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Acculturation attitudes and urban-related identity of internal migrants in three largest cities of Turkey

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Abstract

This study explores the acculturation strategies and the urban related identity of Turkish and Kurdish internal migrants who moved from different regions of Turkey to Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. In terms of acculturation strategies, assimilation was found to be the most preferred acculturation attitude among Turks. Whereas separation was found to be most endorsed acculturation attitude among Kurds. Concerning urban-related identity scores, Turks reported a higher urban-related identity score than the Kurds. Furthermore, the internal migrants in Izmir reported higher urban-related identity scores than the migrants living in Istanbul and Ankara. The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that gender, length of residence and migration type were the most significant predictors for integration preference of Kurds.

Keywords: Acculturation; urban-related identity; internal migration; internal displacement; ethnic identity

Introduction

Turkey, considering its emigration and immigration history, is a country characterized with socio-cultural migration experiences. With respect to intra-country migration flows in the period from 1950 to 1980s, “transition from one-party political system to multi-party political life” (Tekeli, 2001:28) and rapid urbanization due to modernization in the agricultural sector, has led to significant changes in migration movement. Alongside the economic-voluntary migration flows of the 1980s, the armed conflict in eastern and south-eastern

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regions of Turkey between 1984 and 1999 led to a large internal displacement of people (Kurban et al., 2007).

According to Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (2006: 61) “the total number of internally displaced people was to be between 953,680 and 1,210,200”. On the other hand, “international organizations and national and foreign NGOs estimate the figure of internally displaced people in Turkey at between one and three or four million” (Unalan et al., 2007: 83). As a result of this internal displacement Cohen (2007) indicated that migrants escaped to many different urban areas and were subsequently impoverished from employment and housing insecurity. Migrants also suffered from lacking health and limited primary educational services. Although these problems were common in the whole of Turkey, internally displaced migrants experienced these deficiencies harder. For instance, Celik (2007) emphasized that internally displaced population in the province of Batman cannot benefit from private health services due to poverty and they can benefit from public services only if they can reach them. Moreover, concerning displaced migrants, social exclusion is another important fact that to be underlined. As Yukseker (2007) reported that inability to benefit from social citizenship rights, housing problems, inability to benefit from right to education and being discriminated in urban areas are some of the main dimensions of social exclusion caused by internal displacement.

Conflict-caused economic depression in south-eastern areas has also influenced migratory movements (Sirkeci, 2000). Many of the displaced have crowded into the south-eastern provincial cities, such as Diyarbakir and Batman, which doubled their populations. As of 2001, according to international reports, it is estimated that as many as 3.5 million Kurds left south-east Turkey since 1984 and settled mainly in large cities in the west. Post displacement housing conditions for the displaced Kurds includes squatting in settlements and homelessness. Overcrowding is also reported to be common among internally displaced families who are forced to live together due to the economic problems. A Council of Europe report indicates that the government has generally failed to provide emergency assistance to those displaced in the southeast, including provision of shelter (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2006). According a survey research with a large sample of displaced Kurds in Turkey demonstrated that “a mass migration brought about ‘a multi-structural urban space’. As a consequence of this movement, new divisions and segregation emerged within the urban space rather than an integration with the settled population” (Barut, 2002: 33).

In addition to these findings it is well documented that internally displaced persons (IDPs) have suffered psychological trauma. A 1998 medical study carried out on a group of IDPs, found that 66 percent were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, with 29.3 percent showing profound depression (Sir et al., 1998). Another survey recorded that 9.5 percent of displaced were suffering from mental illness arising during or after displacement (Barut, 2002).

In 2013, Turkish Statistical Institute reported that “77.3 % of the total population were living in the province and district centres in 2012. The proportion of population living in Istanbul was 18.3% (13.854.740 persons) in 2012. This province was followed by Ankara with 6.6% (4.965.542 persons), Izmir with 5.3% (4.005.459 persons), respectively” (para. 4). These three cities, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, were reported as the largest metropolitan cities in population growth (Sonmez, 2007: 324).

The migration of people in Turkey which we have summarized above continue to occur although having adopted a new form. Since Parliamentary Election on 7 June 2015, the reignited armed conflict between the state and the separatist forces (PKK) has been concentrated in the south-eastern part of the Turkey where the majority of residents are of Kurdish origin. There is already observable movement of people within the region following the increased conflict and it would not be a surprising outcome for the situation to result in a new migration wave towards the western parts of the country.

The increased migration numbers whether it is from the rural areas to the city centres or from the East towards the West due to economic hardship or forced resettlement, the issue continues to increase its significance for social sciences. The issue is highly multi-dimensional that cannot be limited only around migration and migrants. Issues such as discrimination, social exclusion to centralized policies like town planning and unemployment management etc. are among the many facets of the problem. The challenges faced by different migrant groups are discussed in this study through their relationship with cultural and spatial adaptation.

This present study aimed to explore the cultural adaptation processes of Kurd and Turk internal migrants from different regions of Turkey, who had resettled in one the biggest cities since 1950s and especially after 1980s in Turkey. This study is particularly aimed to examine cultural adaptation processes in regards to their new urban environment, through an integrated theoretical perspective that connects the approaches of cross-cultural psychology and environmental psychology. The theoretical framework of this study is outlined in the following paragraphs.

Acculturation strategies

The issue of acculturation has been one of the focal points of an intensively expanding field of cross-cultural psychology (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 1987) and intergroup relations (e.g. Arends-Toth and van de Vijver, 2003; Piontkowski et al., 2000). In cross-cultural psychology literature, Berry (2006: 27) defined acculturation as “a process of cultural and psychological change that results from the continuing contact between people of different cultural backgrounds”.

Within bi-dimensional modelling of acculturation, Berry (1992; 1997) stated that acculturation process proceeds according to the degree to which the individual simultaneously participates in the cultural life of the new society and

maintains his or her original cultural identity. As a result of this cultural contact, Berry's (1997) four acculturation strategies were defined for the non-dominant ethnocultural groups: *Assimilation* (value on interaction with other cultures), *Separation* (value on maintaining original culture), *Integration* (value on maintaining original culture and interaction with other cultures) and *Marginalisation* (little or no value on maintaining original culture and interaction with others). The previous research on acculturation strategies of immigrant groups in various cultural contexts (Arends-Toth and van de Vijver, 2003; Berry, 1997) pointed out that integration is the most preferred and adaptive strategy, whereas marginalization is the least preferred by immigrants. In addition, there are some research findings that show separation is the most preferred strategy for Turkish immigrants (e.g. Ataca and Berry, 2002; Piontkowski et al., 2000; Seker and Sirkeci, 2014). For instance, Turkish immigrants in Canada were found to strongly prefer separation; the high socioeconomic group was found to endorse integration and assimilation to a greater extent in comparison to those of low socioeconomic group (Ataca and Berry, 2002). Similarly, recent study conducted with Turk and Kurd female immigrants in the United Kingdom (Seker and Sirkeci, 2014), separation was found to be the most preferred strategy in acculturation attitudes.

Although most of the studies conducted in this area have focused on acculturation processes upon international migration, there are similar cultural adaptation patterns which migrants experience after intra-country movement (e.g. Gui et al., 2012; Goksen and Cemalcilar, 2010; Seker, 2006). From this similarity Berry (2010) suggests that the acculturation process following internal migration has similar psychological and cultural characteristics of acculturation after international migration.

For instance, Gui et al. (2012) demonstrated that rural and urban areas constitute distinct cultural environments in terms of observable differences between industrial areas, transportation and infrastructural systems, market economies and the width of social networks. Concerning internal migration in Turkey, Goksen and Cemalcilar (2010) emphasized the positive impact of social capital factors and cultural distance in acculturation process of rural-to-urban migrant families' children. Furthermore, Seker (2006) demonstrated that Berry's acculturation framework (Berry et al., 1989) is a valid way to understand rural-to-urban internal migrants' acculturation attitudes within Turkey. Seker's study was a comparative study of Bulgarian Turks and Eastern and South-Eastern Anatolian migrants' acculturation attitudes. According to the research findings, Bulgarian Turks, culturally similar to Turkish host community, demonstrated assimilation strategies whereas participants from East and South East Anatolia, who are Kurdish and rural-to-urban migrants, preferred integration and separation strategies.

Urban-related identity

Acculturation literature may be helpful in understanding how individuals and groups deal with cultural encounters; however, it offers much less for understanding of adaptation to a new physical setting. Although Berry (1976) touched upon the link between acculturation and physical environment in his “ecocultural model”, few studies (e.g. Gui et al., 2012; Goregenli and Karakus, 2014a; Karakus, 2014) have examined immigrants’ responses to their new physical and cultural environment.

Contemporary urban environments could be defined as areas where migrant groups with different ethno-cultural backgrounds and members of the host culture group come across accompanied by changing socio-cultural features. The perspective of Gui et al., is that moving to urban environments from the countryside involves engagement with a new civic context that includes different social, economic and cultural circumstances, which can be considered as an acculturation transition. Their findings demonstrated that rural-to-urban migrant workers experience similar acculturation process with international migrants. Gui et al. specifically examined the relationships between urban identity, social identity dimensions and acculturation strategies and they suggested that “the more superficial the social or place engagement with the city, the more the migrant workers prefer integration or assimilation. In contrast, when the engagement is more profound, the less is the preference for integration or assimilation into the life of the city” (Gui et al., 2012: 608).

Thus, the present study aimed to examine the acculturation strategies of internal migrants with respect to urban-related identity (Lalli, 1992) as a consequence of voluntary migration or internal displacement within a multi-cultural context emerging from the contingencies of different cultural groups in three major cities of Turkey. Lalli (1988: 306) conceptualized the general theory of “urban identity” from a social psychological perspective on self-concept. Lalli’s “urban identity” concept is that “a part of a person’s more comprehensive self identity is the result of a complex association between self and urban environment”. Lalli (1992) operationalized five dimensions of urban-related identity as follows: *Evaluation*: Perceiving own town unique by comparing it with others; *Continuity*: connecting the town with own personal history; *Attachment*: feeling of belongingness; *Familiarity*: perception of familiarity with town; *Commitment*: the commitment to ‘want to stay’ in personal future” (Lalli, 1992: 294).

Objectives

The first major objective was to evaluate if urban-related identity of Turks and Kurds significantly relates to acculturation strategies. We would expect that adapting to a new urban environment for ethnically different groups is to be significantly associated with acculturation process. The second major objective was to examine the socio-demographic factors (age, gender, place of residence, length of residence, ethnicity) and migration type (forced or voluntary) which

are expected to be related to urban-related identity and acculturation strategies. Particularly for ethnicity we would expect that Turks with a similar ethno-cultural features with the host culture members would prefer assimilation strategy whereas Kurds with different mother tongue and different cultural origin to prefer separation strategy. With respect to urban-related identity, we would expect higher attachment for Turks than Kurds due to socio-cultural similarities with Turkish host culture members from the viewpoints of environmental psychology and cross-cultural social psychology.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 412 adult participants from Izmir (64 females, 86 males); Ankara (76 females, 75 males); and Istanbul (43 females, 64 males and four unreported). The mean ages of participants from Izmir was 42.08 years (range = 25-74, $SD= 13.06$) and of participants from Ankara 39, 22 years (range = 19-77, $SD= 12.55$) and of participants from Istanbul 36,75 years (range = 18-67, $SD= 11.28$). 52.9% of participants was ethnically Turk and 47.1% of participants was Kurd. 45.1% of Turks migrated at least twenty years ago, compared to 33.8% of Kurds. 26% of Turks reported that they migrated 11-20 years ago whereas this rate reached to 36.3% in Kurdish sample. The remaining included participants migrated mostly 10 years ago in both ethnic group.

Measures

The method of this study is a field/questionnaire research. The subscales of the questionnaire are described next.

Migration type and the major causes

Participants indicated whether their migration movement was as a forced or a voluntary movement by answering a close-ended categorical question. After the measurement of migration type, the participants were asked to mention their major cause for movement.

Acculturation strategies

Acculturation Attitude Scale (Berry et al., 1989) was translated into Turkish and validated by Seker (2006). In the present study this translated 44 items version of the scale was used and 4 items were added representing a supplementary attitude domain 'the way of demonstrating emotions in rites and ceremonies'. Totally 12 attitude domains (social activity, religious holiday celebrations, customs and traditions, food, decoration at home environment, the language of media and mass communication (using ethnic or national tools of newspaper, television, radio etc.), friendship, child-rearing style, children's values, language used at home environment, the general lifestyle, the way of demonstrating emotions in rites and ceremonies) were determined. Each attitude domain included four items to assess four acculturation attitudes:

assimilation, integration, separation, marginalisation. For instance, the items in the social activities domain include four items: 'I prefer social activities which involve host culture members only' (assimilation); 'I prefer social activities which involve host culture members and my ethnic group' (integration); 'I prefer social activities which involve members of my own ethnic group only' (separation); 'I don't want to attend either host cultural or ethnic social activities' (marginalisation). The statements of 'nationals' in Berry and colleagues' items were replaced by the statement of 'host culture members' in order to adapt instrument to intra-country migration context. The responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strong disagreement" (1) to "strong agreement" (5). Higher scores for each acculturation attitude measure indicated higher preference for the particular strategy.

Satisfaction with migration decision

The satisfaction level of participants was measured by a single question ("To what extent are you satisfied with your migration decision?"). Participants rated their decision on a 5-point scale where 1=Not satisfied, and 5=Very satisfied.

Urban-related identity scale

This measure was taken from Lalli (1992) and consisted of 20 items (e.g., 'This city is like a part of myself', 'Compared with other cities, this city has many disadvantages', 'I would like to witness this city's future development', 'Lots of things in this city remind me of my own past'). Participants indicated their agreement with each statement on a 5-point scale, 1=strongly disagree, and 5=strongly agree. The higher points indicate higher level of urban-related identity. The reliability and validity of the Turkish version of this scale were determined by Karakus and Goregenli (2008) and the findings of several further researches (Goregenli and Karakus, 2014b; Goregenli et al., 2014; Karakus, 2014) supported the high level reliability and validity of this scale in local context.

Results

The percentile findings for migration type revealed that 26.3% of all participants reported their migration as a forced movement. For the major causes of migration in whole sample, 49.5% of participants moved in search of an employment and better economic opportunities. The other major causes and their percentages of the whole sample were family reunification (13%), arbitrary familial decision (13%), safety concern related to familial crisis such as blood feud (10.8%), job change and permanent appointment (4.7%), education (4.5%), internal displacement due to political turmoil and eviction of villagers in Eastern and South-eastern Turkey (2.5%), natural disasters and deficiency of natural resources (1.8%). Internally displacement due to eviction of villages as a major cause of migration was indicated by only the Kurds and it constituted

5.8% of Kurdish participants. The further descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Means (standard deviations) and internal consistency coefficients for study variables.

Variables (1 – 5 likert)	Turks		Kurds	
	Mean (SD)	Alpha	Mean (SD)	Alpha
Urban-related identity	65.98 (15.68)	.94	60.02 (17.02)	.94
Acculturation Strategies				
Assimilation	38.05 (10.32)	.83	30.04 (10.80)	.87
Separation	36.43 (12.32)	.88	41.05 (11.93)	.89
Integration	30.47 (10.66)	.81	34.99 (12.69)	.87
Marginalisation	16.51 (7.91)	.86	15.69 (7.46)	.89
Satisfaction with migration decision	3.84 (1.12)	-	3.27 (1.25)	-

Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficients between study variables for Turks and Kurds

<i>Turks</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Satisfaction with migration decision	1	.25**	.24**	-.23**	.06	-.01
2.Urban-related identity		1	.29**	-.29**	-.06	-.20**
3.Assimilation			1	-.46**	.00	-.38**
4.Separation				1	.35**	-.24**
5.Integration					1	-.08
6.Marginalisation						1
<i>Kurds</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.Satisfaction with migration decision	1	.34**	.32**	-.28**	.19*	.06
2.Urban-related identity		1	.31**	-.28**	.30**	-.30**
3.Assimilation			1	-.17*	.50**	-.02
4.Separation				1	-.29**	-.19*
5.Integration					1	.11
6.Marginalisation						1

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Findings of the field research were based on a comparison of acculturation attitudes and urban-related identity scores in terms of ethnicity, place of residence and migration type.

The inter-correlations between study variables

The correlations between satisfaction with migration decision, urban-related identity and four acculturation strategies are presented in Table 2. Turks who obtained higher scores in assimilation strategy reported higher level of urban-related identity and of satisfaction with the migration decision. Kurds who obtained higher scores in assimilation and integration strategy had greater level of urban-related identity and of satisfaction with the migration decision. On the other hand, participants who obtained higher scores in separation strategy had

weaker relationship with urban-related identity and satisfaction with the migration decision in both samples.

Group differences in acculturation strategies

A 2 (ethnicity: Turk / Kurd) x 3 (place of residence: Izmir / Ankara / Istanbul) multivariate ANOVA was used to compare reported degrees to the four acculturation strategies. Wilks's Lambda showed that significant effects for ethnicity, $F(4, 310) = 20.9, p = .000$, place of residence, $F(8, 620) = 23.6, p = .000$, and the interaction between ethnicity and place of residence, $F(8, 620) = 7.48, p = .000$, existed.

Examination of the univariate ANOVAs showed that significant main effects for ethnicity existed for assimilation $F(1, 313) = 57.6, p = .000$, separation $F(1, 313) = 21.6, p = .000$ and integration $F(1, 313) = 10.02, p < .01$ strategies such that Turks reported higher assimilation scores, ($M = 38.22, SD = .78$); lower separation ($M = 34.96, SD = .91$) and integration scores ($M = 30.61, SD = .87$) than did Kurds ($M = 29.79, SD = .79; M = 40.94, SD = .91; M = 34.52, SD = .87$, respectively).

Significant main effects for place of residence were found for all acculturation strategies, assimilation $F(2, 313) = 34.49, p = .000$, separation $F(2, 313) = 25.76, p = .000$, integration $F(2, 313) = 22.00, p = .000$ and marginalization $F(2, 313) = 9.53, p = .000$. The migrants in Izmir reported higher assimilation ($M = 40.36, SD = .91$) and lower marginalization scores ($M = 13.96, SD = .72$) than did the participants in Ankara ($M = 30.88, SD = .94$ and $M = 17.92, SD = .73$, respectively) and Istanbul ($M = 30.77, SD = 1.03$ and $M = 17.83, SD = .80$, respectively). Moreover, the migrants in Ankara reported higher separation scores ($M = 44.34, SD = 1.08$) and lower integration scores ($M = 27.08, SD = 1.04$) than did the migrants in Izmir ($M = 34.39, SD = 1.06$ and $M = 36.42, SD = 1.02$, respectively) and Istanbul ($M = 35.11, SD = 1.19$ and $M = 34.17, SD = 1.15$, respectively).

A significant interaction between ethnicity and place of residence existed only for integration strategy, $F(2, 319) = 9.25, p = .000$ such that Kurdish migrants in Izmir ($M = 41.22, SD = 9.54$) reported higher scores of integration than did Turkish migrants in Izmir ($M = 31.64, SD = 12.62$), Kurdish migrants in Ankara and Istanbul ($M = 25.65, SD = 10.30$ and $M = 36.69, SD = 12.15$, respectively) and Turkish migrants in Ankara and Istanbul ($M = 28.51, SD = 10.68$ and $M = 31.66, SD = 7.91$, respectively). No other main effects or interactions were revealed by the univariate ANOVAs.

Additionally the findings of univariate ANOVA revealed significant main effects for migration type existed for Kurdish participants' separation $F(1, 136) = 10.17, p < .01$, integration $F(1, 136) = 5.81, p < .05$ and marginalisation $F(1, 136) = 5.35, p < .05$ strategies such that migrants who reported their movement as a forced migration due to social, economic or political reasons reported higher separation ($M = 44.69, SD = 1.58$), and integration scores ($M = 37.65, SD = 1.54$) and lower

marginalisation scores ($M = 13.84$, $SD = 1.06$) than did voluntary migrants ($M = 38.50$, $SD = 1.12$; $M = 33.11$, $SD = 1.09$; $M = 16.85$, $SD = .75$, respectively).

Group differences in urban-related identity

A 2 (ethnicity: Turk / Kurd) x 3 (place of residence: Izmir / Ankara / Istanbul) univariate ANOVA was used to compare reported degrees to urban-related identity scale. According to the test of between-subjects effects, Turks and Kurds differed significantly on urban-related identity $F(1, 368) = 14.942$, $p = .000$. Moreover, the main effect of place of residence on urban-related identity was also significant $F(2, 368) = 10.680$, $p = .000$. No significant interaction was revealed $F(2, 368) = 2.339$, $p > .05$.

Examination of the univariate ANOVAs showed that Turks reported higher urban-related identity scores, ($M = 66.15$, $SD = 1.17$) than did Kurdish migrants ($M = 59.63$, $SD = 1.22$). Concerning the significant main effects for place of residence showed that participants from Izmir reported higher scores ($M = 67.51$, $SD = 1.35$) than the participants from Istanbul ($M = 62.65$, $SD = 1.62$) and Ankara ($M = 58.52$, $SD = 1.40$).

Finally, a 2 (migration type: forced/ voluntary) x 3 (place of residence: Izmir / Ankara / Istanbul) univariate ANOVA was performed to compare Kurds' reported degrees to urban-related identity. Examination of the univariate ANOVAs showed that no significant main effects for migration type $F(1, 58) = 1.469$, $p > .05$ and interaction $F(2, 158) = 2.276$, $p > .05$ existed. For ethnicity, Kurds from Izmir reported higher scores ($M = 67.03$, $SD = 2.15$) than the Kurds from Ankara ($M = 51.83$, $SD = 2.32$).

Predictors of integration strategy

A four step hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to explore the predictive power of several key variables for integration strategy of the Kurds. In this analysis, demographic variables sex (female/male) and age are entered at Step 1, length of residence and place of residence (Izmir/Ankara/Istanbul) were added at Step 2, the migration type (forced/voluntary) and satisfaction of migration decision were added at Step 3, and at the fourth step urban-related identity mean score was entered. As expected at the last step of the model sex $\beta = -.26$ ($p < .01$), length of residence $\beta = .20$ ($p < .05$) and the migration type $\beta = -.29$ ($p < .01$) were significant predictors of Kurds' integration preference $F(7,131) = 4.694$ ($p = .000$), $R^2 = .21$.

As it can be followed in Table 3, sex, and the length of residence and migration type were the significant predictors of integration preference of Kurds. Thus, sex and migration type had significant negative impact on Kurds' integration attitude. Compared to female Kurds, male Kurds were found to be more integrated. Furthermore, voluntary Kurds were more favour of integration attitude than Kurds who reported their movement as a forced

movement due to social, economic and political reasons such as poverty, political conflict or economic hardships. Regarding to length of residence, the results revealed that the longer time the Kurds spent in the city, the more they endorse integration attitude. In other words, the length of residence in receiving city was positively associated with higher engagement in host culture.

Table 3. Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting integration strategy in Kurd sample (N=185)

	Integration strategy	
	B	R ²
Step 1		.05
Sex	-.22*	
Age	-.04	
Step 2		.11
Sex	-.21*	
Age	-.18	
Length of residence	.25*	
Place of residence	-.09	
Step 3		.19
Sex	-.25**	
Age	-.16	
Length of residence	.26**	
Place of residence	-.12	
Migration type	-.31**	
Satisfaction with migration decision	.14	
Step 4		.21
Sex	-.26**	
Age	-.17	
Length of residence	.20*	
Place of residence	-.11	
Migration type	-.29**	
Satisfaction with migration decision	.11	
Urban-related identity	.16	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Note: The categorical variables were coded as follows: Sex (1 Female 2 Male); Place of residence (1 Izmir 2 Ankara 3 Istanbul); Migration type (1 Forced 2 Voluntary)

Discussion

In this study, we adopted the acculturation framework to internal migration and examined the acculturation attitudes of Turkish and Kurdish migrants from different regions of Turkey who resettled in three major cities. Consistent with Berry's (2010) suggestion and other evidences derived from studies conducted in Turkey (e.g. Goksen and Cemalcilar, 2010; Karakuş, 2014; Seker, 2006) internal migration has similar psychological and cultural features with the features of acculturation experienced after a process of international migration.

This paper supported the usefulness of Berry's conceptual framework as a representative approach in order to understand the acculturation processes occur following migration within the same country. Moreover, the high level of internal consistency coefficients for acculturation sub-scales for Turkish and Kurdish migrant samples separately supported the former reliability evidence of these instruments (Seker, 2006). Furthermore, the significant differentiations of mean scores of these two dependent variables in terms of several socio-demographic and cultural variables (e.g. sex, place of residence, ethnic identity) provided empirical evidence that these instruments are externally valid. Although the sample size of the research is relatively small, the meaningful statistical correlations between the variables prove our findings reliable. The principal aim of this research is to discuss and test new dimensions in migration and integration processes rather than make general assumptions. For this reason, we believe we managed to reach data which could guide and support further research around the issue.

In line with previous evidence (Ataca and Berry, 2002; Piontkowski et al., 2000; Seker and Sirkeci, 2014) findings revealed that Kurds, a low socio-economic group, reported higher endorsement of separation and integration whereas Turks reported greater endorsement of assimilation. Furthermore, the significant differentiations between Turkish and Kurdish migrant's acculturation preferences are in line with other research findings (Karakus, 2014; Seker, 2006). Herein, it is worthy to notice that Turkish and Kurdish migrants differ from each other in two main extents. Firstly, Turks share the mother tongue of Turkish, whereas Kurds who moved from predominantly Kurdish spoken provinces face Turkish language barrier as a second language which dominates the daily activities in urban life (see also, Zeyneloglu, Sirkeci and Civelek, 2016). For Kurds and especially for female migrants, the language difference and other cultural distinctions lead to more difficult adaptation processes to the new urban life (see, Caglayan et al., 2011). Secondly, Turkish migrant's decisions resulting from economic reasons, occur relatively more voluntarily. However, Kurds and particularly internally displaced people have been exposed to more disadvantaged social, economic and physical conditions after migration as well as prior to it (see, Barut, 2002). As a consequence of the social and economic inequalities, Kurdish migrant's settlements in new urban settings are largely built up in poor, peripheral areas (see, Kaya et al., 2009; Isik and Pinarcioglu, 2008). As Sirkeci (2000) pointed out that combining the living conditions of Kurdish migrants in big cities with already existing ethnic discrimination problems constitute a comprehensive picture of relative deprivation faced by the Kurdish migrants of Turkey.

We would argue that the location of these residential areas in the city perimeters cause these spatial units to be segregated from urban public areas where different cultural groups have the possibility to connect with each other.

On the issue of social inequalities, we would also argue that public areas of urban settings offer a free space of inter-group relations where groups from

different socio-economic status and cultural identities may contact with each other. Thus socio-political context of urban environments, intergroup perceptions (e.g. Bilali et al., 2014) and attitudes of host culture group towards migration and migrants (e.g. Arends-Toth and van de Vijver, 2003; Piontkowski et al., 2000; Umuroglu et al., 2015) affect the acculturation attitudes of migrants.

Moreover, findings which demonstrated the intensity of urban-related identity are significantly correlated with the level of endorsement for assimilation strategy and negatively correlated with the preference of separation strategy amongst both groups. We would argue that adaptation process to a new physical environment is an important aspect of migrants' acculturation attitudes. In support of this argument, the effect of intersection with the host population is significant. We would argue that migration destination (place of residence) and the physical/geographical characteristics of this new destination affects urban-related identity and acculturation attitudes of migrants. Particularly for Kurds, to live in Izmir led to higher integration scores when it is compared to migrants living in Istanbul or Ankara. This finding is in line with recent evidence demonstrating higher Turkish-Kurdish intermarriage in the Aegean region compared to other regions of Turkey (see, Zeyneloglu, Civelek and Sirkeci, 2016). In this respect we should also state that the participants, either Turks or Kurds living in Izmir were found to have highest urban-related identity scores compared to the other two cities. Herein we would argue that the geographical features and the general urban planning principles in Izmir lead to more permeable borders between urban centre and the peripheral areas. The ease of accessibility to public areas and social mobility in Izmir could be assumed as relatively higher than the two other big cities and various social and ethnic groups would have more possibility to contact with other groups in a heterogeneous urban setting (see, Karakus, 2014; Goregenli and Karakus, 2014b). These findings pointed out that the advances of environmental psychology would be helpful to understand acculturation process and cultural transition from rural to urban life. The findings of this study consider the emphasis of Ward and Kagitcibasi's (2010: 189) on "practical utility of acculturation research" and need for researchers to share their findings with public authorities. Correspondingly the activities of civil societies (Ambrosini, 2013) and local policies of municipalities have essential roles to provide social interventions in urban life. As Gruber (2012) elaborated that local governments have a central importance of local integration policies for migrants such as "language and educational activities for different age groups, equal opportunities and services for migrants, working with anti-discrimination activities and applying special methods of conflict solving in heterogeneous neighborhoods".

Finally, we would argue that most of the issues faced by the migrant groups arise not only from migrants' acculturation preferences but also are strongly influenced by matters and decisions around urban planning and the disposition of public authorities towards migration. At this point we would raise a question

for the present study as such: “Do Kurds prefer the separation strategy or are they being obliged to be segregated physically, socially and economically in urban life?”

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