



# Class, migration and masculinity among Syrian and Turkish youths in working-class neighborhoods of Istanbul

Deniz Yüksekler, Zafer Çeler & Neşe Şahin Taşğın

To cite this article: Deniz Yüksekler, Zafer Çeler & Neşe Şahin Taşğın (16 Sep 2024): Class, migration and masculinity among Syrian and Turkish youths in working-class neighborhoods of Istanbul, Turkish Studies, DOI: [10.1080/14683849.2024.2401890](https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2024.2401890)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2024.2401890>



Published online: 16 Sep 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 46



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



# Class, migration and masculinity among Syrian and Turkish youths in working-class neighborhoods of Istanbul

Deniz Yükseler <sup>a</sup>, Zafer Çeler <sup>b</sup> and Neşe Şahin Taşğın<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Sociology, Izmir University of Economics, Izmir, Turkey; <sup>b</sup>Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Istanbul Kent University, Istanbul, Turkey; <sup>c</sup>Department of Social Work, Maltepe University, Istanbul, Turkey

## ABSTRACT

This article describes the masculinity narratives of working-class Syrian and Turkish youths in Istanbul on their lived experiences of socio-economic inequalities, everyday violence, and discrimination. Based on qualitative fieldwork conducted in 2020 and 2021 with male youths in two districts, it emphasizes the common experiences of Syrian and Turkish male youths shaped by their working-class predicaments, but also demonstrates that certain forms of masculinity performances emerge as strategies to tackle the difficulties in their lives. Turkish youths' masculinity narratives display nationalism and anti-migrant discourses, whereas Syrian youths seek to affirm their dignity against racism through performances of masculinity.

**ARTICLE HISTORY** Received 12 December 2023; Accepted 25 July 2024

**KEYWORDS** Migration; masculinity; Syrian youth; Turkish youth; social class

## Introduction

In the summer of 2019, a rumor that a Turkish girl was molested by a Syrian man led to protests against Syrians in a working-class neighborhood of the Küçükçekmece district of Istanbul. A mob broke the windows of Syrian-owned shops and Syrians' homes. The incidents calmed down only after police intervened and it became clear that the rumor was false.<sup>1</sup> While incidents like this targeting Syrian communities have been increasing in recent years, Turkish political parties have capitalized on growing anti-migrant sentiments. Amidst the intensifying anti-migrant discourse, the main opposition Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) organized a campaign in 2021 involving the hanging of banners in large cities

**CONTACT** Zafer Çeler  zaferceler@hotmail.com  Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Istanbul Kent University, Cihangir Mahallesi, Siraselvilier Caddesi, No:71, Beyoğlu, Istanbul 34433, Turkey

proclaiming ‘The Border is Honor’ (*Sınır Namustur*), a slogan equating masculine honor with the defense of the nation.<sup>2</sup>

These incidents exemplify the sexualized and gendered character of the political representation of migration. Although anti-migrant discourses involve a variety of concerns such as the fear of refugees’ and other migrants’<sup>3</sup> effect on the labor market, none of them has an impact as strong as those related to gender. Gender often appears as a fault line bearing the tensions between migrants including refugees and host societies. Although there is a large scholarship on different aspects of gender and migration, few of them focus on men and masculinity. This article aims to understand the relationship between migration and masculinity at the intersection of social class and nationalism through an analysis of the experiences of Syrian and Turkish male youths in Istanbul based on qualitative fieldwork in 2020 and 2021. The article describes the masculinity narratives and performances of Syrian and Turkish youths pertaining to their lived experiences of socio-economic inequalities, everyday violence, and discrimination.

The shared paths of class treaded by the Turkish and Syrian male youths are marked by low wages, joblessness, and hopelessness about the future. Against perspectives viewing migrant and native communities as inherently different, this article emphasizes their common experiences shaped by social class, but also demonstrates that certain forms of masculinity performances emerge as strategies to tackle with the difficulties in their lives. While Turkish youths’ narratives about masculinity are intertwined with nationalism and anti-migrant discourses, Syrian youths also seek to affirm their dignity in the face of racism through performances of masculinity.

Several million Syrians arrived in Turkey after the civil war started in Syria in 2011. Currently, official figures put the number of Syrians at 3.115 million, roughly half of whom are at or below 18 years of age.<sup>4</sup> Syrians were brought under temporary protection in 2014 and, since 2016, piecemeal policies for their integration into Turkish society have been adopted. For instance, school-age Syrians were gradually incorporated into Turkish schools. A regulation allowed Syrians to get work permits under restrictive conditions. Nonetheless, around one million Syrians still work informally. As economic troubles intensified in the country in recent years, survey studies have pointed to rising levels of prejudice towards Syrians.<sup>5</sup> In the past several years, violent acts against Syrians have erupted, such as the mob violence in Ankara in 2021.<sup>6</sup> Most recently in July 2024, mobs attacked Syrians and their property in the province of Kayseri, triggered by a rumor that a Syrian man had molested a child. The violent protests then spread to other cities before they could be contained.<sup>7</sup>

Given these circumstances, studying the lived experiences of young Syrians in comparison with native youths who live in the same working-class neighborhoods is important. The findings of this article contribute to

a relational understanding of masculinity in a migration context, especially in a political environment marked by rising anti-migrant discourses and actions in Turkey. In what follows, we first review the literature on masculinities, especially in relation to migration. Then we explain the methodology of the study. The analysis of the findings starts with a description of the educational and working conditions of Syrian and Turkish youths, followed by a discussion of the violence to which they are exposed. As we discuss next, native youths' prejudices against migrants and Syrians' accounts of how they counter prejudice and racism both yield narratives on performances of masculinity, albeit in different ways.

### **Hegemonic masculinity at the intersection of migration, class, and nationalism**

Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as a normative ideal of heterosexual masculinity that establishes patriarchal power relations and male domination. Connell describes it as 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.'<sup>8</sup> Rather than a simple and static male domination, hegemonic masculinity is a core of traits and a crux of gendered discursive space that act as an aspirational ideal type that men strive to achieve. Hegemonic masculinity can only be created by excluding subordinate masculinities and femininity. For Howson and Hearn, these excluded identifications lead hegemonic masculinity to constitute and re-constitute itself to accommodate new meanings and practices.<sup>9</sup> Far from being stable and fixed, hegemonic masculinity is shaped and re-shaped by its inimical others, i.e. subordinate masculinities and femininity. The core traits and values defining the hegemonic feature of masculinity are emphasized, changed, shifted or deleted by the influence exerted upon it by other masculinities and femininity based on changing social, historical, political, and economic circumstances. Increasing visibility of women in work life, changes in gender roles and the rising political influence of feminist and LGBTI+ movements can create a 'crisis in masculinity'. However, the power of hegemonic masculinity is not declining; in line with its fluid character, hegemonic masculinity may gain a different configuration to confront the challenge posed by such a crisis.

Migration may have a powerful influence upon performances and signifiers of masculinity. Refugees and other migrants as well as native men encounter a fluidity and diversity in gender constructions and contestations. The more divergent and drastic these changes are, the deeper and harsher the contestations. For example, the experience of migration can undermine masculine identity of refugee and other migrant men as a loss of masculinity, or

in the form of a crisis of masculinity. Male refugees and other migrants and native men may attempt to redefine a desirable masculinity to confront constraints and disappointments. The crisis of masculinity may appear in the form that refugee and other migrant men can be subject to infantilization, feminization, and racial taunting in the host country.<sup>10</sup> They may (re)negotiate their masculinity to adapt into the new circumstances, or some may protest against their loss of status and agency in the form of aggressive and violent acts.<sup>11</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum of (re)negotiation is the strife of being invisible. If refugee and other migrant men are stigmatized and discriminated against through emasculation and infantilization, then they can try to hide their visibility in public as migrants. Another strategy can take the form of differentiation between migrant masculinities as creating a scale of acceptability, for example, married Indian migrant men in Italy contrast their own respectable masculinity with the 'barbarous' masculinity of undocumented Punjabi migrant men.<sup>12</sup>

Refugee and other migrant men are generally represented in policy texts on migration as perpetrators of violence and troublemakers, with claims that such attitudes are rooted in their culture and traditions.<sup>13</sup> We argue that such an essentialist perspective can only be overcome through an understanding of the power relations constitutive of gender differences. Those power relations are shaped by economic and class parameters, and political and social factors. For example, as Achilli shows, the ingredients of the masculine performance of Palestinian refugees in Jordan have changed in line with the changes in the Palestinian resistance movement from 1948 until now, gaining more religious and devout tinges as Hamas' influence grew.<sup>14</sup>

Migration as a destabilizing and disturbing factor over masculine identities may in some cases take an egalitarian shape because of the renegotiation process. Refugee and migrant men can develop a more egalitarian and less oppressive form of masculinity while they confront challenges. For instance, Turkish and Moroccan migrant men in the Netherlands adopt more gender egalitarian attitudes within their families as their sojourn becomes longer.<sup>15</sup> However, especially in the case of forced migration, such positive changes can be hard to observe since migration is experienced drastically and abruptly. The confrontation between refugees and other migrants and the host society can foment division and discrimination and can result in the exaggeration of masculine traits by both groups. Loss of economic and social status, cultural alienation and spatial segregation experienced by migrants including refugees may be reflected in exalted efforts in the performance of masculinity. As Charsley and Wray assert, 'men in positions of weakness may seek solutions not in the rejection of the norms of hegemonic masculinity but in their reassertion, even in "hypermasculinity",'<sup>16</sup> that is, overemphasis on manly traits such as physical strength, violence, and virility.

Studies on migration and masculinity, including in Turkey, have mostly focused on adult male migrants.<sup>17</sup> They consider migration as a destabilizing process over the established structures and values of masculinities. Especially refugees and other migrants from more conservative gender regimes migrating to more egalitarian gender regimes are said to experience a crisis of masculinity, since the established structures and value systems fortifying their masculinities do not exist in receiving societies. Economic factors also contribute to this crisis. For example, having to let their wives or daughters work outside the home may lead to a loss of status as the sole breadwinner of the family, which might then have a negative effect on the parameters of masculinity which a migrant man may guard.<sup>18</sup>

In the nascent literature on masculinities and migration in the Turkish context, Bozok<sup>19</sup> and Çarpar and Yaylacı<sup>20</sup> describe migration as an unsettling force leading to the loss of power and patriarchal privileges among adult refugee and other migrant men. Adult male migrants might face a masculinity crisis due to loss of status and power they previously enjoyed in their countries.<sup>21</sup> A significant proportion of the refugees and other migrants who arrived in Turkey in the past decade were children and adolescents. For the young generation of male refugees and other migrants who are growing up in Turkey, masculinity also plays a role in the shaping of their identity as young males, as we seek to show in this article.

Masculinity creates its own hierarchical status structure where some men are more manly than others. This masculinity structure is constantly shaped, negotiated and contested. Huizinga and Van Hoven call this constant formation 'relational masculinity',<sup>22</sup> and Wojnicka and Nowicka name it as 'masculinity through intersectionality'.<sup>23</sup> We believe that masculinities in a migration context should be studied in a relational, intersectional and comparative perspective. There is a large body of scholarship on Syrian refugees in Turkey, but comparative studies are few. Likewise, studies on Syrian youth are relatively few, not comparative,<sup>24</sup> and focus only on education<sup>25</sup> or integration and aspirations for onward migration to Europe.<sup>26</sup>

The significance of social class in the formation of masculine performance has been one of the main focal points of masculinity studies, as class appears as the fundamental factor shaping differences in masculinity performances.<sup>27</sup> However, in studies of masculinity in a migration context, class is usually ignored because migrant status/identity takes the foreground in the analysis of masculinity by establishing a migrant/refugee-native men dichotomy. In this article, we bring back class as an important determinant into the discussion of masculinity by going beyond the limits of the migrant/ refugee-native men duality.

We seek to demonstrate that masculinity narratives and performances of Syrian and Turkish youths living in working-class neighborhoods of Istanbul are not only shaped by migration but also contested and negotiated through

class dynamics. Although there is a tension zone between Syrians and natives, social class, and the male-dominant value system constitute a common ground for Syrian and Turkish male youths. These fault lines and convergences produce certain masculinity hierarchies which in turn produce anxieties and antagonisms that are rampant ground for everyday forms of violence and prejudice.

### **Methodology of the study and data collection**

The findings for this paper derive from two rounds of qualitative fieldwork in 2020 and 2021 in the Küçükçekmece and Sultanbeyli districts of Istanbul. Both districts have received intensive internal migration since the 1990s. Since the mid-2010s they also received significant Syrian arrivals. The fieldwork locations were working-class neighborhoods, where both native and Syrian laborers find jobs in manufacturing workshops or the service sector.

The studies were conducted in September–October 2020 and August–November 2021.<sup>28</sup> In total, semi-structured interviews with 18 Syrian and 11 Turkish male youths in Küçükçekmece on the European side of Istanbul, and 16 Syrian and 14 Turkish male youths in Sultanbeyli on the Asian side, were conducted.<sup>29</sup> In addition, four focus group meetings with Syrians and three with Turkish youths were carried out. The youths were between the ages of 14–20. In the second study, a total of 32 Turkish and Syrian female youths were also interviewed in the two districts. The findings of the research with female youth are scrutinized in a separate paper with a different analytical focus and therefore not included in this article.

Participants were reached with the help of civil society organizations and district municipalities. Syrian youths self-identified as Arabs, Kurds or Turkmens, and Turkish youth described themselves as Turk or Kurdish. Hence in this paper, the adjective Turkish refers to nationality, not ethnicity. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant if they were above 18 years of age, and from a parent or adult relative if they were below 18.<sup>30</sup> In the first study, the individual and focus group interviews were conducted by four women – two of the researchers and two scholars from Terra Araştırma, a research company which helped with data collection. A Syrian man and a Syrian woman assisted with interpreting during the first fieldwork. The fieldwork for the second study was coordinated by the three researchers. Eight trained research assistants (RAs) (four men and four women), all graduate students or university graduates, four of whom were Arabic speakers and who also acted as interpreters/translators, conducted most of the interviews. The researchers conducted focus group meetings and some interviews. In the second study, the male researcher and male RAs spoke with the male youths. The semi-structured interview guides for Syrian and Turkish

males included questions regarding their families, migration history, social activities, educational and work experience, their opinions on the relations between Turkish citizens and Syrians in their neighborhoods, their aspirations for the future, and attitudes on gender relations.<sup>31</sup>

Voice recorded interviews were anonymized, (if in Arabic, first translated into Turkish), and then fully transcribed by the RAs. The researchers then coded the transcripts for the following themes: education, employment, social activities, future aspirations, attitudes on intergroup relations and attitudes on gender.

## Findings

Many Syrian and Turkish male participants had trouble at school, started working at an early age in blue collar jobs and were surrounded by violence at school and on the streets. Using the findings of our field study, we seek to show that these working-class realities and the lack of prospects for the future trigger certain narratives and performances of masculinity among both groups. While Turkish male youths' masculinity narratives reflect elements of the prevailing anti-Syrian nationalist discourses in the country and a quest to 'protect' their 'territory', Syrian youths respond to these through various tactics for raising their self-worth and staying out of trouble.

### *School-to-work transition: frustrated expectations, workshop realities*

We start this section by describing the working-class characteristics of their lives in terms of their school and work experiences. Both Syrian and Turkish youths had problematic relations with education. Among the Turkish participants, there were several high school dropouts. There were more school dropouts among the Syrians, and several participants had not attended formal education after their families arrived in Turkey. Some families had sent their kids to Quran training (*Kuran kursu*) instead of school. Syrian youths were thus integrated into formal education in Turkey only partly and after a long delay.

In Küçükçekmece, many participants and/or their fathers worked in shoe manufacturing or related sectors due to the proximity of their neighborhood to a large organized industrial zone. In Sultanbeyli, Syrian and Turkish participants worked in garment workshops, carpentry, auto repair shops or in the service sector. In both districts, Syrians started working at an earlier age, and many worked fulltime jobs. Turkish youths, if they had dropped out of school or when they completed it, found blue collar jobs in manufacturing or the service sector. However, the jobs were often precarious, leading them to move from one to another or remain jobless for periods of time.

An 18-year-old Turkish youth had dropped out of high school to start working in blue-collar jobs. He thought that education had nothing to offer to him and so he had quit to find a job. However, he was jobless when we met him for an interview.

I went to school until ninth grade. In ninth grade, I attended classes for one week and then ditched school the next. Because, I said – and you will understand it yourself if you observe it – in this country however much you go to school, you should either be super intelligent, or you should not go to school (Turkish, 18, 2021).

Syrian youths had enrolled in Turkish schools late, creating an interrupted educational experience that was intertwined with working for wages, as exemplified by the testimony of a 19-year-old.

When I came [to Turkey] in 2014, I was 13. I did not go to school for two years. Because I worked in a job. I worked in a garment workshop (*tekstilde*). (...) Then in 2016 I started going to school. I went to a temporary education center for two years. (...) I went to a Turkish school for grades 11–12. Now I have completed high school and was placed in a university [in the university entrance exam] (Syrian, 19, 2020).

This young Syrian man was ethnically Turkmen, which gave him an advantage in learning Turkish, perhaps also helping him get into university, but his situation was more of an exception among the Syrian participants. As the following account shows, it was more likely for Syrians to completely drop out of school.

The first year I dropped out of school, I worked in garments (*tekstil*) for a year due to financial difficulties. Then I enrolled in a course (*kurs*). There I did both open education (*açık öğretim*) and learnt the Quran for one-and-a-half years and then I dropped out. I enrolled in a [regular] school but I flunked because of the pandemic. Thus, I wasted three years (Syrian, 17, 2021).

For some Syrian youth, ‘having to financially contribute to their families,’ or replacing their fathers as the main wage earner in the family placed them in the gender role of male breadwinner, as the following words of a 17-year-old youth exemplifies.

I told my family that I didn’t want to work, but they said to me: “If you don’t work, we will have difficulty.” (...) During the Covid-19 [pandemic] I quit work. I was jobless for three months and then I understood what my family meant. I realized that it was not enough for only my father to work (Syrian, 17, 2020).

Syrian participants worked informally for long hours and without social security for wages below the legal minimum. Turkish participants were more likely to have social security and receive the legal minimum wage for their effort. Some Turkish youth mentioned the impossibility of making a

living on the legal minimum wage or finding a job congruent with one's education level. Having to work in a jewelry workshop for the minimum wage felt oppressive for a 20-year-old Turkish man who had finished high school, and who thought that he was more skilled compared to a university graduate.

There is an inequality. (...) But since we work as a normal employee, we have more knowledge than someone who [completed university]. Yet we have to work for the minimum wage because we didn't go to school (Turkish, 20, 2020).

While Syrians expressed the reason for working as a necessity, some Turkish youths said they worked for 'making pocket money,' wanting to emphasize their difference from Syrian youths in terms of economic standing. In fact, the jobs they did for pocket money were also quite hard and low paying, as the following testimony demonstrates.

After finishing secondary school, I wanted to make my own pocket money. I started working as a street vendor. (...) After a couple of years, I started working as a motorcycle courier for fast-food restaurants. (...) After that, I worked in printing houses for an extra job (Turkish, 16, 2020).

During the pandemic, economic hardships increased for the working classes in Turkey. Due to COVID-19, education was based on distance learning, leading some participants not to follow the online classes and find wage work instead. A 16-year-old Syrian who said he worked since when he was 14, was compelled to start working in a garment workshop, as he told us:

I actually would not work in garment workshops. But when I was working in a telephone business, the owner had to close the store due to Covid-19, so I had to leave the job. So, instead of staying at home and doing nothing, I had to start working in a garment workshop as a last resort (Syrian, 16, 2020).

Due to lockdowns and falling demand, many workplaces in manufacturing and retail services were closed, leading to unemployment in the neighborhoods of Küçükçekmece where we conducted fieldwork. A Turkish twenty-year-old high school graduate who worked in a workshop in the nearby jewelry industry complex said he observed many layoffs in his sector, although he had kept his job:

*(Question: How did it go during the pandemic? Could you work regularly?)* Our sector does not function properly as you know (...) *(Question: Did any layoffs take place?)* Many. It did not happen in our workplace, but it happened in others that I know (Turkish, 20, 2020).

Rising unemployment was translated into a sense of competition for the same jobs among Syrians and natives. Turkish youths we interviewed in both Küçükçekmece and Sultanbeyli districts in both rounds of fieldwork

complained that Syrians were the cause of rising unemployment and that they were taking over their jobs, as the following testimonies exemplify.

[Syrians] left Turks jobless, now no one can find a job, whether he has a university degree or not (Turkish, 18, 2021).

Before, there was a little unemployment in Turkey. (...) [Syrians] said that they could do the job for less money than a Turkish worker. Then, business owners started to fire Turks (Turkish, 15, 2020).

But some Syrian youths had a different perspective. One participant said Syrian workers were more competent in sectors such as shoemaking, which prompted Turkish nationals to envy them, as his words below testify:

I realized that when Syrians work better than Turks for less money, Turks do not take it well. They say “we earn more than them. Our positions are better than theirs, but we cannot have what they [Syrians] have” (Syrian, 19, 2020).

Frustrated with wage work, many participants aspired to become entrepreneurs in the future. ‘Being one’s own boss,’ not being subjugated to someone else in wage work is a common theme in expressions of masculinity among Turkish men. The ideal of self-employment was echoed in the testimonies of several Turkish participants in unrealistic plans about making easy money, either through TikTok or by investing into cryptocurrencies. The 18-year-old high school dropout who was jobless when we met him was one of them:

[I am] saving money. There is an application like Bitcoin, but it is safer. Your money stays there. If the dollar’s value rises, then your amount of money rises, too (Turkish, 18, 2021).

A 17-year-old high school student, aware that there is an economic crisis, dreamt about ‘turning the crisis into an opportunity’ by making money on TikTok.

If I had the resources, I would venture into the TikTok business. There are many people watching it, I would like to make lots of money on it. I mean I would like to turn the crisis into an opportunity (Turkish, 17, 2021).

Interestingly, similar aspirations of self-employment were present among Syrian participants as well. Having dropped out of school, some Syrian participants said they wished to open manufacturing workshops in the future, as the following two quotes exemplify.

Well, if we can establish our own shoe-making factory one day, it would be quite nice, I have such a dream (Syrian, 16, 2021).

One day, I want to establish a shoe-making factory (Sy’rian, 17, 2021).

But there were also others who aspired to go to university, although that was also often tied to desires to open a business, as the words of a 19-year-old Syrian in Küçükçekmece, who had a job in a shoe workshop, show:

I am planning to study at the university. (...) I want to continue shoe-making business after university because I love that job (Syrian 19, 2020).

In both groups, youths had conservative perspectives on gender relations. Both Syrian and Turkish participants subscribed to traditional gender roles where men are the breadwinners. When asked about a future marriage, they said they would not want their wives to work in working-class jobs, but only in professions such as teaching. This ‘preference,’ which objectifies women by assuming that decisions about whether a woman should work are to be made by men, was justified by saying that a man should provide for his family, or that interactions between women and male bosses in a workplace would violate their manly honor.

Many Syrian and Turkish participants had mediocre educational and job prospects. Members of both groups started working in labor intensive, low-paying jobs during their teenage years without any employment security. Thus, their class predicaments were quite similar. Their opinions about gender roles, especially with respect to women’s work, were also alike.

### ***Violence: a staple of everyday life***

A common characteristic of the social environments of the Syrian and Turkish participants in both districts was that they all operated in a male universe. Syrian and Turkish youths were socialized in a male environment where fights were solved by ‘bigger brothers’ (*abiler*) in the neighborhood, friend circles contained only males and social activities such as playing football or hanging out in the park also involved only males. Bullying and physical violence were rampant in schools, as their testimonies and studies indicate.<sup>32</sup> Thus, facing and dealing with violence contributed to the shaping of their narratives of masculinity.

While the vocational schools they attend often do not lead to pathways for decent employment, everyday forms of violence in these schools ‘toughen up’ young Syrian and Turkish males into ‘men’. In this section, we discuss how Turkish and Syrian youths strategized to deal with the violence, which is reflected in their narratives of masculine performance.

Bullying and violence occurred even in middle schools, often prompting police presence. Sometimes fights between boys flared because of ‘girl issues’ as a 14-year-old Turkish youth in Küçükçekmece who went to an imam training middle school (*Imam-Hatip ortaokulu*) recounted:

It is about the girl issues mostly. (...) For example, it happened to me once. A kid from the high school said bad things about my sister and attacked me

outside of the school. (...) They came and tried to beat me up, but my friends, they protected me. (...) After those fights, undercover policemen started coming to the school frequently (Turkish, 14, 2020).

He was so disturbed by the bullying that he told the interviewer that he would have dropped out school were it not for his mother's insistence. Another Turkish youth said he had to change his school when he was beaten up in his previous vocational high school because of his worsening health.

A troubled kid from the school messed up with me in ninth grade. After we received report cards, he beat me up in front of the school. I have had a cardiac illness since eighth grade. (...) I was beaten up and kicked in the chest. I could not breath and passed out (Turkish, 16, 2020).

Violence was not confined to schools. Many of the participants in both districts talked about muggings on the street and attempts to steal their money or phones. Perceived threats required them to strategize to deal with violence. Turkish youths thought that aggression requires reprisals. One should be prepared to take a beating as well as to give one, as two Turkish participants, 19 and 17, both high school dropouts in Sultanbeyli, recounted.

We have been beaten up many times; we have beaten them up many times. This is the (...) district. We have to be prepared for anything anytime (Turkish, 19, 2020).

If you grow up in the streets, you learn how to be beaten up, there is nothing you can do about it. You learn how to beat someone up in the end (Turkish, 17, 2020).

In the case of Syrians, violence directed at them often stemmed from prejudice and racism. Many Syrian youths said they would fight back against aggression coming from natives. The testimonies of two 16-year-old Syrians below indicate that even if they were beaten up, self-respect and the quest to get respect from others was based on standing up against the aggressors.

We won the [football] match. (...) The other team was Turkish, they attacked us. I beat up one of them, then the whole team came down on me. My body turned all blue. We beat them up, but we also got beaten up quite well. (*Question: Did the fight serve anything?*) No, it did not, but I did not bow down (*kendimi ezdirmedim*) (Syrian, 16, 2020).

Someone attacked me, but I overcame him. I did not let him stand up. Another one attacked me from behind, I turned and hit him, and he ran away. After that they have not done anything to me, they started respecting me (Syrian, 16, 2020).

But more commonly, Syrian participants said they tried to keep out of trouble. One Syrian youth who talked about a previous beating by Turkish tough guys which resulted in hearing loss, wanted to stay out of harm's way.

If I don't stay away from them, they can stab me. So, I try to stay away from them (Syrian, 17, 2020).

Similarly, the 19-year-old Syrian mentioned earlier who was about to start university education, said he avoided walking around in this own neighborhood.

I am not spending much time in this neighborhood. It is full of trouble. (...) Now it is rare, but bad things used to happen all the time (Syrian, 19, 2020).

Instead of responding to aggression, other Syrian participants preferred employing different strategies such as trying to be invisible. As Walter, Bourgois, and Loinaz describe in their work on Latino day laborers in the United States, Mexican irregular migrants prefer to appear obedient and docile contrary to the general perception about them as macho troublemakers.<sup>33</sup> Their fragile position as undocumented migrants leads them to adopt such a strategy by forfeiting their desire for looking masculine. In our study, some Syrian young men said they preferred to hide their nationality and to be invisible to avoid any conflict or violence by sacrificing the ideal of masculinity.

They always look down on you because you are Syrian. I was mugged several times. They pulled out knives and asked for money. (...) After a while, I stopped saying that I am Syrian, I hide it. (...) There is no one left around me who knows that I am Syrian. (...) I stopped spending time with my friends because they are Syrians. I am always hanging out alone. I stay away from crowded places (Syrian, 17, 2020).

### ***Anti-migrant sentiments expressed through masculinity: defending one's territory***

Shows of aggression, threat perceptions and defending oneself against them shaped Turkish participants' performances of masculinity. Many Turkish youths we interviewed held prejudicial attitudes against Syrians, echoing anti-Syrian discourses circulating in the broader society propagated by politicians and the media. In this section of the paper, we address how Turkish male youths' anti-migrant attitudes were mixed with narratives of masculinity that alluded to class injuries, a quest to recover manly honor and the protection of women.

A majority of Turkish participants expressed negative opinions about Syrians' presence in their neighborhoods and in Turkey. Among recurrent themes in the interviews were that Syrians had not fought for their country, whereas Turkish soldiers were fighting in Syria (a reference to the Turkish military's presence in northern Syria); that Syrians audaciously displayed their flag in public but did not come to the help of Turkish people during the coup attempt on July 15, 2016; and that Syrian men disturbed young Turkish women by staring at or harassing them. A 20-year-old

participant in Küçükçekmece who worked in a jewelry workshop complained that Syrians did not have a belonging to Turkey. His example was about the military coup attempt on July 15, 2016, when thousands of Turkish citizens took to the streets in Istanbul and other big cities in support of the elected government.

July 15 took place. I did not see a single Syrian go out to the street and support Turkish people. They all locked themselves in their homes (Turkish, 20, 2020).

His narrative implicitly suggested that although the government had welcomed Syrians, they had not come to its support. While his words implicitly hint at nationalist sentiments, in the case of the unemployed high school drop-out in Küçükçekmece mentioned earlier, the nationalist lens through which he interpreted Syrians' actions was clearer.

Some Syrian was waiving his [Syrian] flag in my neighborhood; I could not handle that. I cannot wave my flag in my own country. Of course, we may hang it in our balconies or windows. But it offends me that I don't wave my flag whereas they do. I had a fight (with Syrians) (Turkish, 18, 2021).

His account about the waving of the Syrian flag might have been based on hearsay rather than facts. The same youth also described an incident in which he had a fight with a Syrian man who he claimed had harassed his girlfriend. In both accounts, we may surmise that this young man considered a Syrian's perceived unwanted approach towards a Turkish woman or the waiving of a flag as violations of symbolic borders, which deserved reprisal.

[A young Syrian man] came and put his hand on my girlfriend's shoulder. I asked him "what are you doing dude?" and he responds "what is it to you? She is my friend." But the girl says, "I don't know you." I told him to leave but he retorted: "Who are you to say that to me?" I was mad, I hit him of course (Turkish, 18, 2021).

Some Turkish male youths in Sultanbeyli expressed similar views about Syrian men posing a threat to Turkish women, or not having fought for their country, as exemplified below.

I am not being racist of course, but we are very disturbed by Syrians' presence. Syrians come and they could do something or rape my friend, my daughter or maybe my sister (Turkish, 17, 2021).

These men have not made any effort in their own country in the war. (...) They fled their country without fighting (Turkish, 18, 2021).

We might argue that all these accounts demonstrate an effort to define and defend one's territory. Turkish participants thought that Syrians were violating their territory in two senses: first, Syrians were perceived as violating familiar spaces in the *neighborhood* such as parks, common areas in buildings or on the streets by staring at women. Secondly, this also permeated

the level of the *national territory*: Syrians were said to wave their own flags, not to have defended their country, and not to have come to the defense of Turkey during the coup attempt. This attitude also resonates with the notion of ‘the border is honor,’ an anti-migrant nationalist slogan that has been put into circulation by opposition parties in recent years, as we mentioned at the beginning. Thus, protecting one’s neighborhood, female relatives and acquaintances and country were intermingled, creating a narrative and performances of masculinity infused with nationalism.

In a contradictory way, these narratives simultaneously emasculate Syrian men and label them as displaying unwanted acts associated with masculinity. Accordingly, not fighting for one’s country is unmanly, assuming that joining the army is the appropriate masculine behavior. But at the same time, the claims about Syrians staring at Turkish women, and disturbing or harassing them in public are interpreted as unacceptable displays of masculinity.

Some of the Turkish participants responded to these perceived violations of their space with acts of aggression. In Küçükçekmece, several of the Turkish participants we interviewed in 2020 talked about beating up or stabbing Syrians or having witnessed the mob who attacked Syrians’ homes and Syrian-owned stores during the incidents in the summer of 2019 recounted at the beginning of this article.

An incident took place. Turks rose up a little bit. They showed themselves. Of course, [Syrians] could not come out to the street for a week or two after their shops and homes were looted. (...) We don’t know if the rumor was based on truth or not. But you know, something happens, it triggers another one, and then that triggers another one. That’s how the incident got bigger. (...) Since nobody wants [Syrians], this was an excuse. (...) The urge to attack them was already pent up (Turkish, 20, 2020).

The words of this 20-year-old high school graduate worker’s account shows that, while he questioned the veracity of the accusations against a Syrian man which triggered the incident, he did not necessarily regret what happened, since he suggested indirectly that Syrians had to be put in their place. He also associated the anger towards Syrians in terms of a competition for jobs in the neighborhood, as his words below indicate.

This is why anger was accumulated. I will give an example from my family. My father worked in a workplace. The reason why he was fired was because of Syrians (Turkish, 20, 2020).

In Sultanbeyli, some Turkish youths shared similar views, as the below example shows.

My father has been in this district for 45 years. (...) My father’s store cannot be opened now. They [Syrians] have a tax exemption. (...) But we have to pay ÖTV and KDV [special consumption tax and value added tax] (Turkish, 17, 2020).

This youth blamed his father's store's closure on unfair competition from Syrians who he claimed had tax exemption, which is an incorrect but widespread label about Syrians that they are favored by the government in opening businesses.

### ***Responding to prejudice and racism: asserting one's self-worth***

Syrian youths' testimonies included their experiences and perceptions of discrimination and racism, and how they coped with these. Syrian participants recounted facing prejudice and racism at school, on the street or in the football field. We have already discussed in a previous section how some Syrian youths considered that responding to aggression, even if one gets beaten up, is important for protecting one's honor, while others emphasized that they would rather stay out of the path of aggressors. Another strategy in the face of prejudice, discrimination, and aggression is to separate oneself discursively from other co-nationals to assert one's self-worth as above them.

In Küçükçekmece, some Syrian participants had lived through the incidents that took place in the summer of 2019 and still remembered it. In the focus group meeting with Syrians, two high school students recalled the incident vividly although they were only 15 years old back then.

After that incident we could not come out of the house for a week. When that incident happened, they were attacking even Syrians walking on the street. That's why we did not come out of the house for a week. My brother has a friend. [The aggressors] blindfolded him and took him to a place and beat him up. Then they brought him back and threw him on the street (Syrian, 16, 2020).

*(Question to another participant: Do you remember that incident?)*

No one can forget it (Syrian, 16, 2020).

One of them carefully explained to the researchers that the incidents had started based on a false rumor that a Syrian man had harassed a Turkish girl in the neighborhood.

That incident was triggered by a rumor that a Syrian had raped a Turk, but later it turned out that that person was not Syrian (Syrian, 16, 2020).

The Syrian participants were also careful to disassociate themselves from Syrian males who lived in shared rental rooms for single men (*bekar evleri*) and worked in informal workshops in the neighborhood. In the focus group meeting, one of the 16-year-old Syrians who recounted the incidents in 2019 put the blame for natives' prejudices and racism on the behavior of single Syrian laborers who rented shared rooms, while affirming the dignity of families.

Syrian fights come out of the shared rental rooms for single men. There are many shared rental rooms for single men in this neighborhood because it is an industrial area. A person who has a family would not take part in fights. But those who stay in a shared rental room have nothing to lose. The fights between Syrians and Turks always come out of singles' rooms. Here, no families would fight with each other.

(...)

Single Syrians spoiled this neighborhood a bit. Suppose a single Syrian starts an incident. Then he packs up and leaves. He never comes back. It is the families who remain here who are harmed. There is racism, stores were broken down. People got wounded (Syrian, 16, 2020).

Another participant in the focus group meeting, the 19-year-old Syrian who was about to start university clearly defined the incidents as racism, and pointed out that individual behaviors were blamed on the entire community.

There was racism, especially against the ones living in shared rental rooms. If one person or two does something wrong, the whole community gets punished. Syrians' shops were looted (Syrian, 19, 2020).

As we described in the previous section, some Turkish youths, probably echoing the thoughts of many in their neighborhood, stigmatized Syrian males as a threat to their community. Çelik's study on Turkish male students in Germany shows how they adopted different strategies in the face of stigmatization of the Turkish minority. One of these is a quest to detach themselves from the stigmatized community by differentiating themselves from their co-ethnics' stigmatized presumed traits.<sup>34</sup> In a similar way, in the above accounts, Syrian youths also sought to detach themselves from single Syrian men who lived in their neighborhood, identifying them as troublemakers. This strategy of differentiating themselves from others creates a scale of masculinity in terms of acceptability. As Gallo points out in his work on Indian migrants in Italy, married Indian men separate their respectable masculinity as family men from the undocumented Punjabi migrant men's 'uncivilized' masculinity.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, in our study too, Syrian youths considered single Syrian men as threats and a menace to the community and distanced themselves from them, so that they can create a certain scale of masculinity within the Syrian community where the single men represent a subordinate masculinity that must be excluded.

## Conclusion

The everyday lives of Syrian and Turkish male youths in working-class neighborhoods of Istanbul are fraught by similar challenges. Their educational prospects are not bright; they toil in blue-collar jobs with little future; they come face to face with violence on a regular basis. They seek

to make sense of their place in these social environments in terms of defending one's territory and asserting one's self-worth, which yield narratives of masculinity that strive for a higher ground.

Nevertheless, despite the similarities in their classed experiences and narratives, prejudice and racism against Syrians creates a sharp divide between the Syrian and Turkish youths living in the same neighborhoods. Syrians try to cope with stigmatization and discrimination by detaching themselves from troublemakers but sometimes also by forfeiting their masculinity in return for safety. Turkish youths' prejudices and anti-migrant attitudes, on the other hand, display a quest to protect their territory which they discursively define in a gendered way at the level of both their neighborhoods and the nation. The injuries of class are thus translated into narratives and performances of masculinity that are entangled with racism and nationalism.

Hegemonic masculinity is not monolithic and static, but (re)negotiated by different social forces. Migration is a significant factor that shapes and contests narratives and performances of masculinity. Migration can undermine the masculine identity of refugee and other migrant men such that they may attempt to redefine a desirable masculinity to confront constraints and disappointments, they may opt for invisibility or may try to affirm their 'respectable' masculinity in comparison to others. Despite paying attention to these negotiations, much of the scholarship on masculinity in migration contexts focuses on the experience of refugee and other migrant men exclusively. The major contribution of this article is that, by including both natives and refugees and other migrants, it brings a comparative and relational perspective. It shows that Syrian and Turkish youths' performances of masculinity are shaped in relation to each other as well as within the context of changing political and socio-economic conditions. As such, migration is a significant factor shaping performances of masculinity, but not the sole determinant. Through taking the discussion beyond the migrant-native dichotomy and by focusing on youths in both groups, the article displays the constitutive forces such as class dynamics and nationalism shaping young men's masculinity performances. While Turkish youth regard Syrians as the other who steal their jobs and who did not defend their own country, Syrian youths also produce their own scale and hierarchy of masculinities by looking down upon single Syrian male workers and by praising their own job skills and ethics against those of the natives. This article also sheds light on the dynamics through which anti-migrant discourses turn into violence, as witnessed in Küçükçekmece, Ankara, and Kayseri in recent years.

This negotiation and contestation do not lead to a new and egalitarian gender regime. Our findings demonstrate that Syrian and Turkish youths have more commonalities than they might want to admit. Economic difficulties and social class boundaries determine their future prospects and hopes.

Both groups come from male-dominant social environments and have conservative attitudes about gender roles. Thus, a form of exaggerated masculinity through othering remains as a very important coping strategy in their hands.

This article brings social class and nationalism dimensions to the analysis of Turkish and Syrian youths' masculinities in working-class neighborhoods in Istanbul, but it does not focus on female youths' perspectives on their male peers' narratives. Also, an analysis of how Syrian and Turkish male youths from middle class backgrounds may construct their masculinity narratives differently was beyond the scope of the research. Therefore, future research might bring in comparative male and female as well as middle class perspectives on understandings of youth masculinity.

## Notes

1. "Küçükçekmece'de Neler Oldu?, *Sözcü*, July 1, 2019.
2. "CHP Genel Merkez Binası'na 'Sınır namustur' pankartı asıldı," *Gazete Duvar*, August 18, 2021.
3. In this article we prefer an inclusive terminology as suggested by Carling. Therefore, we use 'refugees and other migrants' and 'migrants including refugees.' See Carling, "The Phrase 'Refugees and Migrants' Undermines Analysis."
4. PMM, "Temporary Protection."
5. Erdoğan, *Syrians Barometer*.
6. "Ankara Altındağ'da ırkçı saldırı: Suriyelilerin evleri ve dükkanları taşlandı," *Evrinsel*, August 11, 2021. i.
7. "Kayseri'de başlayan gerilim Suriye kaynaklı görüntülerle başka illere de sıçradı," *Medyascope*, July 2, 2024.
8. Connell, *Masculinities*, 77.
9. Howson and Hearn, "Hegemony," 47.
10. Griffiths, "Here, Man is Nothing!"
11. Charsley and Wray, "Introduction," 408.
12. Gallo, "Italy."
13. Olivius, "Refugee Men," 57.
14. Achilli, "Becoming a Man."
15. Röder and Mühlau, "Are They Acculturating?."
16. Charsley and Wray, "Introduction," 411.
17. Röder and Mühlau, "Are They Acculturating?"; Huizinga and Van Hoven, "Hegemonic Masculinities"; Kukreja, "Recouping Masculinity"; Bozok, "Göç Sonucu Yaşanan Erkeklik Krizleri"; Güney and Konak, "Bolu'da Suriyeli ve Iraklı Sığınmacılar"; and Çarpar and Yaylacı, "Forced Migration."
18. Çarpar and Yaylacı, "Forced Migration."
19. Bozok, "Göç Sonucu Yaşanan Erkeklik Krizleri."
20. Çarpar and Yaylacı, "Forced Migration."
21. Mozafari and Ünal Reşitoğlu, *Erkekliğe Karşı Üçlü İttifak*.
22. Huizinga and Van Hoven, "Hegemonic Masculinities."
23. Wojnicka and Nowicka, "Understanding Migrant Masculinities."
24. Ertong Attar and Küçükşen, "Somehow Familiar."

25. For example, Dereli, “Belonging,” and Çelik and İçduygu, “Schools and Refugee Children.”
26. Üstübcü and Elçi, “Aspirations.”
27. Creese, *Contracting Masculinity*; Ingram and Waller, “Degrees of Masculinity”; Morgan, “Class and Masculinity”, and Ward, “Men, Masculinities and Social Class.”
28. Yüksek, Tekin and Şahin Taşğın, *Türkiyeli ve Suriyeli Genç Erkekler*, and Yüksek, Şahin Taşğın and Tekin, *Suriyeli ve Türkiyeli Genç Kadınlar ve Erkekler*.
29. In both studies, the researchers were N. Şahin Taşğın, U. Tekin and D. Yüksek. The first field study coincided with partial lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, RAs could not be employed. Terra Araştırma, a research firm, agreed to assist with data collection and Hatice Kurtuluş and Esra Kaya Erdoğan participated in the fieldwork from Terra. Social distance was observed, and masks were worn by all participants and researchers during the interviews and focus group meetings. Interviews were conducted in community centers. Focus group discussions took place in open-air cafeterias. The pandemic prevented the researchers from meeting the youth in their homes or observing them in school environments, since education was still based on distance learning. The researchers ensured that neither the participants nor themselves were exposed to COVID-related risks; data collection was ceded in October 2020 when COVID cases started to rise. The researchers’ extensive experience with qualitative fieldwork probably offset for the age and gender difference between them and the participants, allowing candid conversations. During the second study, lockdowns had ended. The fact that RAs were university graduates or graduate students in their twenties helped create a friendly atmosphere during the interviews.
30. For the first study, approval was received from Istanbul Kent University’s Ethics Committee for Social and Human Sciences on 18 September 2020 (Decision no 13), and for the second study, similar approval was obtained on 30 July 2021 (Decision no: 09).
31. The interview guides included questions to allow youths to freely narrate their experiences and thoughts, followed by several probes to open up each topic. In this way, we sought not to lead their answers but rather to let them express themselves in their own words. The opening questions were as follows: “Can you tell us about yourself?” “Can you tell us about your family – your parents and your siblings?”, “Can you tell us about your school / the school from which you graduated?” “Can you describe how you spend a day?”, “How do you spend your time when you are not in school/work?”, “Can you tell us about your friends?”, “How are the relations between Turkish and Syrian youth in your neighborhood?”, “What are your plans for when you finish school / grow up?”, “When you grow up and if you marry, what would you like your spouse’s characteristics to be?”, “What is your opinion about women working outside the home?”
32. Yüksek et al., *Life*, 200–207.
33. Walter, Bourgois, and Loinaz, “Masculinity.”
34. Çelik, “Disadvantaged but Morally Superior.”
35. Gallo, “Italy.”

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our co-researcher Uğur Tekin who is not among the authors of this article. We express our gratitude to Hatice Kurtuluş and Esra Kaya Erdoğan

for coordinating the fieldwork in the 2020 study. We also thank all the research assistants who participated in the fieldwork in 2020 and 2021. Finally, we are grateful to Heinrich Böll Foundation's Turkey Representation for supporting the studies.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Funding

This work was supported by Heinrich Böll Stiftung's Turkey Representation (project grant number: 401950/15, 2021 and project grant number: 401950/10, 2020).

### Note on contributors

*Deniz Yüksekler* is professor and chair in the Department of Sociology at Izmir University of Economics. She received her Ph.D. in sociology from Binghamton University in 2000. She has conducted research and has published articles, books and reports on the informal shuttle trade between Turkey and former Soviet republics, African migrants and refugees in Istanbul, the forced displacement of Kurds, working conditions of service providers who work with refugees, and migration and social participation.

*Zafer Çeler* received his PhD degree in political science at Paris 1 Sorbonne – Panthéon University. He has worked at several civil society organizations such as the History Foundation and Civil Society Development Centre. He is currently an assistant professor working at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Istanbul Kent University. His academic interests cover a diverse field stretching from history-temporality relations and social memory to migration studies and gender.

*Neşe Şahin Taşğın* is the Chair of the Department of Social Work at Maltepe University and the Director of the Women and Family Studies Application and Research Centre. She holds a bachelor's degree in social work and a PhD in human rights from Hacettepe University. Her research interests include human rights, gender, social policy, poverty, social exclusion, and migration studies. Since 2010 she is a member of the organizing committee of the Rethinking Social Work conference series.

### ORCID

*Deniz Yüksekler*  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1047-1685>

*Zafer Çeler*  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8908-4711>

### Bibliography

Achilli, Luigi. "Becoming a Man in Al-Wihdat: Masculine Performances in a Palestinian Refugee Camp in Jordan." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47 (2015): 263–280.

- Bozok, Mehmet. "Göç Sonucu Yaşanan Erkeklik Krizlerinin Bir Yüzü Olarak Erkekliğin Kaybı." *Journal of Economy Culture and Society* 60 (2019): 171–185.
- Carling, Jorgen. "The Phrase 'Refugees and Migrants' Undermines Analysis, Policy and Protection." *International Migration* 61, no. 3 (2023): 399–403.
- Çarpar, Mehmet C., and F. Göktuna Yaylacı. "Forced Migration as a Crisis in Masculinity: A Sociological Approach to Refugee Men's Remasculinization Strategies in Turkey." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no. 4 (2022): 3846–3870.
- Çelik, Çetin. "Disadvantaged, But Morally Superior: Ethnic Boundary Making Strategies of Second-generation Male Turkish Immigrant Youth in Germany." *Identities* 25, no. 6 (2018): 705–723.
- Çelik, Çetin, and Ahmet İçduygu. "Schools and Refugee Children: The Case of Syrians in Turkey." *International Migration* 57, no. 2 (2019): 253–267.
- Charsley, Katharine, and Helena Wray. "Introduction: The Invisible (Migrant) Man." *Men and Masculinities* 18, no. 4 (2015): 403–423.
- Connell, R. W. *Masculinities*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Creese, Gillian. *Contracting Masculinity: Gender, Class, and Race in a White-Collar Union, 1944–1994*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Dereli, Begüm. "Belonging through Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Youth in Turkey." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 35, no. 1 (2022): 195–219.
- Erdoğan, Murat. *Syrians Barometer 2021. A Framework for Achieving Social Cohesion with Syrians in Türkiye*. Ankara: Eğiten Yayıncılık, 2022.
- Ertong Attar, Günnur, and Deniz Küçükşen. "Somehow Familiar But Still a Stranger: Syrian Students in Turkish Higher Education." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 20 (2019): 1041–1053.
- Gallo, Ester. "Italy is Not a Good Place for Men: Narratives of Places, Marriage and Masculinity Among Malayali Migrants." *Global Networks* 6, no. 4 (2006): 357–372.
- Griffiths, Melanie. "Here, Man is Nothing!: Gender and Policy in an Asylum Context." *Men and Masculinities* 18, no. 4 (2015): 468–488.
- Güney, Ülkü, and Nahide Konak. "Bolu'da Suriyeli ve Iraklı Sığınmacılar: Milliyetçilik, Erillik ve Vatandaşlık Temelinde Öteki Algısı." *Alternatif Politika* 8, no. 3 (2016): 505–535.
- Howson, Richard, and Jeff Hearn. "Hegemony, Hegemonic Masculinity, and Beyond." In *Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies*, edited by Lucas Gottzén, Ulf Mellström, and Tamara Shefer, 41–51. Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.
- Huizinga, Rik P., and Bettina van Hoven. "Hegemonic Masculinities After Forced Migration: Exploring Relational Performances of Syrian Refugee Men in the Netherlands." *Gender, Place and Culture* 28, no. 8 (2021): 543–565.
- Ingram, Nicola, and Richard Waller. "Degrees of Masculinity: Working and Middle-Class Undergraduate Students' Construction of Masculine Identities." In *Debating Modern Masculinities: Change, Continuity, Crisis?*, edited by Steven Roberts, 33–51. London: Springer, 2014.
- Kukreja, Reena. "Recouping Masculinity: Understanding the Links Between Macho Masculinity and Self-exploitation Among Undocumented South Asian Male Migrants in Greece." *Geoforum; Journal of Physical, Human, and Regional Geosciences* 122 (2021): 164–173.
- Morgan, David. "Class and Masculinity." In *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*, edited by Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, and R. W. Connell, 165–177. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005.
- Mozafari, Saeid, and Halime Ünal Reşitoğlu. *Erkekliğe Karşı Üçlü İttifak: Savaş, Göç ve Yoksulluk Kıskaçında Erkeklikler Ankara'daki Suriyeliler Örneği*. Ankara: Nobel Yayınları, 2023.

- Olivius, Elisabeth. "Refugee Men as Perpetrators, Allies or Troublemakers? Emerging Discourses on Men and Masculinities in Humanitarian Aid." *Women's Studies International Forum* 56 (2016): 56–65.
- Presidency of Migration Management. "Temporary Protection." <https://en.goc.gov.tr/temporary-protection27>.
- Röder, Antje, and Peter Mühlau. "Are They Acculturating? Europe's Immigrants and Gender Egalitarianism." *Social Forces* 92, no. 3 (2014): 899–928.
- Üstübcü, Ayşe, and Ezgi Elçi. "Aspirations Among Young Refugees in Turkey: Social Class, Integration and Onward Migration in Forced Migration Contexts." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48, no. 20 (2022): 4865–4884.
- Walter, Nicholas, Philippe Bourgois, and H. Margarita Loinaz. "Masculinity and Undocumented Labor Migration: Injured Latino Day Laborers in San Francisco." *Social Science & Medicine* 59, no. 6 (2004): 1159–1168.
- Ward, Michael R.M. "Men, Masculinities and Social Class." In *Routledge International Handbook of Masculinity Studies*, edited by Lucas Gottzén, Ulf Mellström, and Tamara Shefer, 201–210. Abingdon: Routledge, 2019.
- Wojnicka, Katarzyna, and Magdalena Nowicka. "Understanding Migrant Masculinities Through a Spatially Intersectional Lens." *Men and Masculinities* 25, no. 2 (2022): 232–251.
- Yükseker, Deniz, Hatice Kurtuluş, Uğur Tekin, and Esra Kaya Erdoğan. *Life in Migrant Neighbourhoods. Post-2010 Migration in Turkey and the Social Participation of Migrants*. Istanbul: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2023.
- Yükseker, Deniz, Neşe Şahin Taşğın, and Uğur Tekin. *Suriyeli ve Türkiyeli Genç Kadınlar ve Erkeklerin Gündelik Yaşamları: Küçükçekmece ve Sultanbeyli'de Nitel bir Araştırma*. Istanbul: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2022.
- Yükseker, Deniz, Uğur Tekin, and Neşe Şahin Taşğın. *Türkiyeli ve Suriyeli Genç Erkeklerin Gündelik Yaşam Deneyimleri: Küçükçekmece ve Sultanbeyli Üzerine Bir Araştırma*. Istanbul: Heinrich Böll Foundation, 2021.