



## Housing – A Critical Perspective.

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### **Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:**

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:** How to Utilize Housing for Integration: Housing Narratives of Asylum Seekers in Istanbul

**2. Format:** Written paper

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**4. University or Company Affiliation:** Bahcesehir University

**5. Abstract (300 words):**

Turkey as a country that signed Geneva Convention in 1961 and approved the Geneva Pact on the legal status of refugees, so far sustains the geographical restriction policy provided that only asylum seekers from the European countries can be recognized refugee status. Syrian asylum seekers have been provided temporary protection status in 2014 entitling them certain rights in terms of health, education and access to working. Even though recently integration attempts and policies have come to the agenda of the government, housing and dwelling conditions do not take place among them.

A Refugee Housing Coordinatorship has been established in Turkey in 1990 following the massive migration wave from Bulgaria and its duty has been transferred to TOKI (Mass Housing Administration) in 2004. However, TOKI provided refugee housing for only refugees of Turkish origin. It is important to state that there is no social housing system in Turkey, TOKI produces comparably cheap housing units (mostly in the outskirts of cities) for lower income groups upon affordable prices but does not provide rental units. Yet Syrian refugees are vulnerable in the housing market and they are subjected to savage/turbulent neoliberal urban renewal policies. Depending on their financial

situation some are temporarily accommodating in abandoned houses to be demolished in urban renewal areas, some gather in comparably cheaper neighborhoods in search for solidarity also creating the risk of ghettoization, and some are considered as novel actors/potential buyers that would stimulate the construction market in Turkey as the impetus for economic growth. This paper, after giving an overview of the housing policy of Turkey for refugees aims at sharing the findings of a qualitative inquiry carried out with Syrian refugees from different socio-economic strata who dwell in different neighborhoods of Istanbul to unfold their experiences in terms of housing access and reveal their survival tactics. The paper will conclude with some inferences on how to utilize housing as a part of integration policy.

### **7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

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Received her degree in architecture from Middle East Technical University in 1997; completed her graduate studies M. Sc. (2000) and Ph.D. (2008) in Architectural Design at Istanbul Technical University. Her Ph.D. thesis titled 'Diversified Households in Metropolis and Housing' focuses on social and physical needs, wants and expectations of alternative/non-traditional household types in relation to housing. Joined Bahcesehir University (BAU) in 2005 and currently works as an assistant professor at BAU, Faculty of Architecture and Design. Main research interests include ontological aspects of dwelling, housing studies, theory and history of design, gender and space, place-making practices. Her work appeared in *Woman/Kadin*, *Megaron*, *METU Journal of Faculty of Architecture* as well as others. Interested in interdisciplinary potentials of architecture and searches for in-between grounds focusing on social/cultural aspects of dwelling and place-making. Teaches 'Urban Housing' course in graduate level since 2009, where students develop conceptual projects on 're-thinking dwelling'. Member of Executive Board of BAUMUS Center of Migration and Urban Studies which aims at empowering the interdisciplinary teamwork.