

Unveiling the Invisible

Capabilities and Well-being of Undocumented
Syrian Migrants in Istanbul



LUND UNIVERSITY

Zeynep Bastıyalı

May 2022

Department of Political Science

MSc in Development Studies

SIMZ31

Supervisor: Laura Landorff

Abstract

The number of irregular migrants increased in Turkey, especially after the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan of 2016. This study examines the situation of undocumented Syrian migrants in terms of their capabilities and approaches to the well-being of this particular group from the normative framework of the capability approach with a specific focus on material conditions. Building on the Capability Approach, this study concerns individual perspectives on their journey, freedoms, deprivations, and realization of capabilities and well-being. This study uses qualitative methodology applied in this study by gathering narratives through seven semi-structured in-depth interviews with undocumented Syrian migrants in Istanbul. The collected data is analyzed through Narrative Thematic Analysis. The analysis is centered on the theoretical concepts and themes that emerge from the stories. This study revealed that living without documents highly impaired the well-being of the migrants living in Istanbul based on their material living conditions. However, being undocumented provided such material conditions that they could meet their basic needs, which they see as the first step toward their well-being. Feeling at home and safe and being around people like them played a vital role in improving one's well-being. By stating that insufficient income is one of the primary causes of undocumented migrants' capability deprivation, the study concludes that migrating to Europe to improve their material conditions, followed by having more agency and expansion of capabilities, and sustainably having better life conditions has been considered a way of improving well-being.

Keywords: Capability Approach, Undocumented Migrants in Turkey, Well-being, Freedoms, Narrative Analysis

Words: 20,303

Acknowledgement

I dedicate this dissertation to the people who lost their lives due to inhumane migration policies and to my dear grandpa, who died right before I moved to Sweden. I made it şekerim!

I would like to present my sincerest gratitude to the undocumented migrants in Istanbul who trusted me and shared their stories with me.

Writing a dissertation is not an easy task. I would like to present my gratitude to my best friend Ezgi Mangura for being the best guiding spirit for my thesis. Her never-ending support enabled me to complete this dissertation. Sharing my dreams with you is such a relief. We'll make it, together! I can't imagine a future in Sweden without you in it.

I would also like to thank my friends Leni Lidemann and Lisa Börjel for being so generous with their time and reading countless drafts. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your academic and emotional support; Volkan Muyan, Cihan Özorhan, and my cousin Damla Fırat.

Trying to migrate to a new country and start a new life brings a lot of challenges. Thanks to my friends Emma Lewin, Yazan Najy, Julia Mühlhauser, and Willy Simonsson for easing my loneliness and trying to make me feel at home here with their unconditional support and love.

I would also like to thank Rasmus for being my number one cheerleader, supporting and believing me even when I didn't believe in myself. I am very grateful for his support and love. I simply couldn't have done this without him.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to give my mom and dad a big hug for their numerous sacrifices. I am wholeheartedly thankful to them for encouraging me and helping me follow my dreams. Without them, I would not have made it through my master's degree. Sizi çok seviyorum!

List of Abbreviations

CSO - Civil Society Organisation

DGMM - Directorate General of Migration Management

EU - European Union

ID - Identity Document

NGO - Non Governmental Organisation

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PDMM - Provincial Directorates for Migration Management

TPR - Temporary Protection Regime

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgement	3
List of Abbreviations	4
Table of Contents	5
1 Introduction	7
1.1 Research Question & Aim	9
1.2 Literature Review	10
1.3 Thesis Outline	14
2 Contextual Considerations	14
2.1 Historical background of Turkey's migration system	15
2.1.1 The EU- Turkey Deal as the turning point	16
2.1.2. Turkey's Shifting Migration Policies: Introducing Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR)	17
2.2 Being Undocumented in Turkey	17
2.3 Challenges to Being Undocumented in Turkey	18
2.3.1 COVID-19 Effects	18
2.3.2 Stopping of registration of Syrian migrants in Istanbul in 2018	19
3 Theoretical Framework	20
3.1 Capability Approach as a Framework	21
3.2.2. Capability Approach and its concepts: Functionings & Capabilities & Agency	25
3.3 The Ends and The Means of Development	26
3.3.1 Means and Ends: Roles of Freedoms	26
This approach treats individual freedoms as the basic building blocks as Sen phrases. Therefore, the lives of people according to what they value and what they reason to value caused by the expansion of capabilities of people is the main focus of this school of thought (Sen, 1999: 18).	26
3.3.2 Means and Ends: Unfreedoms	29
3.3.3 Means and Ends: Human Capital Approach and Human Capabilities	30
3.4 Critiques and Refinements of the Capability Approach	31
4 Methodology	33
4.1 Operationalization in relation with the Theoretical Framework	34
4.2.2 Semi-structured in-depth interviews	38
4.2.3 Sampling	40
4.2.4 Narrative Analysis	40

4.3	Limitations of this study	42
4.4	Positionality & Ethical Considerations	44
5	Analysis	46
5.1	Journey to Istanbul	47
5.2	Freedoms & Deprivations for their Well-Being	54
5.2.1	“Work is abundant in Istanbul”	55
5.2.2.	“ A roof over our head”	59
5.3	Well-Being Through Realization of Capabilities	62
5.3.1	“Standing on your own feet”	62
5.3.2	“If we want to have a better life, we have to make this place home first”	65
5.3.3	“Even a life with an ID is related to hopelessness.”	66
6	Conclusion	69
7	References	72

1 Introduction

In 2019, I was working as an assistant migration worker in a Non-Governmental Organization that assists undocumented Syrian migrants who fled to Turkey and were unable to get registration from Istanbul. While on my way to the office, I ran into the casual police control at the subway station, where they randomly check people's criminal records as part of their routine duty. Back then, the first thing that came to my mind was that the undocumented migrants coming to our office in search of assistance would be using the same route as me. Therefore, they were in great danger of being arrested if they were to take that same route to come to our office that day. Not having documents in Istanbul means having to act invisible because of the danger of getting caught by the authorities. Being 'undocumented' has to a great extent become synonymous with being a potential criminal in the Turkish State. Among the undocumented, with the greatest danger to be treated as potential criminals, are the large number of people who fled from Syria as a consequence of the outburst of the Syrian civil war.

The demonstrations against the Syrian government that broke out in March 2011 escalated and spiraled into a civil war that engulfed the whole of Syria. This has resulted in a more than decade long search for refuge in neighboring countries for many Syrians (Erdoğan, 2021: 24). Since 2014, Turkey has hosted the highest number of migrants in the world, with 3.7 million Syrians under temporary protection and approximately four million refugees and asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2022).

Four million Syrian nationals have arrived in Turkey without any local connections or knowledge of the Turkish language or local culture. As a result, for many Syrian families which have fled the violence in their home country, Turkey has become a 'temporary' home. (Özdora Akşak & Dimitrova, 2021: 1). Turkey's open-door policy had a welcoming impact on those who were fleeing at first, however, this has recently started to change , as officials stated that Turkey will prioritize creating a safe zone to send those people back (ibid:2). Turkey officially designated all Syrian refugees crossing its southern land borders as 'guests', effectively denying them an official refugee status. This is a category that neither international nor national refugee law recognises (Heck & Hess 2017:42).

Migrants arriving from Syria are required by Turkish law to register with relevant authorities to get a document known as an identity card, specifically a Temporary Protection identification card issued by Turkish authorities. In addition, they are obligated to reside in the provinces which correspond to their place of registration. (Amnesty International, 2019:9). However, the registration process has become increasingly difficult, and in some cases impossible, during the past few years. Since the end of 2017, according to Turkish lawyers, the process of registering in Istanbul has grown even more challenging (ibid:16). Those who faced severe issues during the registration process often ended up as undocumented migrants who were officially categorized as illegal, unregistered, or irregular (İçduygu 2015 cited in Genç, 2017: 119). Consequently, those belonging to this group, face the constant threat of deportation due to their status (Parla, 2011: 82). The primary reason for why the presence of undocumented migrants is particularly high in Istanbul, is that the city offers a vast array of irregular job opportunities - -compared to other cities (Leghtas, 2019:9). Because very few Syrians are able to secure work permits in Turkey, 97 percent of Syrians who work do so on the informal job market, putting them in even greater danger of detention and deportation (Amnesty International, 2019: 17).

In addition, the increased flow of undocumented Syrian migrants has resulted in a shift in the numbers of informal workers in the Turkish job market (Caro, 2020: 23; İçduygu & Diker, 2017: 32). However, previous research highly noted that the informal job opportunities not only allowed Syrians to stand on their own feet but also limited the increase in unemployment figures in Turkey due to Syrians (Erdoğan, 2021: 80). Since examining their situations from a single point of view would not be enough, the outcomes resulting from being undocumented, both as freedoms and deprivations, should be acknowledged to understand their conditions in Turkey. The factors leading to their realization of capabilities through deep diving into their material conditions must also be taken into account, which is a part of the aims of this thesis.

1.1 Research Question & Aim

To understand the research problem, Sen's (1999) capabilities approach is of value as it can aid in the examination of the well-being of the undocumented Syrian migrants in Turkey. This helps to illustrate how their capabilities affect their well-being by looking at the provisions of economic facilities and material conditions. Since Sen states that: "Freedoms of different kinds can strengthen one another" (1999:11), having social and political freedoms are intertwined with having economic freedoms. This study takes Sen's approach to labor as the starting point by stating that the primary commodity that a person may sell is their labor. As a result, a person's entitlement is based primarily on their capacity to obtain work (Eichsteller, 2021: 177).

This study focuses on the existence of economic facilities for irregular migrants in Turkey, such as access to the labor market, accommodation and how these provisions of economic facilities affect their realization of capabilities and overall well-being. Choosing Turkey as a country to investigate the well-being of undocumented migrants is due to the nature of Turkey as a host country with the most significant number of migrants, also known as its initial open-door policy.

In this study, the aim is to examine the situation of undocumented Syrian migrants in terms of their well-being and approach the development of this particular group from the normative framework of capability approach. The following research question will guide this examination:

How does being undocumented in Istanbul impair the capabilities of Syrian migrants with regard to their well-being in terms of economic facilities?

1.2 Literature Review

This study is situated in the field of development studies, exploring the developmental challenges which stem from being an undocumented migrant in Turkey. In addition, this study benefits from the frameworks shared by critical border studies by approaching the borders similar to Koshravi's (2010) conceptualization by perceiving borders as concepts that do not exist independently of us but are perpetually performed through acts and discourses.

Previous studies on the situation of irregular migration approached the issue through the production of 'irregularity' and 'criminality' of migration and migrants in relation to their stand towards borders as influential concepts that reshape the concept of irregularity (De Genova 2002; Hajer & Ambrosini 2010; Düvell 2011; Ambrosini 2015).

According to Khosravi, borders are "situated everywhere and nowhere" at the same time (2010: 2). He brings the understanding of the powerful grasp of borders to hold over realities into the discussion of how they and their interconnection with the nation-state system also constitute legitimate and illegitimate lives. The 'illegality' of border crossings are further explored by Khosravi who shows how intertwined these two concepts, border, and 'illegality', are through narratives as well as his own experience by stressing its relation with the criminalization of migration (ibid: 4). There is also other research elaborating

on the ‘illegality’ of migration by conceptualizing the problem as a theoretical problem by focusing on the legal production of the ‘illegality’ of migrants (De Genova, 2002: 419). Thus, this ‘illegality’ is argued as something constructed and patterned; they are not self-generating and arbitrary (ibid: 424). De Genova argues that: “studying undocumented migration's ‘illegality’ solely in terms of its consequences is insufficient and that it is also essential to generate historically informed accounts of the political and social processes of ‘illegalization’, which can be described as the legal production of migrant ‘illegality’” (ibid: 419).

Particularly in discussing the recent developments regarding Turkey’s border and migration regime, critical migration scholars as Ataç et al. (2017) highlight the importance of the EU – Turkey Refugee Deal of 2016¹ and recognize the deal as a turning point. However, prior to the Deal most of the research focused on the significant historical developments in the Turkish migration and border regime, and evaluated the issues starting from Turkey’s accession process to the EU, which began early 2000s. During this process, Turkey’s shift on migration policies in relation to its economic and political interest in its internal migration policies was structured in relation to the European border regime (ibid: 11).

Even though much of the literature takes the turning points in the migration policies of Turkey from the 2000s, some research emphasizes that Turkey has always been a country for migration (Kirişçi, 2007; İçduygu, 2009; Genç, 2015). The studies further highlight the ethnic nature of these migration flows since the migrants used to have Turkic-origin from the Ottoman territories which had been lost after many wars (ibid.). This was followed by the worker migration movements after the dissolution of the USSR. Therefore, Turkey has been considered a useful market for informal jobs (Yükseker, 2004:53; Akalın, 2007:210; İçduygu & Diker, 2017:22).

¹ see Chapter 2.1

A broad body of literature divides the European Border Regime into two, such as internal and external dimensions. Yet, this study leans more on the latter dimension since it covers the issue of externalization practices as well as third-country cooperation to fight against irregular migration (Bernard 2009: 202). Several studies in the literature explored the externalization of borders from varied perspectives. While most of them acknowledged the Deal as a practice of externalization of borders, there are different views on the consequences of this externalization process. Several NGOs have raised their concerns about the violation of human rights in the Turkish context, the rising vulnerability between asylum-seeking women, LGBTQ refugees, and Kurds stuck in Turkey. In fact, Turkey's policy on the refugees does not meet international legal requirements since it keeps the geographical limitation to the ratification of the 1951 UN Convention² (Haferlach & Kurban 2017:88). The EU has emphasized the need of this agreement to prevent a humanitarian disaster in Greece and the crashing down of the Schengen system. As a result, some scholars interpret the Deal as a damaging factor for the normative power the EU once held over Turkey (ibid: 91).

There are contrasting views on the interpretation of externalization politics. Some scholars emphasize the importance of the role of Turkey and the gains of the Turkish government through the Deal (Heck & Hess, 2017; Leonard & Kaunert, 2022). Leonard and Kaunert (2022:18) argue that the EU has been put in a vulnerable position by Turkey's demands. Heck & Hess (2017:52) further add to this by arguing that in contrast with the EU's policy makers' expectations, politics of externalization unintentionally created more room for maneuvering by the Turkish government (Ataç et. al., 2017: 16).

Other scholars, among them Genç, also focused on the current transformation in the migration field, in other words shifts in the migration regime and these shifts have also provided the base for the emergence of new solidarity initiatives (Genç, 2017: 18). Hajer and Ambrosini emphasized the emergence of a

² See Chapter 2.1.1

diverse group consisting of NGOs and CSOs, activists networks, and citizens to challenge the state response to irregular migration by providing undocumented migrants services that they cannot access themselves (2020: 213). In addition, some literature examines the responses of civil society organizations to forced migration in the context of Syrian migrants in Turkey (Danış & Nazlı, 2019; Boşnak, 2021). According to this research , it is vital to take into consideration that civil society's role in the field of irregular migration should not be examined in isolation from the European Union (Boşnak, 2021:312).

Much literature has a specific focus on access to the job market and tries to find solutions to ease the problem. Especially when helping migrants to increase their possibility to access the job market, to provide better services to those specific groups of people, data verification of Syrian employees would be helpful (İçduygu & Diker, 2017: 27). Because it would give more information about migrants' occupational background in Syria to help NGOs that give vocational training. Yet, those solutions are not sufficient enough to understand the problem as they often exclude undocumented migrants from the job market (ibid: 33).

The approach toward the borders of Khosravi (2010) and De Genova (2002) goes hand in hand with this thesis' position. Therefore, this thesis carries the discussion further by how the border regimes shape irregular migrants living conditions, with a focus on economic facilities. This study strongly defends the argument made by McEwen, by trying to shed light on the experiences of undocumented migrants, on the need to transform the reality refugees encounter is urgent because there is no end to the migration flows insight (2017:29). The literature review also highlights a need to contribute to the knowledge on the development and well-being of undocumented migrants in Turkey. It further accepts the challenges of reaching data and statistics about the issue due to the visibility of 'illegal' immigrants and the invisibility of the law. What makes that thesis different from the literature is the application of the capabilities approach, which reveals the importance of realizing of capabilities of undocumented Syrian

migrants in Turkey for enhancing their well-being through gathering narratives and stories from the ground.

1.3 Thesis Outline

The structure of the text is as follows; The first chapter, the introduction chapter, starts with posing the research questions, the aim of this study as well as the literature review. The second chapter gives the contextualization through diving into Turkey's standpoint in the migration field by introducing the Deal. The same chapter covers the differentiation between documented and undocumented migrants in Turkey and their conditions. The Theoretical Perspective chapter focuses on the Capabilities Approach as the normative lens. Lastly, the theoretical perspective chapter covers the analytical framework to use in analysis. The Methodology chapter presents the selection of methods, the choice of semi-structured in-depth interviews followed by limitations and ethical considerations. The method of analysis is narrative analysis, and the rationale behind this choice is presented in the chapter, followed by the analysis chapter. The study will conclude itself with the analysis chapter.

2 Contextual Considerations

This section lays out the points about the change in Turkey's asylum policies and temporary protection regime as the historical background, as well as the meaning of being undocumented in Turkey for the reader's ease. The turning points in the Turkish context on dealing with irregular migration are also emphasized.

2.1 Historical background of Turkey's migration system

Even before the civil war broke out in Syria, Turkey has always had particular importance in the international migration system. Especially when talking about irregular migrants, Turkey has become a destination and transit country for irregular migrants during the last five decades (İçduygu & Yüksek, 2010:442). One can argue that it is possible to start counting Turkey's process of being a migrant-receiving country in the international arena with the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets (İçduygu, 2011:3) . This follows with the change of regime in Iran in the 1970s as well as the effects of the Saddam regime in Iraq near the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s(ibid). In addition to that, the effect of globalization has an outstanding contribution as well (ibid:). Primarily due to the globalization effect, Turkey's migration dynamics have gotten more complex which includes different terminologies such as irregular migrants, transit migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, persons of regular migrant status, etc. (Toktaş, 2009:274; İçduygu & Yüksek, 2011 cited in İçduygu, 2011:3). As of the year 2011, Turkey has tried to maintain an open-door policy in conjunction with a national temporary protection regime to safeguard more than three million Syrians escaping from the civil war (Ineli-Cigler, 2017: 558). However, border closures hardened after 2016 due to the enormous influx of refugees coming from Syria. As a result, the open-door policy could not sustain itself from that year onwards (ibid:558). Indeed, Turkey overburdened itself due

to not only large numbers of refugees from Syria but also refugees re-admitted through the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan of 2016 (ibid:559).

2.1.1 The EU- Turkey Deal as the turning point

European involvement in migratory mobility starts well before people reach Mediterranean waters (Van Rekuum, 2016:337), as could be seen from the European cooperation with third countries like Turkey. The turning point of the number of migrants coming to Turkey had drastically changed after 2016. Following the refugee influx into Europe in 2015, the Deal between Turkey and the EU was implemented. The Deal mandated the return of 'irregular' migrants from Turkey who had entered the EU without proper documentation (Bastiyalı, 2022: 6). In exchange, the EU has provided entry to 'regular' migrants coming through Turkey (Council of the EU, 2016:). As a result, Turkey has been designated as a "safe third country" under EU guidelines (Arribas, 2016: 1098). Even though working with the undocumented means counting the uncountable, it is possible to say that the number of migrants in Turkey drastically increased after the Deal as well as the number of undocumented migrants (Heck & Hess, 2017: 44). While the Deal was created to find a solution for irregular migration, it mostly solved the issue by controlling irregular migration especially to the EU(ibid). Therefore, it is possible to claim a gap on Turkey's side while dealing with irregular migration. Being undocumented in Turkey has started to have different consequences after the considerable increase in the number of refugees and change in Turkish asylum policy. However, the research on undocumented migrants can be considered very limited and inadequate due to the invisible nature of undocumented migrants (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012:21). One of the most efficient ways to reach undocumented migrants is through civil society workers since they can be considered the only agents of undocumented migrants.

2.1.2. Turkey's Shifting Migration Policies: Introducing Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR)

Turkey is a party that signed the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and the 1967 Protocol (İçduygu & Diker, 2017: 17). However, Turkey's geographical limitation to this Convention shaped the country's migration policies, as it can be seen from the Temporary Protection regime of Turkey. As a result of this limitation, people who have fled from any country except Europe cannot be recognized as refugees (Leghtas, 2019: 8). There are other statuses Turkey has introduced for people fleeing their country of origin, such as international protection and conditional refugee category. This study deals with Syrian migrants, therefore, temporary protection status plays a more critical role than the other categories due to the present context. The introduction of temporary protection regulation for Syrians in 2014 (ibid: 9). In addition, it should be noted that the similarities between Turkey's TPR and the EU's TPR Directive which include: "the entitlements of temporary protection beneficiaries and the broad discretion of political authorities to determine who will receive temporary protection, and when temporary protection begins and ends" (Ineli-Ciger, 2017: 566). This is the only regulation for the protection of Syrians in Turkey. Through this status, Syrians can have access to public services such as healthcare and education. Still, their overall rights are more limited than those defined as refugees in the law. For example, their freedom of movement or access to the labor market is restricted (Leghtas, 2019: 9).

2.2 Being Undocumented in Turkey

Undocumented migrants in Istanbul, provided they are registered to the system, would eventually start living in one of the small cities of Turkey without having any job opportunities; therefore, migrants usually prefer to live in the bigger cities like Istanbul, Izmir or Ankara to increase the possibility of finding informal labour opportunities (Ineli-Cigler, 2017: 561). Even though having a job

considerably increases their ability to acquire basic survival needs, being undocumented brings about additional problems related to access to health provisions and education (ibid: 579). As noted by Bahar Özbarış et al., (2020:4), they (the undocumented migrants) do not have access to healthcare or any other services. But the most crucial issue the authors highlight is the fear among the undocumented of being captured by the police and ending up in detention centers. Many migrants are faced with a key dilemma: If they register in smaller cities in Turkey, they would gain access to essential resources and services such as healthcare, education, etc., but they would lose access to the employment opportunities found in larger cities (Leghtas, 2019: 12). Civil Society plays a vital role in that regard and can be considered as the active agent which helps migrants to register in bigger cities like Istanbul or Ankara, provides assistance for family reunifications or by filing cases against the government to have their IDs returned to them from bigger cities (Ataç et al., 2017:16). Moreover, if migrants are arrested due to their lack of documents, civil society workers tend to be the ones who advocate for their release from detention centers. Even though states declare their commitment to fight against irregular migration, irregular migrants' never-ending efforts to enter and settle and other actors playing an important role in irregular migrants' agency can be understood as a dynamic battleground (Hajer & Ambrosini, 2020:200).

2.3 Challenges to Being Undocumented in Turkey

2.3.1 COVID-19 Effects

Bringing up the situation due to the changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is crucial. Covid-19 deepened the challenges of undocumented migrants in Turkey (Bahar Özvarış et al., 2020: 6). Adverse working conditions, informal jobs, and loss of employment during the Covid-19 pandemic have made the situation for undocumented migrants even more difficult. In addition, undocumented migrants in Turkey have been struggling to gain access to health

care. Detrimentially, if they seek out health treatments, the omnipresent risk of being reported to the police by health care workers, remains (ibid: 4).

In addition to the challenges caused by economic and health-related factors, nearly all asylum-related activities were suspended during Covid-19 which needs to be considered an additional challenge (AIDA Country Report: Turkey, 2020: 15) . Furthermore, the PDMM (Provincial Directorates for Migration Management)'s registration offices around the country were closed from March to June of 2020 as a result of the health crisis. Consequently, it took longer to conduct interviews and process requests for international protection. Similarly, returns were affected by this rule. Throughout the year, lawyers and refugees alike were unable to access all government agencies. (ibid: 15).

2.3.2 Stopping of registration of Syrian migrants in Istanbul in 2018

Turkish authorities stopped the registration of Syrian migrants in Istanbul in 2018. This was another turning point in the lives of undocumented migrants in Turkey. It is vital to highlight the well-known characteristic of Istanbul as the heart of the Turkish economy, which attracts all migrants due to formal and informal job opportunities (Leghtas, 2019: 9). As a result, there are more than 540 thousand Syrian migrants³ registered in Istanbul under temporary protection, as well as thousands of Syrian migrants even though they do not have the required identity documents (Leghtas, 2019: 4).

A statement of the Governor of Istanbul from 2019 drastically altered the situation of undocumented migrants in Istanbul. He instructed migrants who did not have a registration in Istanbul and assigned them the deadline of 20th of August for returning to the cities they had registered before(Leghtas, 2019: 5). This was an open threat for undocumented migrants in Istanbul who worked at informal jobs while living in Istanbul without documents. The Governor's office

³ see <https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>

also announced that the unregistered Syrians living in Istanbul would be transferred to other provinces by the Ministry of Interior (ibid:11).

Yet, the government denied all the allegations regarding their plan to send back undocumented migrants to places such as Idlib, which is still an active war zone. Migrants were caught by the police during identity checks in Istanbul (Amnesty International, 2019: 5; Leghtas, 2019:11). Particularly those who did not have a registration in Istanbul were detained or were forced to sign a voluntary return form and ultimately sent back to their country of origin (Amnesty International, 2019: 12). In brief, it is noted that the change in Turkey's attitude towards undocumented migration got harsher and started to implement new bordering practices. However, this does not prevent undocumented migrants from staying in Istanbul due to informal job opportunities. Moreover, Istanbul is not the only city that attracts migrants. There are also other cities in southeastern Turkey bordering Syria, such as Hatay, Gaziantep, and Kilis, in which large numbers of Syrian migrants live (Leghtas 2019: 9).

3 Theoretical Framework

This study aims to investigate the well-being of undocumented (irregular) migrants living in Istanbul through a focus on the existence of economic facilities. The theoretical approach used is the Capability Approach by Amartya Sen (1999). I analyze the reasons and outcomes of living in Istanbul for refugees without having documents and the challenges to their well-being. While doing so, the work of civil society is also acknowledged in this study as they are the dominant agents that officially recognize the situation of undocumented migrants. Brief preliminary interviews with civil society workers have been done to comprehend the issue more thoroughly. In this chapter, I argue for the utility of the empirical way of using the capability approach. This study through using this approach, does not measure completely the well-being of undocumented migrants but is rather interested in analyzing findings on a more micro-level by examining undocumented people's ability to choose what to do or be (Gigler, 2015: 26). In this study, I am investigating the well-being of undocumented migrants as well as the deprivations they have faced against their development in relation with economic facilities. The effect of a variety of intersecting socio-economic contexts on the well-being process of the undocumented migrants, their capability set in general, and the achievement of functionings have been taken into consideration while conducting this study (Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015: 117).

The following chapter will introduce the approach and present the recent discussions and critiques around the lack of universally applicable capability tools for those who perform Sen's capability approach. After carefully reviewing Sen's approach and the critical literature, the interview guide for this study is developed by focusing on the theoretical concepts on economic facilities, namely one of the instrumental freedoms.(See, Figure 1). The operationalization of the capability approach and the concept of instrumental freedom will be presented in Chapter 4, where the methodology is discussed.

3.1 Capability Approach as a Framework

Amartya Sen originally presented the Capability Approach in the 1980s. Historically, it has been widely used in the case of human development by seeing development as expansion of freedoms and capabilities (Sen, 1999:3). The emphasis on agency in this approach goes hand in hand with the aim of this study.

It is important to clarify that when scholars engage with the Capability Approach, they do not describe it as a theory that can explain or measure poverty, inequality, or well-being. Instead, they can be used for conceptualizing and evaluating these societal phenomena mentioned above as a conceptual framework (Robeyns, 2006: 353).

Gigler tries to conceptualize the well-being of people in poverty, and argues that: “Sen’s capability approach(1999) has been well situated to conceptualizing marginalized populations” well-being (2005:4). In particular, it represents a holistic view of the development of marginalized communities like undocumented migrants’ well-being in the social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions (ibid). Aligned with Gigler’s arguments, a holistic approach to development has been adopted in this study by emphasizing the various dimensions of development. These dimensions can be defined as the expansion of the individual’s well-being, which includes interrelation between social, political, cultural, and spiritual factors but with a specific focus on economic elements (Gigler, 2015: 25).

While discussing the suitability of this approach to the research problem, the drawbacks should also be considered. For example, a significant drawback occurs particularly when evaluating human development due to the lack of a specific list of basic capabilities provided by Sen (1999: 76). This might raise questions regarding the difficulties in defining a certain pathway during the analysis due to this drawback. Yet, this study rather acknowledges it as an

advantage in the thesis context, considering this way of thinking leaves open the door to the creation of definitions by the local context and individuals' priorities (Gigler, 2015: 26). Getting inspiration from Topuz & Erkanlı's study (2020), which tries to understand women's poverty from the perspective of capability approach, this study has used a similar approach. To shine light on the participants' views on instrumental freedoms while putting the focus on economic facilities while keeping the various demographic features of migrants in Turkey and bare their states of deprivation is the main goal of this study (2020: 1631).

3.2 Measuring Well-being

Well-being is a complex and multi-faceted construct that still attracts researchers to define and measure (Pollard & Lee, 2003: 60 cited in Dodge et al., 2012: 223). Therefore, many kinds of research have been done that tried to define the concept. In the historical background of the concept, there have been times the concept has been used alongside other constructs such as happiness, satisfaction with life, or positive psychological functioning and human development. Even though there have been differences in history in approaching the concept of well-being, it's more common for researchers to see the concept as a multi-dimensional construct (Dodge et al, 2012: 223). This is where Sen's capability approach comes into the picture since his approach offers a framework or tool which is efficient to conceptualize and evaluate issues such as the well-being of an individual, poverty, and inequality (Robeyns, 2005: 94). "The Capability Approach conceives measured well-being as the freedom people have to enjoy valuable activities and states" (Alkire, 2015: 3).

When it comes to assessing and valuing human well-being, Sen's approach strongly impacted the development industry. In the light of this approach, new indicators have arisen, such as the Human Development Index, the Human Poverty Index, and so on (Northover, 2014: 73). Thus, 'quality of life' has become a more frequently used word. The reason why reframing the ways of measuring

'quality of life' is vital is related to the argument that if the measurements used have flaws, it will result in misguidance at policy-making. Thus, what we do is affected by what we measure (Stiglitz et al., 2009: 7). Therefore, assessing human well-being has been becoming more multi-faceted, as can also be seen from Sen's thoughts. The approach, of course, accepts that the growth in the GNP or incomes of individuals is significant when expanding the freedoms enjoyed by society's individuals. But also, there are other factors, such as social and economic systems, as well as political and civil rights, that influence freedoms (Sen, 1999: 3). Alkire (2015:3) further argues that the emphasis on freedom is one of the fundamental measurement features of this approach. Therefore he emphasizes conceived measured well-being by the capability approach as "the freedom people have to enjoy valuable activities and states" (ibid:3).

3.2.1 Capability Approach to Human Well-Being

The Capability approach provides a framework for recognizing and prioritizing perspectives of individuals frequently underrepresented in the existing literature on refugees (Clarke, 2014: 70). The approach supports the multi-dimensional nature of human well-being, the relevance of diversity of individuals as well as the role of human agency. Therefore, comprehending issues such as fighting social exclusion, enhancing social cohesion, and promoting the integration of refugees and migrants, can be significantly enriched through the capability approach (ibid: 70). As a result, this study agrees with Clark's argument by arguing that the capability approach is proposed as a flexible framework for assisting researchers in exploring these critical topics (ibid: 70). Instead of emphasizing the resources themselves, as is common in social capital analyses, the capability approach moves the focus to what resources do to human beings and why (Sen, 1980:218 cited in Clarke, 2014: 63).

Considering the conditions after the Post-Washington Consensus era, which focuses on development by considering pro-poor and participatory approaches and good governance, Northover highlights the possible effect of

Sen's capability approach on these current agendas by claiming that his views could become the pioneer for them. This study also takes Sen's approach as a guide to the current agenda, which is the conditions of the well-being of undocumented migrants in Turkey (Northover, 2014: 72).

Using empirical examples, Sen tries to highlight the significance of his approach to human well-being, as the quality of life is accomplished through a specific set of activities valued by individual agents (Northover 2014: 74). First of all, to comprehend the concept of human well-being broadly, one must rely on more objective data and personal welfare criteria. To accomplish this, Sen's approach sheds light by drawing on the Aristotelian understanding of 'functionings' (ibid: 75). The idea of Sen's feature of well-being as the ability to achieve valuable functionings harks back to a long line thought of by Adam Smith (1776), John Stuart Mill(1859), and John Hicks(1981). Since those scholars also argue that instead of focusing on resources and utilities, well-being should be considered through functionings and capabilities (Alkire, 2015: 3).

3.2.2. Capability Approach and its concepts: Functionings & Capabilities & Agency

Functionings are described as a broad term for various beings and doings that individuals value and have reason to value, which individuals spontaneously recognize to be vital (Stiglitz et al., 2009: 151; Alkire, 2015: 3). These can consist of some basic achievements as well as more complex ones. While the former can include achievements like being safe, being well-nourished, and being literate, the latter can consist of being able to express one's thoughts freely or performing a piano recital routine.

The ability to pursue goals that one must value is referred to as agency. The importance given to the individual agency in this approach is what makes this approach quite overarching. (Deneulin & McGregor, 2010: 504). Sen defines agency as "someone who acts and brings change, and whose accomplishments

can be defined in terms of her own values and goals whether or not we evaluate them against some external criteria as well” (1999: 19). It is possible to relate this to the development and deprivations of the undocumented migrant community in Istanbul. Their access to instrumental freedoms can be seen as tools to achieve further economic, social, and institutional development, which can foster an increase in their amount of agency or the other way around. This approach considers a person's life as: “a combination of different ‘doings and beings’ (functionings), and evaluates Quality of Life in regards to a person's freedom to choose among these various combinations (capabilities).” (Stiglitz et al., 2009: 151).

The reason why focusing on human capabilities matters when describing well-being is that it helps us to differentiate the unfreedom and deprivation experienced by a starving child and the liberty of a monk who is fasting. In that example, even though the experienced functioning here can be considered similar (a starving hunger), the states of capability reflected are different, as well as the presence/absence of choice. Having the possibility of eating makes fasting what it is, namely, not eating when one could have eaten (Sen 1999: 76 ;Northover 2014: 75).

3.3 The Ends and The Means of Development

3.3.1 Means and Ends: Roles of Freedoms

This approach treats individual freedoms as the basic building blocks as Sen phrases. Therefore, the lives of people according to what they value and what they reason to value caused by the expansion of capabilities of people is the main focus of this school of thought (Sen, 1999: 18).

Sen argues that expanding freedom in relation to what individuals enjoy is central to development. As a result, the approach is an attempt to conceptualize the expansion of freedom both as the primary and the principal means of development (Sen, 1999:36). When viewing the expansion of freedom as the primary end brings the constitutive role of freedoms within. While the instrumental role of freedom in development is considered the principal means of development. While the former emphasizes the substantive freedoms' role in enriching human life by showing the intrinsic importance of freedom, the latter focuses more on the effectiveness of freedom as means, not only as end. The substantive freedoms, which highlight the constitutive role of freedom, focus both on elementary capabilities and other types of freedoms such as knowing how to read and write, enjoying political participation, freedom of speech and thought, etc. In addition, elementary capabilities include being able to not starve, not be undernourished, and so on. Therefore, by expanding these capabilities combined with other basic freedoms mentioned above constitute the constitutive perspective.

However, the expansion of freedom should also be understood from the means and effectiveness of the development perspective. As Sen states: "There is much more in the instrumental connection than this constitutive linkage. The effectiveness of freedom as an instrument lies in the fact that different kinds of freedom interrelate with one another, and freedom of one type may greatly help in advancing freedom of other types." (1999: 37). Thus, the focus of this study goes hand in hand with the instrumental connection for the expansion of freedom. He considers instrumental freedoms while discussing the effectiveness of freedom as an instrument. These freedoms consist of political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security(Sen, 1999: 39).

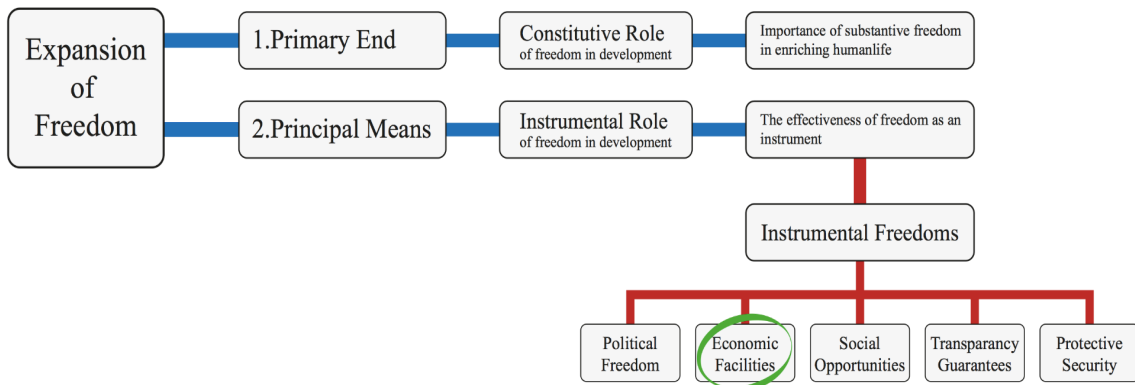


Figure 1. Viewing expansion of freedom. (Author’s illustration based on Sen, 1999:36).

Since they’re all interrelated, it is important to understand all of them thoroughly. Economic facilities represent the opportunities that individuals have while using economic resources for consuming, producing and trading. Therefore, economic well-being includes the resources available for use and availability of exchange of these resources as well as functioning of the markets (ibid: 39). Political freedoms include individuals’ right to decide on who should rule with which rules as well as having the possibility to limit and criticize authorities. Expressing political views freely and press without censoring can be added here(ibid: 38). Social opportunities include factors like education and healthcare. Transparency guarantees refers to the importance of trust, to prevent corruption and being an open and transparent society(ibid: 39). Lastly, protective security represents unemployment benefits and statutory income supplements to provide a social safety net. This instrumental freedom is crucial for the most vulnerable to protect them from the most extreme cases such as starvation and death (ibid: 40). Therefore, Sen (1999) explains the interconnectedness and complementariness of the instrumental freedoms by arguing that “instrumental freedoms directly enhance the capabilities of people, but they also supplement one another, and can furthermore reinforce one another” (ibid: 40). Also, this study adds Sen’s empirical examples by bringing experiences of undocumented migrants on their economic well-being and its relation with other aspects of instrumental freedoms.

It is important to mention that acknowledging and taking objectives and aims of development analysis into account is making instrumental freedoms far-reachingly important (Sen:1999: 38; Robeyns, 2005: 95). For instance, the issue of the role of economic factors (e.g. GDP growth or household income) in promoting to individuals' well-being and overall human development is also addressed by this contrast between means and objectives. While Sen (1999:38) accepts that economic elements have a role in increasing people's freedom, he underlines that these economic elements are primarily a means to a larger end. In brief, the expansion of human freedom is not only the primary end but also the principal means of development (ibid).

3.3.2 Means and Ends: Unfreedoms

In addition, when considering persistence deprivations of a community, the impact of economic unfreedom should never be neglected (Sen, 1999:7). Sen argues that extreme poverty as one of the economic unfreedoms can put individuals (especially the individuals with narrowly defined identities) in a position of defenseless prey in the violation of other types of freedom (ibid:8). He further argues that “Economic unfreedom can breed social unfreedom, just as social or political unfreedom can also foster economic unfreedom.”(ibid:8). As a result, increasing the general level of freedom must start with improving the position of the most unfree one and through removing these kinds of unfreedoms people should be able to experience their reasoned agency (Northover, 2014: 77). These include not only removal of poverty, insufficient economic opportunities, but also systematic social deprivation or intolerance of repressive states. This study considers Turkey as shifting from a delegative democracy to the expanding of competitive authoritarianism, noting the introduction of emergency law during the July 2016 coup attempt as well as the following shift to the presidential system in 2018. (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2016:1581 cited in Sahin Mencütek, 2020: 188), and further investigates deprivations of freedom also caused by the political nature of the country.

There have been many different cases of unfreedoms. Sometimes, they are directly related to the lack of social care, healthcare, and educational elements. In some cases, economic poverty is directly linked to the absence of substantive freedoms that take individuals' freedom to satisfy hunger and other basic needs. In some other cases, authoritarian regimes cause violation of freedoms by denying social and political liberties of these individuals by taking their freedom of participating in the social, political, and economic life of the community that they've been living with (Sen, 1999: 3-4).

3.3.3 Means and Ends: Human Capital Approach and Human Capabilities

Sen (1999) demonstrates the shift in the development view by simply emphasizing the achievements and shortcomings of the human capital approach and how it had been furthered by the human capability approach. He emphasizes the valuational difference between the human capital approach and the human capabilities approach. He further places the two in such a way that they become related to the distinction between the means and ends in development. As the human capital approach describes, the importance of human qualities such as education to reach and keep a certain level of economic growth. Sen accepts the importance of this perspective by acknowledging the importance of production possibilities increased by the agency of individuals (1999: 293). However, Sen claims that what's lacking in that approach is that it doesn't ask the question of "why" this economic well-being is necessary in the first place (Clarke, 2014: 63). What makes focusing on human capabilities so worthwhile is its focus on individuals to lead lives they have reason to value (Vero et al., 2012: 64). Therefore, he sees the benefits of education not only as an enhancement of human capital. Benefits of education can be considered as adding value to the production in the economy as well as increase in individuals' incomes. But there are some other ways to benefit from education that occur while reading, communicating,

arguing, etc. When examining the well-being of undocumented migrants in Istanbul, the human capability perspective allows this study not only to focus on production possibilities but also to note and value these aforementioned roles as well (Sen, 1999: 294).

3.4 Critiques and Refinements of the Capability Approach

Despite the benefits that the capability approach has been providing, there has also been a lively debate in the literature about its applicability, operationalization in empirical studies, its incompleteness as a theory, as well as its way of constructing human well-being (Comim, 2001; Corbridge, 2001; Deneulin & McGregor, 2002; Robeyns, 2005; Gigler, 2015). According to Robeyns (2005:94), the reason why the Capability Approach cannot be seen as a theory is that the approach does not seek to explain social phenomena like poverty, inequality, well-being, marginalization; rather seeks to conceptualize these phenomena through the concept of individual freedom (Deneulin & McGregor 2002: 509). However, that does not mean that the capability approach is not useful for explaining social issues by providing a conceptual framework, as seen in many national Human Development reports (ibid).

They see its operationalization as a heavy, demanding process but also acknowledge how rich and innovative it is when assessing well-being. Therefore, the task of operationalizing raises some conceptual, methodological, and empirical issues (Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015: 115). While Comim (2001) indicates the theoretical underspecification of the approach as one of the main challenges, Nussbaum (2000) and Alkire (2002) criticize the lack of a set of basic capabilities causing challenges to starting some specific evaluations (Gigler, 2015: 26). Nussbaum further suggests a universal list of capabilities in which he makes a list of ten specific human capabilities (Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015: 116).

However, Sen's approach(1999), which does not create an a priori list of human capabilities, makes room for keeping the conceptions like good, justice, and advantage more diverse (ibid).

Since there have been some challenges to the implementation of the approach, Stiglitz et al. (2009:152) suggest a practical step to take. When gathering data, the component of that data is usually based on functionings (Sumner & Tribe, 2010: 22) rather than capabilities (Stiglitz et al., 2009: 153). "However, many functionings, such as health and education, also determine capabilities (to consume, to move, to participate), while some data may directly refer to people's rights and freedoms (e.g., to participate in political decision-making, to join organizations at work and in society)"(ibid: 153). In addition to the debate of whether capabilities or functionings can be measured or not, Chiappero-Martinetti et al. argue that only functionings can be measured since they consist of a person's attainments (2015: 116). Even though measuring capabilities and functionings seems challenging, it is still achievable in practice (ibid).

Sen's approach has also been criticized due to his commitment to the institutional mindset of Western liberal democracies. In addition, his emphasis on the importance of economic freedoms in capitalist market societies received criticism as well (Northover, 2014:77). Robeyns places the capability approach within the liberal school of thought in political philosophy (2005:95). Some scholars, such as Corbridge (2002) and Northover (2014) do not agree with some of Sen's correlations. In his work(1999), he draws a correlation between famines and democratic freedom by relating it to the presence of free-press. Corbridge criticizes it from the evidence of the existence of substantive well-being, and structural transformations have been usually made under the rule of authoritarian regimes(2002: 208). Another critique comes from feminist perspectives. Des Gasper & Van Stavren (2003: 22) find Sen's(1999) concepts very abstract since Sen emphasizes abstract qualities of freedom, agency freedom, etc. They believe

that those abstract concepts represent Liberalism's liberty which they find hard to justify (ibid).

Deneulin & McGregor find Sen's view on the capability approach on the way of understanding human well-being and living well inadequate since it disregards the 'togetherness' aspect of it (2010: 501). If the approach had targeted 'living well together', it would have looked into the social structures and institutions for grasping a better understanding of individual freedoms in relation to others (ibid). Therefore they argue that: "a person's state of well-being must be understood as being socially and psychologically co-constituted in specific social and cultural contexts." (ibid). They further explain the approach's weakness, especially at the level of social meanings, which makes it less effective in dealing with the practical political challenges of promoting human well-being in a world where people are treated differently.(502).

This study accepts the theoretical incompleteness of this approach, especially the difficulties it causes for operationalizing to some extent. However, the study turns this drawback into the research's advantage since this particular 'openness of approach' makes it especially suitable for assessing the well-being of underrepresented groups (Gigler, 2015: 26).

4 Methodology

In order to successfully argue for this study's choice of methodological approach and to defend its feasibility this section starts off with a brief review of the study's research aim which is to examine the situation of undocumented Syrian migrants in terms of their well-being and approach the development of this particular group from the normative framework of capability approach.

To answer the research question from the capabilities approach, case study methods based on qualitative methodology have been selected. In accordance with the study's aim, qualitative methodology is applied in this thesis by gathering narratives through semi-structured in-depth interviews with undocumented Syrian migrants. The collected data is analyzed through Narrative Analysis.

The following section will introduce and discuss operationalization with regards to theoretical framework, semi-structured interviews, sampling, and narrative analysis in relation to the study's aim. Further, the potential limitations and ethical considerations will be presented.

4.1 Operationalization in relation with the Theoretical Framework

As discussed in Chapter 3, the incompleteness of the theoretical foundation of the capability approach has been questioned, and this has undoubtedly contributed to challenges in operationalizing the approach. This incompleteness, however, lends the approach a distinct openness that is particularly well suited for investigating the well-being of marginalized groups (Comin 2001: 6). Quantitative methods have been used to operationalize the approach (usually for measuring functionings) in other studies, qualitative

methods have usually consisted of interviews, focus groups, and participatory methods to gather information about values, freedom of choice, and agency to examine capabilities (Anand, Krishnakumar & Tran, 2011 cited in Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015: 118). Contemporary capability researchers widely use qualitative methods, especially in research conducted in developing countries. Through deliberative dialogues, they aim to learn more about what people have reason to value and to create a list of capabilities to examine the role of their conditions and understandings in influencing their preferences and choices (ibid:119).

Like Sen (1999), this study does not make apriori lists of capabilities. Instead, it tries to investigate the well-being of undocumented (irregular) migrants living in Istanbul through a focus on the existence of economic facilities. Many factors led to the selection of the economic aspect of well-being as the primary focus of this research, which entails assessing how effectively various socioeconomic groups in Turkey can meet material needs. As a developing country, Turkey plays a vital role in choosing material conditions as the focus.

The OECD's well-being framework for measuring current well-being has some specific features based on best practices for assessing well-being and development, the recommendations from the Economic Performance and Social Progress report, as well as consultations with international experts and National Statistical Offices represented in the OECD Committee on Statistics (Yap & Yu, 2016: 6). To better understand the concept of well-being, this study takes the Economic Performance and Social Progress Report's main components of well-being as a basis to identify the ways of making analysis through the capability approach. According to the report, well-being should be understood and examined through material living conditions, quality of life, and sustainability (Stiglitz et. al., 2009: 11). According to Durand (2014: 5), OECD Better Life Initiative (2011) assesses current well-being by looking at the outcomes in two significant domains, which are material living conditions and quality of life (Yap

& Yu, 2016:5). This study focuses on the former by examining the income, wealth, jobs, earnings, and housing conditions of undocumented migrants (ibid). The reason why this study's focus is on material conditions is Sen's (1999) emphasis on the necessity of providing material conditions to reach basic needs. Therefore, undocumented migrants' freedom to choose what to value or not about their lives can be enhanced (ibid:20). Since this study takes place in a developing country, it prioritizes the material conditions to examine the freedoms and deprivations of undocumented migrants in Istanbul. Another reason for focusing on material conditions is the researcher's ability to provide information. Because material things are easier to talk about, especially interviewing vulnerable groups like undocumented migrants. It is the most possible way of learning about undocumented migrants' well-being in the scope of this research.

By keeping the critiques around the operationalization of the approach in mind, it is highly important to emphasize the individuality of the approach and its effect on this study. The spectrum of human capabilities is limitless, and individuals' worth on each of them can differ from person to person, depending on their perspective. Even though some capabilities require more widespread attention than others, the relative significance of capabilities can change from community to community and even country-to-country throughout time (Fukuda-Parr, 2003: 305). Therefore, putting individuals at the center of the development is at the heart of Sen's (1999) approach, which emphasizes the importance of individuals as the driving force behind change. This study follows the same logic by keeping individuals at the heart of the research (Yap & Yu, 2016: 316) by making them the unit of analysis.

Chiappero-Martinetti et al's suggestion of making empirical use of the approach beneficial when conducting research on stateless refugees in Sweden to overcome the problem of operationalization of the approach is a common route in the related literature. Mursalova(2021)'s study on stateless refugees acknowledges the challenges associated with operationalization theory due to the

aforementioned causes and follows Chiappero-Martinetti et al's advice by addressing a series of choices and decisions regarding evaluative space (this could be capabilities/functions as well as agency), the number of indicators (quantitative or qualitative) to be measured, the unit of analysis and the characteristics that differentiate those units, and lastly, the variety of contexts in which they are to be utilized (2015:117). Unlike the other studies focusing on stateless, documented refugees, this study focuses on the capabilities of undocumented migrants residing in Istanbul. This study is motivated by this method of practical application. The evaluative space might be viewed as the agency of these persons, as undocumented migrants' perspectives are crucial to this study. Indicators of well-being are consequently shaped by individuals' decisions regarding what to value and what not to value. Thus, it is equally vital to stress the economic facilities and material conditions as the subject of this research. Undocumented migrants residing in Istanbul constitute the unit of analysis (refugees in Istanbul without being registered in Istanbul). The heterogeneity characteristic that differentiates the unit is being undocumented while residing in Istanbul.

Building on the approach, the interview guide was created in such a way that it could collect the experiences of undocumented migrants as a process together within story form. The categories identified are: Journey to Istanbul, Freedoms & Deprivations and Well-being & Capabilities inspired by the approach and combined with more themes captured from the narratives. While the first category investigates their experience of migration journey to better understand the individual priorities and the life in Istanbul as the outcome of their status. The second category examines the material conditions and the quality of life through unveiling their freedoms and deprivations resulting from their status. Lastly, the third category combines their priorities and their existing conditions to reach a conclusion on their realization of capabilities.

4.2 Research Design, Sampling, Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

4.2.1 Case Study Design

Some researchers interpret the term "case study" as holding implications related to the kind of data which is collected and/or analyzed. It usually involves gathering unstructured data and performing qualitative analysis of that data (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000:3). In relation to the purpose of the study, "the case study method can be used for capturing cases in their uniqueness rather than using it as a foundation for making generalizations or for theoretical assumptions. In addition, it is commonly assumed that this necessitates a narrative approach. "(ibid)

Yin acknowledges that case studies have different strengths than other research strategies (1981:98). According to him, the use of case studies are highly needed "when examining contemporary phenomena in their real-life context" (ibid). Considering the research problem of this study, the context of living in Turkey without documents cannot be considered separately from the contemporary phenomenon of this study, which is the situation of undocumented migrants, and the material conditions to provide for their well-being. To find an answer to the research question, one must understand the capabilities of undocumented migrants within the context of their presence both in practical life and in Turkish law. According to Donmoyer, other strengths of the case study design are the accessibility and seeing through the researcher's eyes (2000: 61). Sometimes, because of this accessibility, this type of research can take us to locations we otherwise would not be able to visit (ibid). Even though this study was conducted online, studying the cases of hard-to-reach populations like undocumented migrants in Turkey makes this study relevant and significant.

4.2.2 Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Drawing on the work of Mason (2018) and Haraway(1988), all knowledge forms are situated, meaning that they reflect the unique cases in which they are produced as well as the social identities of the locations of the people who create them. Undocumented migrants living in Istanbul are considered active agents in the process of the conflict and the knowledge production in this study. In this regard, semi-structured in-depth interviews were selected for the feasibility of the data collection. This method allows us to construct undocumented migrants' experiences, understand their capabilities, and investigate the construction of well-being as well as the effects of being undocumented, particularly under the Turkish border regime.

The choice of qualitative interviewing is not only derived from the ontological position of the research but also for pragmatic reasons that were involved in the decision process. It has already been acknowledged in the previous studies that the difficulties in obtaining accurate data on undocumented migrants (Özvarış et al., 2020:4). The data this study aimed to provide was not feasibly available in any other format. Therefore, asking those individuals for their accounts and stories, and talking and listening to them, is one of the most effective ways to obtain the type of data this study requires (Mason, 2018: 115). The strength of conducting such interviews is that the researcher can gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences, feelings, and meanings from their viewpoints, which is at the center of the capability approach for the realization of capabilities (O'Reilly, 2009: 125). Another advantage of semi-structured interviews is the ability to combine openness with structure (Bryman, 2011). This study takes the suggestion of Mason, which is to "provide the maximum opportunity for the construction of contextual knowledge through concentrating on relevant specifics in each interview" (2018:112) as the basis for the interviews.

Prior to the interviews, research through secondary data on the situation of undocumented migrants in Turkey was conducted. The rights and freedoms they have under the Turkish type of temporary protection, and the legal consequences of living without documents in Turkey were researched to help understand either the deprivations or freedoms caused by this status. Additionally, to get a more detailed understanding of the issue, unstructured pre-interviews were conducted with 2 employees who have been working for refugee NGOs that specifically help undocumented migrants in Istanbul. These interviews focused on gaining information on what it is like to live in Istanbul without having a registry in the city and the outcomes of the status in practice, not on paper. Lastly, interviews were carried out with seven undocumented migrants who currently live in Istanbul. These interviews ranged from 35 to 45 minutes. All interviews were transcribed into Turkish, and all the quotes used in this study were translated into English. Some confirming words like "hmm, uhm" were removed to keep the coherency of the quotes.

4.2.3 Sampling

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, with consideration to the aim of the study. A smaller sample size can yield more specific information about a case when using this kind of sampling (Lavrakas, 2008:646). Considering several different purposive sampling methods for reaching the undocumented migrants in Istanbul, the snowball method was found to be the most effective. This non-probability sampling strategy necessitated the use of social networks to find potential participants. The study is in line with Bryman's (2011) two levels of purposive sampling. When evaluating the research questions, the sampling context refers to Turkey and being an undocumented migrant in Turkey, Istanbul, while the sampling of participants refers to the undocumented migrants.

Gatekeepers have often been discussed in the social sciences literature in relation to accessing socially excluded people and minorities, this study has also benefited from the presence of a gatekeeper to build the network and set up

contacts (Eklund, 2010: 130). I approached this study's gatekeeper as a civil society professional who is a Syrian migrant as a starting step for the snowball. Since undocumented migrants in Istanbul are considered "illegal" in the eyes of the Turkish State, those participants needed to trust the researcher and research process due to the sensitivity and riskiness of their own situation. The gatekeeper played the critical role here in persuading them since he is a Syrian refugee himself (O'Reilly, 2009: 132). I approached the first participant through him. Then the participant who was interviewed was referred to another undocumented migrant.

4.2.4 Narrative Analysis

In political science, as in other social science fields, narrative analysis is an indispensable aspect of research methodology since it provides a powerful research tool for researchers (Patterson & Monroe, 1998:316). Narratives make it possible to learn a lot about how people make sense of their lives, how people organize information, think of themselves, and interpret the world through their stories (ibid: 330). Therefore, this study performed narrative analysis on the data gathered from semi-structured in-depth interviews with undocumented migrants. The choice of this method of analysis derives from the theoretical standpoint of the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999) since it gives importance to individuals' perspectives and represents their experiences. This method of analysis differs from the others regarding the necessity of agency in narratives, which includes individuals as characters or actors (Patterson & Monroe, 1998:316).

Through this method of analysis, the agency of undocumented migrants in knowledge production has been recognized. Furthermore, rather than attempting to discover the truths, it strives to portray experiences (Polkinghorne, 1988: 1). Analyzing empirical data is often regarded as a procedure that occurs after the data has been collected. However, it can also be considered an integral part of the whole research process instead of viewing the data analysis as an afterthought (Holstein & Gulbriun, 1995: 56). This research has followed the same path by

creating the interview guide beforehand and selecting specific questions and themes as part of the process.

According to Lieblich et al., (2011:7) narrative analysis can be performed in a variety of ways based on the unit and the form. Instead of applying a holistic approach that examines the narratives as a whole, this study applies some aspects of categorical-content perspective. This study draws close connections with Lieblich et al.'s (2011:113) view and finds it beneficial for this research to analyze the narratives of undocumented migrants by identifying categories and themes and demonstrating the patterns. While identifying categories, the theory guided the interview, and the themes and patterns were captured from the participants' narratives for the analysis. Narrative Analysis has been using themes as Thematic Analysis does. However, it is highly needed to justify why the thematic analysis wasn't the first preference of analysis in this study. The Narrative Analysis differs from it by making the research's starting point the participants' perspective, emphasizing how experiences are interpreted dynamically (Riley & Hawe, 2005: 229). Therefore, in line with the aim of the study, which is to understand individuals' perspectives and stories (undocumented migrants in Istanbul) on their well-being, using narrative analysis is significant. As a result this study created an interview guide by building on the approach and in such a way that it could collect the experiences of undocumented migrants as a process together within a story form. After transcribing the interviews, they have been read many times to identify similarities, patterns, as well as unique turning points. When it comes to coding the data, it has been done manually by the researcher.

Researchers' interpretations can shape the fundamentals of research when applying narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993:8). Therefore, researchers' roles should be highlighted as well over the entire process of research since they are constantly involved in the creation of knowledge (ibid:22). However, this might not be enough to overcome the problem of the validity of the research due to the impact of the position of the researcher. To overcome the validity problem,

Lieblich et al.'s four principles have been followed during the analysis by trying to make a comprehensive, coherent, insightful, and simple analysis (1998: 173).

4.3 Limitations of this study

The space in which the interviews were conducted was one of the most distinct limitations of this study. COVID-19 made potential trips to Turkey more difficult. There are drawbacks to conducting online research, but this type of research also provides some advantages. Because conducting research with undocumented migrants in Istanbul in person is a challenge in and of itself since those people are considered to be 'illegal'. Meeting in person would have been more difficult than reaching them via phone. But it is needed to highlight that the space and situation of interviews have an effect on the interaction between researcher and participant (Westby, 1990: 104). There were moments of silence during the interviews, problems caused by the internet connection, cyber security and so forth.

Another limitation was the language barrier. Four of the interviews were conducted in Arabic, with the presence of an interpreter. During the process of translating sentences simultaneously, there might have been some words left unnoted and even though the interviews were conducted in the researchers mother tongue, the Turkish language, some of the undocumented migrants had limited knowledge of the language. The final limitation was the generalizability of the research. Since this study is a case study, it is difficult to make generalizations. But making generalizations, in general, is also not perfectly achievable due to different human actions differ in other contexts.

The aim was to obtain in-depth data, but the number of the participants was highly limited. According to Bahar Özvarış et al., obtaining accurate data both on the quantity and names of contacts from these groups becomes extremely sensitive and difficult (2020:4). Therefore, gathering data from large number of

undocumented migrants was not possible, which might affect the generalizability of this study (Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015:120; Sykes et al., 2018:5). Additionally, this may have an effect on the diversity of the findings. Since this study is a case study that is researching on a specific site, it can be helpful to understand other sites (Schofield, 1993:72). Nonetheless, the data collected through the interviews has resulted in a deeper understanding of conditions and well-being perceptions of undocumented migrants in Istanbul, and opens up for further research on the topic.

4.4 Positionality & Ethical Considerations

It is highly important to problematize the role and position of the researcher in this study since the main focus is on a marginalized, vulnerable group such as undocumented Syrian migrants from Turkey. This study is inspired by the thoughts of Guillemin & Gillam (2004:262) by looking at both procedural ethics (regulations and applications) and ethics in practice (day-to-day ethical issues).

Since the "context is both determines and determined by the researcher's self-understanding" (Flyvbjerg, 2001: 33), it is vital to situate this researcher's position by acknowledging that, like the scholars mentioned above, I am also a researcher who has been participating in the movement of asylum rights in Turkey. Moreover, this study acknowledges that knowledge is both partial and situated in a sense. Therefore, the choice of conducting research on undocumented migrants is derived from own experience while professionally working and volunteering to help undocumented migrants in Turkey. As a result, it is possible to see a real closeness to the field. Nonetheless, being close to the field has not been easy. It creates complex methodological problems since the researcher must continuously consider its own position. To overcome this issue, the methodology section has been transparent both in terms of discussing each stage of the process and in terms of locating myself within the frames of this study.

One could argue that sample interviews from refugee organizations instead of refugees themselves would be less ethically controversial and more safe due to the risk of reproducing traumas. However, this study defends that the idea of undocumented migrants should be heard. Most importantly, as the researcher in this study, I have been trained in working with vulnerable groups due to my previous professional experience. Therefore, it is in my best interest to be equipped to meet the requirements.

In today's social research, the notion of informed consent has become a core aspect of applied ethics (Hugman, Bartolomei & Pittaway, 2011: 658). Even though some scholars find informed consent and do no harm principles necessary but insufficient in the ethical basis for the refugee field, I acknowledge the need to be more integrated with principles such as honesty, respect for privacy, and competence (Hugman, Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2011: 1284). Like Hugman, Bartolomei & Pittaway, I also interpret informed consent as one of the means of practicing human agency to engage as partners in the process (2011: 669). As mentioned above, participating in studies can be part of a solution rather than an additional issue for undocumented migrants whose lives have involved the stripping away of human agency in so many ways (Limbu, 2009: 257). While meeting the procedural requirements for informed consent, this study tries to be flexible and responsive to the needs and demands of the respondents. Moreover, all the names of both respondents and organizations that were mentioned during the interviews have been changed. Any reporting that is too specific to a respondent has been avoided as well. Before starting collecting data, I informed the respondents about the aim of the research and, to clarify the process, their questions were answered. After that, I asked for their consent if I could record the interviews and use the data for my thesis by letting them know that it will be published on my university's website and so on. I will also be sharing the findings with them (if I can reach them) to make the research process more participatory

and collaborative. Moreover, interview questions were prepared with sensitivity, triggering, and trauma-reminding questions were avoided.

Ethical concerns in this study do not only consist of the positionality of myself as the researcher but also include confidentiality, transcription writing, and analysis. In addition, with the conclusions drawn by Kvale (2006:480), the produced/reproduced power asymmetries during the interviews have been taken into account since power imbalances between the researchers and respondents create complex ethical issues (Pittaway, Bartolomei & Hugman, 2010: 232). It is important to note that as a masters student in Sweden, being from the host country, which is Turkey, puts me in a more powerful position. Moreover, being able to decide on themes for discussion and what is included in this research has been acknowledged with its potential exploitative aspects.

To give a reflexive analysis of the research problem, I, as the researcher, made a conscious effort not to rely on my own beliefs and assumptions but instead made an effort to center my research and analysis on the themes generated through the framework provided by the Capability Approach.

5 Analysis

This chapter presents the data and analyzes how being undocumented impairs the well-being of Syrian migrants by investigating their capabilities. The specific focus is on their economic freedoms and how they affect migrants' well-being in Istanbul. Therefore, I will first present how and why the participants ended up in Istanbul, and will delve into their migration journey. The study then explores freedoms and deprivations resulting from being undocumented in Istanbul, focusing on their material conditions. Finally, the study explores the realization of capabilities and their expectations to elaborate more on their well-being. The analysis has been made through different conversations I had with undocumented Syrian migrants residing in Istanbul, their representations as well as my interpretation. In addition, the narrative quotes used for the analysis section are extracted from the interviews with migrants. Furthermore, the thesis background should be acknowledged because contextualizing the analysis is critical in creating coherence, especially when working on narratives. As a result, while reading, the reader should have to keep *Chapter 2* in mind, introducing Turkey's migration system and policies and being undocumented in Turkey.

The analysis is structured under three categories derived from the Capability Approach as mentioned in the operationalization, and themes extracted from the interviews under these categories while analyzing the narratives. The categories used are *Journey to Istanbul*, *Freedom & Deprivations*, and *Well-being Through Realization of Capabilities*.

5.1 Journey to Istanbul

To explore how being undocumented impairs migrants' capabilities, first, the connection between their experiences on their migratory journey and the outcome of ending up in Istanbul should be analyzed. As a result, the questions of

how their journey was to Turkey and what they experienced with the Turkish migration system have been asked. During the interviews, questions about experiences were fundamental since individual priorities and perspectives are significant in examining well-being (Robeyns, 2005: 94).

Most of the participants are undocumented in this study because they came to Turkey after 2017-2018. Especially after 2018, the government made registration in big, industrial cities harder. Therefore, those who immigrated to Turkey during that time did not get registered at all or registered in a small city but did not live there and lost their registrations. It can be seen from the quotes that the participants referred to being unregistered or undocumented as “living with/without ID.” That should be kept in mind when reading the quotes. In addition, the most common narrative about being undocumented among undocumented migrants was identifying themselves as “illegal migrants”. Therefore, in this chapter, being undocumented will keep appearing as being “illegal” as it was how they identified themselves.

The common theme in all seven interviews mentioned is the expectation of being safer in Turkey than in Syria when they decided to come to Turkey. Even though they mentioned they had faced *tons of problems* just by being in Turkey and being undocumented, they kept mentioning the importance of living in relative safety and not being at war. One of the participants, Ahmed, who is 28 and came to Turkey in 2019 and currently lives in the Sultangazi province of Istanbul, mentioned the existence of life safety as:

"Living without ID is hard anyway. You are not at war, so you are safe. For example, if I compare myself to how many years ago I was, thank goodness. Thank God very much. I don't have to worry every day for my family's life, for my own life. Didn't we all come all this way for this? But there are still a lot of problems we're facing, you know? Ok, I think I have

life safety, as long as I don't get out of here. But this time there are other problems."

(Ahmed)

He further explained how he keeps himself safe in Turkey by being around people like him: *"On the other hand, where you stay gives you that safe feeling. Everyone is like you around here."* This narrative was similar to Zahra's narrative on their safety in Istanbul. Zahra is a 54-year-old undocumented migrant who came to Istanbul with two sons and her daughter. She explained why she feels safe: *"But for example, I am not afraid when I send my sons to work or when they hang out on the street, in case something bad happens to them. I know they would be safe. Even if someone says something, everyone in this neighborhood is from us. They would help my sons. (...)"*. Muhammed also had a similar narrative around their safety and he also added that he and his family do not want to go back to Syria. He further used the narrative of *"from us, like us"* to feel safe: *"I have a job, thankfully I have bread on my table. There are always people from us here. Everyone is Syrian. I don't go out much here anyway. Of course, I feel safer than in Syria, despite a lot of negative things exist."*

Even though they feel safer than in Syria, they also highlight the fragility of their status. Since they live without documents, which makes them illegal people in the eyes of the Turkish state, they are in constant fear of being captured. Omar phrased his *"constant fear"* as: *"My fear of war has subsided; however, I now have another constant fear. I always have that kind of fear. My cousin for instance. He was captured, because his ID was issued from another city he was placed out of the city border. Let me put it this way, God knows what is being done to him now."* Kawa used the same narrative by framing his fear as *"constant"*: *"Also there is constant fear, what if I get caught- fear(?). Though for all these years, I haven't got caught because God protects. Hopefully I won't get caught."*

As the only woman participant in this study, Zahra's narrative brought the issue of safety to another level by adding the gender difference:

"For a while we thought what if they(her family) lived in Istanbul undocumented and I lived in Isparta so that they would send me money. But we don't know anyone in Isparta. What would I do all by myself as a woman? What'd happen to me if it were to be heard, a Syrian woman living alone. God forbid, I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy. Escaping Syria is not enough to be safe. Its harder to stay safe if you are a woman. Because of that, I moved to Istanbul, moved in with my family of course."

(Zahra)

Zehra's first city of registration was Isparta, and she was raising her concerns about her safety in a small city like Isparta as a lonely woman. Therefore her migration journey ended up in Istanbul with her other family members. Coming late to Istanbul was another factor that affected their current conditions and their registration status. Ahmed identified himself as a "late-comer": *"Everyone is in a difficult situation. Not just us Syrians, but also Afghans are in a difficult situation. But most of them came and moved in before us, opened stores. We came later. We always feel that on us. We can't get IDs, that's why."*

When talking about their journey to Turkey, their motivation to be safe in Turkey was not the only issue. They all had different stories since they have different demographics. However, one thing prevalent in the narratives was how impossible it is to get their ID from Istanbul and how the Turkish migration system did not help them get registered, as seen from the previous quote of, Ahmed's.

There are several reasons why they do not have documents. Usually, the registration for Istanbul and other cities is closed. According to them, it is "impossible" to live with an ID from a different city and still live in Istanbul due

to bureaucratic reasons. Because when they are registered to a city, they need to go and sign a document frequently (like taking attendance) so that they can prove that they are living in that city. According to them, since they had to live in Istanbul, they lost their registrations or did not register at all from the beginning. Omar was one of them, and he mentioned how “*frustrating*” the process was and how he became “*illegal*.” He described how he was “*forced to become illegal*”:

“My relatives were waiting for me. Initially I came to them, they placed me in a job here. I wanted to be registered because right after that period there were news saying everyone undocumented would be kicked out. But they guided me to another city obviously. I said fine, at least I would have an ID after all(?). I went there, but they said I needed to give my signature. Uhh How could I live in Istanbul and give a signature every week at the same time? If I were to travel intercity, I can't even buy a bus ticket without an ID. Even if I have an ID they ask for a road permission document(issued from DGMM). I understood it was impossible living in both Istanbul and another city. I did not go for the signature, my registration was invalid after that. This is a very frustrating thing. I have been ‘illegal’ since then . I mean they push you to be an ‘illegal’.”

(Omar)

Like Omar, Zahra, who came to Turkey in 2019, mentioned how impossible it is for her to get an ID since DGMM requires signing papers regularly. Different from Omar’s narrative on being illegal, she identified herself as a “*doubled illegal migrant*”:

“When I came to Istanbul in 2019, it was already hard to get registered there. They registered me in Isparta. I had to go and give a signature, how would I do it? My kids and husband are in Istanbul. We built our home here, what do you mean Isparta? In that circumstance I was already an

illegal migrant, I became even more illegal. Double illegal. But what can I do, would I want things to be like this.”

(Zahra)

Like Omar and Zahra, Ahmed also highlighted the impossibility of getting an ID from Istanbul: *“When I first came to Istanbul, my relatives told me that If I keep being persistent about getting an ID from Istanbul, I will have it only in my dreams.”* He thought the reason behind that was him being a late-comer since his year of arrival was 2019. Mustafa expressed his regret for coming late to Istanbul: *“My uncle has arrived way before us with his own family. As soon as they arrived, they got their ID in Istanbul. Istanbul was not hectic before then. They are so lucky, I wish we came around then, I often say.”*

Some of the participants of this study, like Muhammed, mentioned some ways to transfer the registration from smaller cities to Istanbul, such as getting a work permit in Istanbul. Muhammed has been living in Istanbul for more than four years with his mother and father, but his first city of registration was Urfa, even though his parents are documented in Istanbul. He raised *“no point of trying to get ID”* as: *“I worked so hard to change my ID, they wouldn't do it. It wasn't until I got a work permit. The work permit is something like this, when you stop working, your ID turns back to Urfa. They don't give you any chance for an ID. Even if I get a work permit from Istanbul, if my ID returns back to Urfa when I stop working in Istanbul, then what is the point of trying?”* He also added that family reunification is not possible in his case since he is older than 18 years old. Omar also mentioned the temporariness of the solution of getting a work permit from Istanbul. According to him, it is possible to pay to get a work permit from Istanbul. There are some places in Istanbul doing this for profit:

“For instance, they give you a work permit in Istanbul in return for money, then you get to be documented in Istanbul. But this is a temporary solution. Because the moment you lose your job your ID returns back to

your old city. Everything here is temporary after all. Even the name of the ID is a temporary protection card. Meaning they don't protect fully, they say we'll protect you temporarily since you are a guest, they say. Then what's the point?"

(Muhammed)

Another way of transferring ID is family reunification through marriages, as shown from the example of Zahra's daughter since she managed to be documented in Istanbul through marriage and a work permit. Even though Zahra expressed how grateful she is for her daughter's situation, she still found the process frustrating since it took more than a year. On the other hand, she mentioned how it does not matter whether to have an ID or not due to the temporary nature of the status. *"It doesn't matter if you have a paper or not. Let's say you have it. Well, you'd need to get it renewed. As the name implies, it's temporary protection. Temporary. Whether you have a paper or not, it does not guarantee a future to you."* It is important to recall that Turkey's temporary protection does not provide long-term benefits such as getting citizenship, requiring renewal.

This was also visible in Mustafa Yusuf's and Omar's narratives. Mustafa expressed his journey to Istanbul and the relation between the temporariness of being registered by finding trying to get an ID as *"pointless"*: *"Will I be told 'work for five years and we'll give you the citizenship' just because I got the ID? not at all, ID is a temporary one. Furthermore, the name implies 'temporary.' Then what are we here dealing with, it has no point. We came to Istanbul because we knew this."*

Even though the temporality of the ID has been found pointless and the process frustrating by the participants, they repeated how they need to be documented, especially after 2018 and 2019, after the statement of the governor of

Istanbul⁴. Kawa said that he was scared because of the stories he heard about being deported. About the governor's statement, he expressed his concerns: *"I was praying everyday something bad would not happen to me so that I don't have to go to the hospital. Because normally I was told the ones who get caught will be sent to the cities they are documented. But we've heard all kinds of stories. People got deported instead. I was very afraid then."* Yusuf had a similar narrative about the need for ID and how scared he is: *"I had a lot of acquaintances that were caught and deported. I have heard a lot after then. They didn't hear back for days. I am very afraid for sure that something like this would happen to me. Those times we need an ID more than ever."*

Other than the need to be safe and the challenges of getting registered, another factor that affected their migration journey to Turkey was their already existing relatives in Istanbul. Ahmed described the importance of their relatives' presence in Istanbul as their *"entry ticket to Istanbul."* Not only Ahmed, but also Zahra, Kawa, Mustafa, Yusuf, and Omar shared similar experiences about the help they got from their relatives when they were coming to Istanbul. Their relatives played an important role in finding a job or getting a place to stay and forming a community. Like Omar, most of them came earlier than their families, found a job with the help of relatives, and found a place to stay with the help of relatives again. Then their families came. He questioned how to exist without knowing anyone: *"Without acquaintances, how could you exist in a town you have no idea of? They arranged everything first. They showed me the ways, everything. Now I know what to do, where to go."* Ahmed shared a similar narrative by questioning where he would end up without having relatives in Istanbul: *"But if I go and stay in another city, what would I do without acquaintances? How would I find a job, make a living, what would I eat/drink? Will I be safe?"*. Ahmed and Omar do not share their apartment with their relatives, and they only have their own families there.

⁴ see Chapter 2.3.2

However, Mustafa's and Yusuf's experiences were different. They are still staying with their relatives because they cannot afford to have a different apartment. Mustafa, who came to Istanbul in 2018 and who is 29 years old, came to Turkey with his mother: *"We are just my mother and I. We live with my uncles. Both my mom and I are not documented in Istanbul. We live in Sultangazi. We initially came here because our acquaintances were here. Then we stayed here after all. I don't know what we would do without my uncle."* For Yusuf, he and his family considered going to Malatya first. However, after getting in touch with their relatives in Malatya, they decided to go to Istanbul because they were convinced about not being able to find jobs in Malatya. Nevertheless, they have other relatives in Istanbul: *"What I mean by acquaintances is the son of my father's uncle and his family. They said they were barely making a living, but when we were told it's possible to find daily labor jobs one way or another, we packed and came here."* Coming to Istanbul due to the presence of their relatives was common in all seven interviews.

5.2 Freedoms & Deprivations for their Well-Being

After capturing the relation between how their journey ended in Istanbul and their registration status, questions like how they have found a job and what has been their previous job experiences, and the difficulties they have faced were asked. Also, a question to describe their experiences with securing accommodation in Istanbul followed. It can be seen from their narratives that undocumented migrants face so many deprivations to their well-being. However, they also agreed that being in Istanbul gives them economic freedom and that freedom breeds other types of freedoms (Sen, 1999: 8). Two main themes appeared, namely "Access to the labor market" and "finding accommodation". However, in their narratives, those issues are both connected to their visibility.

5.2.1 “*Work is abundant in Istanbul*”

As the participants of this study are undocumented people, there is no possibility for them to have formal jobs in Istanbul. Therefore all 7 out of the 7 participants work in the informal job sector in Istanbul. All of the male participants were working outside of the home. They had occupations such as factory workers, garbage collectors, furniture makers, construction workers, and garment sector workers. In contrast, the only female participant, Zahra, worked at home and did outwork(work done outside the factory).

Almost all participants agreed that Istanbul has the largest informal job market in Turkey. Kawa compared Istanbul with other cities and said : *“Besides, none could come close to Istanbul. All factories, workshops, everything is here. Everything is in Istanbul. Work is abundant in Istanbul.”* Even though the conditions at their jobs are pretty challenging as they describe, the standard narrative about their jobs is “it is the only way to take care of their family.” That narrative of taking care of someone appears in every interview repeatedly. While Kawa said it is his most considerable responsibility to take care of his parents, he added: *“I am in this job (only) for them; my main purpose in life is to keep them safe. Without a job, that would not be the case.”* Muhammed also said since his parents are old, he has to “put bread on the table.” Zahra had a different view. She gave the example of herself, working from home now as *“Women usually don't have jobs back home, for instance. But now you can see that all the Syrian women work here, whether formally or not and bring money home. Because everyone has to provide for their family somehow. I, too, make money which goes for grocery shopping [at the bazaar], I have to support my family.”* Providing for family appeared as the most common narrative when it comes to having jobs.

As it was discussed above, most of the participants highlighted the importance of their relatives and acquaintances to the access labor market, but Muhammed had a different experience from them. He found his job as a furniture maker from a Facebook page:

"There was a job ad from an employer. So I called. I know that people pull some strings beforehand, so anyway, isn't that the main reason that we come to Istanbul? Finding jobs through networking. But I didn't even need that, sister. I found it right away, thank goodness. But this time/in this scenario the trust might be an issue. Let's see if they are going to pay your money or treat you badly. Lucky me, my boss pays my money on time, I feel lucky. It is very difficult without networks. I mean, finding a job is not hard at all yet finding one where you can get paid is very hard." (Muhammed)

During the undocumented migrants' stay in Istanbul, that trust derived from their networks is critical for them to make a living and maintain their dignity. The narrative of trusting the employer appeared in other interviews as well.

Participants considered themselves lucky if they could get paid. Kawa described his situation as follows: *"At least there is a guarantor in this job, I can get my money even though it's not regularly paid. The bosses make Syrians suffer. I'm one of the lucky few."* Yusuf was not as lucky as Kawa and Muhammed since he was working at daily jobs without having a fixed employer, and he found all these jobs through a middle-man. His negative narrative on trusting him was: *"You might talk to me about the middle-man: can't you trust him, can't he arrange something to make you get paid? But to whom you can rely on in these times, you cannot trust anyone anymore."*

The main narrative in the interviews concludes that better economic conditions allow people to have a more extensive range of choices and have more satisfying lives (ibid: 295). However, Kawa once quit his job because his employer didn't want him to practice his religion.

"I used to work in a workshop, but I couldn't stand there much. The boss was complaining, saying that: you people pray too much, you always want

to perform [daily] prayer and to go to mosques to avoid work. I had never been treated as such when I was in Syria. Thank goodness that my current boss doesn't care much about these. I worship comfortably. This endurance of mine comes from my faith in God."

(Kawa)

According to Sen(1999), these types of social freedoms, as in the example of Kawa, should be directly considered developmental since they assist us to live longer, more free, and more fulfilling lives in addition to their function in fostering individual incomes (ibid).

The narrative of without money, you will starve to death was common in the interviews. Mustafa, working in the garment sector, said he feels embarrassed to tell me how much he earns from his job. Their narratives prove the interrelatedness of different types of unfreedom(Sen, 1999: 8). It also highlighted the astonishing reality that economic unfreedom, manifested as great poverty, can render a person defenseless prey in violating other types of freedom(ibid). Mustafa put this situation into words by saying that he is not taken seriously because of his status, and he ends up in worse situations because of that:

"I do jobs with a daily wage. I changed so many jobs, I was trampled on so many times... Nobody takes me seriously, the bosses don't take me seriously as I'm a miserable, poor illegal here. Some days I work 13,5 hours a day or work the night shift. No overtime, nothing. Don't work, if you dare. They'll replace you in no time. If you don't work, you don't get to eat, cannot pay your rent or your bills, can't feed yourself. How could a man live without paying his rent? How could a person survive while hungry?"

(Mustafa)

As it can be seen from Mustafa's experience, one of the ways that individuals are kept in bondage and captivity is when they are denied the ability to participate in the labor market (Sen, 1999: 7). Zahra also stated that her sons struggled with the same problem because they have also been getting paid very little and worked long hours. Yusuf stated that sometimes he needs to work for 12 hours or even 15 hours. Since Mustafa, Yusuf, and Zahra's sons make a living on daily wage, they ended up working for longer hours than the other participants. Because their shift is done, when the shift is done, and sometimes this can take even 15-16 hours, according to Yusuf.

Another common narrative was the impact of Covid-19 on the labor market. Both Kawa's, Yusuf's, and Omar's workplaces put the undocumented workers in a more vulnerable position due to Covid-19. When the employers started firing workers from the undocumented ones, Kawa could still keep his place due to his specific skill in tying two machines together in that factory. Yusuf's concern was different. He said he is not afraid of Covid, but: *"We have always been walking on eggshells, and we still are. If we get sick, we cannot go to work. Then we are not going to be able to make money."* However, even if they get sick, Muhammed said that problem is solvable as long as they have money. Being undocumented keeps them away from hospitals due to the risk of deportation, but Muhammed said he prioritizes having a job so that he can buy medicine. Zahra shared a similar view: *"But, you know, it's all about money. When you have money, you'll be healthy somehow, 'Money solves everything'."*

Even though they have been facing many problems with their economic conditions and jobs, one narrative common in Kawa's, Omar's and Ahmed's interviews was being thankful to God because they were healthy. Omar further said that: *"Yet sometimes I say to myself: this is your destiny, God has willed you to be grateful. You are in good health. Be thankful. You still find jobs and are able to earn money even though it's little, you can feed yourself. Be thankful."*

In their narratives, they value finding a job not only because of their belief that "*Money solves all problems*" but also the belief in Islam which requires you not to commit anything "*haram*." Therefore, they should earn every material they have under "*halal*" conditions. The narrative of earning halal money by not committing any crimes or by not doing anything haram was central in the interviews.

5.2.2. "*A roof over our head*"

Since the participants of this study are undocumented, they are not allowed to rent apartments in Istanbul. Therefore, they need relatives or acquaintances who are documented to help them. As mentioned above, while describing their journey to Istanbul, the presence of their relatives played a vital role not only in finding jobs but also to find a place to stay. They have mentioned some difficulties getting an apartment in Istanbul; since they are Syrians, they are socially accepted in merely some specific neighborhoods.

All 7 of the participants complained about the physical condition of their apartments. Even if they can afford to get apartments, they struggle to pay the bills, or they struggle to afford furniture, etc. The most common narrative about this issue was the fear of seeing the electricity bill. Muhammed described it as: "*Although there is a heater at home, I cannot turn it on. We have had a cold all winter. How can I pay the energy bill? Whose concern is that?*". Zahra described her apartment by saying that she has a roof over her head but also struggled to warm her apartment this winter like Muhammed: "*Well, fine, we have a roof over our heads, we feed ourselves in the end. But that's not enough. Especially in wintertime. We all come together and sit in a freezing room. We are trying to warm up together*". Kawa's and Ahmed's apartment was covered with mold, and they both said they wanted to change it, but they could not afford it. None of the participants were satisfied with their housing conditions.

However, when they mentioned something positive about their accommodation, it was usually related to the neighborhoods. Omar found it "crucial" and "life-saving" to stay in the same neighborhood with his relatives and the presence of neighbors. He described how accepted he feels as:

“The grocer, the shopkeeper, I know everyone around and talk to them. It feels like home a bit. Even the well-off Syrians sacrificed last Eid [al-Adha] and distributed the food to us. Our culture is about looking after each other. Okay, we don't have much money and we are struggling but when we are with one of us, we help each other. That's how we learned.”

(Omar)

As it can be seen from Omar's narrative, “People who are in poverty usually emphasize their community's strong cultural identity, traditional knowledge, and strong customs. These groups regard themselves wealthy in knowledge, social networks, and cultural diversity” (Gigler, 2015: 25). Also, Zahra said she wants to stay in Istanbul only because of the neighborhood she has been living in, Zeytinburnu. She said she feels at home at Zeytinburnu: *“For example, I go to the [bazaar] marketplace. Even the sellers there know me now. Many years have gone by. That's when it feels like home. Some of them even speak Arabic with me sometimes.”* Her social connections make her want to stay in Istanbul because she values those types of connections, as well as connections with neighbors. Ahmed, too, had a similar narrative about making the place their home but different from Zahra. He phrased it as: *“This [place] had to be our home.”* In addition, Zahra believed Zeytinburnu gave her a new life: *“because it gives you economic freedom and also mobility. You can move freely here, everybody is from us. (...) And the economic chances here helps to have your life in order.”*

5.2.3. “I have to attain my visibility”

Deprivation of their economic freedoms, to access the labour market and to find housing usually connected with their visibility in their narratives during the

interviews. Also need to be invisible especially in the eyes of the Turkish state, and state institutions in order to not to get caught. Yet, when it comes to getting support from the government or international bodies, documented migrants are the ones who can get aid, especially financial aid. But undocumented migrants cannot since they need to be invisible. Muhammed puts this situation into words:

“There is an [economical] crisis in the country. Money is short. It is always said to us that we are receiving subsidies for instance. No, we don't get any. We stay low from governmental agencies and become invisible. What help would come from places that do not even recognize you? It is said that UNHCR is helping, but they haven't either.”

(Muhammed)

Yusuf also raised complaints against the same issue but in his narrative he needs to pretend like he does not exist : *“It is said that the Syrians are lazy, they don't work, they receive subsidies, and the EU feeds them. Just show me who they are feeding, where? Let's say they do. Do they feed people like us too? We must disappear, act like we don't even exist. How can they reach out to someone who does not even exist?”* While Muhammed and Yusuf approached the need to pretend to be invisible, Mustafa's narrative argued that the invisibility caused a lack of accountability of employers and said: *“Where should I go, to whom should I make a complaint about, for instance, my former employers? I have neither money nor any rights. What are these rights anyway? To whom do we go to complain? First of all, I'm an illegal migrant. I must disappear from their point of view. I must attain my visibility and it only happens when you have money.”* Therefore, the narrative around invisibility in the interviews has been perceived as something to be earned. Something that they lack. Their options are limited because of their status. As a result, things they achieve are limited as well.

As it can be seen from their narratives, the amount of agency undocumented migrants have, as well as their assets, is extremely limited. As a

result, they have very limited opportunities to participate at various levels in society and, as a result, to structurally enhance their condition. Therefore, they do not have enough assets to change their working conditions or hearing of their voice. Mustafa argued that nobody hears their voice:

“But who is listening to us anyway? Which immigrant has the right to speak in the country. I think the only times that they consider us are election times and those considerations are always about sending us back. I believe that we have zero influence in the political sphere. How much political influence could people whose voices are not heard have? Oh, and if you are undocumented, then you are already not existing.”

(Mustafa)

As Sen stated the lack of economic freedom can give rise to social unfreedom, and the lack of social or political freedom can likewise give rise to a lack of economic freedom (Sen, 1999: 8). This was visible in Mustafa’s narrative since it shows the deprivation of his political and social freedom due to his registration status to gain economic freedom.

5.3 Well-Being Through Realization of Capabilities

5.3.1 *“Standing on your own feet”*

After describing their journey to Istanbul, getting a better understanding of their status in Turkey, and unveiling the freedoms and deprivations their status brings, I asked questions about the jobs they found matching their capabilities and how they see their well-being, especially in Turkey. This last chapter discusses what the participants want from their lives, what they expect and What they get, and what they value and what they achieve through trying to understand their

narratives about the realization of capabilities. To conceptualize well-being in this context, Inspired by Sen(1999), the participants' narrative on their ability to achieve valuable outcomes was the main focus (Chiappero-Martinetti et al., 2015: 133).

Due to the restricted access to the labor market because of their registration status, they struggled to find jobs matching what they aspired to do and wanted to be. The clearest example was Muhammed, who is currently working as a furniture maker but wants to work in auto-repair, said: *"First I want to learn auto repair and improve myself on that. Then if I manage to go to Europe, I would do it there and earn a lot of money. Yet I can't even think about any of these now as I'm busy being worried about feeding myself or taking care of my parents."* Lack of sufficient income can be one of the main reasons behind Muhammad's capability deprivation and can create the ground for a limited life (Topuz & Erkanlı, 2020: 1621). "To develop" repeatedly appears in some of the interviews. Ahmed used the narrative of "developing" his skills in football. However, he only plays it in his neighborhood whenever he finds time, and he described it as his greatest pleasure in life. He added: *"We play football with the people in the neighborhood whenever we have time to do so. I used to play a lot in Syria, too. Does good to me here also. I'm physically tired to be honest but it still feels good. Keeps a man's mind going. If only I could play it professionally but first I have to feed myself."* Without reaching their basic needs, their freedom to choose what to value and what not to is pretty limited. The economic situation of the country that those people are living in also plays a crucial role in their freedom to choose what to do and be. Turkey has struggled with a high unemployment rate among well-educated young people. Unlike other participants, Yusuf acknowledged this fact and found being educated in Turkey unnecessary and pointless:

"But my peers(Turkish) are studying and everyone is unemployed. I am not like my father; I keep up with what's happening in Turkey. Youth

unemployment is at its peak, college graduates end up being a housekeeper, taxi driver. Studying is meaningless then. Because of that, I always wanted to do practical things. Like installing. But who will ever teach me that? ”.

(Yusuf)

Since well-being cannot “depend on the mere existence of resources, it focuses on what they enable people to do and be” the narrative of holding their heads up helps to understand the motivations behind the bad living conditions of undocumented migrants to keep going in life (Alkire, 2015: 6). Even though the main narrative about their working conditions consists of various negative experiences, they usually agreed on one thing when it comes to how to “*be in a good state.*” Both Muhammed, Ahmed, Zahra, and Mustafa mentioned that what matters to them is the ability to “*hold their head high*” by “*standing on their own feet*” at the end of the day. Ahmed pointed out that he is not committing a crime to “*stand on his own feet*” to hold his “*head high all the time*”. Therefore he has to live without documents to make a living “*to hold his and his parents’ heads high*”. Muhammed used the same narrative but showed his “*manliness*” as the reason by saying: “*I need to take care of my family. I am the son, I need to keep their heads up high.*” Due to the demographics of my participants, which are mostly young males, feeling responsible toward their families to make a living was always apparent.

5.3.2 “*If we want to have a better life, we have to make this place home first*”

The theme of “feeling at home” has already been discussed in the participants' narratives. However, when they started talking about feeling good, to feel better, the following sentences usually were about making the place their home or not being able to achieve that or having their family next to them. Ahmed described the importance of feeling at home as: “*But I know how important it is to have a home. That homey feeling. Once you feel like home, you are set, you'll*

figure out the rest. You'll find a way". Zahra found it necessary too, but she saw making their place home as a condition for having a better life:

"I don't feel like a guest. Besides, in order to say well I can live here, you need to feel like home. Your family needs to be there with you too. That's the most important thing. I feel like home here. Of course it cannot replace my actual home, but see, are there any homes after all? Everywhere was torn down. If we want to be happy here, we will build our home then."

(Zahra)

Their narratives show that the more they feel at home, the more they want to stay in Turkey, not search for third countries. For instance, Zahra stated that she wants to stay in Turkey because of her age, and she does not expect much from the future; she wants to feel at home. Kawa also stated that he wants to stay in Turkey but for different reasons. He valued the freedom to practice religion and have people like him around the most. However, the most common narrative about staying in Turkey usually had negative connotations in the majority of the interviews.

5.3.3 *"Even a life with an ID is related to hopelessness."*

After mentioning freedoms and deprivations resulting from their undocumentedness, the most common theme that appeared was their hopelessness when the participants started talking about being documented. They found life with an ID issued from Istanbul still hopeless and miserable. They did not believe that ID would improve their living conditions so much. Instead, they insisted that structural changes are required. Their hardships are caused not only by their status but also because of the migration policies in Turkey and Europe. Muhammed said: *"Even a life with an ID is related to hopelessness. I wish I can go to Europe. Even though my ID is issued in Istanbul, even if I register, I would like to go to Europe. Turkey is doing everything to avoid giving me my rights ."* Unlike Muhammed, Ahmed added the unwillingness of Turks to stay in Turkey and

pointed a question at me since he knows me as a Turkish student living in Sweden and trying to stay in Europe. He said to me: *“You see sister, even you have gone away from here. I know that Turkish citizens are also struggling here. They are not happy either. Even though your parents are not with you, you are away. you didn’t want to stay in Turkey. I don’t either.”* The unpleasant environment in Turkey and the unwillingness of Turkish youth was also used in his answers to show why he wants to go to Europe. In addition, Muhammed connected the achievement of valuable functionings (outcomes) with moving to Europe, which is considered a feature of well-being. As he already stated: *“First I want to learn auto repair and improve myself on that. Then if I manage to go to Europe, I would do it there and earn a lot of money.”* Therefore he believed he would have a better life in Europe by doing the job he wanted to do.

Even though they said that they do not want to stay in Turkey and would prefer to go to Europe to increase their opportunities to earn more, they still have many suspicions about integration and cultural difference and are not accepted in Europe. Omar described how he was confused about this issue: *“ I think to myself, what if I go to Europe and make a lot of money. But I am sure I will never be accepted.”* Mustafa was the one who had the strongest opinions about going to Europe because he said his psychology was deteriorating in Turkey, and he did not know for how long he could stand this. He has been considering going to Europe, and he has already been in touch with some smugglers. He said:

“It doesn’t matter if I continue living this worthless life in Turkey or if I get caught escaping to Europe. Honestly I feel dead inside. But to escape to Europe money is needed. Money is needed for everything. I wish somebody out there would hear and help us. That’s why I told you initially to keep my name on your homework (this study). Now if the Europeans are going to read this, let them read. Maybe they would be a hope for us, maybe someone will come up and say let’s help them.”

(Mustafa)

Therefore, some participants like Mustafa tied his hopes to go to Europe for a better living. In addition, Yusuf's narrative on his future and well-being was in line with Sen's approach(1999) on the necessity of providing material conditions to reach basic needs. Since Yusuf has been struggling with that, he could not even think of "something good" in his life. He said:

"First I need to maintain my presence to be able to be present in the future, right? To ensure that I need to be able to afford my basic expenses, whether it's the rent, transportation, food, bills. When these are not paid, a family can not sustain its presence. Because of that I don't imagine anything about the future."

(Yusuf)

Concluding the analysis with Yusuf's words, living undocumented in Istanbul impaired their well-being in terms of material conditions. However, their main wish was to be safer in Turkey than in Syria. To examine their capabilities and well-being, the first step of the analysis, which connects their journey to Istanbul with their status of being undocumented, shows that the main narrative was the need to be safe in seven of the interviews. In the interviews, being safe had two layers. The first meaning was to be far from war, and the second was to be able to afford food and housing to keep them safe in Turkey. After unveiling the facts and motivations behind their status, examining their freedoms and deprivations made it clear that their material conditions make their life very difficult and put them in a vulnerable situation in the eyes of the state and the employers.

As it was clear from the described living conditions in Turkey through a narrative of lack of secure and normal-paid jobs, regular working hours as well as lack of proper housing were the deprivations they have been facing. However, all these conditions are followed up by one primary motivation: the "need to be

thankful to God .”All the interviews contained that narrative, but they differed on the reasons behind being thankful such as being able to provide for the family, keeping their familys’ heads high up, not earning money from haram(immoral) means, etc.

Being undocumented impaired their well-being, but being undocumented provided such material conditions that they could meet their basic needs, which they see as the first step toward their well-being. Some participants, such as Omar, Yusuf, Muhammed, and Mustafa, believed they could achieve functionings that they value by moving to Europe. They believed they needed to provide the proper material conditions first. Because they both think they cannot sustain their living under Turkey’s conditions any longer, they show their hopelessness in their narratives. On the contrary, Zahra and Kawa agreed with that narrative but still wanted to stay in Turkey since they wanted to feel at home, and they achieved it by living in the neighborhoods and being around the people like them. Even though they all agreed that not having an ID from Istanbul perpetually impairs their well-being, their perspective on how their status impairs their well-being differed since each individual values different aspects the most in life.

6 Conclusion

By applying a narrative analysis and the concepts of the Capability Approach, such as freedom/deprivations, capabilities, and well-being, this study provided a detailed investigation of the conditions of undocumented Syrian migrants in Istanbul. The case of Turkey provided the ways of treating undocumented migrants as a host country with the most significant number of migrants. The study emphasized how and in which ways living without documentation in Istanbul impaired the undocumented migrants' capabilities and well-being.

This study aimed to investigate the well-being of undocumented Syrian migrants in Istanbul through examining how living as an undocumented in Istanbul impairs their capabilities in terms of providing material conditions. The Capability Approach by Amartya Sen (1999) has been adopted to analyze the findings gathered from semi-structured interviews. This study demonstrated that living undocumented highly impaired the well-being of the migrants living in Istanbul based on their material living conditions.

Firstly, living in Istanbul derived from their willingness to keep their families safe and belief that Turkey is safer than Syria. The constant fear of being captured follows even here. Another point that increased the impairment of the well-being of the said group is more structural, which is Turkish migration policies as well as the Temporary Protection Regime. The interviewees have found it pointless to get registered since the temporary protection ID does not provide any long-term benefits and commitments such as getting citizenship. Thus, the registration system in Turkey is so ineffective that getting registered is challenging and tricky that they stopped trying.

Secondly, the analysis shows that the undocumented migrants do not see any difference between getting registered in a small city in Turkey and being

unregistered in Istanbul. As a result, even if getting registered in a small city would provide healthcare and rights to education through, making them 'legal' migrants in the eyes of the Turkish state, having income has been the first and most important priority to sustain their lives. Therefore, they lack all these rights from being a documented migrant due to their current status. However, being undocumented in Istanbul has in fact made enabled them to take place in the informal job market and has given them economic freedom to some extent. In addition, they tried to improve their material conditions by other means; getting help from relatives and acquaintances, forming communities, and getting help from organizations are a few examples of such strategies. These play a crucial role in improving material conditions while fighting Turkish migration policies at the same time. Being visible in the job market but invisible at state institutions shaped their stands towards Turkey's migration policies and further thoughts on their well-being. While being invisible at state institutions made it harder for their lives such as not being able to go to hospital, to get medicine for free, Being visible and taking active part in the labor market affected their perceptions on the realization of capabilities. They believe they can gain more economic freedom through acting visible in the informal labor market. Therefore they can get other state-related services with money, privately.

The number one priority for the interviewees was to keep their families safe by providing material needs. The study also showed how the economic unfreedoms they have been facing impaired other types of freedoms such as social or political freedoms. Sentiments of home and being around people in similar situations played a vital role in maintaining and improving the well-being of the interviewees. Insufficient income was identified as one of the primary causes of the undocumented migrants' capability deprivation. Therefore, migrating to Europe to improve material conditions, followed by having more agency and expansion of capabilities, and sustainably having better life conditions has been considered a way of improving their well-being. Losing their hope in sustaining

their lives, primarily due to Turkey's economic/political situation, resulted in finding ways to go to Europe even if that meant putting their lives in danger.

While concluding this study, the difficulty of reaching the undocumented population which results in limited studies on this topic, should be kept in mind while making suggestions for further research. It calls for the need to focus on other dimensions aside from material conditions when examining the well-being of this specific group, such as political rights, social opportunities, and protective security. Those dimensions, which can include social rights, and conditions for education, could be examined to grasp the well-being of undocumented migrants better.

7 References

- Akalın, A., 2007. “Hired as a Caregiver, Demanded as a Housewife. Becoming a Migrant Domestic Worker in Turkey”, *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 14(3). pp. 209–225.
- Alkire, S., 2002. *Valuing freedoms: Sen’s capability approach and poverty reduction*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Alkire, S., 2015. *The capability approach and well-being measurement for public policy*. Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. OPHI Working Paper. 94. Oxford: University of Oxford.
- Ambrosini, M., 2015. “From ‘illegality’ to Tolerance and Beyond: Irregular Immigration as a Selective and Dynamic Process”, *International Migration*, 54(2), pp. 144–159.
- Amnesty International., 2015. *Europe’s Gatekeeper: Unlawful Detention and Deportation of Refugees from Turkey*, [Online] 16 December 2015. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/3022/2015/en/> [accessed on 27 Nov 2021].
- Amnesty International, 2019., *Turkey Sent to War Zone: Turkey’s illegal deportations of Syrian Refugees*. London: Amnesty International Ltd. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EUR4411022019ENGLISH.pdf>
- Anand, P., Krishnakumar, J. & Tran, N.B., 2011. “Measuring welfare: Latent variable models for happiness and capabilities in the presence of unobservable heterogeneity”, *Journal of Public Economics*, 95(3-4), pp. 205–215.
- Asylum Information Database (AIDA)., 2020. *Country Report: Turkey*. [Online] Available at:

https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/AIDA-TR_2020update.pdf.

- Ataç, I., Heck, G., Hess, S., Kaşlı, Z., Ratfisch, P., Soykan, C. & Yılmaz, B., 2017. “Contested B/Orders. Turkey’s Changing Migration Regime. An Introduction”, *Movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, 3(2), pp. 9–21.
- Bahar Özvarış, Ş., Kayı, İ., Mardin, D., Sakarya, S., Ekzayez, A., Meagher, K. & Patel, P., 2020. “COVID-19 barriers and response strategies for refugees and undocumented migrants in Turkey”, *Journal of Migration and Health*, 1(2), p.100012.
- Bastıyalı, Z., 2022. *Building walls rather than bridges. Is the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan one of the latest examples of securitisation of migration?*. Unpublished manuscript. SIMR44 Course Paper. Lund: Lund University.
- Bernard, R., 2019. The Migration Crisis and the European Union Border Regime, In: Cremona, M. and Scott, J. (eds), 2019. *EU Law Beyond EU Borders: The Extraterritorial Reach of EU Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 197-227.
- Boşnak, B., 2021. “Politics of Subsidiarity in Refugee Reception: The Case of Civil Society in Turkey”, *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 19(3), pp. 301–315.
- Bryman, A., 2011. *Samhällsvetenskapliga metoder*. 2nd ed. Stockholm: Liber.
- Caro, L.P., 2020.. *İş Gücü Piyasasındaki Suriyeli Mülteciler*. Ankara: International Labor Organisation (ILO).
- Chiappero-Martinetti, E., Egdell, V., McQuaid, R. & Hollywood, E., 2015. Operationalization of the Capability Approach, from Theory to Practice: A Review of Techniques and Empirical Applications. In: Otto, H.U., Atzmüller, R. Berthet, T., Bifulco, L., Bonvin, J., Chiappero-Martinetti, E., Egdell, V., Halleröd, B., Kjeldsen, C., Kwiek, M., Schröer, R., Vero, J. & Zieleńska, M. (eds.), 2015.. *Facing Trajectories from School to Work: Towards a Capability-Friendly Youth Policy in Europe*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

- Clarke, J., 2014. "Beyond social capital: a capability approach to understanding Refugee Community Organisations and other providers for 'hard to reach' groups", *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 10(2), pp. 61–72.
- Comim, F., 2001. *Operationalizing Sen's Capabilities Approach*. Conference Paper for the Conference Justice and Poverty: examining Sen's Capability Approach, Cambridge on 5-7 June 2001. Cambridge: St. Edmund's College Von Hugel Institute.
- Corbridge, S., 2002. "Development as freedom: the spaces of Amartya Sen", *Progress in Development Studies*, 2(3), pp. 183–217.
- Council of the EU (2016) EU-Turkey statement [Press release]. 18 March. Available from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/pdf> [Accessed 17 May 2022].
- Danış, D., & Nazlı, D., 2019. "A faithful alliance between the civil society and the state: Actors and mechanisms of accommodating Syrian refugees in Istanbul". *International Migration*, 57(2), pp. 143–157.
- De Genova, N. P., 2002. "Migrant Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31(1), pp. 419-447.
- Deneulin, S. & McGregor, J.A., 2010. "The capability approach and the politics of a social conception of wellbeing", *European Journal of Social Theory*, 13(4), pp. 501–519.
- Dodge, R., Daly, A., Huyton, J. & Sanders, L., 2012. "The Challenge of Defining Wellbeing", *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(3), pp. 222–235.
- Donmoyer, R., 2000. The case study method in social inquiry. In: Gomm, R, Hammersley, M. & Foster, P. (eds.), 2009. *Case Study Method*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. pp. 45-68.
- Durand, M., 2014. "The OECD Better Life Initiative: How's Life? and the Measurement of Well-Being", *Review of Income and Wealth*, 61(1), pp.4–17.

- Düvell, F., 2011. "Paths into irregularity: the legal and political construction of irregular migration", *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 13(1), pp. 275-295.
- Eichsteller, M., 2021. "Migration as a Capability: Discussing Sen's Capability Approach in the Context of International Migration", *Social Inclusion*, 9(1), pp.174–181.
- Eklund, L., 2010. Cadres as Gatekeepers: The Art of Opening the Right Doors? In: Szarycz, G.S.I. (ed.). 2010. *Research Realities in the Social Sciences: Negotiating Fieldwork Dilemmas*. Armherst, New York: Cambria Press, pp. 129-147.
- Erdoğan, M., 2021. *Suriyeliler Barometresi 'Suriyelilerle Uyum İçinde Yaşamının Çerçevesi*. Ankara: Eğiten Kitap Yayıncılık.
- Fernández Arribas, G., 2016. "The EU-Turkey Agreement: A Controversial Attempt at Patching up a Major Problem", *European Papers*, 1(3), pp. 1097-1104.
- Flyvbjerg, B., 2011. *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fukuda-Parr, S., 2003. "The Human Development Paradigm: Operationalizing Sen's Ideas on Capabilities", *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3), pp. 301–317.
- Gasper, D. & van Staveren, I., 2003. "Development as Freedom v-v and as what else?", *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3), pp. 137-161.
- Genç, D., 2015. "An Analysis of Turkey's Bordering Processes: Why and Against Whom?", *Turkish Studies*, 16(4), pp. 527–553.
- Genç, F., 2017. "Migration as a Site of Political Struggle. An Evaluation of the Istanbul Migrant Solidarity Network", *Movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, 3(2), pp. 117–133.
- Gigler, B.S., 2005. *Indigenous Peoples, Human Development and the Capability Approach* Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on the Capability Approach. Paris, France: UNESCO.

- Gigler, B.S., 2015. *Development as freedom in a digital age: experiences of the rural poor in Bolivia*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Gomm, R., Hammersley, M. & Foster, P. (eds.), 2000. *Case Study Method: Key issues, key texts*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Guillemin, M. & Gillam, L., 2004. "Ethics, Reflexivity, and "Ethically Important Moments", *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), pp. 261-280.
- Haferlach, L., & Kurban, D., 2017. "Lessons learnt from the EU-Turkey Refugee Agreement in guiding EU migration partnerships with origin and transit countries", *Global Policy*, 8(1), pp. 85-93.
- Hajer, M. & Ambrosini, M., 2020. "Who helps irregular migrants? Supporters of irregular migrants in Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Turin (Italy)", *REMHU: Revista Interdisciplinar da Mobilidade Humana*, 28(59), pp. 199–216.
- Haraway, D., 1988. "Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), pp. 575- 599.
- Heck, G. & Hess, S., 2017. "Tracing the Effects of the EU-Turkey Deal: the Momentum of the Multi-layered Turkish Border Regime", *Movements. Journal for Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies*, 3(2), pp. 35–57.
- Holstein, J.A. & Gubrium, J.F., 1995. *The Active Interview*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Hugman, R., Bartolomei, L. & Pittaway, E., 2011. "Human Agency and the Meaning of Informed Consent: Reflections on Research with Refugees", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 24(4), pp. 655–671.
- Hugman, R., Pittaway, E. & Bartolomei, L., 2011. "When 'Do No Harm' Is Not Enough: The Ethics of Research with Refugees and Other Vulnerable Groups", *British Journal of Social Work*, 41(7), pp. 1271–1287.
- Ineli-Ciger, M., 2017. "Protecting Syrians in Turkey: A Legal Analysis", *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 29(4), pp. 555–579.

- İçduygu, A., 2009. *International Migration and Human Development in Turkey* Human Development Research Paper.2009/52. Ankara: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- İçduygu, A. & Yüksek, D., 2010. “Rethinking transit migration in Turkey: reality and re-presentation in the creation of a migratory phenomenon”, *Population, Space and Place*, 18(4), pp. 441–456.
- İçduygu, A., 2011. *The Irregular Migration Corridor between the EU and Turkey: Is it Possible to Block it with a Readmission Agreement?*. Technical Report 2011/14. San Domenico di Fiesole: European University Institute Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
- İçduygu, A. & Aksel, D.B., 2012. *Türkiye’de Düzensiz Göç*. Ankara: International Organisation for Migration (IOM).
- İçduygu, A., 2015. Türkiye’ye Yönelen Düzensiz Göç Dalgaları: Transit Göç. In: Erdoğan, M. and Kaya, A. 2015. *Türkiye’nin Göç Tarihi: 14. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Türkiye’ye Göçler*. Istanbul: Bilgi University. pp. 277-294.
- İçduygu, A. & Diker, E., 2017. “Labor market integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey: From refugees to settlers”, *The Journal of Migration Studies*, 3(1), pp. 12-35.
- Khosravi, S., 2010. *“Illegal” Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kirişçi, K., 2007. *Border Management and EU-Turkish Relations: Convergence or Deadlock*. Research reports. Florence: European University Institute CARIM.
- Kurt Topuz, S. & Erkanlı, H., 2020. “An applied study on women’s poverty in Turkey in the context of the capability approach”, *International Journal of Social Economics*, 47(12), pp. 1619–1632.
- Kvale, S., 2006. “Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogue”, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(3), pp. 480-500.
- Lavrakas, P. J., 2008. *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.

- Leghtas I., 2019. *Türkiye'deki Mülteciler İçin Güvensiz Bir Gelecek. Zorla Geri Gönderme ve Yasal İş İmkanlarına Erişimdeki Sorunlar*. Fieldwork Report. Washington, DC: Refugees International.
- Léonard, S. & Kaunert, C., 2022. "De-centring the Securitisation of Asylum and Migration in the European Union: Securitisation, Vulnerability and the Role of Turkey", *Geopolitics*, 27(3), pp. 729-751.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R. & Zilber, T., 1998. *Narrative Research: Reading, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Limbu, B., 2009. "Illegible Humanity: The Refugee, Human Rights, and the Question of Representation", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22(3), pp. 257–282.
- Mason, J., 2018. *Qualitative Researching*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- McEwen, M., 2017. "Refugee Resettlement in Crisis: The failure of the EU-Turkey Deal and the Case of Burden-Sharing", *Swarthmore International Relations Journal*, 2(1), pp. 20–32.
- Mursalova M, 2021., *Development Barriers for Stateless Refugees*. Master's Thesis. Lund: Department of Political Science, Lund University.
- Northover, P., 2014. Development as freedom. In: Potter, R.B. (ed.), 2014. *The Companion to Development Studies*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Nussbaum, M.C., 2000. *Women and human development: the capabilities approach*. Cambridge: New York: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Reilly, K., 2009. *Key concepts in ethnography*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd..
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)., 2020. *How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

- Özdora-Akşak, E. & Dimitrova, D., 2021. “Walking on a Tightrope: Challenges and Opportunities for Civil Society Organizations Working with Refugees and Migrants in Turkey”, *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 32(1), pp.1-12.
- Parla, A., 2011. “Undocumented migrants and the double binds of rights claims”, *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 22(1), pp. 64-89.
- Patterson, M. & Monroe, K. R., 1998. “Narrative in Political Science”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 1(1), pp. 315-331.
- Pittaway, E., Bartolomei, L. & Hugman, R., 2010. “ ‘Stop Stealing Our Stories’: The Ethics of Research with Vulnerable Groups”, *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 2(2), pp. 229–251.
- Polkinghorne, D., 1988. *Narrative Knowing and The Human Sciences*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Pollard, E.L. & Lee, P.D., 2003. “Child Well-being: A Systematic Review of the Literature”, *Social Indicators Research*, 61(1), pp.59–78.
- Robeyns, I., 2005. “The Capability Approach: a theoretical survey”, *Journal of Human Development*, 6(1), pp. 93-117.
- Robeyns, I., 2016. “Capabilitarianism”, *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 17(3), pp. 397–414.
- Riessman, C.K., 2005. Narrative Analysis. In: Kelly, N., Horrocks, C., Milnes, K., Roberts, B. & Robinson, D. (eds.) 2005. *Narrative, Memory & Everyday Life*. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield., pp. 1-7.
- Riley, T. & Hawe, P., 2005. “Researching Practice: the methodological case for narrative inquiry”, *Health Education Research*, 2(2), pp. 226-236.
- Sahin Mencutek, Z., 2020. “Refugee Community Organisations: Capabilities, Interactions and Limitations”, *Third World Quarterly*, 42(1), pp .1–19.
- Schofield, J.W., 1993. Increasing the generalizability of qualitative research. In: Gomm, R., Hammersley, M. and Foster, P. (eds.), 2000.

- Case Study Method: Key issues, key texts*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd., pp. 69-97.
- Sen, A., 1980. Equality of what?, In: McMurrin, S.M.I. (ed.), 1980. *Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sen, A., 1999. *Development as freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stiglitz, J., Sen, A. & J.-P. Fitoussi. 2009. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*. Paris: Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE).
- Sumner, A. & Tribe, M.A., 2010. *International Development Studies: Theories and Methods in Research and Practice*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Sykes, B. L., Verma, A. & Hancock, B. H., 2018. “Aligning sampling and case selection in quantitative-qualitative research designs: Establishing generalizability limits in mixed-method studies”, *Ethnography*, 19(2), pp. 227–253.
- Toktaş, Ş., 2009. “Book Review: Ahmet İçduygu and Kemal Kirişçi, eds. *Land of Diverse Migrations: Challenges of Emigration and Immigration in Turkey*, İstanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2009.” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 41(1), pp. 273–276.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2022., *Turkey Fact Sheet February 2022*. Ankara: UNHCR. [Online] Available at: https://www.unhcr.org/tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2022/03/Bi-annual-fact-sheet-2022-02-Turkey-ENG-Final-210322_TR_PL.pdf
- Van Reekum, R., 2016. “The Mediterranean: Migration Corridor, Border Spectacle, Ethical Landscape”, *Mediterranean Politics*, 21(2), pp. 336–341.
- Vero, J., Bonvin, J.-M., Lambert, M. & Moachon, E., 2012. “Decoding the European dynamic employment security indicator through the lens of the capability approach. A comparison of the United Kingdom and Sweden”, *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 18(1), pp. 55–67.

- Westby, C., 1990. "Ethnographic Interviewing: Asking the right questions to the right people in the right ways", *Journal of Childhood Communication Disorders*, 13(1), pp. 101- 111.
- Yükseker, D., 2004. "Trust and Gender in a Transnational Marketplace: The Public Culture of Laleli", *Public Culture*, 16(1), pp. 47–65.
- Yap, M. & Yu, E., 2016. "Operationalising the capability approach: developing culturally relevant indicators of indigenous wellbeing – an Australian example", *Oxford Development Studies*, 44(3), pp. 315–331.
- Yin, R.K., 1981. "The case study as a serious research strategy. Knowledge", 3(1), pp. 97-114.

8 Appendix

Appendix A. Participants of the study

Pseudonyms	Age	Gender	Source of Income	Household Status
Muhammed	25	M	Furniture-making	Single
Ahmed	28	M	Factory	Single
Zahra	54	F	Outwork (work done outside of the factory)	Married with 2 sons and 1 daughter
Kawa	28	M	Leather factory	Single
Mustafa	29	M	Daily wage, garment sector	Single
Yusuf	19	M	Daily wage (construction, agriculture, bakery)	Single
Omar	27	M	Garment sector	Single

Appendix B. The Interview Guide

It is possible that the questions asked during the interview process will not follow the particular order or the specified form. This is because the manner in which questions are asked during an interview depends on the natural flow of the conversation. On the other hand, the interview demonstrates an apparent coherence with the topics for which questions were developed. All of the seven interviews were conducted online. Three were conducted in Turkish, and four were conducted in Arabic, with the presence of an interpreter(also the gatekeeper). Interviews more or less took 35 to 45 minutes.

Questions about their Journey to Istanbul

- Could you tell me about yourself? Age, how long have you lived in Istanbul in which neighborhood, marital status.
- Why did you come to Istanbul?

- What did you experience when you tried to register? Or did you not try registering at all? Why?

Questions about Freedoms & Deprivations resulting from their status and their material conditions

- If you have found a job in Istanbul, how was your experience with the job market in Istanbul? Did you get any help? If yes, from who?
- How do you find your working conditions?
- How is your accommodation condition? Where are you staying, with who, and how did you find that accommodation?

Questions about their Well-being and realization of capabilities

- How do you think that working/living in Istanbul affects your well-being?
- What would you like to do as an occupation? Are you planning to register in a different city in the future? If not, why?