

## Syrian Migration and Active Citizenship in Turkey: Rethinking the Possibility of Living Together and Social Cohesion

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### Abstract

The sudden and intense migration that emerged as a result of the Syrian crisis in 2011 had significant effects on cities and municipalities in our country as well as in the world. Considering that the vast majority of Syrians currently live in urban areas, municipalities that have a significant proportion of Syrian immigrants compared to their resident population faced a challenge of delivering the same quality municipal services to more populations due to unexpected increase in the number of people waiting for service, but with the same budget, personnel, equipment and organizational structure. This situation negatively affects the quality of life in cities and threatens local sustainable development. The main idea of our study is to open the theoretical framework of the “active citizenship” model for discussion. The model is based on the idea that, active citizenship model is the most important resource to be mobilized in increasing the resilience of municipalities at the local level in the face of added urban issues such as mass migration and pandemic, and living together and a sustainable quality of life in cities. After making conceptual fixations in the study, answers will be sought to possible questions on how active citizens are involved in the political and social participation processes; their roles; why it is necessary to be an active citizen; how to establish an enabling environment for this to occur and what the duties of municipalities are in this context.

**Keywords:** Active citizenship; migration; multi-layered shocks; social cohesion

“Citizen”, which comes from the root of “civis” in Latin in terms of its origin, means the resident of a city or town, that is, “citizen”, and includes not only sharing a certain geography, but also a political place knitted with certain social networks. From this point of view, the city is not only a management area, but also a lively and variable social area with certain and shared values, knitted with social responsibility networks. From this point of view, the economic, political, compulsory or voluntary dimensions of the migration movement, which has emerged in our country and the world in the recent period and whose impact will continue for many years, redefines the relations between the state, local governments, cities and individuals, politically, socially and spatially. Because individuals can reside in countries where they are not legal citizens, sometimes for a short time or for a long time. For example, Syrian

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refugees are naturally considered citizens of the Turkish cities where they reside. The legal basis of this approach is Article 13 of the Municipal Law No. 5393. According to the relevant article of the said Law, “Everyone is a citizen of the town in which they reside. Citizens have the right to participate in municipal decisions and services, to be informed about municipal activities and to benefit from the assistance of the municipal administration. It is obligatory to provide aid in conditions that do not harm human dignity”.

With the introduction of the Active Citizenship model, which was recently put on the agenda by the Reslog (Resilience and Local Governance Project) funded by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) has attracted a lot of attention and this issue became a highly debated agenda item. Reslog argues that, the most important resource to be mobilized by the municipalities are “active citizens” for the resilience<sup>2</sup> and “living together and a sustainable quality of life in cities” in the face of the added urban issues such as mass migration and pandemic (RESLOG, 2021, p. 16). Active citizens from the perspective of local governance and increasing urban resilience; They are actors who come together for a good cause for the benefit of society, are open to all kinds of partnerships and cooperation, work with institutions interested in society, and participate in voluntary community actions. They are the members of the society who seek ways of political and social transformation for a common ground that will make a peaceful life possible, and who take responsibility and have the power to create a collective action for a common purpose as well as taking individual actions. When we look at the daily examples applied in the world, we see that in Canada, for example, Active Citizens come together with immigrants at certain intervals and provide monitoring and mentoring services (Hawthorn, 2021).

In fact, when we do some research on the definition of active citizenship, which has recently been introduced to the literature, the European Commission's active citizenship is an umbrella term for the acquisition and exercise of rights for civic and political participation. As such, it includes citizenship and residence, membership in political organizations, voting, running for office, volunteering or participation in political protest”. The definition brought by the British Council (n.d.) with a more social perspective is as follows: “Active citizens are people who feel inspired. They are people who feel motivated and empowered to make a difference. People define who have the drive and the know-how to make sure ideas don't just remain ideas” and the social leadership courses they organize on this subject are defined as “through” our Active citizens’ social leadership training programme, we've encouraged hundreds of thousands of people to take action on the issues they care about most. This leads to them taking on some of the biggest social challenges of the 21st century”.

In my opinion, the most inclusive definition was brought by the European University College Association (EUCA) and active citizenship is described as “Active citizenship means people getting involved in their communities and democracy at all levels from local to national and global” terms (European Commission, n.d.). Active citizens as individuals are on the other hand, defined as “An active citizen promotes the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political process developing a combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to work to make a difference in the society” and their importance in today's

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<sup>2</sup> Resilience is defined as the capacity of cities to be flexible, resilient and turn them into opportunities by reversing possible shocks (Brigit Obrist et al., 2010, p. 290). According to The Resilience Alliance, resilience is a multidimensional condition that can be defined as 1) the amount of disturbance that a system can absorb and maintain, 2) the degree of self-reorganization, and 3) the degree to which it develops and increases the capacity for learning and adaptation.



environment. It is also emphasized that “Given the low levels of civic engagement and participation, it is crucial to promote the active citizenship, especially with young people:” So, what kind of consciousness should individuals who have such an important and responsible citizenship consciousness have? Or in other words, what is the effect of playing an active role in ensuring political and social harmony on individuals?

### **Why do people want to be active citizens?**

In terms of political and social participation, we can understand the definition of citizenship at four different levels (RESLOG, 2021, pp. 34-35). Studies in this area frame citizenship as passive, shy, questioning, and active citizenship. Active citizens can be individual members of the society and independent individuals in the participation process, as well as a large stakeholder group or different stakeholder groups.

In the light of the information we have obtained in the meetings held with the Urban Councils on this subject recently, the majority of the retired groups, who have reached a certain age and have provided important services to the society in the past with their knowledge and skills start to participate them and become active citizens. Reasons would be the prolongation of the average human lifespan and expectancy of the retirement life in parallel, inapplicability of the previous retired activities which were used to pass the spare time in retirement in the past, such as gardening, meeting and chatting with former colleagues and retirees in the neighbourhood cafe have become impracticable for today. Life in apartments without gardens, gigantic sizes of neighbourhoods, loss of neighbourhood culture, difficulty in accessing to green and open spaces, rapid disappearance of the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, street, environment, etc. High population in cities and increased settlement densities trigger the isolation of people and especially the retired ones. It is observed that, retirees have been adopted new activities like participation in cultural and artistic activities instead of old retirement occupations, distraction by acquiring various hobbies, etc. We understand that the currently well-known activities such as philanthropy and charity service have not become widespread in our country are effective in making individuals active citizens.

In addition, it is observed that retirees, most of whom have financial difficulties due to low pensions, react to developments they are not accustomed to in daily life and feel uneasiness and anger because of the idea that the world they know is slipping out of their hands and they are asking themselves and their close circles, "Can't something be done about these issues?" We see that, now they volunteer to become Active citizens because of the tension they feel due to frequently asking the question, not being able to find valid answers on these issues, or not seeing any hope for possible recovery in a short time.

In her column, Cerrahoğlu wrote that one of the most important Italian writers of today Claudio Magris said, "Over the centuries, the world has changed imperceptibly, sometimes this change has accelerated... but whatever happens, people have found themselves in a position to grasp the change they have witnessed throughout their lifetimes. Not so today. By quoting the expression “The elderly are almost lost on a completely different planet where other laws and other laws of physics apply”, he emphasizes the anguish of the wise people of an era who felt excluded from the system in the changing world. “The radical alienation (that I hear) to the digital universe makes the world around me incomprehensible, full of ambushes, traps and deceptions. This creates a real sense of uneasiness, fear and loss in the heart of this person... The word 'generation' gains a different meaning in this context. A generation spans

not 25 years as in the past, but ten years from now on. As soon as we begin to grasp the contemporary, we see that the contemporary has become obsolete and passed!” then he emphasized the fragility of the wise people of a period who had difficulty in keeping up with the pace of the world they live in but did not want to isolate themselves from this society completely (Cerrahoğlu, 2022).

Here is the first point where the idea of active citizenship caught us, by showing sensitivity to the current problems of the prominent professional groups such as doctors, lawyers, engineers and teachers, who were trying to find a place for themselves in Urban Councils, and their units such as the neighbourhood or city they live in, and do something by making the effort possible. However, it should be noted that when similar applications in developed countries are examined, it is revealed that in the applications in Canada and Northern countries, in the face of shocks such as pandemic and migration, Active Citizenship candidates are not only retirees, but also the educated people who are currently working but cannot find what they are looking for in their current jobs can take part in the same platform (Hawthorn, 2021).

### **What is the enabling environment to active citizenship?**

As we know, Lipset listed the prerequisites for political and social development while defining the political person, and gave equal weight to wealth, education, urbanization and institutionalization (Lipset, 1986, pp. 29-43). In this context, it would be appropriate to understand that what should be understood from education is a political culture vision that has internalized the values of political development. There is a cultural framework that is expected to be settled in society for the development of active citizenship awareness. From this perspective, studies to be carried out that adopt universal principles such as respect for human rights, peacefulness and inclusiveness, pave the way for participatory, transparent, mutual dialogue and thus the development of mutual understanding and trust, and enable cooperation and/or effective division of labour on this ground. It is important to establish an environment that enables active citizens and civil society to develop a common determination, ownership and belonging towards the future of the city, and it should have these features that are suitable for the development and settlement of active citizens.

In modern democracies, civil society, in its broadest and most up-to-date sense, can be defined as the common area established by different voluntary organizations that actively participate in the process of finding effective and long-term solutions to social problems and, on this basis, work to direct political actors to produce policies that will bring these solutions to life (Taylor, 1990, pp. 95-118). At this point, it is necessary to remember the importance of good governance and civil society in the formation and sustainability of living together. Of course, although it is thought that both municipalities, citizens and immigrants have some roles for the development of active citizenship within the scope of the goal of “living together”, it is clear that the responsibility for creating and maintaining a favourable environment lies largely with the municipalities which have the decision-making authority and necessary resources. Municipalities will contribute to improve the quality of life throughout the city and the development of coexistence for the entire local community, including Syrians migrants, and be implemented through a participatory planning and cooperative implementation process that can involve all relevant actors, social groups and civil society in the city. It should be in a position to provide the opportunity to obtain concrete outputs on a human scale, to be defined on the basis of social cohesion and fusion, and to be presented to all citizens.



Living together requires the Syrian migrants fleeing the war to adapt to the conditions of the places where they live, as well as the different social segments in Turkey to accept the existence of Syrians and develop life practices on equal terms with them (Duman & Çelik, 2019, pp. 301-324). Moreover, civil society and municipalities working on these problems often act with a crisis management approach, with the understanding of either producing solutions without adequately analysing these multi-layered and multi-actor conflicts, or only providing services instead of solutions that will change the origin of the conflict. At best, this leads to the understanding of “working for refugees” rather than “working with refugees” and causes the interventions to not have a long-term and transformative effect. The sensitivity of the multi-layered resistance approach to conflict is another important issue. Migration itself is a phenomenon that leads people of different identities (class, ethnicity, religion, gender, sect, etc.) to share life in the same environment. While multi-layered shocks increase the population in need, they create more conflict actors and causes of conflict as resources remain the same or decrease. When all these points are taken into account, all stakeholders who have different capitals and/or access to multiple resilience and who will develop and take action in adaptive and transformative actions that can make the city and society resilient are seen as active citizens. Municipalities, on the other hand, are institutions that will provide an environment conducive to the transformative actions that active citizens will take with them and/or on their own.

### **What are the concrete benefits to be active citizens?**

Active citizenship is one of the unifying factors in society. It is known that Syrian migrants living in Turkey have not very strong and often conflictual relations both with themselves and also the local people and public institutions. Many methods to be put into practice through active citizenship can make important contributions to the strengthening of these ties. For example, Syrians who actively participate in local problems can act as mediators or facilitators in a possible Syrian-municipal conflict. Similarly, while actively participating Syrians and local people are working to solve a common problem, they can develop new projects to get to know each other better and talk about their problems. In addition, active citizens open up spaces for closer interaction and communication between all groups of society and for the development of activities; With their characteristics of being the grounds for discussion and cooperation on matters of public concern, they enable active citizens to exhibit all kinds of participation and provide inclusiveness, and by providing the citizens with the ability to self-government, they prevent situations such as unilateral decision-making and unilateral management, and form the basis of life together in society. In this sense, social actors that include active citizens; citizens (especially disadvantaged groups, women, children, disabled people, immigrants), non-governmental organizations and formations (associations, platforms, networks, initiatives, movements), urban councils, including other assemblies and working groups within them, headmen, social enterprises, activists, professional associations and units, universities and their associations, the private sector and the media.

Basically, the importance of active citizenship comes from the fact that individuals have the power and potential to create a better society by making a direct and positive contribution to the society in which they live. On the other hand, active citizenship in terms of awareness of rights and responsibilities reinforces the sense of coexistence and belonging in the society. Organized active citizens can easily coordinate on a particular social issue and support effective active citizenship by bringing different groups together. Identifying and

implementing multi-layered resilience measures together with the active citizens of the city ensures that problems that may arise during the implementation phase due to different needs are determined in advance, and that subsequent reactions are prevented. With the contribution of active citizens, correct, accurate and need-oriented policies are created, delays and costs in implementation are reduced. In addition, it is expected that the right participation processes and cooperation areas of the active citizens will contribute to the acquisition of measurable and tangible benefits by ensuring that the resources are delivered to the real target groups in need and used effectively. On the other hand, it is a fact that active citizens are involved in the processes, increasing accountability; It makes the process transparent and gives municipalities trust and legitimacy to their work. In this way, civil society structures, where active citizens are organized for common purposes, can have expertise and capacity in many issues related to multiple resilience, as they are closer to the field.

Finally, active citizenship and a participatory local governance approach create an environment suitable for changing the power relations between women and men, and for the empowerment of women by removing the barriers to women's access to information and services. In addition to their responsibilities arising from gender roles, although their victimization increases in humanitarian crises, when a suitable environment is provided for women to be more active in social life, when their contact and sharing with institutions and other citizens increases, they act as a catalyst for coexistence and social cohesion, as a transformative in society. However, for this to happen, an environment that enables the development of a common determination, ownership and belonging among active citizens towards the future of the city and the sustainability of the quality of life is necessary through the development of a culture of working together and doing business together. It should also be added that in line with the conceptual approach put forward, implementation tools and stakeholder views can be used by municipalities not only in the face of migration, but also in the face of multi-layered shocks such as pandemics and natural disasters. From this point of view, the issue of active citizenship should be considered as a basic resource to strengthen the resilience of municipalities in the face of multi-layered shocks (Reslog, 2021, p. 16).

However, even under current circumstances, these examples are conducive to active citizens, where the different roles (confidence building, facilitating, empowering and catalysing) played by municipalities in different decision-making stages (analysis and planning, implementation, monitoring-evaluation) during a multiple shock process such as migration and pandemic. It shows how effective it is in creating an environment. In cases where a favourable environment is provided for active citizens, very positive developments such as easier access to target groups, more ownership, more effective analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring processes, more effective service delivery, more effective and efficient use of resources have emerged. The holistic benefits of including all resources in the process of increasing resilience are also seen. As recorded in the semi-official interviews with Reslog officials, "mutual trust" is a very critical starting point in creating a conducive environment for active citizenship, and it has been found that municipalities also have an important role in establishing this environment of trust.

From the point of view of municipalities, the situation is somewhat complicated. Factors such as the temporary protection status granted to Syrian refugees in Turkey, the lack of a migration policy that focuses on local municipalities, the lack of resources, the uncontrolled/irregular settlement process also negatively affect the planned service delivery of the municipalities.





With factors such as lack of awareness and dialogue, misconceptions, limited access to limited opportunities, tensions may arise from time to time between local people and immigrants who use the same public services, including municipal services, in the same urban environment. Therefore, municipalities, while struggling institutionally with the effects of migration, are also faced with the challenge of ensuring that their citizens live together in peace and tranquillity.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis, which emerged at the beginning of 2020, when the Migration Master Plans were implemented, took the situation to a completely different dimension and brought the concept of "multi-layered shocks" to the agenda of municipalities (RESLOG, 2021, pp. 37-38). Municipalities were faced with another unexpected shock, such as the pandemic, on top of the migration crisis that emerged in 2011, and the compelling effects of migration on municipalities have been added to, and some have deepened. The importance of this shock for Syrian migration is that it has interrupted the efforts of municipalities to develop and support the "co-existence" of local people and immigrants, on the basis that the migration movement has now entered the "settlement" stage (Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2020, pp. 18-19). With the pandemic crisis, along with the mandatory isolation, equally urgent humanitarian needs have emerged for the local population, including a significant segment that has never needed any assistance in the past. Many people either became unemployed or had to close their businesses, and municipalities began to be unable to collect their income. Therefore, there is a serious economic bottleneck. The compelling economic conditions fuelled by the pandemic also make it difficult to "live together" in peace (Kaya, 2020, pp. 25-34).

### **Ensuring an Enabling Environment for Multi-Layer Resilience and Active Citizenship in the Context of Migration and Pandemic**

On top of the first shock affecting urban resilience, forced mass migration, municipalities faced a second shock, the COVID-19 pandemic, just at the time they were just starting to implement their Migration Master Plans. The COVID-19 pandemic, which started with March 2020, negatively affected the participation dimension of the process. We understand that by suspending some infrastructure works and big projects, digitalization in services accelerates and focuses more on social support services (food support, baby food, health, home care, hygiene and cleaning services, online distance education support, etc.) (Lewis, 2020, p. 14). However, despite their limited resources, just as they started to provide services to strengthen the coexistence of Syrians and local people after migration, as a result of the forced isolation due to closures, the increase in poverty and neediness among vulnerable groups in the society, especially among the Syrians, and the inability to collect municipal revenues/forced postponements. It would be correct to state that the work of the municipality is negatively affected due to the decrease in income they experience.

At this point, municipalities have returned to emergency humanitarian aid-oriented services at the stage of arrival, in the face of increasing poverty with the pandemic. Due to the fact that coexistence and social cohesion services have come to a standstill, job losses, economic problems, language barrier and limited access to the internet, limited access to information and education, the cessation of courses (language and vocational) and face-to-face services offered, the existing isolation of Syrians and the two communities further increased the distance between them. In summary, municipalities have faced another unexpected shock, such as the pandemic, following the sudden mass migration that occurred in 2011. The

importance of the pandemic shock for Syrian migration is that it has damaged the efforts of municipalities to “support and develop the coexistence of immigrants and local people” (Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2020, pp. 15-29). Considering other shocks such as the earthquake and flood disasters experienced in Turkey in the same period and the ongoing climate change, it is clear that the municipalities' encounters with multiple shocks unexpectedly have an impact on both their resilience and the coexistence of immigrants and local communities.

It has been revealed that migration affects all the services offered by the municipality at different levels, therefore, developing resilience against migration in municipalities is not only the responsibility of social assistance and/or migration units, but can be achieved through division of labour and cooperation between units within the municipality (Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2020, pp. 22-28). Obrist, Pfeiffer, and Henley (2010, p. 284) in their conceptual analysis study on multi-layered social resilience argue that the prerequisite for sustainable development is to develop resilience rather than risk management. According to the authors, resilience is a bigger phenomenon than "coping". Resilience is a process that includes taking precautionary measures, planning, prevention, avoidance and solution based on the cumulative knowledge and experience that individuals have learned from their past experiences as well as coping with challenging situations and developing a reaction against them (Obrist et al., 2010, pp. 283-293). It also covers approaches such as forecasting, changing and searching for new options with reactive capacities. Accordingly, in order to ensure multi-layered resilience, the capacities of individuals, communities and societies must be strengthened (empowerment) and functioned in an interconnected way. This depends on the cooperation of the public private sector and civil society (Dückers, 2017, pp. 182-187). In the same study, it is stated that social institutions that shape access to resources, distribution and use of resources at the household level play a key role in the construction of resilience, and draws attention to the concept of “adaptation potential” introduced by Pelling (2003). Adaptation potential is defined as actions that mobilize social and political values to increase local resilience.

### **What are the concrete responsibilities of municipalities as a peaceful third part?**

As stated Bostancı and Durmaz, reducing the immigrant issue only to handicapology causes some ontological problems. According to them, with the approach that does not see refugees and migrants among the stakeholders of the city, the “relationship between the guest who receives assistance and the host who helps”, which is dominant especially in the migration policy towards refugees, is re-established and a rights-based service provision is not possible (Bostancı and Durmaz, 2021, p. 15). But the active citizenship approach will increase the power of having a say in the lives of disadvantaged groups in the society who do not have the opportunity to have a say in the decision mechanisms in municipalities and assemblies, and will contribute to the fulfilment of their responsibilities in international and national legislation. This issue is of vital importance especially for women and especially for Syrian women under temporary protection status. It is more difficult for Syrian women to have a say in their own lives due to post-war traumas, socioeconomic conditions, language barrier, cultural codes, and gender roles. For this reason, the favourable environment created by municipalities for active citizenship needs special measures to ensure the inclusion of women (Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2020, p. 34). Basic daily needs of individuals such as housing,





water, sewerage, waste collection, electricity, road, pavement, security, park, open space, market, culture, health, school, transportation services and access to them (usually municipalities and other institutions) for individuals to continue their lives are offered, to some extent, on a neighbourhood scale. In addition, many of the global and national development priorities (such as resilience, democracy, gender equality, human rights and poverty reduction) manifest at the neighbourhood level. In short, the neighbourhood provides an area where active citizens can take action for life, cooperate, overcome difficulties together with the increase in multi-layered resilience and quality of life, but also realize key opportunities (Adana Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2020, pp. 30-33). Active citizens, on the other hand, have the ability to quickly grasp the demographic changes, urgent needs and demands experienced in the local area for various reasons and produce quick solutions. Especially non-governmental organizations can develop quick dirt, provide coordination between teams and take action. As stated before, the opportunities that can be created for active citizenship and all kinds of movement areas that can be opened will bring the expertise, resources, capacity and experience of the citizens to these areas, and the necessary adaptation capacity for multi-layered resilience will be produced here.

It is very important to reflect the ideas and dreams of active citizens in the city vision. The city vision developed with active citizens will be the most concrete output of a city's dream and what kind of city the citizens want to live in. Only the role of building trust between the stakeholders and the municipality-civil society, the role of strengthening active citizens and non-governmental organizations in terms of financial, internal and institutional capacity, the role of facilitating the coordination of active citizens, the channels of information and participation, activating all local dynamics and It will mobilize local dynamics and enable them to act as catalysts. At this point, it is possible to reach all of the citizens, to protect their quality of life and to realize all the norms of living together in the long term, through a holistic, multi-stakeholder and inclusive management approach that does not exclude any segment of the society.

In today's political conditions, where local governments and civil society need to be less distant, listening to the demands and expectations of these actors from each other, taking lessons, and transforming the lessons into common policies, especially through various studies and bridges to be built, will minimize segregation and polarization. However, we can talk about realizing life together and ensuring the welfare of all segments of society in a society where there is no polarization and prejudices are broken. For this, the actors of the city need to come together and listen to each other. At this stage, city councils have emerged as a semi-institutional tool in the provision of participatory city management at the local level, but since the concepts and processes that are the source of the legal regulations that cause the emergence of city councils, the position of city councils in the constitutional and political order is unclear in some aspects. This complex situation creates question marks in many cases in the process of city councils up to the present day. However, it is clear that there is no other legal instrument that is more advanced than city councils at the level of local governments in Turkey (Şahin,2021, p.33). With these remarks, it will be necessary to take into account that the participation of civil society in Turkey is limited in some respects. Issues such as the fact that some initiatives regarding decentralization and decentralization are met with certain concerns and hesitancy and the narrowing of the political space of civil society slows down the activation of city councils. Despite this, citizens are trying to be active by being aware of the necessity and urgency of taking initiative in the face of migration. Non-governmental

organizations trying to play a role in this issue at the local level provide effectiveness beyond the task drawn by the national roof.

## **Conclusion**

Tekeli emphasizes that today's societies are made up of "people in relation", so today's municipal service provision has experienced the transition from "a municipality that produces piecemeal services to atomic individuals to a municipality that creates a community strategy for real people in relationship" (Tekeli, 1975, pp. 153-176). Therefore, the municipality should create a public space for this and enrich the public spaces of the city. Quality of life rises in the public sphere. The public domain is jointly owned space. People need to do something about it, to act on it. Events, on the other hand, gain meaning when they are events that are held together, in which the users themselves participate. The adaptive potential required for multiple resilience can only be produced in such an environment, and municipalities will be the institutional structures that will enable this environment to be created.

While trying to reveal our predictions about theoretical expectations and gains on the axis of active citizenship and multiple shocks; basically, how active citizenship can be used as a tool for municipalities to support living together in a peaceful, inclusive and participatory way in the face of possible problems, especially migration and pandemic, how and why individuals should play a more active role towards the society they live in, and how we tried to frame a unique approach for municipalities on how the environment can be created. Of course, there are certain obstacles to be encountered at this point. When the municipal resources and budget are not determined by participatory methods, insufficient budget can be allocated to the resources needed for the development of active citizenship; even if it is wanted to be transferred, the transferred budget can remain limited; deficiencies in the digital infrastructures of municipalities that will facilitate the transfer of information; there may be deficiencies in channels and units within the municipality that will communicate with active citizens and civil society, or even if these units exist, the knowledge and capacity of the personnel may be limited; inadequate functioning of accountability mechanisms; even if an area is opened for active citizens and non-governmental organizations, the deficiencies in providing timely, data-based, transparent and systematic information about the developments and studies carried out constitute an obstacle to the establishment of active citizens. On the other hand, both the disintegrating effect of the local political atmosphere from time to time and the lack of mutual intention, approach and institutional capacity are seen as the main obstacles to the development of active citizenship. While the creation of communication and dialogue channels was pointed out as the main tool in overcoming these obstacles, mutual willingness, the municipality's role as a catalyst and the civil society's ability to exhibit an open attitude to cooperation were expressed as the prerequisites for success.



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