	1,480,571	29,752	33,730	-3,978	-2.7
2008-2009	1,448,418	28,547	32,296	-3,749	-2.6
2007-2008	1,413,287	29,459	32,624	-3,165	-2.2

#### 5.6.1.1 Youth and Women

The most important problems of the youth are the insufficient number of social facilities. Mukhtars stated that economic support given to Syrians creates great unrest among the youth. For this reason, young people are angry with Syrians.

Mukhtars stated that there is no social facility where women can benefit from in the city. Mukhtars said that women want to have more roles in daily life, but employment conditions are already weak.

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<sup>36</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

### **5.6.1.2 Foreigners**

Syrians mainly live in Reyhanlı, Antakya, Yayladağı, Altınözü, Kırıkhan, Iskenderun, Kumlu and Arsuz districts. Most of the Syrians coming to Hatay are Arabs. Most of the Syrian migrants came from Idlib. A smaller number of migrants came from Aleppo and Latakia. The Syrian Turkmens came to Hatay and settled in Yayladağı district. Due to language barriers, Syrians experience in daily life. Also, it is said that Syrians are shopping only from the shops opened by Syrians, and this prevents social cohesion.

### **5.6.2 Education**

The proportion of young people and education level is high throughout the province. Still, there are families in Defne and Reyhanlı districts who cannot send their children to school due to financial difficulties. With the increase in unemployment among university graduates, young people lose their willingness to go to school.

A Syrian school for Syrians was opened in Antakya and Kırıkhan. Since education program implemented in these schools is not compatible with Turkish institutions, the Syrians attending these schools are told that they will not be accepted because their diplomas are not valid.

### **5.6.3 Economy**

Mukhtars say that Syrians do not have a big problem because there are no major economic problems in Hatay. However, the increase in economic problems is said to have a dangerous potential for future tension. When the Syrians first arrived, they joined the labor force for cheap wages. But now they work for equal wages with the residents of the city.

The Syrians, rather than “stealing Turks’ and Kurds’ jobs” as argued by people in many cities, according to mukhtars, contributed to Hatay’s economy by filling vacant positions. The quality of work provided by the Syrians remains very low compared to the local population. However, the labor force participation and the materials received by the charities for the

Syrians contributed to the economy. Another important point mentioned was that the social assistance provided by municipalities, governorates, and district governors reduced the labor force participation of the people.

The increase in rents in the districts of Reyhanlı, Antakya, Yayladağı, Altınözü, Kırıkhan, İskenderun, Kumlu and Arsuz, where Syrians live, has been irritating the locals. On the other hand, property owners benefit from the increase in rents. Particularly in the city centers, property owners benefit from the places they rent to foreign NGOs.

#### **5.6.4 Security**

With close proximity to the border oil smuggling was on the rise since the beginning of the Syrian civil war, according to mukhtars, but the state has intervened effectively. It was stated that public order offenses started to fall, too.

It is said that the public is disturbed by the attitude of the Syrians. It was stated that the Syrians started to undergo cultural and social change with the majority of the population in the Reyhanlı district. On the other hand, it is claimed that Syrians are talking about the ownership of Hatay among themselves. Although there is no actual conflict between the local people and Syrians, it is stated that there is a cultural conflict beneath the surface. Therefore, it is said that the Syrian refugees will create a potential conflict if social harmony is not ensured.

PKK members and sympathizers living in the districts of İskenderun and Dörtyol have been reported to support the terrorist organization by planting cannabis on the Amanos Mountain. Some of the mukhtars interviewed mentioned the presence of PKK sympathizers in the districts mentioned. Although the terrorist organization has a potential in the region, it does not show visibility in urban centers.

Despite the Kurdish population living in Kırıkhan, the PKK does not have a popular support.

There are religious communities in the province of Hatay. Before July 15, Mukhtars said that FETÖ was present. After the coup attempt, the FETÖ structure was disseminated to a great extent.

In the districts of Reyhanlı and Yayladağı, there were attacks from ISIS in the past. However, by the intervention of the security forces, ISIS or similar groups have been largely eliminated.

In the regions where people of Alawite origin live, locals react to the Syrians more than other regions. People living in Samandağı district do not want Syrians to be in their districts. For this reason, Syrians do not go to Samandağı district.

It has been stated that the left-wing terrorist organizations such as the terrorist organization DHKP-C in Hatay have a significant potential but no actual activities. It is stated that foreign NGOs are carrying out missionary activities in the districts where Syrians live.

### **5.6.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

According to Mukhtars, ethnic differences have a significant impact on determining political tendencies. Different projects are carried out for young people throughout the province. These projects are mainly carried out by the governorships. However, municipalities also organize similar projects due to the competition between the governorate and municipalities. Likewise, the metropolitan municipality and district municipalities are managed by different parties, so there is a competition between them, too, benefitting the youth. As a result of this competition, new social facilities are built.

## **5.7 Istanbul**

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2017, 15.067.724 people live in 39 districts and 961 neighborhoods in the province of Istanbul as the biggest city with the metropolitan status. As the country's biggest city, Istanbul hosts people both from different cities of Turkey and many different nationalities and with more than 15 million residents, it is believed that each and every terror group can try to influence their target audiences with various ethnic, religious and ideological motives. With several terror attacks in the last four years by ISIS and PKK-linked TAK, the city is also a major target to have a significant propaganda effect for any terror group. All in all, Istanbul is one of the cities this study should definitely look into.

### **5.7.1 Social Structure**

Istanbul is a metropolitan city that the population of many districts is quite a mix. It is known that the population in some neighborhoods of Istanbul was even larger than the average city population in Anatolia. Where neighborhoods are large and combined, it is stated that the neighborhood culture gradually begins to disappear and the problem of getting to know each other emerges.

Nevertheless, it is stated that residents in certain neighborhoods still appeal mukhtars to solve own problems. Mukhtars, stated that with the erosion of traditional social structure, the concept of family is weakening.

Mukhtars stated that, with the concentration of the Syrian population in Istanbul, cultural adaptation problems began to emerge in certain neighborhoods. At the same time, mukhtars stated that Istanbul faced various problems in terms of migration, and they stated that there is a n ongoing migration flow in some neighborhoods. General population and migration data of Istanbul province can be seen in the Table-8 below.

Mukhtars stated that the interaction between mukhtar and the residents has decreased as many legal and administrative documents can now be collected via the Internet. Therefore, mukhtars said that people (mukhtars and residents) have been losing their direct contact. Mukhtars expressed that the media has a significant impact on citizens.

Table 8- Population and immigration data of the city of Istanbul

Year	ABPRS <sup>37</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	15,067,724	385,482	595,803	-210,321	-13,9
2016-2017	15,029,231	418,587	422,559	-5,972	-0,4
2015-2016	14,804,116	369,582	440,889	-71,307	-4,8
2014-2015	14,657,434	453,407	402,864	50,543	3,5
2013-2014	14,377,018	438,998	424,662	14,336	1,0
2012-2013	14,160,467	437,922	371,601	66,321	4,7
2011-2012	13,854,740	384,535	354,074	30,461	2,2
2010-2011	13,624,240	450,445	328,663	121,782	9,0
2009-2010	13,255,685	439,515	336,932	102,583	7,8
2008-2009	12,915,158	388,467	348,986	39,481	3,1
2007-2008	12,697,164	374,868	348,193	26,675	2,1

#### 5.7.1.1 Youth and Women

The number of choices and facilities for social and cultural activities for the young population in Istanbul is quite high compared to other cities. However, it is stated that the existence of social facilities that the youth can benefit from is based on the conditions of neighborhoods. Mukhtars stated that such facilities are important in preventing young people from being involved in crime and bad habits.

It is stated that the most important problems of the youth in Istanbul are unemployment and drug addiction problems. It is expressed that with the lack of unemployment and the lack of social facilities that young people can enjoy free of charge, these young people are likely to turn into focal points of all kinds of extreme ideas and groups.

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<sup>37</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

However, despite all the shortcomings, it has been stated that the young people do not tend to go astray in the neighborhoods where the neighborhood culture is relatively protected, and they have no cultural dissonance problem.

There are courses for women in neighborhoods in general. While the social, cultural and economic patterns of Istanbul are quite different from other cities, it is stated that women's participation in social and economic life is more limited in neighborhoods where traditional lifestyle continues. In some neighborhoods women's participation in social life is low due to their high levels of involvement in economic life.

#### **5.7.1.2 Foreigners**

It is stated that a significant part of the foreign population in Istanbul lives in Zeytinburnu, Fatih, and Bağcılar districts.

It is stated that there is no high risk of radicalization among Syrians, and they should not be seen as a key target audience for criminal organizations. However, it is stated that differences between Syrians and Turkish people at cultural and lifestyle level bear the risk for future tension. Mukhtars stated that the Syrians did not cause any problems in the neighborhood where the cultural structure is strong.

One of the main reasons for the reaction to the Syrians is that they are preferred by the enterprises because of cheap labor, and this encourages the already existing unemployment problem. Mukhtars said that residents think that “we are unemployed because of the Syrians”. Mukhtar added that Syrians actually positively contribute to the existing labor shortages in the areas, where the local population does not work and/or does not want to work in particular jobs. The increase in rents in low-income neighborhoods also causes a reaction. Another reason for reaction to Syrians is the pressure on basic services such as education, health, municipal services. Local people think that because of the Syrians, the quality of education has fallen, the classes are crowded, and they are experiencing difficulties in getting health care. Finally, the local people think that the Turkish government and its authorities are more tolerant to the Syrians. However, despite all reactions to Syrians, it is stated that they do not

infect crime, do not create a security problem except for small cases, and almost all are working.

The neighborhoods where foreigners live are naturally low-income ones, and the local population needs social assistance, too. Many locals believe that foreigners heavily benefit from social benefits due to international aid, while residents receive much less social assistance, causing inter-communal tension. It is stated that even if an asylum seeker/refugee committed a crime, no one could be identified, and no sanction could be imposed due to registration problems.

It was mentioned by mukhtars that there was a risk of religious radicalization among some of the foreigners who settled in Istanbul's low-income neighborhoods and that the associations established in some neighborhoods paved the way for this. It was stated that these associations carried out activities based on religious propaganda, but they started to disappear as a result of cooperation between mukhtars and law-enforcement agencies.

During the field research, in the Çırpıcı, Yeşiltepe, Nuri Paşa, and Sümer neighborhoods, where the foreigners live in the Zeytinburnu district, it is seen that the risk of radicalization among the foreigners from Central Asia is high. Also, it was stated that the ISIS terrorist who carried out the terrorist attack in Reina, Abdulgadir Masharipov, was also from one of these neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods, mukhtars said that there was a serious risk of religious radicalization among these communities. The risk of religious radicalization does not directly come from Central Asian people, but the Uzbek community in Istanbul is more vulnerable. Mukhtars added that some Afghans in Istanbul are taking part in various criminal organizations, in particular, the ones focusing on drug sales and human trafficking.

It was stated that the pressure of Turkish security units on these structures increased after the terrorist attack in the Reina nightclub and many associations were closed down and thus, the activities that prepared the ground for radicalization were tried to be eliminated.

It can be said that the risk of local reaction in neighborhoods, where foreigners live, is stemming from people's concerns for their own future. The current attitude does not turn into

any concrete action except for small incidents, but there is a very fragile ground for such a development.

### **5.7.2 Education**

Although mukhtars stated that children and young people have a high school attendance rate, this rate after high school depends on economic conditions in neighborhoods. However, as it can be seen in other cities, it was stated that Roma citizens had problems in their children's participation in the school, and they could not support their children due to economic difficulties.

Mukhtars stated that young people who have completed high school have started to work in small businesses in their neighborhoods if they cannot attend university. Mukhtars stated that courses for illiterate people were opened in their neighborhoods.

### **5.7.3 Economy**

In neighborhoods that have economically middle- and lower-income levels, it is stated that the economy consists of workshops is mostly unregistered. In some places, Syrians started to work in these workshops, and the labor force participation rate of Turkish citizens started to decrease. In certain neighborhoods, mukhtars stated that the unemployment problem is not so high, and that young people do not like the job because of their education levels and social status.

### **5.7.4 Security**

Based on the fieldwork conducted in low-income neighborhoods in Istanbul, there was no direct radicalization risk among the local population. However, the number of foreigners/refugees in Istanbul has been increasing rapidly in recent years. It is stated that this increases the discomfort among the locals that might marginalize not only themselves but also the refugees.

The majority of the local population in Istanbul's low-income districts have settled in the city as a result of internal migration. Therefore, residents from different cities have different lifestyles and identities continue to live together in harmony. However, in certain cases, this causes tensions among the local people. The most important risk factor in this respect is the events among the Turkish and Kurdish people. In certain neighborhoods, there is a mutual distrust between the two groups, and this situation caused conflicts between the two communities in the past. In certain neighborhoods, it is stated that there is a small amount of PKK influence, some young people are radicalized and join the terrorist group.

One of the security risks in some neighborhoods in the Kartal district of Istanbul is the tendency of young people with radical leftist ideas to turn to leftist terrorist groups. In this context, a certain number of the youth support the legally marginalized left-wing political parties, while some others join in left-wing terrorist organizations such as TIKKO and DHKP-C. One of the factors that are effective in the process of intensifying the polarization among young people and their tendency towards radical left groups in Istanbul is the intensive use of social media. According to the local officials who were interviewed, the discussions of the youth on social media have intensified especially after the Gezi protests, and this has fueled the polarization.

Recently, it is said that law enforcement agencies have increased their control over the use of social media and the situation calms down with prevention or elimination of hate speech. Another factor related to the inclination of young people towards radical leftist organizations is related to identity. In this context, it is seen that especially the young people living in the predominantly Alawite neighborhoods and having a feeling of exclusion as economic and identity have tended to join such groups.

The foreign population is increasing in the districts with a low-income level, such as Zeytinburnu and Fatih. This situation causes the change in social texture in the neighborhoods where the foreign population is also present, and the local people find their way out of their neighborhood. Consequently, certain neighborhoods in Istanbul are now becoming the places where foreigners live, where the local people feel unfamiliar, and when they find the opportunity to leave, the locals mostly take their chances.

According to the statements of the local authorities interviewed, within a few years, foreigners will fully be inhabited in some neighborhoods. Another finding related to this issue is that the problems of the local people has become of secondary significance with the increase of the foreign population in recent years and the local people who have different identities develop a common reaction against foreigners. Mukhtars stated that the conflict between the people, who came from different parts of Turkey, became of secondary importance, and now local people with different identities have begun to take a common stance against refugees. Therefore, it can also be said that the increase in foreign population in Istanbul results in reducing the tensions between the local people with different ethnic backgrounds.

Mukhtars stated that drug addiction is an important problem, both in the neighborhoods that can be defined as the center of Istanbul and in the middle-upper income level or the lower-income level neighborhoods. Thanks to the collaboration between local authorities and law-enforcement agencies, drug networks have been largely neutralized, but drug trafficking and drug addiction are still considered as a major issue needs to be tackled.

### **5.7.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

Mukhtars have a high level of awareness regarding social and security-related problems in their neighborhoods, and they have a quite close contact and collaboration mechanisms with law-enforcement agencies. It was stated that the communication and cooperation between the local authorities and the law-enforcement agencies in Istanbul was very good, resulting in a significant reduction in the crime rates, the destruction of the networks and the drug gangs.

Mukhtars, who stated that they did not encounter big problems in terms of participation in the political field, emphasized that every ideology or set of thought can live together in their neighborhoods, but some extreme ideologies and ideas can jeopardize this.

## 5.8 İzmir

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2018, 4.320.519 people live in 30 districts and 1298 neighborhoods in the city of İzmir. İzmir is Turkey's third biggest city y. There is a growing foreign population in the city of which the majority are Syrians, and many want to seek asylum in Europe after the war started in Syria. Also, the city has an ethnically diverse structure because of the migration flows from the east of Turkey. So, because of heterogeneous demography in the city, and increasing foreign population, it was important to conduct a field study in İzmir.

### 5.8.1 Social Structure

Table 9- Population and immigration data of the city of İzmir

Year	ABPRS <sup>38</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	4,320,519	130,092	117,113	12,979	3.0
2016-2017	4,279,677	127,394	102,776	24,618	5.8
2015-2016	4,223,545	122,668	98,902	23,766	5.6
2014-2015	4,168,415	126,238	105,389	20,849	5.0
2013-2014	4,113,072	124,439	101,447	22,992	5.6
2012-2013	4,061,074	113,673	99,681	13,992	3.5
2011-2012	4,005,459	105,804	95,954	9,850	2.5
2010-2011	3,965,232	110,364	101,420	8,944	2.3
2009-2010	3,948,848	111,255	99,775	11,480	2.9
2008-2009	3,868,308	116,390	89,517	26,873	7.0
2007-2008	3,795,978	117,067	89,819	27,248	7.2

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<sup>38</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

Since Izmir attracts migration flows both from inside and outside of the country, there are neighborhoods where different ethnic or religious identities and cultural backgrounds live together. Among these different social segments, the problem of social cohesion continues. It is stated that there is social polarization in neighborhoods where immigrants from the Balkans and east of Turkey live together. Mukhtar stated that there is Alawite population in certain neighborhoods and extreme leftist groups try to reach out to the Alawite youth. Religious-based radicalization risk was observed to be quite low.

#### **5.8.1.1 *Youth and Women***

The biggest social problem among young people in Izmir is unemployment and drug addiction, which is in an increasing tendency. This problem is at the forefront of Izmir's low-income districts and the districts where migrants predominantly live. The police forces have been actively involved in the prevention of drug addiction in the last year. Recently, people involved in drug trade were arrested, and criminal organizations were eliminated to a large extent. In this way, the visibility of drug addicts has decreased. One of the most important shortcomings in the suburbs is that social facilities are either insufficient or non-existent. In some neighborhoods, schools are inadequate, but this does not prevent school-age students from continuing their education. It is stated that the participation rate in education is high even in the neighborhoods where there is a low-income population.

#### **5.8.1.2 *Foreigners***

In Izmir, refugees/asylum seekers are mostly concentrated in certain neighborhoods of Konak, Buca, and Bornova. The most densely populated neighborhoods are Mustafa Kemal, İnönü, Göksu, Fırat, Tan, Pınarbaşı, Altınordu, Mirali, and Yeşilbağlar. The common feature of these neighborhoods is that the rents are cheap, and they are the neighborhoods where the textile companies intensively operate.

The main reasons behind the choice of İzmir is that as a metropolitan city, living is cheaper than Istanbul, more job opportunities in the textile industry can be found, illegal passage to Europe is easier through sea route. In the past, many foreigners chose to stay in this city after coming to Izmir instead of going to Europe. Although there is a tendency to migrate to Europe by 2016, it is said that this trend has ended, and most refugees have become permanent residents. However, illegal immigration efforts continues as mukhtars stated.

There are several reasons of rising discontent towards the Syrians where they intensively live. In the first place, problems are arising from the Syrians' lifestyle and cultural differences. Residents say that Syrians do not comply with the general rules of cleanliness, they roam the streets, they make a lot of noise, and they “occupy” parks. It is stated that Syrians act together against the local population, they are displaying solidarity and not acting as a guest in Turkey. The Syrians were accepted and supported by the local people at first. Changing attitudes of the Syrians, according to many mukhtars resulted in a growing tension among the locals. The most typical example of minority solidarity is that Syrians are very well organized through social media, and when they have a debate/fight between a Syrian and a Turkish citizen, they can gather in a very short period of time and act together against the Turkish citizen.

The second reason for local discontent with the Syrians is economical. Mukhtars stated that "the idea of Syrians taking our jobs as a cheap labor force" is common among local residents. However, if Syrians suddenly withdrawn from the labor market, it is mentioned that there will be a major economic problem. Another factor related to the economic dimension is that Syrians open offices and establishments, affecting the businesses of the local shop owners negatively. As mukhtars who are also businessmen stated, their workplaces are about to go bankrupt and therefore they are very critical of the presence of Syrians. According to this idea, Syrians only shop at the shops opened by Syrians, and the Syrian business owners sell their products at lower prices because they do not pay taxes and they can be preferred by local people. The local artisans say that they are subject to all rules and regulations, that they face a risk of bankruptcy if they fail to provide a single document whereas public institutions are extremely tolerant towards the Syrian tradesmen. Another economic factor is that although the Syrians receive social assistance from the state, the local poor people cannot utilize these

benefits at all. Another source of discontent stems from positive discrimination applied to Syrians is expressed by Kurdish citizens. The people of Kurdish origin says they are subject to terrorism-related accusations if they have Kurdish signs in their shop, whereas all Syrians were very comfortable using Arabic signs in their workplaces.

Another problem related to Syrians is that they cause a decrease in the quality of basic services, especially in education. When Syrian children are at the age of the primary school, they are receiving Turkish education in public schools. Therefore, it is said that the number of students in the classes increased and the quality of education decreased. . One of the most serious social consequences of Syrian migration is the relocation of the local people to different neighborhoods. If this trend continues, some neighborhoods and districts, where only Syrians and foreigners live, will emerge. The response to foreigners in Izmir is not limited to Syrians. In the suburbs of Izmir, Afghan and African foreigners live. The local people say that foreigners have no record, they settle in their neighborhoods, they do not know who they are, and this creates a feeling of insecurity among the public.

As of now, there is a negative approach towards Syrians among the local population, but it does not turn into violence. However, the potential for such a possibility should be recognized and necessary steps needs to be taken as soon as possible. So far, examples of inter-communa tension have been experienced only in the neighborhoods of Pınarbaşı and Göksu.

There was no risk of radicalization among Syrians in general. The main reason is that almost most of the Syrians are actively in the job market and had to focus on their living. In addition, the process of integration of Syrians benefit from the presence of NGOs working on the improvement of the conditions of refugees. These NGOs carry out projects in the areas of language education, cultural adaptation, and participation in the labor market. These projects play a critical role in terms of the integration of Syrians into Turkish society.

Despite all the risk factors, it was stated by all mukhtars that there is no risk of radicalization among youth even in the suburbs in Izmir. One of the most important reasons for this is that the family structure is strong, and the control of the family elders on their children is high. The risk of radicalization among foreigners, especially Syrians, as well as local people, is also regarded low by mukhtars. Most of the Syrians are employed and in the process of being

integrated into Turkish society both culturally and economically. In a few neighborhoods in Izmir, there was polarization based on some ethnic-religious differences among the local population, but it did not turn into a conflict, and there was no tendency towards radical ideas among young people despite all social problems.

### **5.8.2 Education**

Mukhtars, who stated that there were problems in terms of access to education, stated that there is a significant issue in the neighborhoods where Roma citizens live. A mukhtar said that he is Roma himself and added that “we fight for bread, and we cannot support our children’s further level of education because of our economic weakness”. Mukhtars stated that Roma people think that even if Roma youth completed their higher education, they face serious problems in employment phase of their career. However, mukhtars said that Roma people do not show any tendency towards violent extremism.

In some schools where Syrians participated in education, it was stated that there were tensions based on hate speech among children and they can also affect their parents. Still no major violent incident has been recorded so far.

### **5.8.3 Economy**

Izmir, which is a quite important city for the Turkish economy, also enjoys close proximity to the large industrial cities such as Manisa as a major port and industrial city. However, when the Syrians started to work in the city, especially in the industrial zones, many Turkish citizens started to lose their jobs. It was also stated that many young people who struggled to have access to the employment market direct their anger towards the Syrians due to their unemployment after graduation.

#### **5.8.4 Security**

The biggest security problem is drug addiction according to the interviews in Izmir. After Süleyman Soylu became the Minister of Interior Affairs, mukhtars stated that the law-enforcement agencies were made considerable progress in the fight against drug addiction. Mukhtars stated that they know who is addicted and who is conducting drug trade with whom in their neighborhoods and such persons are also prone to criminal organizations.

The second major problem arises from hatred and anger towards Syrians. Mukhtars stated that young people are increasingly angry with the cheap labor force created by Syrians and this bears a high risk for inter-communal tension in the future.

#### **5.8.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

Mukhtars stated that they could easily complain about the problems to law-enforcement agencies and the civil administration. There is strong and uninterrupted communication line among sides. They stated that they did not receive the necessary support from politicians though. Mukhtars added people think that they were not adequately represented in political life. According to mukhtars, people feel that they remembered by local and national politicians only during pre-election periods.

## **5.9 Konya**

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2018, 2.205.609 live in 31 districts and 1154 neighborhoods in Konya. As one of the most important cities of Anatolia during the Seljuki and Ottoman eras, Konya even acted as the capital city in the Seljuki period and today stands out as a city of agriculture, industry and education. The city is known with its dominant conservative culture. Although extremist religious groups have chosen Konya as a potential source of human resources, Konya did not provide them with such a fertile ground they expected.

### **5.9.1 Social Structure**

Many people migrated from districts of Konya to city center and countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden.. Mukhtars imply that migrated people cannot find work or are unable to complete education in Turkey. Therefore, the population in the villages is decreasing. For the last two years, social facilities have been built to enable the socialization of people in Konya. However, it was stated that the facilities are not sufficient.

Incoming migrants mostly come to work in the construction sector. These immigrants, such as foreign migrants, affect the traditions of the city. It is also stated that the rapid increase in the population of the city and migrants caused problems in hospitals and infrastructure. In the neighborhoods of the city that have undergone an urban transformation, it is stated that Syrian and Afghan migrants begin to settle in the places abandoned by the local population.

The population in Cihanbeyli district is not as homogeneous as the demography in the central districts. Mukhtars say that approximately 70% of the population of the district is composed of Kurds. Although there is no ethnic problem among Turks and Kurds in the district, kinship ties have been established by marriage. It was stated that approximately 100 Syrian families were living in the district.

**Table 10-** Population and immigration data of the city of Konya

Year	ABPRS <sup>39</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (‰)
2017-2018	2,205,609	58,300	60,571	-2,271	-1.0
2016-2017	2,180,149	53,007	56,594	-3,587	-1.6
2015-2016	2,161,303	56,500	54,712	1,788	0.8
2014-2015	2,130,544	56,817	57,056	-239	-0.1
2013-2014	2,108,808	55,798	55,453	345	0.2
2012-2013	2,079,225	51,080	55,006	-3,926	-1.9
2011-2012	2,052,281	51,981	48,313	3,668	1.8
2010-2011	2,038,555	52,134	54,533	-2,399	-1.2
2009-2010	2,013,845	47,901	56,729	-8,828	-4.4
2008-2009	1,992,675	46,042	51,006	-4,964	-2.5
2007-2008	1,969,868	45,502	56,760	-11,258	-5.7

### **5.9.1.1 Youth and Women**

Mukhtars stated that the participation rate of the youth in education is high, and the social opportunities of the city are increasing day by day, but the unemployment problem is an important problem. Although the city has a large capacity in terms of industry, it is not seen sufficient. Since the city is also home to several universities, it is stated that the young population is prominent and circulating. Mukhtars, who stated that university students were

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<sup>39</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

concentrated in certain neighborhoods, said that students not visited so much mukhtars' office, because of e-government application. Therefore, they stated that they could not say anything about young people in their neighborhood.

Since the city has a traditional structure, it has been stated that the position of women in daily life changes according to the economic situation of the neighborhoods. However, it is stated that the number of the clubs (lokal/dernek)<sup>40</sup> and courses for women in the city have increased in recent years.

### **5.9.1.2 Foreigners**

There are Syrian and Afghan immigrants living in Cihanbeyli district. There are no major problems between the immigrants and the public. The people accept them because they did not discretionally. These migrants receive social assistance. Some of the Syrian migrants live in the homes of families who go abroad for job.

Mukhtars said that people complain about the presence of immigrants because of their behaviours in the city. Although there is a PKK sympathizer among the population who migrated to Kulu district, the PKK is not supported by the local population. There are also PKK sympathizers among the migrants who migrated from Urfa, Diyarbakır, and Mardin 30-40 years ago.

### **5.9.2 Education**

Since the agricultural and transport sector does not provide enough financial income, young people continue their education. Therefore, the proportion of those who go to school is increasing. Compared to men, women have a higher reading rate. Since there is no science

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<sup>40</sup> It is kind of association that established for specific goals.

high school in Cihanbeyli district, the students go to the central districts of Konya or Ankara. Families with no financial means cannot send their children for education. Despite this, it is stated that education rate increased compared to previous years.

The education rate is high in Selçuklu district. Konya Vocational Training Courses (KOMEK) and Selçuklu Vocational Training Courses (SELMEK) encourage young people to acquire a profession. Although most of the women are housewives, the participation rate among girls is also high. When security problems occur in schools, security forces are slow to intervene. This situation makes their families uneasy.

### **5.9.3 Economy**

People in Konya generally earn their livelihood from agriculture and livestock. In the districts such as Cihanbeyli, besides agriculture, people earn their livelihood from different sectors such as transportation. The drought has a negative impact on farmers. For this reason, farmers cannot pay their debts to banks. Due to the lack of material resources, most farmers are unable to give fertilizer to their crops and prefer non-certified seeds. However, the income provided by the farmers is not enough to sustain their families. While farming and agricultural activities are not seen as an unprofitable sector, mukhtars added that livestock is losing its value. For this reason, many young people work in low-cost jobs in factories. Nevertheless, there are rich villages, thanks to the people worked abroad.

The participation of women in business life is limited. Worsening economic conditions affect parental conflict. Therefore, divorce rates are also increasing. Six or seven of the ten cases in the courthouse are divorce cases.

The Syrian and Afghan immigrants who came to Konya have caused wages to fall. Therefore, young people have serious difficulties in finding a job and many of them work without social security. Some young people who spend most of the year as unemployed are living in the winter months and provide their livelihood.

#### **5.9.4 Security**

Mukhtars state that some of Syrians living in Karatay take part in organized crime. In the Sedirler and Saraçoğlu neighborhoods, ISIS cell was detected. However, the detected cells neutralized by counter-terrorism operations.

No major security issue is mentioned in the district of Cihanbeyli. However, several cases of joining PKK were witnessed in Gölyazı. Certain Kurdish families and tribes are known to have joined PKK. The impact of Syrian and Afghan refugees on public order varies according to the districts. In some districts, they reach a remarkable rate compared to in other districts. There are no major groups involved in the crime. Besides the local population of Cihanbeyli district, there are PKK sympathizers among those coming from provinces such as Mardin and Agri.

Drug addiction is becoming widespread in the Konya. Some of the mukhtars stated that the Syrian migrants brought drug addiction to the city. Also, mukhtars added that drug addiction is frequently seen in the areas where the urban transformation process continues.

Among Syrian refugees, there are some criminal cases such as murder and prostitution. Especially in the summer months, the number of public order problems connected to Syrians are increasing.

#### **5.9.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

The mukhtars, who pointed out that Konya is in a strong position both in terms of bureaucracy and politics, expressed that when they faced any problem, they were generally not challenged even if they had minor difficulties in bringing them to the attention necessary authorities. In addition, after July 15, they stated that reaching bureaucracy has become easier than ever.

## **5.10 Şanlıurfa**

According to Turkish Statistical Institute data of 2018, 2.035.089 live in 13 districts and 1420 neighborhoods in the city of Şanlıurfa. In the city, predominantly Arab and Kurdish communities live. Şanlıurfa, neighboring Syria, has been one of the most affected cities following the atrocities during the civil war. Also, the city is the hometown of the jailed leader of the PKK terrorist organization, and it is the place where he carried out his first terror attack. All the points above make conducting research in the city essential.

### **5.10.1 Social Structure**

Mukhtars stated that there was no problems in terms of the local population in the city where different ethnic and religious groups live together, and it was stated that tensions arose between the Kurdish and Arab groups from time to time due to Syrian refugees. However, it is also emphasized that this remains at the individual level.

It is stated that the current tribal structure in Şanlıurfa has important roles in many areas of social life. The tribes, which play a role in a wide framework from the solution of social problems to the prevention of radicalization, are regarded as one of the most important reasons for the failure of terrorism in Şanlıurfa according to mukhtars.

Arab and Turkish communities in the city is generally defined as nationalist-statist and at least half of the Kurdish community has a political tendency in the same direction. Among the remaining Kurdish population, it is stated that there is a section that is distant to the center and sometimes even sympathetic to the PKK. It can be seen that this section is prominent in Suruç, Viranşehir and Ceylanpınar districts located in Şanlıurfa countryside.

There are difficulties in accessing social assistance for the poor. Likewise, the fact that social assistance is mostly channeled to Syrians, or the perception in this direction causes discontent among the local population.

Table 11- Population and immigration data of the city of Şanlıurfa

Year	ABPRS <sup>41</sup> Population	Received Immigration	Outgoing Immigration	Net Immigration	Net Immigration Speed (%)
2017-2018	2,035,089	44,448	56,748	-12,300	-6.0
2016-2017	1,985,753	40,058	52,648	-12,590	-6.3
2015-2016	1,940,627	38,662	49,789	-11,127	-5.7
2014-2015	1,892,320	40,135	50,580	-10,445	-5.5
2013-2014	1,845,667	35,670	49,030	-13,360	-7.2
2012-2013	1,801,980	33,383	47,429	-14,046	-7.8
2011-2012	1,762,075	31,890	44,878	-12,988	-7.3
2010-2011	1,716,254	35,888	41,570	-5,682	-3.3
2009-2010	1,663,371	32,555	37,555	-5,000	-3.0
2008-2009	1,613,737	27,190	35,154	-7,964	-4.9
2007-2008	1,574,224	25,510	37,282	-11,772	-7.5

#### 5.10.1.1 Youth and Women

In Şanlıurfa, two problems come to the fore in connection with youth, according to mukhtars. “The first one is unemployment. The participation rate for university graduates is very low. Unemployed youth who come together in social areas such as coffee houses, waste their time”, one mukhtar said. While this situation caused psychological issues among young people, it was observed that there was no political, ethnic or religious radicalization tendency among youth thanks to the strong family structure, strong tribal structure, and the self-control mechanism among the people in the neighborhood.

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<sup>41</sup>Address Based Population Registration System

The second problem associated with the youth is drug addiction that is also partly due to the above-mentioned unemployment problem and has a growing tendency to spread. It is stated that although there are youth centers in Şanlıurfa, they are mostly located in the central neighborhoods and that everyone cannot benefit from them. In this respect, mukhtars think that all neighborhoods should have youth centers. Due to the conservative nature of Şanlıurfa, the level of participation of women in business life is low.

#### **5.10.1.2 Foreigners**

The greatest threat to the social fabric of the city in Şanlıurfa is the perception that there will be no local people in the city shortly due to the increasing number of Syrians and that all the residents will be Syrian soon. Şanlıurfa comes just after Istanbul in terms of the number of Syrians.<sup>42</sup>

In the middle of 2018, Syrians killed two Turkish citizens in the neighborhood of Eyyubiye. This incident caused tension between the local population and the Syrians. The events were not limited to the Eyyubiye neighborhood, but had a spill-over effect. With the growth of the events, all Syrians in the Eyyubiye neighborhood were moved by law-enforcement forces to other neighborhoods of the city. This event shows rising discontent towards Syrians among the people of Şanlıurfa and, more importantly, it shows that at some point, this attitude has the potential to turn into violence towards Syrians.

The reasons for this negative attitude towards Syrians in Şanlıurfa are based on social and economic issues. Mukhtars state that the issue that caused the most distress to the local population is the way of life of the Syrians. Refugees, as a result of the incompatibility along the way to bring their cultural life into Turkey, is perceived as a threat to local traditions. Şanlıurfa is a city that stands out with its extremely conservative structure. It is thought that

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<sup>42</sup> 21.03.2019 dated data available on the Immigration Administration General Directorate's Website. [http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma\\_363\\_378\\_4713](http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik3/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713) (Date of Access: 01.04.2019)

the Syrians disrupt the cultural texture of the city with their different lifestyles and targeted common values. One of the interlocutors among mukhtars shared an example on this case: “Local people are uncomfortable when Syrians smoke hookah in front of their workplaces, houses or in the parks of the neighborhood.” Due to the conservative nature of Şanlıurfa, there are no nightlife facilities in the city. However, the local people also complain about the Syrians who open such venues.

Another aspect of the social reaction is the perception that Syrians tend to commit crimes in general which in fact, empirically wrong. The data shows that the rate of Syrians' involvement in crime is not high. Another reason is economics. Because Syrians are working at a lower cost, they are regarded as cheap labor by small-scale enterprises and preferred over the local people. This causes the reaction of the local people saying “Syrians take our jobs and we cannot find work because of the Syrians. “In addition, Syrians' opening work without paying taxes creates an unfair sense of competition between local tradesmen and causes reactions”, one of the interviewees stated, and added that “80% of Syrians are fraudsters”. This approach, which is largely perceptive and probably exaggerated, is striking since it shows the negative perception among the local population.

In the same way, there is a belief that Syrians do not pay their utility and water bills, and they live for free. The majority of the people of Şanlıurfa are of Arab and Kurdish origin. The fact that Syrians are from the same ethnic background and they can interact with the same language is has prevented the emergence of an ethnic or religious-based reaction among the local population. The pressure that Syrians have on health, education, and municipal services is another cause of the reaction. Lastly, it was stated that the judicial system was insufficient against the crimes committed by the Syrians and that they were not subject to criminal sanctions due to registration problems.

### **5.10.2 Education**

The rate of participation in education varies according to the economic situation of the neighborhoods. Mukhtars stated that the number of schools in Şanlıurfa's sub-districts is not

enough and that the participation rate of school-age young people is low in education. The majority of families in the suburbs work as seasonal workers. For this reason, families cannot send their children to school regularly, and this leads to a decrease in the rate of education. It has also been determined that families in the suburbs usually send their children to primary school, but the majority does not attend secondary education.

In addition, as a result of the interviews with mukhtars, it was concluded that the status of education was not only related to the material situation. In some interviews, it is stated that some of the neighborhoods which are lower in terms of economic income have higher education participation rates.

### **5.10.3 Economy**

Mukhtars stated that the biggest problem in the economy is that it is related to lack of employment increase at the local level. Mukhtars mentioned that the ones, who came to Turkey following the war in Syria, causing discomfort among local population about the job market. Syrians are working for much lower wages, so fear of job loss among the local population is on the rise.

### **5.10.4 Security**

In the interviews with mukhtars, it was stated that drug addiction is one of the most important problems of the city. It is seen that these complaints are especially for the neighborhoods where Syrians are located. Drug addicts sometimes attack the public. However, this problem is also minimized by the cooperation between Mukhtars and law-enforcement agencies.

Close cooperation between law-enforcement officials and mukhtars in security provides positive results in terms of combating against different type of crimes. Nevertheless, mukhtars stated that the number of patrols of the police was insufficient. Smaller security problems, such as theft, vary according to the welfare of neighborhoods. It was stated that there was no problem in the neighborhoods where education and welfare were high, and demographic diversity in these rich neighborhoods was not faced any problems.

It is determined that there is no radicalization tendency among young people and local people in Şanlıurfa. Even in the interviews carried out in the poor neighborhoods of Şanlıurfa, which has the highest potential for radicalization, no such determination was seen. Mukhtar said that the tribal structure plays an important role in terms of prevention.

One of the biggest security problems in Şanlıurfa is linked to Syrians. In Şanlıurfa, Syrians are very well organized among themselves, and they can be organized in a very short time through social media. When the Syrians suffer from a problem with local people, they gather in a very short time and act together against the local people. As a result, it is stated that there are many quarrels in the city. Such developments deepen the polarization existing in the city and lead to a number of small-scale incidents.

Because of the increasing number of Syrians, there has been a perception that they have become a minority among the local population. Mukhtars said that law-enforcement responses against Syrians remain weak and local authorities behave very tolerantly towards them, causing a sense of injustice among local people. As a result, the negative attitude among the locals of Şanlıurfa is on the rise and this has the potential to turn into a serious security problem in the future. It is stated that the legal infrastructure is intact, but the problem arises from the application of necessary measures.

The reason for the low crime rate in the suburbs of Şanlıurfa is that the tribal structure is strong. Due to the tribal structure, almost everyone in the neighborhood gets to know each other. On the other hand, it was determined that there was no radicalization tendency among Syrians. One of the main reasons for this is that Turkish security forces increase safety measures and border security measures. This played an important role in preventing radicalization among Syrians.

Lack of investment in the suburbs does not create a security problem for now, but it plays a role in weakening social cohesion and social structure. Some of the mukhtars interviewed in the suburbs of Şanlıurfa stated that the local services caused the “we are not a citizen of this country” sense of injustice.

Mukhtars stated that some districts in the rural areas of Şanlıurfa are still under the influence of the PKK propaganda.

#### **5.10.5 Bureaucracy and Politics**

Mukhtars state that the relations with the bureaucracy have been improved in the recent years and they feel that they can reach out to the institutions easier than before even though they stated that politicians are not paying enough attention to local issues and their contact with the people, in many cases is only well and alive during pre-election periods, causing disappointment among the electorate and the feeling of marginalization and political exclusion.

## 5.11 Conclusion

As a result of interviews with 450 mukhtars within 11 cities, it is in general concluded that mukhtars are aware of the changing dynamics and issues arising in their responsibility area . It is seen that mukhtars mostly have direct contact or information about residents in their neighborhoods. It is understood that mukhtars play an important role in P/CVE activities even they are not directly aware of the concepts. Also, neighborhood administration and mukhtars' role need a new configuration and need to be strengthened in the face of today's problems.

As a result of this study, the following results are obtained with respect to awareness of the mukhtars:

- Although mukhtars are unfamiliar with radicalism, radicalization, and violent extremism, they are not unfamiliar with the concept of terrorism/terrorism. In these interviews, mukhtars were less familiar with the concepts when asked about radicalization, radical groups, or extremism/violent extremism, but they answered more comfortably when questions asked about terrorism or criminal organizations.
- Mukhtars are generally aware of the developments and problems in their neighborhood. However, as a result of the latest metropolitan law, some mukhtar administrations were merged. Due to the merger, the size of the responsibility area has expanded, and the population living in the neighborhood administrations of responsibility has increased. Additionally, improvement in the e-government system has an impact on residents' frequency of visiting mukhtar's offices. As a result of this, social interaction between residents and mukhtars has been declining day by day.
- Mukhtars stand out as the people who are well respected in their neighborhoods. The residents of the neighborhood come to mukhtar when they faced problems among themselves or in the family which cannot be solved by themselves (especially for the mukhtars in the East and Southeast Anatolia).
- The credibility of mukhtars in the neighborhood play an important role in trms of acting as **gatekeepers** in combating radicalization and violent extremism.

- Drug addiction is one of Turkey's most important problems. With the appointment of Süleyman Soylu as the Ministry of Interior, it is observed that the measures taken against this threat have been strengthened. However, it is known that there are still young people who are drug addicts in the neighborhoods and sellers who try to access the neighborhoods. Mukhtars say that young people who are drug addicts are generally unemployed and have no future prospects. It is necessary to protect these individuals from falling into the hands of violent groups and terrorist organizations. Because it is known that in different parts of the world, many violent extremist groups are prioritizing drug addicts for militant recruitment.<sup>43</sup>
- Beyond Turkey's national security interests, effects of crisis in Syria to Turkey and rising number of refugees/asylum seekers in the country increase complaints. as the background of these complaints, cultural, economic, and demographics were found to be effective.
- Considering the relationship between economy and radicalization, which is considered to be an important factor in the radicalization of individuals, the literature has been divided into two main camps, where one side defend the argument that poor economic conditions trigger radicalization process, and another one defends the other way around. It has been stated that the increasing number of the educated unemployed population is causing disappointment among young people. It is seen that it is important to construct social and cultural facilities where young people of different neighborhoods benefit from. Either it is based on the neighborhood or the city center, it is stated that such centers are in high demand.
- It was stated that the relationship between citizens and bureaucracy was strengthened after the measures taken in the aftermath of the July 15 coup attempt. Nevertheless, it

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<sup>43</sup><https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/group-sensitizes-650-against-drugs-abuse-extremism-in-yobe.html>  
(Date of Access: 20.01.2019)

is added that citizens generally have problems with reaching out to politicians. The possibility of looking for alternative solutions and the feeling of marginalization and political exclusion should not be disregarded.

Consequently, mukhtars have an important gatekeeper capacity in Turkey's fight against radicalization. By acknowledging the importance of the role of mukhtars at social and administrative levels, their awareness and capacity can be raised in the fight against violence and extremism. At this point, mukhtars may conduct regular apartment visits, and increase coordination with schools in their neighborhoods and encouragement is necessary in that regard in the face of negative impact of neighborhood mergers and e-government applications in terms of weakening the link between the local people and mukhtars.





The Role Of  
Mukhtars in  
Preventing Violent  
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Countering Violent  
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Bu proje Avrupa Birliđi ve  
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