

# Work and living conditions of Syrians in Turkey and their situation in the agricultural sector

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this research is to find out how Syrians with temporary protection status in Turkey live and work, as well as how they are treated in the agriculture industry, from the point of view of Syrians. The study used a survey-based approach to collect primary data from 210 Syrian asylum seekers residing in Hatay province, which hosts a substantial population of Syrian refugees, accounting for 18% of the province's total population. The researchers employed the Simple Random Sampling Method to select the participants, ensuring a representative sample from the overall Syrian refugee population in the region. While a notable proportion of respondents (37%) reported having no major problems at their workplaces, a substantial portion (44%) faced significant challenges. These challenges encompassed issues such as low wages, heavy workloads, language barriers hindering communication, social exclusion, and a lack of access to social security benefits. The research brought attention to the vulnerable position of Syrian refugees in the labor market and the need for comprehensive measures to improve their working conditions and overall well-being.*

**Keywords:** Syrian asylum seekers, Migration, Temporary protection, Integration, Hatay, Turkey.

## 1. Introduction

Many reasons such as wars, natural disasters, climatic conditions, earthquakes, the presence of factors threatening human life, inadequacy of economic conditions, unemployment lead to national and international collective or individual migration movements (Özkarlı, 2015). Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018) define migration as the geographical displacement of individuals or communities from their current location or settlement to a new one for natural, political, social, or economic reasons. Particularly, individuals who are compelled to leave their homes and migrate

to other countries due to war or other compulsion face unique difficulties in the countries they move to. These people, who are asylum seekers in the countries they move to, must first meet their economic needs in order to continue living. These asylum seekers are compelled to live in poor circumstances due to their incapacity to adjust to the society to which they migrated and their lack of revenue from their home countries.

The escalating intensity and scope of the clashes between opposition groups engaged in anti-government activities and the Syrian regime, which began in March 2011, have become

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an issue that has spread to Europe, particularly to neighboring countries (Açikel, 2016). The political crisis that began in Syria on March 15, 2011 took on a worldwide dimension, prompting the majority of the region's inhabitants to flee their country, and a massive influx of immigrants to numerous nations, particularly Turkey (İşcan and Çakır, 2019). Since 2012, when the Syrian civil war escalated, Turkey has been one of the nations that has welcomed the greatest number of Syrian asylum seekers, along with Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq (Erol *et al.*, 2017). Due to geographical proximity, historical, cultural, and social linkages, as well as kinship, language, and religious unity, Turkey is among the most popular destinations for Syrian migrants (Özkarlı, 2015). As of May 2021, there are 3.672.646 Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey. Currently, more than 98% of Syrians under temporary protection reside throughout Turkey's 81 provinces, urban centers, and rural areas, while less than 2% reside in the seven remaining Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs) (3RP, 2021). The provinces where they are most prevalent are Istanbul, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, and Hatay, respectively. There are 368.715 registered Syrians in Hatay, which accounts for 18% of the province's total population (The Presidency of Migration Management, 2022). Syrians constitute 22,07% of the population of Hatay province. Considering their ratio to the province's population, Syrian asylum seekers have a considerable impact on the economic and sociocultural equilibrium in Hatay.

The key requirement for these people, who have fled the civil war and become asylum seekers in neighboring nations, to survive while they are abroad is to meet their economic requirements (Çetin, 2016). Despite the fact that the Work Permit Regulation provides access to employment in Turkey, it is difficult for Syrians to join the workforce due to obstacles such as a lack of information about the rights and responsibilities of foreigners and employers in obtaining work permits and a lack of Turkish language skills (3RP, 2019). Due to their dense population structure and size, Syrian immigrants are a source of inexpensive labour in a variety of commercial sectors, particularly in agricul-

tural work regions (Bayramoğlu and Bozdemir, 2019). In Turkey, several legal and administrative arrangements have been made to promote the involvement of the Syrian people in the labour force and to expand their engagement in formal employment, for 2018, the work permit cost obtained from the employer in the case of employment of Syrians who are granted temporary protection has been reduced by 40%, and those who will work in seasonal agriculture or animal husbandry jobs within the scope of the law will not be required to pay a work permit price (3RP, 2019). According to sector officials, the Syrians have covered the gap in unskilled people on the labor markets, particularly in seasonal sectors that Turks do not choose, and these sectors may now operate at full capacity (Duruel, 2017). According to Çetin (2016), the most common challenges that Syrians encounter in their working lives are the usurpation of rights through the payment of lower wages, delays in payments, and sometimes non-payment at all compared to other employees. On the other hand, İlğazi (2019) claims that asylum seekers who find employment in the informal sectors are coerced into accepting whatever salary offer or working condition that is presented to them by their employers. In addition to seeking employment, Syrians under temporary protection also establish their own small businesses in the food and agriculture sector; however, they face a number of obstacles, including limited access to credit, a lack of productive assets, and a limited understanding of property rights and market dynamics (3RP, 2021).

In the studies conducted with refugees and migrants in the national and international literature, interviews were conducted with refugees and migrants, and their problems in their home countries and adaptation processes were explored. In his research of Mexican laborers in the American agricultural sector, Martin (2002) asserts that the agricultural sector is a significant entrance point for immigrants from rural and agricultural regions who work in U.S. fields and farm-related sectors such as meat and poultry processing. Franz (2003) notes that Bosnian refugee women are frequently compelled to take low-paying, low-skilled jobs in Vienna and New

York because they cannot afford to participate in acculturation programs such as language schools in their host countries, even if they have had a successful career in their home countries. According to Cannizzaro and Corinto (2012), their study has confirmed that local communities and governments rely heavily on immigrant labour to cut manufacturing costs, in effect using unlawful conditions to control the local market. Biner and Soykan (2016) explored how Syrians perceive the practices of constructing a new life in Turkey in the context of their relationships with economic, social, and legal frameworks, as well as the migration process. Sandal *et al.* (2016) investigated the migration movement from Syria to Turkey and its reflections in Gaziantep province. Kavak (2016) examined how the labor market for seasonal migrant labor in agriculture in Turkey has changed with the influx of refugees from Syria. According to Duruel (2017), Syrian asylum seekers labor in the agricultural, industrial, construction, and service sectors in the Hatay area, and it is undesirable for low-skilled locals to perform these occupations as they do in other provinces in the region. İçduygu and Diker (2017), examined the challenges Syrians face in the Turkish labor market in light of legal developments, arguing that policymakers should prioritize regulations that prevent refugees from entering the informal market without harming them, as well as incentives for employers who hire Syrians. In his paper, Dedeoğlu (2018) assessed the present condition of migrants working in agricultural production in Turkey and analyzed the employment of migrant labor in agricultural production in the context of social development in rural regions of Turkey. Mulazzani *et al.* (2020), first aimed to outline the link between food security and migration, and then to validate it using the empirical literature from the African continent. Cento and Bahşi (2022) evaluated the situation of Syrian agricultural workers under temporary protection in Turkey from the perspective of farmers.

The purpose of this research is to find out how Syrians with temporary protection status in Turkey live and work, as well as how they are treated in the agriculture industry, from the point of view of Syrians.

## 2. Material and method

The study's major source material consists of primary data collected via interviews with Syrian asylum seekers residing in Hatay province. In addition, national and international literature, information provided by public and private organizations are among the other materials used in the study. According to the data of the Hatay Provincial Directorate of Migration Management in February 2020, there were 438,936 Syrian asylum seekers in Hatay province and districts (Altınözü, Antakya, Arsuz, Belen, Defne, Dört Yol, Erzin, Hassa, Kumlu, Kırıkhan, Payas, Reyhanlı, Samandağ, Yayladağı, İskenderun).

The research questionnaire questions were developed with consideration of the study's objective, the topic's substance, and the characteristics of the primary audience to whom the questionnaire would be administered. A triple Likert scale was used to find out their views on agricultural activities, their satisfaction with living conditions, and their thoughts on living conditions.

In this research, the sample size was determined using the Simple Random Sampling Method. The formula used to calculate the sample size according to this method is (Yamane, 2001);

$$n = \frac{Nz^2s^2}{Nd^2 + z^2s^2}$$

n: Sample size

N: Population Size

z: The z value in the standard normal distribution table according to the error rate

d: Sensitivity (Accepted fault tolerance level)

s: Sample standard deviation.

The sample volume was calculated as 191 with the 95% confidence level ( $z: 1,96$ ), the standard deviation calculated from the pilot sample ( $n: 14,83$ ), and the accepted error tolerance level within the limits of  $\pm 5$ . Taking into account the shortcomings that may arise in the surveys to be conducted, the sample size was increased by about 10% and 210 surveys were conducted. The survey study started in December 2019. 210 surveys were done after the sample size was expanded by about 10% to allow for any flaws in the to-be-conducted surveys. The surveys were

conducted by face-to-face interviews with Syrian asylum seekers on a voluntary basis. The research findings are presented in the form of frequency distributions and averages.

### 3. Research findings and discussion

#### 3.1. Description of respondents

In Hatay, 50,5% of the Syrian asylum seekers who participated in the survey were women, 49,5% were men, 77,6% were married, 22,4% were single and the average age was 36,9. While 2,4% of the participants in the research are illiterate, 13,8% have completed elementary school, 32,9% have completed secondary school, 30,5% have completed high school, and 20,5% have completed higher education. The average household size was 4,56 individuals. Eight out of ten married couples do not have children. The average number of children in households was 3,5, while the average number of school-aged children was 2,4. Potocky-Tripodi (2004), in his study examining the effects on the economic adaptation of Latin American and Asian immigrants and refugees residing in Miami-Fort Lauderdale and San Diego, states that they tend to live in fairly large households (the average number of people living in households is 5, and the average number of children in households is 3.2). About 59,5% of the Syrians participating in the research in Hatay know Turkish, while 40,5% do not. As of the 2019-2020 period in which the research was conducted, the average length of stay of Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey is 6,6 years. While 34,8% of the Syrians participating in the survey received Turkish citizenship, 65,2% did not. While 87,1% of Syrian asylum seekers migrated with their families, 12,9% came only with other migrants. The family members of 51,4% of the Syrian asylum seekers participating in the survey are still living in Syria. While 91,9% do not travel to Syria, 8,1% do commute. While 61,4% stated that they came to Turkey because of trust, others stated that they chose Turkey to live in due to religious affinity, racial proximity, good conditions, ease of transportation, Turkey's opening of doors, being close to the border, having relatives, and necessity. It has been discovered that 85,2%

of the Syrians who participated in the study entered Turkey illegally and 14,8% did so with a valid passport. While 49% of Syrians who participated in the survey got assistance throughout the adaptation process, 51% did not. 55,4% of those who received support from the state during the adaptation process, 25,2% received support from their family and close circle, and 19,4% received support from non-governmental organizations. 35,3% of the participants in the study received Turkish language education, while 64,7% did not. 32,4% of those who received Turkish education received their Turkish education from TÖMER, 44,6% from the public education center, while the rest received it in different places (school, special courses, etc.).

While 44,8% of the Syrian asylum seekers participating in the survey do not work in any job, 45,2% work full-time and 10% work part-time. The findings show similarities with the studies conducted in different regions of Turkey. It is seen that approximately half of the Syrian asylum seekers do not work in any job. About 55% of Syrians in Turkey, according to Erdoğan (2019), are employed, 30% are housewives, 8,5% are unemployed, and 2,3% are students. According to Potocky-Tripodi (2004), almost half of the respondents do not have a job in their country of origin (48%), over half of the remaining respondents have low-prestige employment in their country of origin (23,6%), and the remaining respondents have higher-prestige positions (28%). According to the research conducted in Gaziantep by Başarıcı (2019), 58,3% of Syrians are unemployed, 14,3% are employed in the service sector, 10,9% are employed in other sectors, and 10,2% are employed in the industrial sector. Arslan *et al.* (2017) found that in his research in Gaziantep province, 25,9% of Syrians are unemployed and that 36,3% of the participants were people in similar situations (sick, extremely elderly, unable to work, etc.). Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018) state that 50% of the household heads interviewed are involved in the labor market. Erdoğan (2020) states that 37,9% of Syrians work in any job, 50,2% of Syrians working in regular wage jobs, 33,6% in daily (day-to-day) jobs, and 13,7% in their own account or as employers. İşcan and Çakır (2019)

stated that 42,8% of Syrians have not yet had a job and do not work in Turkey, while 17,2% are full-time and 39,9% are working occasionally or part-time or on a daily basis. It was determined by İlgazi (2019) that 47,9% of the Syrian labor force is working and 52,1% is not working.

The average daily working time of the Syrians participating in the study in Hatay is 8,8 hours. When the causes for non-working people are considered, 37,4% do not want to work, 5,3% do not have a work permit, 9,6% are unwell, 2,1% are caring for children, 10,7% are ill and injured, 2,1% are housewives, 13,8% are unemployed, 18,1% are unable to find a job that matches their credentials, and 9,6% are students. It is seen that there are differences between the reasons why Syrian asylum seekers living in Hatay do not work with those living in other provinces. It is seen that Syrians in other provinces have more difficulty in finding jobs that match their qualifications. Başarıcı (2019) listed the reasons why Syrians in Gaziantep do not work as other reasons (31,1% – taking care of their children, health problems, being a student, not having an education, not having a work permit, not needing to work), not being able to find a suitable job (27,9%), low wages and difficult working conditions (16,7%), not being accepted to work (15,8%). İşcan and Çakır (2019) stated that 36,7% of Syrians who did not work could not find any job, 30,5% could not find a job suitable for their qualifications, 25,4% did not have a work permit and 7,5% did not need to look for a job. According to İlgazi (2019), the reasons for not working in the labour force are as follows: 11,9% are unable to find work, 70,8% are educated, 6,4% are ill, 6,4% are unwilling to work, and 4,7% are other. It was found that 54,8% of the Syrian asylum seekers in Hatay who took part in the study had workers in their families besides themselves, and 80% of them had at least one more worker besides themselves.

At the time of the research, the average monthly income of households in Turkey was 1186,6 Turkish Liras, but the average monthly income in Syria was 76662,5 Syrian Liras. The most important reason for income differences is thought to be due to the fact that they do not have the chance to do their professions in Turkey, which they have in their own countries.

Only 9,1% of the participants have a work permit and 16,7% have information about obtaining a work permit. It is seen that Syrian asylum seekers did not have work permits at the time of the research. These findings are supported by other studies in the literature. İşcan and Çakır (2019) determined that more than half of the participants did not have information about the work permit, and that much less than the 32,1% of the participants who had information (7,6%) had a work permit. Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018) states that none of the participants have a work permit in Turkey and therefore knowing that they have to work to live condemns them to long working hours with low wages. It is seen that Syrian asylum seekers living in Hatay have to work in jobs other than their own professions in Turkey despite working in different professions in their own countries. In a number of specific occupations (welder, painter, doctor, nurse, etc.), there are also Syrians working in Turkey. Compared to Syria, the proportion of workers working as workers has increased (Syria 10%, Turkey 31%). While the rate of traders in Syria was 11,1%, this rate decreased to 5,2% in Turkey. Housewives in Syria are 21% and in Turkey they are 22,9%. While 29% are students in Syria, it is 10,5% in Turkey. 1% of students also work as workers. There is no change in the proportion of farmers (9,5%). While 70% of the Syrians who farm in Turkey are engaged in agriculture in Syria, 30% state that they do this job only in Turkey. Başarıcı (2019) found that while in Syria, 37,22% of the participants worked as housewives, 20,3% as civil servants and 13,0% as other professions. Arslan *et al.* (2017) determined that 20% of Syrians work as workers, while very few people (5,45%) work as traders. Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018) states that when the work done by Syrians in their own countries and in Turkey is compared, 30% of them are doing the same job as they do in Syria; It was determined that 30% of them worked in qualified jobs as lawyers, teachers, interpreters and guides in Syria, while they worked in lower jobs in terms of status and wages in Turkey. Coşkun and Yılmaz (2018) state that male asylum seekers work as a daily wage earner in construction works that require more physical strength, animal farms, porter jobs in



the transportation sector, car washing, and that among the irregular jobs, jobs such as workplace and house cleaning, labor in textile and dessert manufacturing workshops and hairdressing at home stand out. In Takeda (2000), in the study titled "Psychological and Economic Adaptation of Iraqi Adult Male Refugees", in addition to non-agricultural labor, participants worked in various occupations such as truck or taxi driver (14,7%), student (13,7%), welder (11,6%), soldier (10,5%), electrician (6,3%) and mechanic (5,3%) while in the United States, they did not do the same jobs except one electrician and a mechanic, most of them worked as non-agricultural workers after migrating to this country. Özkarslı (2015) states that 42% of Syrians work in construction, 13% in textile, 9% in agricultural sectors and the rest work in household services, food sector, transportation porter, carpenter, driver, etc. İşcan and Çakır (2019) state that 22,9% of the participants in Syria are workers, 12,7% are students, 19,9% are housewives, other prominent professions are craftsmanship, driver, civil servant, merchant and teacher, and that asylum seekers working as workers (56,5%) in Turkey also take part in working life as waiters, civil servants and merchants. İlgazi (2019) determined that 19,0% of the Syrian workforce is worker, 6,2% is tailor, 17,0% is a teacher, 4,2% is a health personnel, 41,3% is a student, 12,4% is other, and in Turkey, 25,6% is a worker, 6,2% is a tailor, 17,2% is a teacher, 4,9% is a health personnel, 40,0% is a student and 6,2% is other. Çetin (2016) states that those who work as daily temporary jobs (5,3% in Syria, 15,3% in Turkey) and wage workers (16,7% in Syria and 20% in Turkey) have increased in Turkey compared to Syria. The proportion of those who are artisans (Syria: 28,7%, Turkey: 5,3%), professional professions (Syria: 12,7%, Turkey: 0,7%), traders (Syria: 9,3%, Turkey: 6,7%), merchants (Syria: 1,3%, Turkey: 0,7%) and students (Syria: 11,3%, Turkey: 6%) decreased in Turkey, while the situation of those who were housewives (14%) did not change (Çetin, 2016).

It is observed that Syrians working as workers in Hatay work in the agricultural, construction and industrial sectors. Çetin (2016) states that 26% of the Syrian refugees included in the la-

bor market are employed as wage workers, and almost all of them work informally in the manufacturing industry, mostly in the textile sector. Only 8,1% of the Syrians working in Hatay are insured. 33,8% of Syrians state that the job they work in is in accordance with their professional experience. While 39,6% of the Syrian asylum seekers participating in the study in Hatay have never worked, 40% of them have only worked in one job, and the rest have worked in multiple job fields. While 46,4% of Syrians found work themselves, 21,8% found work through relatives and neighbors, 11,8% with the help of intermediaries, 10,9% with the help of friends, 1,8% through the Internet and social media, 3,6% through labor Sundays and coffee shops, 3,6% through family. Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018) state that all of the Syrians working on the sites found the jobs through their acquaintances. Coşkun and Yılmaz (2018), asylum seekers in order to cope with the injustices of friends, relatives through trusted channels such as looking for a job, even lower wages than the market cost of acquaintances, work and effort that you spend working in workplaces with the prospect of buying an asset. Özkarslı (2015) states that finding a job using social networks is a very widely used method for immigrants, and 53% of them find a job through relatives and acquaintances. Erol *et al.* (2017), horizontal social networks in the textile industry (an acquaintance, relative, etc. who works at work), and getting to know the employer are important factors, with 51% of Syrian workers stating that they found this job through a friend or acquaintance.

While 60,4% of the Syrians who participated in the survey stated that they could not earn a living with the income they received, 18,6% stated that their income was sufficient and 21% stated that it was partially sufficient. The largest expenditure items for Syrians are food, rent and other household expenses. Of Syrians living in Hatay 37% stated that they have not encountered any problems while they work in the workplace, 44% asserted that the problems are low wages, heavy work, language problems, social exclusion and lack of social protection. Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018), stated that 58% of Syrians do not have any problems with work, while others express problems

such as long working hours, working on week-ends and working under severe conditions. Erol *et al.* (2017) stated that at least one of the situations such as being discriminated against and insulted while looking for a job of 39% of Syrian workers, not receiving their wages even though they work, receiving lower wages than they agreed, being discriminated against by an employer or co-workers in the workplace, and being subjected to psychological or physical violence in their workplace has happened to them in their working life. Erdoğan and Ünver (2015) state that due to the lack of a regulation on the working rights of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey, the informal economy and informal employment are experienced intensively, and that there is intense activity in agriculture, construction, textile and manufacturing sectors, especially seasonal labor. Özkarslı (2015) stated that the most common problems experienced by the participants were not receiving low wages or wages, getting late, heavy working conditions, being made to do other work other than their own work, prejudices arising from being foreigners and negative consequences of their perspective, being despised, not liking their work. In Hatay, only 8,1% of the respondents attended vocational training courses. The courses they attend are listed as emergency and disaster management, shoemaking, ice cream, handicrafts, first aid, occupational health and safety, mushrooming, beekeeping, strawberry growing, culinary arts, and pastry making. İlgazi (2019) stated that 19,2% of the Syrian workforce received vocational training and 80,8% did not receive vocational training.

### 3.2. Reasons for dealing in agriculture

The reasons for the Syrian refugees engaged in agricultural activities to engage in agriculture are shown in Table 1. It is said that the most important reason to work in agriculture is that it is hard to find another job. Other reasons include having a profession, loving this job, and not needing permission to start a business.

While 60,0% of those engaged in farming carry out their agricultural activities on the lands they rent, 40,0% are partners. 90% of the farmers are engaged in agricultural production on lands small-

Table 1 - Reasons for dealing in agriculture.

<i>The reason for dealing with agriculture</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Little need to speak Turkish	1	5,0
Does not require a business permit	2	10,0
Difficulty finding another job	8	40,0
Own profession	5	25,0
For what I love	3	15,0
Livelihood	1	5,0
Total	20	100,0

er than 10 decares. The average land width with agricultural activity is 4,675 decares. The average number of workers employed in agricultural activities is 2,5. Family members of 35% of Syrians engaged in agricultural activities also help in agricultural activities. Predominantly (57,1%) children are seen to help with agricultural activities, while family members such as spouses and mothers also provide support. While 90% of Syrians make plant production, 5% only produce animal production, and 5% produce both plant and animal. While 70% of the farmers grow strawberries, 10% grow vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, etc. along with strawberries. A group of 5% is engaged in pomegranate cultivation. 60% of those engaged in agricultural activity have attended a course on agriculture. While 63,7% of the participants received mushroom cultivation training, 91,1% received beekeeping and strawberry cultivation training along with mushroom cultivation, and 9,1% received beekeeping and strawberry cultivation training along with mushroom cultivation. 36,4% received beekeeping training along with strawberry cultivation and 9,1% strawberry cultivation. 15% of those engaged in agricultural activities are also workers, grocers and traders. While 55% of Syrians engaged in farming have information about organic agriculture, 45% do not have information. None of them do organic farming. While the most important problems experienced by farmers related to agricultural activities are not receiving sufficient support (40%), not being able to provide fertilizers (10%), inadequate irrigation systems (5%), not having enough experience (5%), high land rents (5%), 35% state that they do not have any problems.

### 3.3. Thoughts on agricultural activities

The opinions of farmers about agricultural activities are given in Figure 1. It is seen that farmers are engaged in agriculture as a source of livelihood, they are very happy to engage in agriculture, they have sufficient experience and knowledge in the field of agriculture, they think that it is difficult to work in the field of agriculture, and they would not want to engage in agriculture if they had a sufficient income. It is seen that they are undecided about the idea that there is a future in agriculture for their children. On the other hand, they state that there is not enough support in the field of agriculture and that they are not engaged in agriculture as a hobby.

### 3.4. Satisfaction levels related to living conditions

While 76,2% of Syrians stay in rented houses, 21,9% stay in camps and 1,9% stay in different shelters such as dormitories. The average number of people living in the same household is 5,5. It is also common for more than one family to live in the same household. Başarıcı (2019) states that 75,5% of the Syrians surveyed in Gaziantep live in a house, apartment, 11,2% in temporary shelter and 10,9% in a camp. Arslan

*et al.* (2017) state that 73,2% of the respondents live in rent, 16,6% in temporary accommodation centers and 10,1% live with their relatives. While 53,4% of the Syrian asylum seekers who participated in the survey in Hatay met their nutritional needs by working, 11,4% met them with state support and aid, and 35,2% stated that they met them through other means. 9,5% of the respondents stated that they had some kind of handicap or disability. While 95,3% of them receive health services from state hospitals, the rest receive them from private hospitals.

It is observed that Syrians are content with their education, health, nutritional circumstances, and employment, whereas they are only partially content with their housing, living conditions, and income (Figure 2). While 59% do not have problems with nutrition, the rest state that they cannot eat regularly and healthily. Başarıcı (2019) found that 66,4% of the Syrian migrants surveyed did not have nutritional problems, 13,8% could not eat regularly, and 9,9% could not find fruits and vegetables. While 49% of the Syrians who participated in the survey in Hatay stated that they did not have any problems with education, 25,3% stated that they could not meet their stationery needs, 13,9% did not know the language, 6,7% could not go

Figure 1 - Thoughts on agricultural activities.

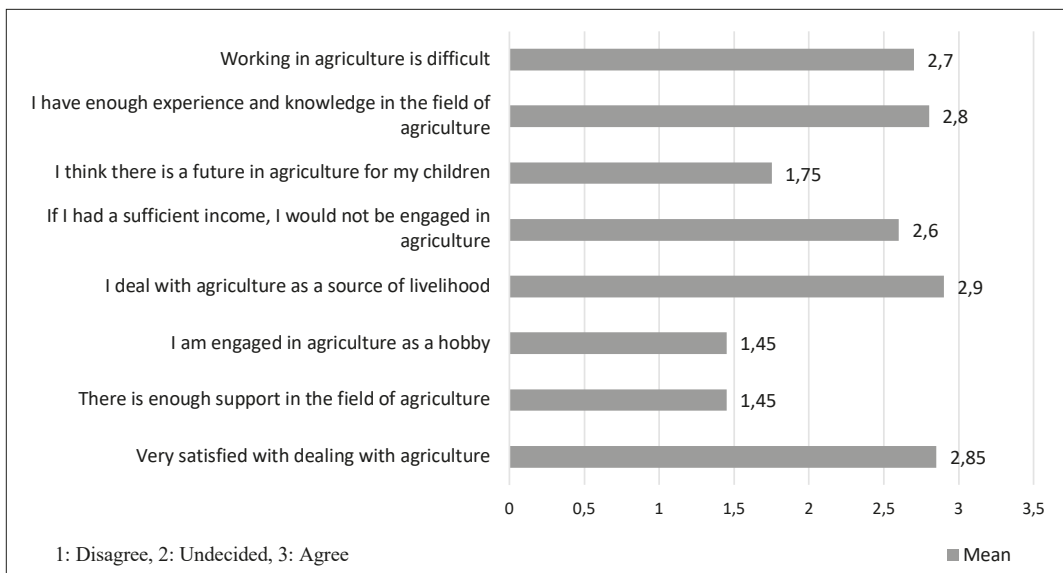
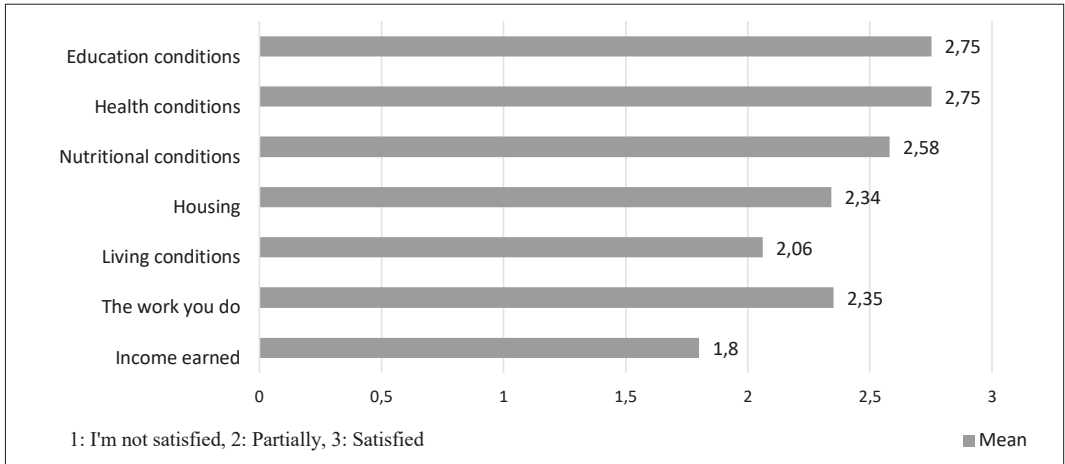




Figure 2 - Satisfaction levels related to living conditions.



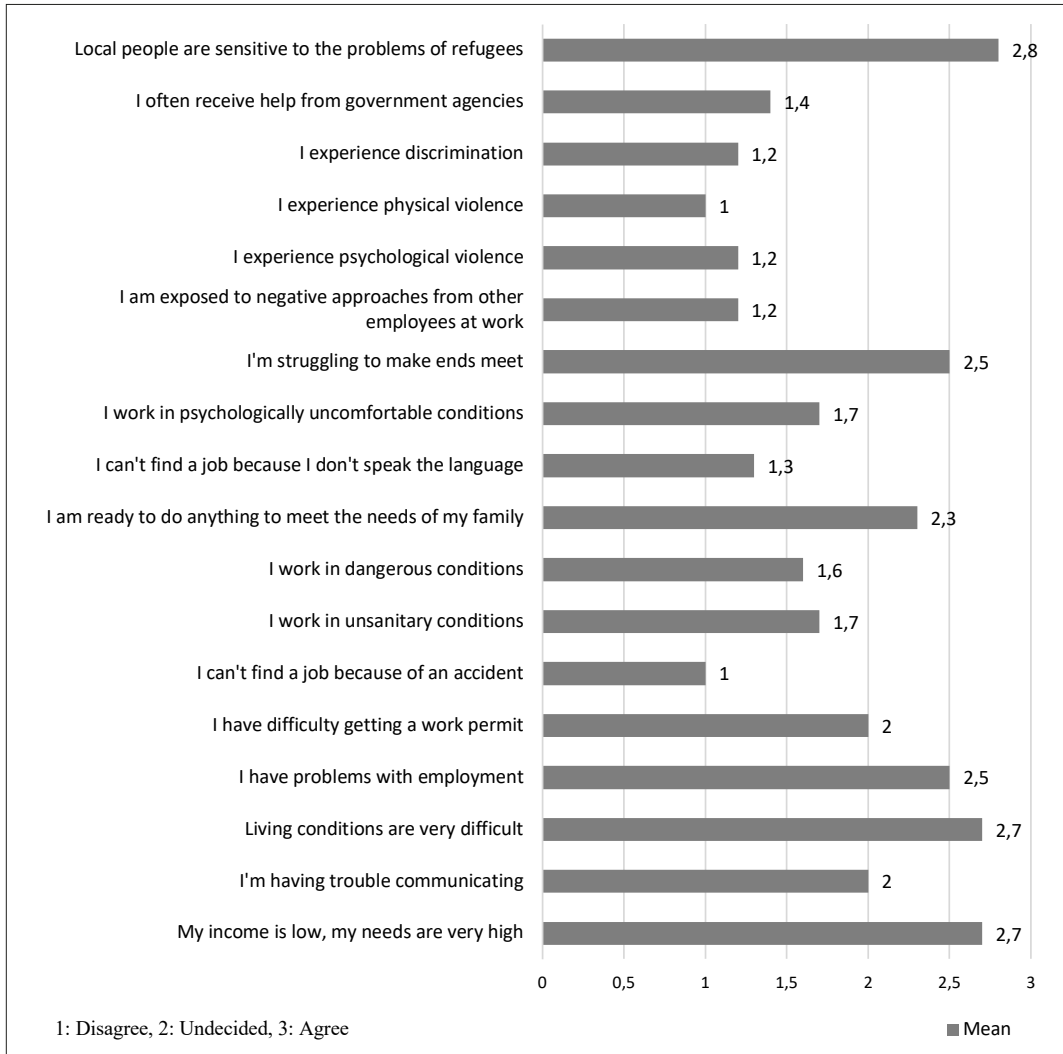
to school because of work, 2,4% had registration difficulties, and 2,7% of the children did not want to go to school. Especially in schools, language education should be given before starting normal education in order to solve language problems. Erdoğan and Ünver (2015) state that education is one of the most serious problems experienced by Syrians in Turkey. Yıldırım *et al.* (2017) state that even if they experience some problems in the education service, they are willing to experience these difficulties rather than stay out of the system and that they have full faith that the problems will be eliminated in time. Başarıcı (2019) listed the problems experienced by the Syrians participating in the survey in the education of their children as 63,7% language problems, 20,4% economic difficulties and 8,2% social cohesion. While 39% of Syrian asylum seekers living in Hatay state that they have no problem with accommodation, 17,6% say that they have problems due to the small size of the place they are staying. Apart from these, the problems related to the shelter are listed as: heating system, lack of water, high rent, lack of sun, several families staying together, dampness. Başarıcı (2019) found that 34,1% of the Syrians surveyed could not pay their rent, 18,8% did not fit where they stayed, 18% had other problems (they lived in a house with mice, a house without glass, no one wanted to rent their house because they were Syrian, they lived on the ground floor, basement, they lived in places far from the city

where no one went, in houses that did not see the sun), 16,9% had heating problems. Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018), 83% of Syrians are dissatisfied with their housing for various reasons, the main reasons for their dissatisfaction are; it is expressed as the fact that the size of the houses is not enough for crowded families, they do not heat up due to the fact that they are uninsulated and old. Yıldırım *et al.* (2017) state that Syrians usually live in basements and small houses, divide rent, and that these narrow, dark houses where they live in crowded ways are not suitable for human health. Coşkun and Yılmaz (2018) state that asylum seekers living in poor and unhealthy conditions also experience problems in terms of not being able to find housing, high rents, the risk of not being able to pay bills, security problems and relations with neighbors due to social discrimination.

### 3.5. Thoughts about living conditions

Figure 3 depicts the opinions of Syrians with temporary protection status residing in Hatay on their living conditions. Syrian asylum-seekers living in Hatay province report that the local people are sensitive to the problems of asylum-seekers, that living conditions are very difficult for them, that their income is low, and their needs are high, that they have problems in employment and that they experience livelihood difficulties. Syrians under temporary protection status; I am

Figure 3 - Thoughts about living conditions.



ready to do everything to meet the needs of my family, I have difficulties in communicating, I have difficulty getting a work permit, I work in unsanitary conditions, I work in psychologically disturbing conditions, partially agree with these thoughts. I work in dangerous conditions, I often get help from government agencies, I can't find a job because I don't speak the language, I am exposed to negative approaches of other employees at work, I face psychological violence, I experience discrimination, I cannot find a job because of an accident, I face physical violence, they do not seem to agree with their thoughts. Arslan *et al.* (2017), 78% of them stated that

they were not subjected to any serious discrimination and 22% of them faced discrimination from time to time.

About 54,8% of Syrians polled in Hatay, Turkey, say their most significant problems are financial difficulties, 16,7% language difficulties, 10% a lack of social communication, 3,8% social exclusion, and 1,0% a lack of employment opportunities, while 12,9% of them say that they do not have a problem, and 0,8% of them did not express an opinion on this issue.

According to Başarıcı (2019), the Syrians who participated in the survey in Gaziantep reported difficulty in communicating (52,1%), social-cul-

tural adaptation problems (20,1%), other problems (18,7%), and not being accepted by locals (9,1%). Those who selected the other problems option generally complained about high rents and the inability to find a job. Arslan *et al.* (2017) state that the most important problems experienced by Syrian asylum seekers in Gaziantep province are unemployment with 27%, high housing rents with 22%, livelihood problems with 16,6%, education problems with 9,3%, health problems with 8%, and that there are no serious problems in terms of social exclusion/pressure (4,6%) in the city. Güneş Aslan and Güngör (2019) stated that one of the most common problems expressed by Syrians living in Istanbul is language problems, 68% have financial problems, 58% cannot access financial assistance, 33% have housing problems, 14% have education problems, 21% have health problems, 20% have expressed house rent as an important problem, 13% have difficulty meeting their basic needs, and 12% have expressed the cost of living in Istanbul. Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018) stated that Syrians can benefit from health and aid services due to their temporary protection status, but they cannot agree with hospital staff because they do not speak Turkish. Coşkun and Yılmaz (2018) state that one of the important problems for most asylum seekers in Düzce is the lack of a livelihood and that they have to work informally in the informal labor market in order to maintain their lives. Erdoğan (2020) lists the areas where Syrians have the most problems as working conditions (36,2%), communication-language (33,2%), food (26,7%), housing (26,7%), discrimination (21,1%), health (17%) and education (7,4%), and states that the area where Syrians are most satisfied in Turkey is “health services”.

When the desire to return to Syria following the conclusion of the civil conflict is assessed among the Syrian asylum seekers participating in the study, 77,6% want to return, 13,8% are unsure, and 8,6% do not want to return. Başarıcı (2019) indicates that 52,9% of Syrians want to return to their country if situations return to normal, while 47,1% do not. Gürel Üçer *et al.* (2018) state that 58% of Syrian respondents plan to return to Syria at the end of the war, 38% never intend to return to Syria, and 4% are undecided. Erdoğan (2020) stated in the SB-2019 study

that 54% of Syrians in Turkey want to stay in Turkey, 8% do not want to stay, and 26,9% neither want to stay nor do they want to stay. İlğazi (2019) stated that 48,6% of the Syrian workforce wants to return to their countries after the war, 25,4% do not want to return, 23,2% are undecided, and 2,9% want to go to European countries. According to Başarıcı (2019), 44,8% of those who do not want to return cite factors such as the lack of security in Syria, 30,9% believe they may build a new and happy life by remaining here, and 13,3% have built their order here.

### **3.6. Expectations from the local population**

When evaluating the expectations of Syrians towards the local populace, it is discovered that 70% of them have no expectations and are satisfied. The most significant reason why Syrian refugees who participated in the survey responded that they do not want anything from the local government in the future and that they are satisfied is that they believe the locals are doing their responsibilities in the most effective manner. Other expectations of Syrians from the local population are 6,7% better behavior, 4,3% non-discrimination and sensitivity, 4,8% acceptance, not hated, not prejudiced, 5,7% job opportunities, and 3,8% financial assistance.

## **4. Conclusions and recommendations**

Syrians who had to leave their countries due to the civil war in Syria had to take refuge in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. With its humanitarian attitude and open-door policy, Turkey is the nation that admits the largest number of asylum seekers. Particularly, persons who are compelled to leave their homes and move to other countries for causes such as war confront unique challenges in their new homes. These asylum seekers are compelled to live in poor circumstances due to their inability to adjust to the society to which they move and their lack of revenue from their home countries. Citizens who are compelled to migrate must engage in business activities in order to continue their lives in the countries where they have sought asylum.

In this research evaluating the working and living situations of Syrians with temporary protection status in Turkey as well as their position in the agriculture sector, it was concluded that around half of the Syrians residing in Hatay were unemployed. While some of them choose not to work, others are unable to work for a variety of reasons, including inability to find a job that matches their skills, lack of employment possibilities, sickness and accidents, etc. It is observed that Syrian asylum seekers residing in Hatay are required to work in occupations other than their own in Turkey, despite having worked in professions other than their own in Syria. In a few specific occupational groups (welder, painter, doctor, nurse, etc.), there are also Syrians who do their own profession in Turkey. It is observed that Syrians employed in Hatay work in the agricultural, industrial, and construction sectors. It was determined that those who farmed engaged in agricultural activities on small plots of land without owning property, in the form of tenancy and partnership. It is seen that Syrians are satisfied with education, health, nutritional conditions and the work they do, while they are partially satisfied with housing, living conditions and income.

It was determined that the Syrians participating in the research had difficulty making a living with the income they earned to a large extent. The biggest expenses for Syrians are food, rent and other household expenses. While some of the Syrians living in Hatay province claim that they do not encounter any problems in the workplace where they work, a significant number of them state that they have problems such as low wages, working in heavy jobs, language problems, social exclusion, and lack of social security. The most important problems experienced by the Syrians participating in the research in Hatay, Turkey are listed as financial problems, language problems, lack of social communication, social exclusion and lack of job opportunities.

To alleviate the difficulties faced by Syrians, it is vital to increase language training for asylum seekers and to ensure that they are placed in positions commensurate with their abilities. Although legal arrangements for the work of asylum seekers have been made in Turkey, it is evident that unregistered employment cannot be

eliminated. Therefore, establishing the required arrangements respecting the social rights of asylum seekers and refugee workers employed in our country would be a significant benefit for both local employees and Syrian asylum seekers. In addition, the pay regulation will improve the living circumstances of refugee employees, thus raising their incentive to work and subsequently their productivity. Without neglecting the employment contribution of Syrian refugees in many sectors of our society, the government should take the necessary steps to create the environment for them to be more productive by understanding that they reside and will continue to live in our country. In addition, in order to facilitate the social adaptation of asylum seekers, necessary studies should be carried out to eliminate information pollution about asylum seekers and to provide accurate information to society.

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