

# Immigration problem in istanbul



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The immigration problem has always been one of the most important debated issues in Turkey, especially after 1950s. It makes big cities more crowded and it also brings many problems together. These problems include economic, social, and environmental issues. Particularly Istanbul is in a great danger with the huge rate of immigration it takes. The city has not enough area for sheltering its continuous growing population as it has not also enough resources to feed them.

It is very unhealthy to enlarge as rapidly as Istanbul with immigration because it brings economic, environmental, and social problems. Istanbul is the most urbanized and crowded city of Turkey. For almost 20 years, it takes internal migration with its economic and social opportunities; therefore, the city, which becomes one of the urbanized cities around the world, grows in an uncontrolled manner day by day. The population of Istanbul, which was not even 1 million in 1950, is now over 14 million.

After a rapid industrialization, a high level of immigration is normal and unavoidable for cities and it has some advantages as providing labor force but the migration to Istanbul get over the limits. According to Istanbul Governorship's data, over 62% of people who live in Istanbul were born outside of the city. Since it is common that Turkish families are crowded, most of immigrant families have more than two children generally.

This year, the prime minister of Turkey, Tayyip Erdogan advised the community to make at least three children in order to protect the nation's young population, at the time of his speech about International Women's day. The elite class of Turkey may not be affected by these events but the rural side of Turkey, and the lower class of the cities, mostly immigrants are

influenced by the people whom they see as their idol. According to the high fertility factor, the native Istanbul population has become a minority in their homeland (Erman 541).

It causes many identity problems beside its social and economic aspect. The mass migration to Istanbul caused economic problems such as inadequate shelter and unemployment. In “ The Human Declaration on Human Settlements”, it is underlined that deterioration of conditions of shelter and human settlements particularly in developing countries has reached crisis proportion (591). As we know that Turkey is a developing country with its industrializing economy, the problems as I mentioned above are common in Turkey, especially in urbanized cities.

Istanbul, the most industrialized city of Turkey, owns problems related to the excessive population concentration such as homelessness, increasing poverty, unemployment, inadequate resources, lack of basic infrastructure and services (592). Migrants who come to Istanbul for its job opportunities generally belong to the low educated agrarian society. They come to this big city with the dream of being a part of rich and modern urban. However, migrants compose the lower class of Istanbul with their lower education and economic situation.

With their inadequate qualifications, they can work in low wage jobs. The squatter settlements issue begins with this problem. People who can't earn enough money to buy or rent apartments they live in squatter settlements. Moreover, the other side of Istanbul, the welfare class which manage the industry becomes richer continuously. Because of this dual economy in

Istanbul as all other urbanized cities in third world countries, the difference, and consequently the tension between rich and poor increase continuously.

The labor class, which works hard, however cannot sustain their family become more aggressive day by day. The bloody 1 May (Labor Day) incidents can be explained with the rebel of this class. Crime rate. The mass migration to Istanbul and the rapid social changes occurred in the city caused the problematic issue "integration" of rural migrants into the urban society (Erman 541). They move into Istanbul, they become physically "urbanite" but since they cannot accommodate themselves in city life, continuing their rural traditions, they cannot become urbanite socially.

They resist changing or they are forced to be an alien. As they live in communes, generally in squatter settlement areas, with the group psychology, they live their own culture as a synthesis of the rural and the urban. As they cannot become an urbanite, they don't detach their relations with their rural villages and community. The concept of "hemsericilik" in Turkish language, it means clientalism, became one of the most important characteristics to evaluate a person. Largely, migrants compose the lower class of Istanbul with their lower education level and economical conditions.

Their economic situation and their education have a strong correlation. Since their language and qualifications are lower, they cannot find high-wage jobs to increase their economic level. Poverty strengthens the alienation of them. They see the luxurious houses, cars, and lifestyles on the streets or on TV and as they can't reach this lifestyle by working, they start to search the

short way to own this shining life. The growth rate of crime in Istanbul is the result of this desire.