

The Narratives of Syrian Refugees on Taking Turkey as a Land of a Long or Temporary Settlement

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Introduction

In late 2011, when Syrians stepped into the Turkish lands after fleeing their country, they were perceived by the government as guests and Muslim brothers, not refugees (Memişoğlu and Ilgit 2017). As soon as increasing numbers of Syrians flooded into Turkey, the government legally put them under the temporary protection system: namely, their residency in Turkey was conditioned either on the conflict in Syria, whether it is settled to peace or not, or on their resettlement in a third country. Among those Syrians, more than ninety thousand have been bestowed with the Turkish nationality according to *selective* criteria (Akçapar and Şimşek 2018).¹ The others, more than 3.6 million Syrians (UNHCR 2019), are either still under temporary protection or live illegally in Turkey.

After nine years of the ongoing civil war in Syria, one can eagerly ask the questions regarding a possible home return² of Syrian refugees from Turkey or of refugees seeking asylum in Europe. Indeed, refugees' repatriation increasingly forms a heated debate in academia and policymaking fields (İçduygu and Nimer 2019). However, this chapter does not approach this issue via legal or practical lenses; rather, it digs into how Syrian refugees

comprehend and cognitively see home return in an “ideal” imagined situation, regardless of the legal and practical realities.

I discuss the intentions of Syrians in Turkey, whether they desire to stay permanently or for a long time, to seek refuge in Europe, or to return to Syria. I aim to find the underlying mechanisms of such intentions. In other words, what does each of these three alternatives mean to them? And, via a sociopsychological lens, how do they meaningfully constitute each alternative?

In doing so, this chapter presents the contexts and conditions where Syrian refugees live and where they can relocate, namely, Turkey, Europe, and Syria. Then it reviews the literature on repatriation and home return; four main theoretical approaches are classified in this study as the most prevailing theories and theoretical frameworks in literature. In order to surpass contradictions or inconsistencies between these approaches and to have a comprehensive model of home return, two concepts are extracted to form the fundamental blocks of the suggested model: identity-agency and place.

To test and develop the designed model, I adopted a narrative analysis method and conducted twenty-one interviews with Syrian refugees in Turkey, Germany, and Sweden. After explaining the methodology, I depict the analyzed narratives in detail, answering the research questions. Finally, I end the chapter with conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Syrians’ Inclusion and Exclusion: Future-Syria, Europe, and Turkey

Three durable solutions are addressed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for refugees: (1) home return, which is the most preferable because it refers to bringing the situation in the country of origin to its “natural,” prewar situation; (2) local integration in the current country of settlement, Turkey in this case; and (3) resettlement in a third country, which is usually a Western country (UNHCR-Kenya 2019). Regarding the 3.6 million Syrians in Turkey, how do the contexts in Europe, Turkey, and Syria affect their possible intentions of the three alternatives?

After nine years of war, the situation in Syria remains ambiguous and uncertain. Violence oscillates between higher and lower levels from month to month; the economic conditions are deeply devastated; the infrastructure is poorly maintained; and the security/legislation question is not concretely reestablished. Therefore, between 2015 and 2018, only 103,000 Syrians repatriated voluntarily, which constitutes 2 percent of the Syrian refugees who live in the neighboring countries, including Turkey (World Bank 2019). Bearing that in mind, this study questions the *intention*, not the actual action of home return. Today, no one can assure that the basic needs of Syrians are

met or able to be met in case of repatriation, either legally, socially, or economically. And no developmental strategic plans have been established to make the home return possible (World Bank 2017). Syria now is not suitable for home return, at least, for the reasons mentioned.

Regarding Syrians in Europe, the refugee crisis that has hit the European Union since 2015 (Khiabany 2016; Scipioni 2018) negatively affects Syrians, making them more prone to uncertain fates, in spite of the well-intentioned refugee system (Zisser 2019). The refugee-triggered crisis in Europe is a key “stressor” on the European Union, threatening its very identity (Mitzen 2018); hence, the Syrian refugees there are depicted as a potential threat (or at least a topic) of a deep cleavage between European actors (e.g., parties, states, and EU institutions). Syrian refugees form a symbolic field of battle, which is represented and narrated daily in media and in banal conversations between people (Boswell, Geddes, and Scholten 2011). Therefore, whether or not they are thinking of leaving Turkey to Europe, this negative (or, say, conflicting) picture is not absent from the Syrian refugees’ awareness in Turkey.

Although this policy is the basic attractive element for Syrians to take refuge in Europe, the integration policy in Europe causes tensions within refugees’ identity. Schinkel (2018) criticizes the integration policy in the West as constituting a type of neocolonialism. For him, the integration policy—in its very nature—frames the newcomers, who are Muslims generally, as strangers forming an “ethnicity” within the Western countries. The newcomers have to integrate by adopting the mainstream values and lifestyle of the Western modernized countries. More precisely, any Western country is seen as a pure, constant society, unchangeable over time, while the newcomers will be, and will always stay, the *minor* ethnicity who must integrate to some extent, more or less. Refugees are at best integrated but not “citizens.” Discrimination, therefore, against the “integrated” refugees is inherent in their lives in the new society. Thus, their self-identities and self-esteem can be strained.

For example, “gender equality” is used in the Western countries as a tool of discrimination and stigmatization against Muslim refugees, as Yurdakul and Korteweg (2013) argue. A woman’s body turns into a measurement of integration into the “Occident” society; the “Oriental backward” Muslim refugees have to adopt the “hosts’ way of doing things,” including the ways of women body practices (Ruby 2013). In this vein, Syrian refugees in Europe, who are exposed to that kind of policy, might feel that they are excluded from the society’s mainstream.

These issues, the refugee crisis of the EU and the problem of integration, affect the intentions of Syrians in Turkey about whether to take the arduous roads to Europe or to stay in Turkey. Notwithstanding this negative image, Syrians can get a better refugee status in the EU than in Turkey, as they have

more rights and their lives are much comfortable due to the “full” refugee-status in the EU,³ whereas they have limited rights and less beneficiaries under the temporary protection in Turkey (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017; Kutlu Tonak 2016). This positive side of the picture is also, of course, present in the Syrians’ minds when they make their intentions.

The refugees’ situation in Turkey, on the other hand, forges a mixed and contested picture. Syrians in Turkey have some social rights, while they are prevented from others. According to the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection, Syrians have the right to stay in the Turkish lands, to freely register children in the public schools, and to get work permits. However, many Syrians cannot send their children to schools because of the language barriers and economic difficulties, which makes the right of education unattainable in practice (İneli-Ciğer 2017). Additionally, Syrian workers and employees rarely apply for work permits because of the rigid system and its inflexible conditions. Therefore, the majority of Syrians work illegally with significantly lower wages than their Turkish peers (İneli-Ciğer 2017). Syrians face other obstacles, such as restricted mobility between provinces even if they are registered under the temporary protection system. All these factors hamper a successful integration of Syrians in Turkey (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel, 2017; İçduygu 2015; Kutlu Tonak 2016; Memişoğlu and Ilgit 2017; Şimşek 2018). It is worth adding that endowing exceptional citizenship to some Syrians in Turkey has not enhanced their integration. Indeed, Turkish locals continue to picture Syrians as a demographic threat and a competitive bloc over public services (Akçapar and Şimşek 2018; Memişoğlu and Ilgit 2017).

Nevertheless, at the grassroots level, many Syrians find Turkey a continuous cultural-religious sphere of their home. On the one hand, the historical relationship between the Ottoman Empire and present-day Syria (which was a part of it) is one reason for this cultural familiarity. On the other hand, the huge number of Syrians who flooded into Turkey early have created a kinship network, on which later Syrian newcomers relied (Kaya 2017). These factors contribute to making Turkey a good place of integration for Syrians, culturally at least.

The question of integration and marginalization, inclusion and exclusion for Syrians in Turkey underlies the refugees’ desire to stay, go to Europe, or return home. Previous studies on Syrian refugees in Turkey have shown scattered results regarding home return. A study in 2019 found that the majority of Syrians (90 percent) desire “ideally” to return home, *conditioning* this return on prosecuting human rights violators (Fabbe and İnmazdemir 2019). Other studies found that the longer Syrians stay in Turkey, the less desire they show to repatriate (Balcılar and Nugent 2019; Kivisto and La Vecchia-Mikkola 2015). However, a deeper mechanism behind these results has not been explored.

To sum up, inclusion/exclusion of Syrians in Turkey and the EU is multi-dimensional. Syrians are more included in Turkey on some dimensions, such as culture (e.g., wearing headscarf is seen as normal in Turkey, praying in mosques is easy since there are many), and excluded on other dimensions. The same is to be said on inclusion/exclusion dimensions in Europe. According to some scholars, the “gender equality” policy in Europe plays an exclusive role against Syrians when it is seen via the lens of multiculturalism. These complicated factors should be taken into account when analyzing the Syrians’ narratives on their future plans.

Theoretical Approaches to Refugees’ Home Return

Literature on home return is wide. The current study addresses four main approaches that cover this topic: failure-success, integration, transnationalism, and homemaking. They overlap in some parts and contradict each other in other parts. Generally, inconsistency is prevalent among these four approaches. Reshaping these approaches in a whole, compatible, coherent model is the intention of this study. Such a model must surpass the inconsistencies among these approaches and configure a systematic theoretical view out of them. To achieve this purpose, this study will first depict the concepts of these approaches, then it will extract the relationships between these concepts, reshaping a coherent model (a method of theory building; e.g., Finfgeld-Connett and Johnson 2013).

Two concepts (more precisely, conceptual umbrellas) should be delineated before presenting and analyzing the four approaches: *place* and *identity-agency*.⁴

Place is not a material container where people live, act, and communicate. Place is a *soft entity* enrooted within the material environment: it is a milieu to create meanings of human beings’ lives. Social communication, normative behaviors, cultural symbols, and everyday economic activities are actualized *by* and entangled *with* place (Devine-Wright 2009; Devine-Wright and Lyons 1997; Di Masso, Dixon, and Pol 2011; Dixon and Durrheim 2004, 2000). People are, generally, attached to their places because place is a framework that coalesces the fragmented events, memories, and social and political objects in one coherent whole, with which people define themselves (Djenar 2016).

Drawing on this concept, both the host country, where refugees live, and home, the original country of refugees, should not be understood as merely geographical territories. Place is a practice on multilayer dimensions.

Identity-agency is another conceptual nexus that needs to be clarified. On the one hand, self-identity (or identity) refers to an answer to the question, “Who am I?” including my values, goals, and belongings to different

social groups, ethnicities, or collectives (e.g., Breakwell 2014; Ciecuch and Topolewska 2017). Agency, on the other hand, points to the individual potential freedom, the capacity to choose among alternative conditions, and the ability to act (Alkire 2005; Giddens 1991, 1984; Hitlin and Elder 2007). Agency, in other words, is about having control over our own lives and over the deeds we need or want to do. It is entangled with identity since “who I am” is sought through being able to achieve “my” morality as well as my needs and goals, i.e., through my agency (Nilson 2001).

Failure-Success Framework

Failure-success framework is a theoretical approach of home return based on migrants²⁵ *economic performances* in host countries. What determines the refugees’ intentions to return home or not is simply their economic performances. Three different theories compete within this framework: neo-classical economic theory of migration (NE), the new economics of labor migration (NELM), and the diaspora trap (Nzima and Moyo 2017).

The NE theory focuses on the individual-migrant, and it evaluates her/his success or failure in the host country according to the monetary gains. When the money s/he earns in the host country does not significantly differ from that in the home country, or when s/he fails in her/his endeavor to achieve the money s/he sought before emigration, then home return will be the logical outcome of the migration process (de Haas 2010; Cassarino 2004). Simply put, when a migrant fails in the economic performance, s/he decides to return home.

The NELM theory, contrary to the NE theory, contends that migrants return when they succeed in their *general* economic performance. NELM focuses on the household or family level not on the individual level as the NE does. So, any migration process is seen as a family action, which starts from the decision to migrate and ends when the family’s “sent” members achieve the family’s goals. These goals are not monetary gains only—as in the NE—but achievement of better livelihood conditions as a whole in home. Hence, as migrants cannot improve the livelihood conditions of their families, they stay in host countries for a longer time, hoping to achieve their goals in future (de Haas 2010; Cassarino 2004).

The last approach within the failure-success framework is the Diaspora Trap. This approach accounts for a set of complicated factors that affect the decision of emigration and home return. According to this approach, an economic success in host societies does not necessarily mean returning to home because the economic conditions at home could be harsh and unsuitable for migrants, who get used to high standards of life. Also, failure in host countries does not necessarily lead to a home return as migrants could feel

socially pressured and ashamed because of the failure, so they prefer to stay abroad (Nzima and Moyo 2017).

The failure-success framework's subtheories are divergent in terms of the assumptions on what makes migrants return to their homes. These theories, however, draw on similar theoretical assumptions. First, the host country is the place where refugees achieve their goals, while home is passively depicted as merely a place of return. Second, the economic performance is the focal point of home return intentions. What formulates such intentions is the refugee's agency, the ability to act and achieve her/his goals.

Integration

Integration does not have one generally accepted definition. It can be understood as a process targeting refugees in multiple domains grouped into four categories: (1) guaranteeing the necessary means of refugees to live well in the new society (having access to education, healthcare, housing, and work); (2) including refugees within the new society by enhancing their connection with the native people; (3) guaranteeing safety, stability, and cultural and linguistic skills for refugees; and finally (4) granting citizenship at the end of the integration process (Ager and Strang 2008). In other words, integration is essentially designed to give refugees, who are expected to stay in a host country for a long time, the ability to be active and self-reliant in their new societies (European Commission 2016).

In line with the failure-success framework, studying the relationship between integration and home return is also complicated without a general accepted theory. Pierre, Martinovic, and de Vroome (2015) studied this relationship throughout multiple dimensions of integration. Refugees' *social* integration into a host society (i.e., having social networks and connections with the natives) and *cultural* integration (adopting the core values of a host society) are positively associated with refugees' identification with and integration in their host countries. This results in less desire to return home. Nevertheless, they also found that the *more* cultural integration and *structural* integration (i.e., economic integration and the level of education fulfilled in the host country) are achieved, the *more* discrimination is perceived by refugees, which in turn leads to a greater desire to return. These findings are in line with the "integration paradox" idea: namely, higher levels of integration within a host society lead to *more* perceived discrimination. That is, well-integrated refugees have intensive connections with natives, they expect more rewards for their economic and educational achievements, and they become more sensitive to less respect, simply put (de Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten 2014). Home return then becomes a way to avert discrimination and a failed integration.

In light of this approach, home is not simply a place to where refugees go back when they fail or succeed economically in the “host.” Refugees continuously evaluate their home situations and their integration level in the “host.” If security, economic conditions, and the political climate at home are unsatisfying for refugees, they will likely refuse to repatriate regardless of their situation in the “host,” whether they are well integrated or not (Chimni 2002; Essuman-Johnson 2011; Fransen, Ruiz, and Vargas-Silvam 2017; Muggerridge and Dona 2006; Rabinowitz 2010).

Intention of home return is shaped by evaluating both the home and the “host,” while in the previous approach, the “host” matters more. Home is important because returning is not identical with “going back,” but it is a new integration *into* home (Heimerl 2005). Returnees may suffer from discrimination in their own home, and they may lack the necessary ability to sustain an acceptable level of well-being because of “local” skills they have lost in the refuge country (Fransen, Ruiz, and Vargas-Silvam 2017). For example, a returnee may not find a house to dwell in, or s/he may not fit into the education system in the case of a long stay abroad (Ecke et al. 2016; Omata 2013). Factors in both home and the “host” are subsequently evaluated by refugees.

Although the integration approach assigns equal weight to home and the “host,” it conceptualizes the boundary between these two places as clear-cut and fixed: a refugee is either totally here or there. The home and “host” are seen as separate places.

On the contrary, the integration approach does not limit the intention of return to refugees’ agency (e.g., economic performance) as the failure-success framework does; rather, it also accounts for self-identity. When a refugee’s self-identity is threatened, her/his integration will fail in the host society, and s/he will have more reasons to repatriate (Kivisto and La Vecchia-Mikkola 2015). For example, perceiving discrimination in the host society implies refusing the refugee’s own values and culture, which leads to an exclusion that mainly strains the refugee’s self-identity.

Transnationalism

Under the umbrella of the transnational approach, refugees in a host society develop diasporic, transnational spaces where they evoke their homes, practice their cultures on the base of everyday life, and create their own communities outside the homes’ borders (Savaş, 2010). For example, they pursue having traditional food, visiting mosques (for Muslims), or attending their own cultural clubs to practice the home language and music. Thus, a communal memory and a collective identity would be sustained and endorsed in exile. In other words, refugees practice two lives, here (in the host country) and there (at home), at the same time while living—actually—in

the “host.” This is what is called transnationalism, which is implemented through *social transnational spaces*. Social transnational spaces, in turn, are home-related places and *activities* held in the host country. In this regard, assembling around a traditional dinner table in a living room, gathering in a cultural organization to sing or to discuss political events, and even dressing in a traditional way (e.g., wearing headscarf by Muslim women) are all social transnational spaces linking the “alien” hosting place/culture to home (Al-Ali, Black and Koser 2001a; Anthias 2016; Levitt and Schiller 2004; Roudometof 2005).

In light of transnationalism, home return is increasingly seen as a political-social action, especially in a context of war-torn countries. Home return is a “social contract-remaking,” as it means that refugees repatriate because a *new* relationship binds them with their state (Long 2011). This political action in host countries by refugees entails that they impact their home’s situation while they are far away from it (e.g., via remittance and political lobbying).

Intentions to return home or not are deeply imbued with a political meaning. And this meaning—itself—is not limited to refugees who live in a host country but is also made by a continuous “re-composing” of their experiences *before* fleeing from home and *during* residency in a host community (Einhorn 2000). Refugees reshape their identities, their social norms, their goals, and future plans by continuously bridging two shores, life in the home and life in the host countries. Put differently, the past and present on one side and home and host countries on the other side function simultaneously to carve out intentions of home return or not (Al-Ali, Black, and Koser 2001a, 2001b; Şimşek 2019). As a result, a remote home itself is recreated within these transnational social spaces through complicated dynamics of bridging both the home and the “host” (Brown 2011; Capo 2015). The place from where refugees escape is not perceived anymore as the same place to where they might return.

The relationship between transnationalism and integration is highly contested; for some scholars, transnationalism enhances integration in host countries, while others think of transnationalism as hindering integration (Şimşek 2019). The latter contend that transnationalism pushes refugees and migrants to feel as if they live neither there (home) nor here (host country), which ignites anxiety (Nukaga 2013). This case has been described as “liminality,” whereby refugees do not abandon their past status—as belonging to home—nor do they identify themselves as belonging to the new place and its culture. Briefly, liminality is to live between places or in no place (Daskalaki, Butler, and Petrovic 2016).

Dwelling on what has been mentioned, mechanism of home return as seen through the lens of transnationalism is not decisive. Such mechanism is dynamic, whereby the boundaries between home and “host” are highly blurred, and both are under dynamic configuration. The idea of home man-

ifests via refugees' daily lives in their host countries, socially, culturally, economically, and politically, while the relationship with the "host" (i.e., integration) varies from one case to another, either enhanced or worsened. We can see that the concept of self-identity and the question of belonging play a more important role (Huizinga and van Hoven 2018)—in this approach—compared to the two previous approaches, integration and failure-success. That is, refugees' pursuit to maintain their identities is what explains their transnational activities, partially at least. It is worth mentioning that integration in the "host" and returning to home are not mutually exclusive as they were in the previous approach; rather, they coexist as two fluid processes, within the frame of transnationalism. Return/nonreturn forges a complex mixed process (Capo 2015; Omata 2013).

Homemaking

Finally, the homemaking approach refers to home as a continuously reloaded concept with meanings. In this approach, being out of or within homelands does not matter that much, contrary to the previous approaches. Home is an *abstract* space, whose boundaries are themselves changeable, negotiable, and reshapeable as refugees' identities are always constructed. Homemaking, then, is directly related to meaning making of belonging and identification (Liu 2014; Tete 2012). Differently stated, home is a multiple and fluctuant concept, apart from being a constant territory, culture, or idea.

Homemaking not only "omits" the boundaries between host and home places but also trespasses the concept of home itself. Home turns into a blurry place (not just its boundaries) and becomes an essential element of negotiating and forging the refugees' self-identity in a context of a continuous loading of meanings (see Identity Process Theory: Breakwell 2001; Timotijevic and Breakwell 2000; Vignoles, Chrysochoou, and Breakwell 2002). Hence, self-identity surpasses agency in shaping the intention on return in this approach.

The four approaches are not mutually exclusive, despite the fact that they are presented separately. We can find some of them presented together in one study. For example, Tezcan (2019) demarcates three factors to predict the desire of home return: the experienced xenophobia and identification with host and home countries (integration approach), economic success (NE theory, failure-success approach), and transnational activities (transnationalism approach). He found that xenophobia experienced in a host country, identification with home, failure in making economic success, and engaging in transnational activities are all positively associated with a stronger desire to return home.

In the next section, I show how these four approaches can be coherently coalesced.

Table 12.1. The Four Approaches and Their Conceptualization of Place and Identity-Agency in Terms of Shaping the Home Return Intention.

The Approach	Place: Home and the “Host”	Identity-Agency
Failure-success	Only the “host” matters	Only agency matters
Integration	Both are important	Agency matters as does identity
Transnationalism	Both are important and are practiced together (regardless of the distance)	Agency and identity matter equally
Homemaking	The two are melded, forming one “conceptual” unit	Self-identity matters the most

Table made by Samer Sharani.

Building a New Model on Home Return

After presenting the similarities and demarcating the differences between the four approaches, identity-agency and place are the wide concepts I am using in order to build a comprehensive model. Place is linked to agency since it enables a wider or narrower range of an individual’s alternative tools and objectives. For example, infrastructure in one place could be widely deteriorated while it is developed in another (Pretty, Chipuer, and Bramston 2003). Place is also linked to identity by giving meaning to a person’s life and anchoring her/himself to a specific culture, norms, and social identity that dwell in that place (Cuba and Hummon 1993; Kumsa 2006).

As table 12.1 shows, the four approaches differ in terms of how they conceptualize place and identity-agency. Patently, either identity is weighed more than agency, they are equally important, or agency is what shapes the intention of returning home more than identity. Place differs across these approaches according to how they conceptualize the boundaries between home and the “host”; are the boundaries fixed between two separate places (home/host) or blurred as the two places are almost obscured together in one “abstract” place?

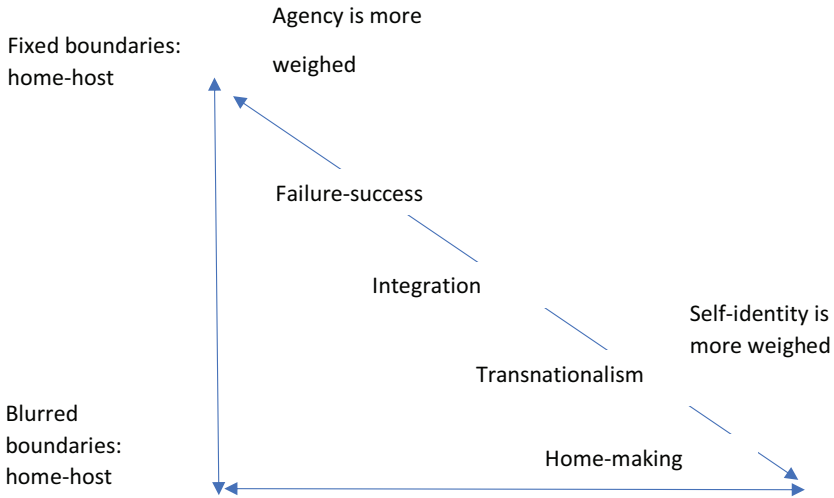


Figure 12.1. Projecting the Four Approaches on Two Dimensions, Place and Identity-Agency. © Samer Sharani.

By projecting these approaches on the place and identity-agency concepts, on the one hand, we find that the more an approach dwells on the concepts of identity and blurry boundaries of home/host, the more it is close to the *pure* homemaking approach. On the other hand, the more an approach gives heft to the concepts of agency and clear-cut boundaries of home/host, the more it is close to the pure failure-success approach (figure 12.1).

At this point, we can think of identity-agency as a nexus with two poles. The agency pole becomes more weighted when refugees carve their intention by asserting terms such as *ability, capabilities, control, livelihood, guaranteed future, efficacy, and security*. Whereas, asserting themes of *belonging, one’s group, ethics, nostalgia, self, nation, religion, values, and belief-system* shifts the balance to the other pole of the nexus: self-identity. Place also can be pictured as a nexus with two poles: blurry or fixed boundaries of home/host (figure 12.2).

After explaining the methodology, I will analyze Syrian refugees’ narratives as hinged on these two nexuses.

Methodology and Narrative Analysis

This study uses narrative analysis in its endeavor to answer the research question. Narrative analysis, and qualitative methods generally, allows for going forward and backward between different concepts and across different

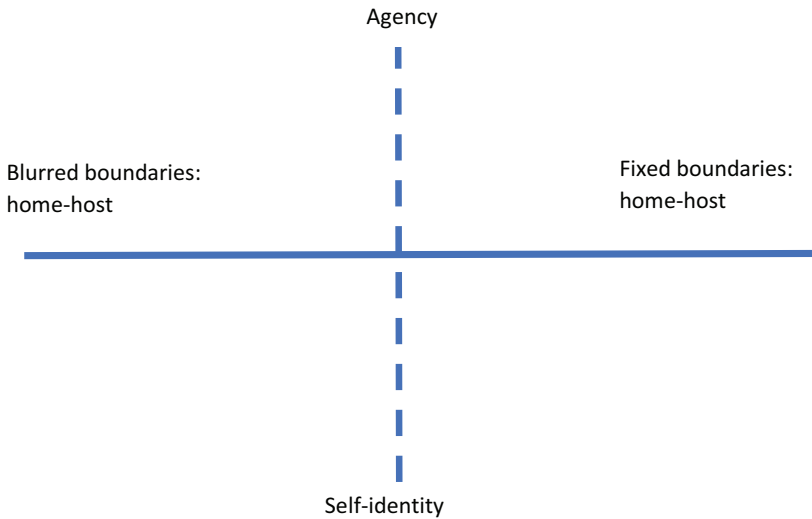


Figure 12.2. The Four Poles of the Two Dimensions. © Samer Sharani.

levels of depth during data collections. The topic of this study is complex. It lacks a general acceptable framework, and the different approaches and theories used to tackle it have resulted in divergent and—sometimes—contradictory conclusions. The picture of refugees' home return in the context of civil wars is, therefore, fuzzy, especially considering that the civil war in Syria is still ongoing.

I conducted twenty-one interviews (individual narratives) with Syrians in Istanbul, Germany, and Sweden between February and September 2019. All the interviewees are Syrian refugees who live or had lived in Istanbul in the wake of the civil war's breakout in 2011. The sample consisted of two types of Syrians, those who still live in Istanbul and those who had lived there and moved to Europe later. The sample is purposive, yet I sought to make it represent different Syrian groups in terms of gender, religion, educational level, and age (for more details on the sample, review the appendix). In total, every interview lasted between thirty and seventy-five minutes and was conducted face-to-face, via WhatsApp or Skype. Interviews were held in Arabic, recorded, and transcribed, then *thematically*⁶ analyzed (Clarke and Braun 2017; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006; Tuckett 2005). No translation was needed since the researcher's native language is Arabic.

The collected data are narratives. *Narrative* is defined as a story told by a person on his or her own life and experiences, but it is not merely an alignment of events in a time sequence; this is a chronicle, not a narrative (Nilson

2011). A story intended to be a narrative should (1) depict the events and experiences lived by the narrator and (2) filter the most salient events to be narrated. That is, someone cannot tell everything s/he has been exposed to; rather, s/he selects what s/he thinks the most important events to tell in terms of her/his identity, worldview, and morality. Narrative also includes (3) interpretive elements of the experienced events and life. Finally, (4) narrative puts lived fragmented events, ideas, and emotions in a connected, meaningful whole (Brockmeier 2001, 2000; Bruner 2001; Josselson 2006; Mankowski and Rappaport 1995; Nilson 2001). Narrative analysis, I argue, is better than conducting (semi)structured interviews because it enables the respondents to speak freely, as if they are telling stories.

In this regard, it is noteworthy to determine the precise type of narrative this study pursues, the “small story.” *Small story* is defined by Georgakopoulou (2006) as an umbrella term covering a gamut of shared events: future events, ongoing events, and *deferral of tellings and refusal of tellings*. Small stories can be narratives of small events in terms of period or imagined events that did not happen yet but are expected to in the future. The small story concept paves the way for researchers to dig deeply into the narrator’s self.

Deferred and refused-to-tell *small stories* or narratives are important because they unearth contradictions within the narrator’s self. Traditionally, narrative is seen as a *coherent* whole, clean from discrepancies; even if the narrator has many contradictions within her/himself, s/he narrates in a coherent way (Hanninen 2004; Kraus 2006; Schank and Abelson 1995). In this traditional vein, coherence in narrative is a critical criterion because narrative functions as a conveyer and generator of meaning, making life seem nonrandom and reasonable (Baumeister and Newman 1995; Bruner 1998). Thus, having incoherence within a narrative is indicative of meaningless elements within the narrative, which negates its function. Nevertheless, other scholars have argued that we analytically can find incoherencies within blatantly coherent narratives (Hermans 2000). Precisely, *untold stories* (small stories) are the places where incoherencies exist (Schank and Abelson 1995). These incoherencies are unavoidable. First, the self is not a pure unit; rather, it is multiple-selves (Kraus 2006); second, self-narrative is not confined to the inner-self but is interwoven with various others. The other members of the community do matter essentially as they—with the individual narrator—form the cultural repertoire (Bruner 1998; Nilson 2001), and self-narrative itself borrows its elements from this repertoire (Feldman 2001).

Digging within incoherencies of narratives becomes a source of rich information to be analyzed. It could channel the analyst to the source of these incoherencies, going beyond the “superficial” coherent narrative and trying to unearth the schemata or structure of the narrative, which is important to grasp a deep understanding of the complicated, fleeting reality (Brockmeier and Harre 2001).

Syrians' Narratives in Turkey: Staying, Resettlement, or Home Return

In the rest of this study, I will analyze Syrian refugees' narratives, which fit into two broad categories: first, their perceptions of Turkey and Europe as two alternatives of refuging; and second, their perceptions of home per se, their intentions to return or not, and the ways by which they justify their intentions.

Turkey vis-à-vis Europe

All the interviewees narrated their experiences in Turkey (more precisely, Istanbul) in light of comparing them to their real experiences or imaginations of Europe. This case could be attributed to the fact that being in Turkey invokes a potential ability to take refuge in Europe, so both Turkey and Europe form a domain of refugeehood. Deciding to stay in Turkey or leave for Europe is justified by this comparison. Such justification is necessary because it alludes to choosing the place where the refugees' identities and agencies will be exercised, where to live is an essential decision for human lives.

Out of the twenty-one interviewees, nine have presented Turkey as a mere *passage* to Europe. Turkey is a place to be passed—they either passed to Europe or could not. Delal, a thirty-year-old woman who lives in Sweden now, said, “Turkey was a window only. ... I decided to travel to Europe before I came to Turkey. ... There [in Turkey], I felt suffocated and stranger ... no one was around but two Syrians. ... I had to stay for two years there because I needed money to send to my family [in Syria] and to save for smuggling to Europe.”

Turkey is a passage to Europe not only because of its geographical proximity but also because people can find jobs in Turkey, save money, and send it to their families (remittance), which all play an important role in the migration process. Interestingly, those who described Turkey as a passage focused on the difficulties they had faced there and attributed these difficulties to the place, Turkey, which helped them only to pass through, not to stay. Most of these difficulties are in line with what was mentioned early, such as the absence of monthly allowance, the practical difficulties of getting job permits, and the lack of full refugee status.⁷ Ahmad, a Syrian Kurdish refugee who has been living in Turkey since 2013 said, “I am at thirty-three, but I feel that I am at twenty-three ... not because I feel younger but because I lost ten years in Turkey.” Maed, another Syrian who had lived in Turkey for two years before migrating to Sweden, said, “If I had felt safe with a guaranteed future in Turkey, I would have never left it.” Another refugee, the thirty-five-year-old Zehlan who lives in Germany now, described the beauty adherent to Istanbul, although he was forced to leave: “In Turkey, I was able

to eat, but I always felt pain because I can eat while my parents cannot. So, I was in deep sadness. ... Istanbul is a beautiful city, I miss it. There were a lot of activities that bounded me to the city, but there was no support [state support] for us, then I traveled to Berlin.”

For refugees such as these, agency is weighed over identity because they assess Turkey in terms of what enables or restricts them, and they establish their arguments on the potential place where agency (not identity) could be better fulfilled, i.e., Europe. Identity does not seem important in their referring to Turkey or to Europe, or in making the decision of staying or leaving. Regarding the notion of place, as having blurred or fixed boundaries between Syria (the home) and Turkey (the passage), these refugees implicitly tend to see places with fixed boundaries, in spite of some transnational activities such as remittance. Refugees are neither engaged in *serious* transnational activities nor actively involved in narrative practices to define home or even question it. This is expected since identity is almost absent in the narratives about Turkey as a passage. Additionally, this fixity of perceiving the place might help the refugees to keep the home astray far enough from their thinking as much as possible, because home is basically narrated as a trauma (however, we will see later that identity is kept silent but not absent). Delal asked me during her narrative, “Could you write down cursing words ... I want to say about Syria?” and Zehlan described his experience in Syria just before coming to Turkey as, “When I left Syria, I was in big trouble. ... Because I was kidnapped ... I was mentally and emotionally destroyed.”

Contrary to those who pictured Turkey as a passage to Europe, others presented Turkey as a better place for exercising agency and identity compared to Europe. In this case, a voluntary stay in Turkey has ensued. Transnational activities, which are available for Syrians in Istanbul, such as meeting in Syrian social centers, working in Arabic schools, and attending Arabic-speaking mosques, compose *one* factor satisfying agency and identity exercises. The other factor is, ironically, engendered by the *absence* of a robust integration policy toward refugees in Turkey, such as compulsory attendance of language schools, monthly allowance, a policy of integration in the job market, and a policy of housing. This absence gives refugees a wider space to prime their morality as being self-dependent, hard workers to survive, and freer to exercise their identity. Arwa, a twenty-three-year-old woman who has been living in Turkey since 2015, clearly expressed, “Here [in Turkey] you convey Syria with you because no one cares about you [state does not care]. However, in Europe it is not the case; you must integrate, then either you do not and become isolated or you integrate without thinking and you will become skinned out from the Syrian community.”

For Arwa, transnational activities in Istanbul made her more confident, giving her higher self-esteem: “The first time I got out of my home I went to a social center for Syrians run by an American woman who helped me a

lot. I learned English, then I enrolled in a university, which gave me a great hope; later I met a Syrian girl studying with me, so I did not feel alone anymore. ... I work in an Arabic school, and I am very successful in my work. Now, I have progressed very much. ... I am in a place (position) and my peers, in Syria, are in a far lower place.”

Twenty-eight-year-old Mohammad explained that his identity is safer in Turkey than in Europe, and he can successfully fulfill his agency: “Here, I discovered that every day I develop ... also, here you can practice your religion because there are religious lessons in Arabic in the near mosque, and all my [Syrian] friends are here with me. ... But you know in Europe, you will be alone, and there is very much sexual freedom, so you know ... you can do a sin... this is not the case in Istanbul.”

Alep, who is twenty-six years old and living in Istanbul, made a short and clear statement to express his idea about the great opportunity for fulfilling his agency in Turkey: “In Europe you are refugee-refugee, here you are productive-refugee [namely, you need to work to live since there is no state-supported aids].” Similarly, Alaa, a thirty-four-year-old man in Istanbul, explained, “Here I am struggling a lot, it is difficult, not as in Europe where everything is easy. ... Nevertheless, after years you will be proud that you have done a great job in your exile [in Turkey].”

These quotations show that those refugees can exercise their morality (related to self-identity) and their jobs and capabilities (related to agency) in one place, where both identity and agency are facilitated by less restrictive integration policies and more transnational activities. By the “one place,” I mean that refugees perceive the notion of place as having blurred boundaries; Turkey (the host) and Syria (the home) are blended and cognitively brought together throughout transnational activities and via identifying the self-identity as better fitting in Turkey (e.g., through Islamic practices).

Bai, a thirty-three-year-old Syrian woman in Istanbul, did not *directly* express the exercising of her identity and agency *in* Turkey as the others did; rather, she expressed this exercising *vicariously* through Europe as a place of agencyless-ness. In other words, Europe is what gives meaning to her self-identity and empowers her agency exactly because she did not go there: “Turkey was a nice place, a new place, an attractive place to be digested [by a newcomer], but as a Syrian escaped the war, you cannot [enjoy the place]. ... Of course, I was happy with [the provided] electricity, water, and internet ... but still, fear was a big title, we did not have the luxury to buy a bottle of water for one lira. ... In Turkey I am not a refugee, and I do not have the right to be a refugee in Europe; others have this right more than me. ... Europe is for these people ... not me ... even if I failed in Turkey, I would come back to Syria, not go to Europe.”

Bai exercises her morality and agency by refusing to take a European “seat” from an “eligible” refugee who is more vulnerable than her. Bai’s

account implies that Europe is perceived as a place for agencyless people because of the provided livelihood there.

By looking at the narratives of Syrian refugees who described Turkey as a mere passage and applied for asylum in Europe, I argue that their agencies are not fully fulfilled *if* they perceive the place concept as fixed. Differently put, refugees' agency in Europe is based on self-contradiction and *inconsistency* between their identities and agencies. Delal, in Sweden now, described the most preminent moment of her agency fulfilment as following: "When I was in Germany, in the camp, I made a revolution there, I led seventy-five men behind me ... do you know why? Because they [German employees] cut off our salaries [allowances], so we demanded our rights. Later, the authority thanked me and invited me to speak in the [local] parliament ... because you know ... I am a woman, from Syria, I am supposed to be suppressed there. In spite of that, I made a revolution."

The importance of this moment in Delal's narrative is generated from (1) being a woman from Syria, helpless and agentless, and (2) having the law violated in Germany by the employees. Therefore, her agency is *not* exercised *within* the German system/place, but *out* of this system/place, i.e., her agency is expressed by the contradiction between in-system and out-system, between Syria and Germany. Her agency emerged in that moment because of a crack in applying the German law, which is not normal in the German system.

Another Syrian refugee in Sweden, Maed, expressed another contradiction between the job he does not like and the safety ensuing from this job: "Look! Here you have nothing to fear ... I work in a tough job, I do not like it, but I am ready to work even in garbage because here you work to guarantee your future ... because they will pay for you when you are old or jobless." Maed perceives his agency as contingent on vulnerability, which implicitly stems from being a Syrian (he said before that he would have not left Turkey, had Turkey guaranteed his future).

To sum up, Syrians, who narrated Turkey as a better place than Europe, perceived the notion of place as blurry, not fixed. Thus, the boundaries between Turkey and Syria—as places—are porous (socially, culturally, and economically), and refugees' identities and agencies are "well" expressed and exercised within these blurry places (figure 12.3a). On the contrary, Syrians who narrated Europe as a better place perceived the place as more fixed, Europe vs. Syria, with a clear edge between them. Furthermore, their agencies and identities are inconsistently expressed (although unconsciously); that is, they seek agencies' fulfilment in Europe while they still identify themselves as Syrians (while Syria is framed as an abhorrent place). More importantly, their agencies are preminent (or just exercised) as much as they are poor and weak Syrians. Simply put, agencies of those who preferred Europe *are* in a place, Europe, and their self-identities *are* in another *separately fixed* place, Syria (figure 12.3b).

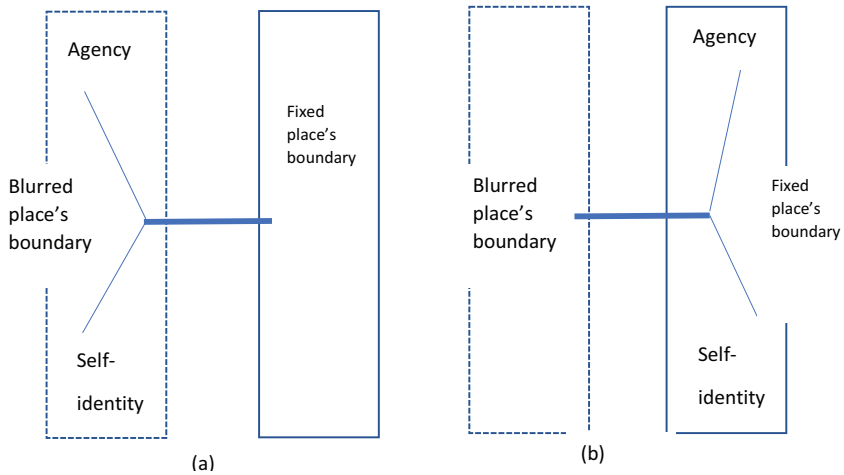


Figure 12.3. Representing the Narratives: (a) agency and self-identity exercised in the same place, Turkey (blurred boundaries between Turkey and Syria), and refugees prefer to stay in Turkey; (b) agency and self-identity exercised in different places, which have fixed boundaries (between Europe and Syria), and refugees prefer to leave for Europe. © Samer Sharani.

Home: Return or No Return

After presenting how Syrians comprehended Turkey and Europe, I will now bring the notion of home to the analysis's foci. Syria is negatively described by all of the interviewees: it is the place of fear, pressure; it meant nothing to some refugees; and it is stripped from being a "land," shrinking to be merely a social network. However, we cannot induce whether these refugees belong to Syria or do not. They, more importantly, *contradictorily* picture the home, as we will see.

Must, a twenty-five-year-old Syrian man who has been living in Istanbul and Edirne since 2014, said, "I do not feel any nostalgia. ... all my friends are killed or emigrated. ... All people who have stayed in Syria are forced to stay; they all prefer to leave it." Latif, a twenty-five-year-old Syrian man in Istanbul, had a similar feeling: "Look! I had lived for twenty-five years in Syria, where is it now? Gone! I belong to people not to place [land]."

Family occupies a special position among the social networks that give home its meaning. Zehlan, who now lives in Germany, said, "In Istanbul, early, I did not care about Syria, it meant nothing to me, only my family meant something to me. ... I even wished my mom die soon to relieve my pain, to relieve my Self, to cut all the relations with Syria."

And for Ahmad, Syria has no legitimate existence as he explained, “Syria has no history. I do not recognize something called Syria. What is Syria? Who controls Umayyad Square [the center of Damascus] controls Syria [he points to military coups].” Another interviewee, Arwa, had her own tragedy, bloodier than the others as she allegedly claimed: “The [Syrian] army attacked the town, they raped women, and threw them from windows, they killed men, and even they split a man into two parts ... a savage pain and fear my family experienced is what contributed to our decision to leave Syria.”

Nevertheless, Arwa refused to leave at the beginning of the civil war; she said that people have paid huge amounts of money to leave the country. She blamed them because she thought, “We were in a revolution. We should have never left. ... How can we leave in the critical moment? They cannot kill all of us.”

The place of Syria, seemingly, expels Syrians *by its “nature”* more than by political and other related circumstances, speaking at the fundamental level. Clearly according to Bai’s saying, “We are the Syrians who cannot live in Syria, that is our identity,” it is the identity that pushes Syrians out, more than other political or economic factors. Also, in Arwa’s narrative above, the people and not the attack by the army per se are blamed for leaving the country. This view of home could be attributed to the nature of civil war, as circumstances become inseparable from the place itself. If it is the case, how could Syrians come back? And to which “Syria” may they return?

Tracing the “short narratives” allows for detecting the contradictions within narratives. Contradictions were present in most of the narratives when the interviewees highlighted the notion of home, describing it inconsistently along their narratives, sometimes *consciously*. Zehlan, for example, who lived in Istanbul for two years and then smuggled himself to Germany, denied “Syrian” as an identity when he was in Istanbul: “Syria meant nothing to me,” he said. But, later during the narrative he consciously showed a contradicted conceptualization of Syria and re-narrated the home as following: “Syria is the place of my tortured childhood, it is the place of bullshit passing down from a generation to another. ... Its historical sites are where people pee, these sites are your identity [O Syrian!] This pain is in my bag I carry ... Syria has changed ... I miss the strong, warm hug, I miss Syria.”

Bai consciously expressed, “I do not long for Syria, but when I started to forget the aspects of Damascus, I felt afraid.” And Alaa has an unconscious contradiction regarding the home: “Feeling of home is dead,” later he said, “the memories in home link me to there.” Then he added after relating some other details, “I am proud of being a Syrian.” Another Syrian, thirty-three-year-old Zeir, living in Istanbul, unconsciously expressed similar contradictions: “Who asks me, ‘Who are you?’ I say Muslim, human. I am not Syrian, I am not proud of being Syrian.” Later he adds, “I long for my room,

I miss my parents, friends, the farms.” Then he says, “But I cannot go back, I have children, so I have to look after them, it is a must, you know ... Syria will not be a good place ...”

Zeir’s narrative shows that (1) he would like to return to (2) a place he hates, (3) but he cannot because he must raise his children away from the “bad” place. This contradiction in narrating home is, I argue, generated from perceiving identity and agency as exercised in separately fixed places, the host country and the home country. Agency is fulfilled in the “host,” while identity is formed and anchored in the home, and both places are fixed in boundaries (that is why they are separated). Literature strongly discerns agency and identity as distinguishable from each other but entangled (Giddens 1991, 1984; Hitlin and Elder 2007). Therefore, distancing them generates this type of contradiction. Practically, we notice that lacking transnational activities and “home-making” thinking fuel this distancing.

When this contradiction is unconsciously experienced, some refugees express a very clear liminal status, as Samiha, a 34-year-old woman living in Istanbul, said: “You do not want to stay in Turkey, but you do, you want to go to Europe, but you cannot, you long for memories in Syria but you are far away. You live in three places at the same time, and at the same time you live in no place.”

However, others do not have this strong and clear status of liminality when they are more engaged in transnational activities, more identified as Muslims, and less distanced from their identity as Syrians. In other words, identity and agency tend to be anchored in the *same* place, which is defined as a place with blurry boundaries—Turkey is almost blended with Syria. The religious Mohammad, who is satisfied with his agency in Istanbul and with his identity by attending, for example, religious Arabic lessons, said, “If I bring my mother here, I will never go back, because 90 percent of the Syrians in Syria are bad persons ... but if Turkey annexes Aleppo, I will go back to Aleppo.” Later he added, “But even if I take the Turkish nationality, I will teach my children that they are Arab Syrians.”

Despite his engagement in transnational activities, Mohammad has a latent contradiction in picturing home, to some extent. As in the cases of Mohammad and Samiha, refugees who unconsciously embed contradictions in their narratives of home are either not sure about home return or they are certain of non-return.

On the contrary, those who explicitly extracted the contradiction to the surface of their narratives consciously (such as Bai; see below) expressed their deep desire to return home, but not as a simple movement. Rather, home return is a project that contributes to rebuilding the home. Bai, for example, said, “I plan to go back to rebuild. Before the war there was no hope, but after the huge damage, hope could exist. You can be active, even those who are in Europe must build bridges to Syria. ... I mean everyone should invest in Syria.”

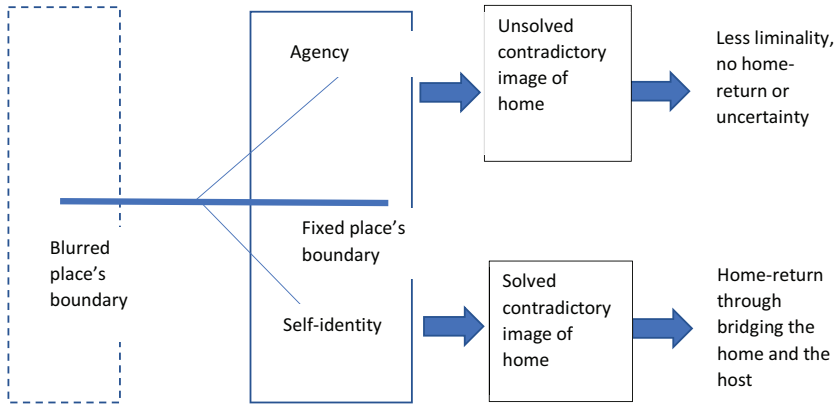


Figure 12.4. The Mechanisms of (Non)Home Return Desire. © Samer Sharani.

Zehlan said something similar: “I will come back only with strong knowledge. I will go back to invest in the society.” Both of them try to solve the contradiction between identity and agency by investing more in homemaking. Thus, places are conceptualized as *actively* blurry; Bia and Zehlan laboriously bridge the two places. Home return then becomes a result of this solved contradiction mechanism.

To sum up, every interviewed refugee expressed a level of contradiction in picturing home. Those not engaged in solving this contradiction expressed various levels of liminality and showed no desire for home return or were uncertain. By contrast, those engaged in solving the contradiction showed a desire to bridge the host and home and to make a home return (figure 12.4).

Conclusion

Syrian refugees in Turkey have three alternatives: staying in Turkey, moving to Europe, or returning home. This study sought to probe into how Syrian refugees accomplish their intentions about these three alternatives.

By using a theory-building method, synthesizing different theoretical frameworks on home return—as a wide theme—this study suggests a theoretical model used to analyze refugees’ narratives. This model consists of two nexuses: identity-agency and place. Identity-agency nexus is composed

of two dimensions, self-identity and agency. Although they are inextricable, someone can assert one at the expense of the other while shaping an intention and practicing his/her identity and agency at the everyday level. Therefore, these two dimensions appear as opposite poles on one axis. The other nexus, place, is defined as an abstract container that coalesces social and cultural norms, infrastructure, social relationships, and the like. In other words, place contains what makes the self-identity and agency possible to be exercised and actualized. Also, this nexus has two opposite poles: fixed boundaries between places (the “host” and the home) and blurred ones. The fixed comprehension of place deals with the “host” and the home as two separate places; you are either there or here. By contrast, a blurry place means that the “host” and home could be practiced and experienced at the same time through transnational activities and engaged in home-making practices.

Analyzing the narratives that were collected from Syrian refugees (who are still in Turkey, or who once lived in Turkey before moving to Europe) resulted in what follows. First, those who highlighted their identities and agencies equally and pictured the place’s boundaries as blurry preferred to stay in Turkey over fleeing to Europe, while those who primed their agencies over self-identities preferred Europe over Turkey. Second, among Syrian refugees in Europe, some of them pictured the place’s boundaries as fixed, splitting the “host” from the home, which resulted in establishing their agencies on a self-contradictory ground. S/he fulfils her/his agency as much as s/he is a weak Syrian, whereas her/his self-identity as Syrian is denied. This study tried to show that integration per se is not what impacts the refugees’ decisions but a mechanism lurking behind it. How refugees “interpret” an integration policy is due to how they understand their agencies, self-identities, and place.

Third, regarding home return, all interviewees depicted the home negatively. By talking about the home, Syrians showed various levels of contradiction, which again emanate from representing place’s boundaries as fixed and anchoring the self-identities and agencies in the two separated places (home/host). This contradiction sometimes was cognitively pulled to the surface of narrative and sometimes was kept silent and unrecognized. Those who recognized this contradiction and tried to solve it expressed a clear desire to return home, contrary to the others who were unaware of this contradiction. It is worthy to mention that home return was understood as a complex and laborious process that inherently includes efforts to bridge both the home and host places, the place of agency’s fulfilment and the place of self-belonging.

Finally, this study is not without limitations. Besides the small sample, which threatens the results’ generalization, operationalizing the concepts is an arduous task. Future research may devote more efforts to find more concrete

themes that denote the concepts of fixed/blurred place’s boundaries, bridging host and home places, and the relationship between self-identity and agency. More importantly, this study ignores those who have lost *forever* their houses and properties in Syria due to compensation or damage. Accounting for the complex situation in Syria will be necessary for future research to illuminate a more precise picture on Syrians’ intention of home return.

Appendix: The Research Sample

The research sample is a purposive sample, consisting of twenty-one Syrian refugees. They range between twenty and fifty years old. During interviews, I assured them that their personal information would not be shared or revealed to anyone or to any institution. Besides those who shared their names with me voluntarily, I did not ask for their full names. This procedure is important in the Syrian context, making the respondents feel comfortable. All the interviews were recorded and kept in a safe place. The interviews were transcribed immediately, then the original voice record was deleted. Only, the transcribed interviews were kept for further analysis on the researcher’s personal computer. All these procedures were explained to the respondents.

The respondents’ ages range between twenty and fifty years old. The rest of their personal attributes are presented in the table below.

Table 12.2. Personal Attributes of Syrian Refugees.

	Sex			Education			Occupation		Religion and ethnicity		
	Total	Female	Male	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Unskilled	Skilled	Sunni Arab	Sunni Kurdish	Minorities, unknown, or atheist
Refugees Number	21	8	13	2	12	7	4	17	12	1	8

The sample’s distribution between Turkey, Germany, and Sweden is as follows:

	Total	Turkey	Sweden	Germany
Refugees Number	21	11	2	8

Table made by Samer Sharani.

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Notes

1. Syrians who are highly educated (doctors, engineers, etc.) and who have established businesses in Turkey are more likely to get Turkish nationality.
2. Although literature usually uses “repatriation” instead of “home return,” I prefer the latter term because the European Union began to use the term “effective return” to indicate sending refugees/migrants back to their homes (see European Council: EU Migration Policy <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/migratory-pressures/>).
3. For example, the European Union asserts that successful integration of Syrians (and refugees generally) is much less costly than failed or no integration. So, the EU member states apply effective policies to help refugees integrate in the educational system and the job market, supporting them with housing, monthly allowance, and the like (European Commission 2016).
4. Methodologically, it is worth noting that I did not come up with these two concepts prior to the analysis of the four approaches. Rather, these two concepts were extracted after making the analysis, i.e., they are *ex post* not *ex ante* concepts. However, I elaborate on them prior to the analysis to ease the reading.
5. This framework focuses on migrants, not refugees (i.e., on those who had emigrated for economic reasons, not because of persecution). Nevertheless, refugees and migrants are two overlapping categories (Erdal and Oeppen 2018).
6. Thematic analysis refers to revealing patterns of meanings that systematically unfold across the qualitative data. It allows the researcher to adjust the theoretical model after immersing it in the data, i.e., it allows for deductive-inductive method.
7. As mentioned earlier, Syrians in Turkey are under the Temporary Protection System, and they are not generally considered refugees as the case in Europe.

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