



ICDD

Tolga Tören

Documentation Report:

Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labour Market

The International
Center for Development
and Decent Work

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Executive summary

This report aims to document and evaluate the outcomes of the regional workshop on “Syrian Refugees and Integration of Syrians” held in İstanbul in February 2017. The workshop was organized by the Global Labour University (GLU) Alumni Network in Turkey in collaboration with International Centre for Development and Decent Work (ICDD), the University of Kassel, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Global Labour University (GLU), Boğaziçi University Centre for Educational Policy Studies (BEPAM) and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Turkey Office, with particular focus on the composition and narratives of the Syrian refugees through the “fishbowl session”.

The report finds that Syrian refugees have a very difficult life in Turkey in terms of working conditions, living conditions, discrimination, bureaucracy, lack of enough regulation, child education, language barriers etc. One of the most important concerns for Syrian refugees is child labour. Owing to unemployment of Syrian adults, most parents are forced to send their kids to work. With ineffective state control on employment and labour market, employers prefer to recruit children who are paid low wages, thereby enabling them to make higher profits. The other problems Syrian refugees face in the labour markets are low wages, long working hours, employment without social insurance, late payment or non-payment of the wages, discrimination at the workplace, etc. Regarding accommodation, majority of the Syrian refugees live in a populous household, paying higher rents for lower quality houses in comparison with domestic people. In addition, the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey has a strong gender dimension. The Syrian females work as precarious workers at the workplace. They are the most affected and vulnerable workers. In addition, Syrian female refugees also take the responsibility of the education of the children who face different types of discrimination at school, with which again Syrian female refugees have to struggle.

These problems have created barriers for Syrian refugees in exercising their rights at the workplace and in taking services from public institutions including healthcare and education. Besides, as findings show, the Syrian refugees are placed in the lowest strata of the labour markets of Turkey.

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to document and evaluate the outcomes of the regional workshop on “Syrian Refugees and Integration of Syrians” held in İstanbul in February 2017. The workshop was organized by the Global Labour University (GLU) Alumni Network in Turkey in collaboration with International Centre for Development and Decent Work (ICDD)/ the University of Kassel, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Global Labour University (GLU), Boğaziçi University Centre for Educational Policy Studies (BEPAM) and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Turkey Office, with particular focus on the testimonies of the Syrian refugees through the “fishbowl session” of the workshop.

The documentation evaluates the labour markets of Turkey in general since the 2001 crisis, particularly focusing on discussions at the fishbowl session of the workshop. In addition to Introduction and Conclusion, the report consists of four chapters.

The first chapter, following Introduction, deals with the developments in the labour markets of Turkey in the post-2001 crisis period. The chapter is divided into three periods—between 2001 and 2008, post-2008 crisis period (during which Turkey witnessed the rise of authoritarianism), and the emergency regime (emphasizing on the situation of labour). The second chapter gives a general picture on the Syrian refugee crisis. In the chapter, the situation of Syrian refugees and its effects on the labour markets of Turkey is discussed. The chapter is divided into two sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter, an overview on the Syrian refugees in Turkey is presented. In the second sub-chapter, the Syrian refugees and their effects on the labour markets of Turkey are discussed. Finally, the fourth chapter focuses on the evaluation and documentation of the workshop of “the Syrian Refugees and Integration of Syrians”. The fourth chapter is divided into two sub-chapters. In the first sub-chapter, the “fishbowl session” is evaluated with particular focus on the composition of the participants. The second sub-chapter also addresses the “fishbowl session”, but this time, with particular focus on the participants’ narratives.

2 Developments in the Labour Markets of Turkey in the Post-2001 Crisis Period

In the post-2001 crisis period, Turkish economy witnessed a substantial restructuring. The aim of this chapter is to deal with the developments of the labour market in Turkey after the crisis of 2001.

2.1 Post-2001 Crisis Period: Institutionalization of Neoliberalism

The economic crisis of 2001 was an important turning point for the capitalist development process of Turkey. The most significant indicator of this was the comprehensive legal, institutional and structural transformation that the capitalist development process of Turkey saw after the crisis. In this context, the following institutional/legal regulations and developments may be highlighted:

- Establishment of “independent regulatory institutions”, or the privatization of a public decision-making process under the discourse of “15 acts in 15 days” together with the concept of “governance”, as borrowed from the World Bank
- Discourse on “primary budget surplus”, which meant the persistence of tight fiscal and monetary policies
- Introduction of a market-oriented stabilization programme called “the Program of Transition to Strong Economy (GEGP)”
- Reform of the banking system and the financial system including independency of the central bank and the abandoning of the exchange-rate-based monetary policy in favour of a floating exchange rate regime
- Enactment of the new labour law 4857 in 2003, legalizing subcontracting relations and informal work practices including part time work

- Re-establishment of the Economic and Social Council to promote “social dialogue” in 2001 on the basis of the new labour law, 4857¹
- Reforms in the social security system by strengthening individual pension funds
- Reforms in the agricultural system of subsidies
- Privatization and commercialization programme of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs)
- Increase in public–private partnership projects
- Commodification of public services including healthcare and education through privatization and commercialization policies
- Commodification of public land and urban space by building industry, gentrification projects and urban transformation projects²

These developments, policies and regulations also led to the strengthening of the executive branch of the state through the use of decree laws and the centralization of decision-making process of economic policies in the hands of specific state agencies thereby bringing in significant transformation within the structure of the state towards a more authoritarian path (Oğuz, 2013).

¹ As Akpınar and Akçay (2015) points out the first attempt to form a social dialogue mechanism in Turkey was the Social Agreement between the government and the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ) in 1978. However, only 14 months later all the efforts for social dialogue were set aside. In 1995, the term social dialogue was again taken into the agenda through the establishment of the Economic and Social Council (ESC). In 2001, one more step was taken to establish a social dialogue mechanism through Law no. 4641 on the Establishment and Working Principles of the Economic and Social Council (ESC). Although it was pointed out at the onset that the ESC would formulate economic and social policies with the consensus and cooperation of labour, since its establishment, many policies have been implemented which profoundly affect labour in negative sense. Finally, the ESC became a constitutional body in 2010. Please see Akpınar and Akçay (2015: 439–440).

² For the post-2001 crisis period and structural transformation of the capitalist development process of Turkey please see: Ercan (2002); Yaman-Öztürk (2008); Yaman-Öztürk (2010); Hoşgör (2011); Öztürk (2012); Akçay (2012); Aydın (2013); Herr and Sonat (2013).

As for the working conditions, persistence of high unemployment rate despite high economic growth and fatal work accidents, especially in the emerging sectors, including shipbuilding, construction, road and mining, which came into the agenda with Soma mining massacre³ and became usual in Tuzla Shipyard Region⁴ in İstanbul since the beginning of 2000s, were the most important indicators of the post-2001 crisis period in Turkey (Akdemir, 2008; Ercan and Oğuz, 2014). The high unemployment rates, especially among the youth, and the level of informal employment may be followed from **Tables 1** and **2**.

Accordingly, as Bozkurt and Yalman (2011) find, during the period between 2002 and 2008, unemployment in Turkey never fell below 10.2 percent and informal employment remained quite high despite high and stable growth rates. In addition, as seen from **Table 1**, while unemployment amongst the youth was 16.2 in 2001, in the following years, it never fell below 19.1, again, although there was stable economic growth.

³ As Ercan and Oğuz (2014: 116 - 117) point out, some lignite mines were being operated by the Turkish Coal Enterprises (TKİ), a public institution. The mines were privatized in 2005 in accordance with the „redevance“ system. According to this system, the state retained the property rights over the mines and transferred the operating rights to private companies which sold the mines they extract from to state-owned institutions, including thermal power plants, with a monopolistic pricing. As Yilmaz and Tören (2017) pointed out, in May 2014, an explosion at a coal mine in Soma led to an underground fire. In the “accident”, 301 mine workers died. After “the accident”, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the president of Turkey, remarked, “These types of incidents are ordinary things” (Scott, 2014).

⁴ Scholar Aslı Odman, who was a part of Tuzla Shipyard Region Monitoring Committee in 2008, explained the work accidents in the Tuzla Shipyard Region with the following sentences: “... the shipbuilding industry has grown internationally; in Turkey, the industry has trebled in size in the last three years, but at the same time, the number of workers dying per year has risen from five to fifteen” (Odman, 2008).

Table 1: Labour Force Statistics 2000–2011*

YEARS	GDP GROWTH	LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION (%)	UNEMPLOYMENT %	YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT (15–24 AGE) %	EMPLOYMENT %
2001	–7.5	49.8	8.4	16.2	45.6
2002	6.2	49.6	10.3	19.2	44.4
2003	5.3	48.3	10.5	20.5	43.2
2004	9.4	46.3	10.8	20.6	41.3
2005	8.4	46.4	10.6	19.9	41.5
2006	6.9	46.3	10.2	19.1	41.5
2007	7.4	46.2	10.3	20.0	41.5
2008	0.7	46.9	11.0	20.5	41.7
2009	–4.7	47.9	14.0	25.3	41.2
2010	8.9	48.8	11.9	21.7	43.0
2011	4.5	48.1	11.9	22.0	42.3

Source: Bozkurt and Yalman (2011: 7).

* In the paper, the tables citing growth rates and labour force statistics have been showed in two different tables. In this report, these two have been combined by the author. While the original table for the labour force statistics began with the year 2000, we have referred to the period after 2001.

In addition to the high unemployment rates, especially among the youth, informal employment in the non-agricultural sectors also increased after the crisis of 2001. **Table 2** depicts that while informal employment in non-agricultural sectors was below 30 percent, after the crisis year, it never fell below 30.6 percent.

After the crisis of 2001, while neoliberalism was institutionalized through the regulations and institutions, unemployment and informal working relations increased. In other words, labour markets in Turkey became more flexible and this tendency continued in subsequent years, especially after the financial crisis of 2008. **Table 2** covers the years between 2000 and 2009, however, informal employment in Turkey reached around 35 percent by 2014 (Ceritoğlu et al., 2017: 6).

Table 2: Informal Employment Rates (2000–2009)

YEARS	TOTAL %	NON-AGRICULTURE %
2000	53.0	29.2
2001	55.8	29.5
2002	52.1	31.7
2003	51.7	31.5
2004	48.1	31.6
2005	49.5	35.3
2006	48.5	32.7
2007	48.7	33.2
2008	45.3	30.6
2009	45.7	30.8

Source: Bozkurt and Yalman (2011: 8).

2.2 The Crisis of 2008: Tangent to the Capital, Bullet to the Labour!

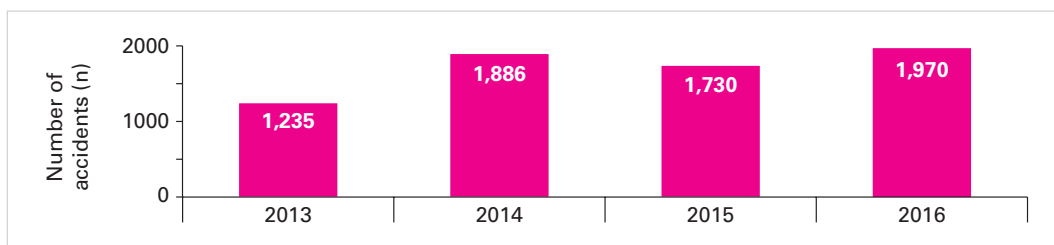
When the crisis of 2008 hit the world capitalist system, although the prime minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, insisted that “... the crisis will pass at a tangent to Turkey. We will overcome the crisis with the minimum damage” (Strauss, 2009), Turkey was most affected by it. In 2009, for example, import declined by 30.6 percent, export declined by 22.1 percent, international trade declined by 46 percent and the manufacturing sector, particularly, was hit by the crisis the most. In addition, the crisis led to a sharp increase in unemployment (Aydın, 2013). It was 10.3 percent in 2007 and 14 in 2010, as seen from **Table 1**. As mentioned above, informal employment was around 35 percent by 2014 (Ceritoğlu et al., 2017: 6). According to OECD (2017a: 17) in 2009, informal employment reached 55 percent in the construction sector which was seen as the ‘locomotive’ of the Turkish economy. As Bozkurt (2011: 39) pointed out, while the employment package introduced in 2008 by the government based on “hiring subsidies” and flexible working relations, in 2009, “temporary and part-time employment incentives” was put into the agenda. As showed by Sebnem Oğuz, in 2010, the “National Employment Strategy” proposed “the removal of severance payments and the regional differentiation of minimum wage” (Oğuz, 2013: 211). In addition, in 2011, for instance, the income gap between regions was fairly high. While per capita income in İstanbul was USD 27,000, it was between USD 7,000 and USD 13,000 in the eastern, north-eastern and south-eastern Anatolian cities (OECD, 2017a: 17).

Another phenomenon of Turkish economy during the 2000s was the increase in borrowing from financial institutions in the household sector. As Elif Karaçimen (2015: 752) observes, while the share of household loans of total credit provided to the private sector was 13 percent in 2002, it rose to 33 percent in 2010. In 2010, in addition, household debt arrived at 41 percent of the disposable personal income by increasing it six-fold since the end of 2003. As Karaçimen (2015: 752) shows, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the consumer credits and credit cards were largely used as alternative payment mechanism by middle and upper-income classes. Nevertheless, during the 2000s, consumer credits started to play a significant role in the payment of everyday expenditures of low-income wage earners (Karaçimen, 2015: 752). In 2009 and 2010, for instance, 42 percent borrowers of consumer credits were people earning less than 1,000 Turkish Lira (TL) and 28 percent were those who earned between 1,000 and 2,000 TL per month (Karaçimen, 2015: 752)⁵. The importance of borrowing among the lower classes may also be understood from the following remarks on the Soma mine disaster by Suzy Hansen as reported in *New York Times*:

As an incentive, some recruiters lured the men with promises that their salaries would qualify them for credit cards, which were new and alluring to many Turks. Luxury goods were flooding the country, and the people of Soma wanted nice televisions, too. But many miners never seemed to be able to get ahead of the interest charges, and soon they found themselves needing to make the kind of money it was hard for them to make outside the mines (Hansen, 2014).

In addition, as depicted by **Figure 1**, fatal work accidents became one of the most important dimensions of the capital accumulation process in Turkey increasing from 1,235 in 2013 to 1,970 in 2016.

Figure 1: Distribution of fatal work accidents (2013–16)



Source: Workers' Health and Work Safety Assembly (Turkey) (2017)

⁵ Ümit Akçay (2018: 12) deals with this reality as "financial inclusion".

2.3 Labour and Labour Markets under the State of Emergency

The process of transformation Turkey has been experiencing since 2001, which has been described by Akçay (2013) as “technocratic authoritarianism”, by Oğuz (2013) as “neoliberal authoritarian state form”, by Aydın (2013) as “the internationalization of the Turkish economy”, by Öztürk (2012) as “neoliberal race to bottom” and by Ercan (2002) as “internationalization of capital” reached its logical results with the state of emergency regime, going much more beyond the term of authoritarianism⁶.

The report released on 20 July 2017 by the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) and entitled as State of Emergency (OHAL) and Working Life gives a broader picture on what the state of emergency regime means not only for workers but also in terms of the degree of concentration of power, loss of democratic rights, situation of freedom of expression and academic freedoms.

As seen from **Table 3** below, after the military coup attempt in 15 July 2016, 26 decrees were issued and 107 laws were amended by decrees. In addition, 169,013 people were exposed to judicial process, 50,510 people were arrested, 157 journalists were arrested, 12 members of parliament were arrested, 82 municipalities in the Kurdish cities were assigned trustees and 85 mayors were imprisoned. As for the numbers regarding labour and trade union rights, after the military coup attempt, 112,683 people were expelled from public duties, 5,602 scholars were dismissed from their positions, work permits of 22,474 private education institution employees were cancelled. In addition, during the same period, 19 trade unions and confederation were closed, 5 strikes were suspended and 23,874 workers were affected by the deferred strikes⁷.

⁶ The paper does not aim to discuss the recent political regime of Turkey. However, it is possible to argue that there is an extensive literature on the recent political regime of Turkey, relying upon Poulantzas’ works, especially, upon the concept of “authoritarian statism” and “state of emergency regime”. For concepts of neo-liberal “authoritarian statism” and “state of emergency regime”, see Poulantzas (1974 and 1978). For literature evaluating the recent situation of Turkey as a turn from neo-liberal “authoritarian statism” to “the state of emergency regime”, please see Oğuz (2016) and Kutun and Tören (2016), Tören and Kutun (2018).

⁷ For a more detailed and more recent report on the effect of decrees, see Akça et al. (2018).

As seen from **Figure 2** below, serial and fatal work accidents have also increased by 9 percent after the declaration of the state of emergency in mid July 2016 and this proves the fact that workers' health and work safety conditions have been worse than before since the declaration of state of emergency regime (Workers' Health and Work Safety Assembly, 2017). Therefore, as the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) insists, it is quite possible to argue that "state of emergency is harmful to labour", moreover, it "kills the workers"⁸.



Sanliurfa, Turkey – Oktober 2014: Cotton pickers working in the field putting the cotton in big sacks.

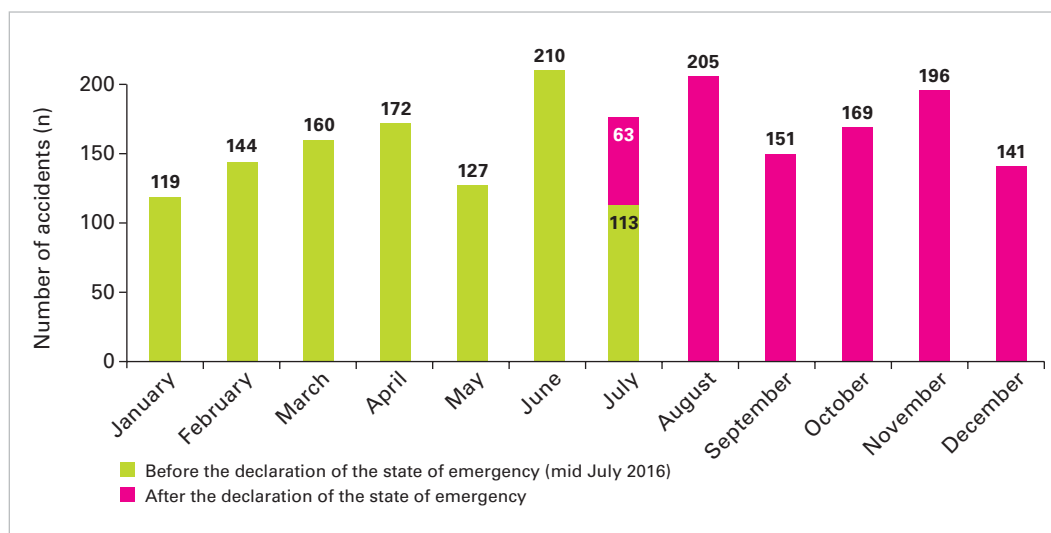
Source: istockphoto.com – Ozbalci

⁸ As pointed out earlier, the report including Table 3 by DİSK was released on 20 July 2017. On 02 August 2017 DİSK released the English version of the report under the title of "State of Emergency (OHAL) and Working Life". In addition, after these dates, new decrees were issued by the government and more people were dismissed from their positions but they are not covered in this report.

Table 3: A Minimal Account of OHAL (State Of Emergency) (by 20 July 2017)

LEGISLATIVE ARRANGEMENTS	
Number of Law Decrees (KHK)	26
Number of Laws Amended through KHKs	107
JUDICIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DISPOSITIONS	
Persons Subject to Judicial Proceeding	169,013
Arrested	50,510
Released	43,404
Conditional Release Subject to Judicial Control	48,439
Number of Journalists Arrested	157
Number of National Assembly Deputies Arrested	12
Municipalities with Appointed Trustees	82
Number of Mayors Arrested	85
DISMISSED AND LEFT UNEMPLOYED	
Expelled from Public Service	112,863
Academics Expelled from Universities	5,602
Workers in Private Education Institutions with Cancelled Work Permits	22,474
Number of Workers Employed by Companies and Enterprises Transferred to the TMSF (Savings Deposit Insurance Fund)	44,888
Journalists Left Jobless (estimated)	2,308
Acts of Suicide Associated with OHAL Land KHKs	36
TRADE UNION RIGHTS	
Trade Unions and Confederations Closed Down	19
Strikes Suspended	5
Workers Affected by Suspended Strikes	23,874
INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS CLOSED DOWN AND TRANSFERRED	
Institutions and Agencies Closed Down	2,433
TV-Radio Channels and Newspapers Closed Down	147
Companies and Commercial Enterprises Transferred to TMSF	879
Associations and Foundations Closed Down	1,129

Source: DiSK (2017).

Figure 2: Work accidents in 2016

Source: Workers' Health and Work Safety Assembly (Turkey) (2017).

This also explains why Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the de-facto president of Turkey, was so confident at the meeting on 11 July 2017 with international investors claiming to present before them:

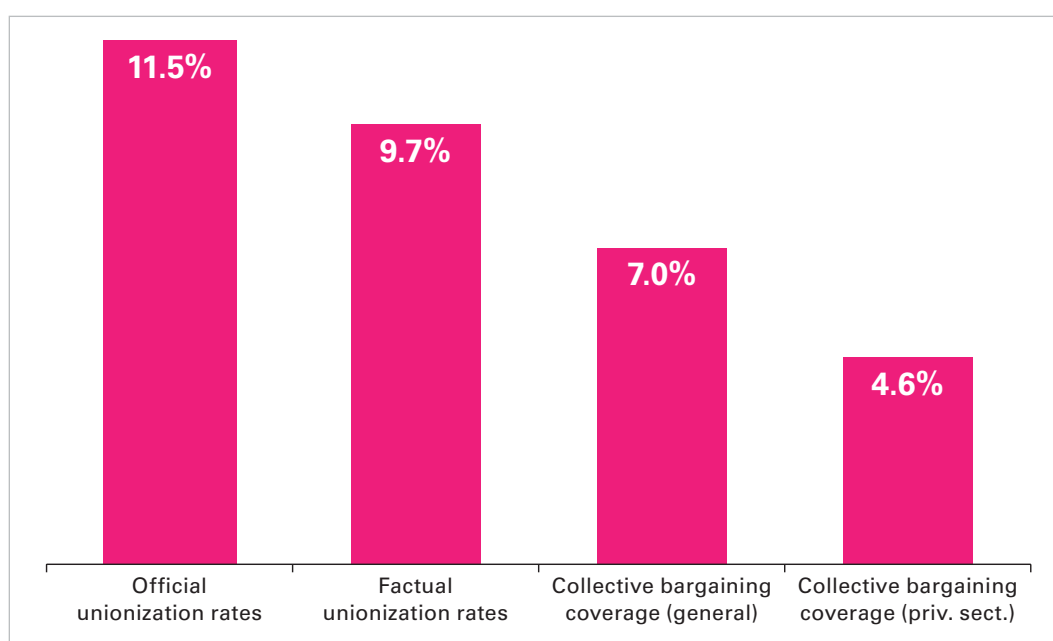
We are enforcing emergency laws in order for our business world to function more easily. So, let me ask: have you got any problems in the business world? Any delays? When we took power, there was again a state of emergency enforced in Turkey but all factories were at risk of strikes. Remember those days! But now, by making use of the state of emergency, we immediately intervene in workplaces that pose a threat of strike. We say to workers that, you can't shake our business world. We use state of emergency for this (Çamur, 2017).⁹

Unionization and collective bargain coverage rates amongst workers in Turkey also give a clear picture about the situation of labour in Turkey. According to the data prepared by DİSK, relying on the official statistics of July 2016, while the number of unionized workers in Turkey is 1,499,870, that of insured workers is 13,038,351. The rate of unionized workers is accounted as 11.5 percent as per DİSK report. This rate does not cover unregistered employees. When unregistered workers are taken into consideration, the unionization

⁹ For a comment on the meeting mentioned above see Yılmaz and Tören (2017).

rate (factual unionization rates) is 9.7 percent (DİSK, 2016: 3)¹⁰. In addition, the unions have to organize 10 percent of the workers at the industry level and 51 percent workers at the workplace to be authorized in collective bargaining. Therefore, unionization rates do not necessarily show the rate of workers under the coverage of collective bargaining. This situation is explained in **Figure 3** where the private sector presents lower ratio of collective bargaining coverage rates in general than the factual and official unionization rates.

Figure 3: Unionization and Collective Bargaining Coverage Rates (2016)

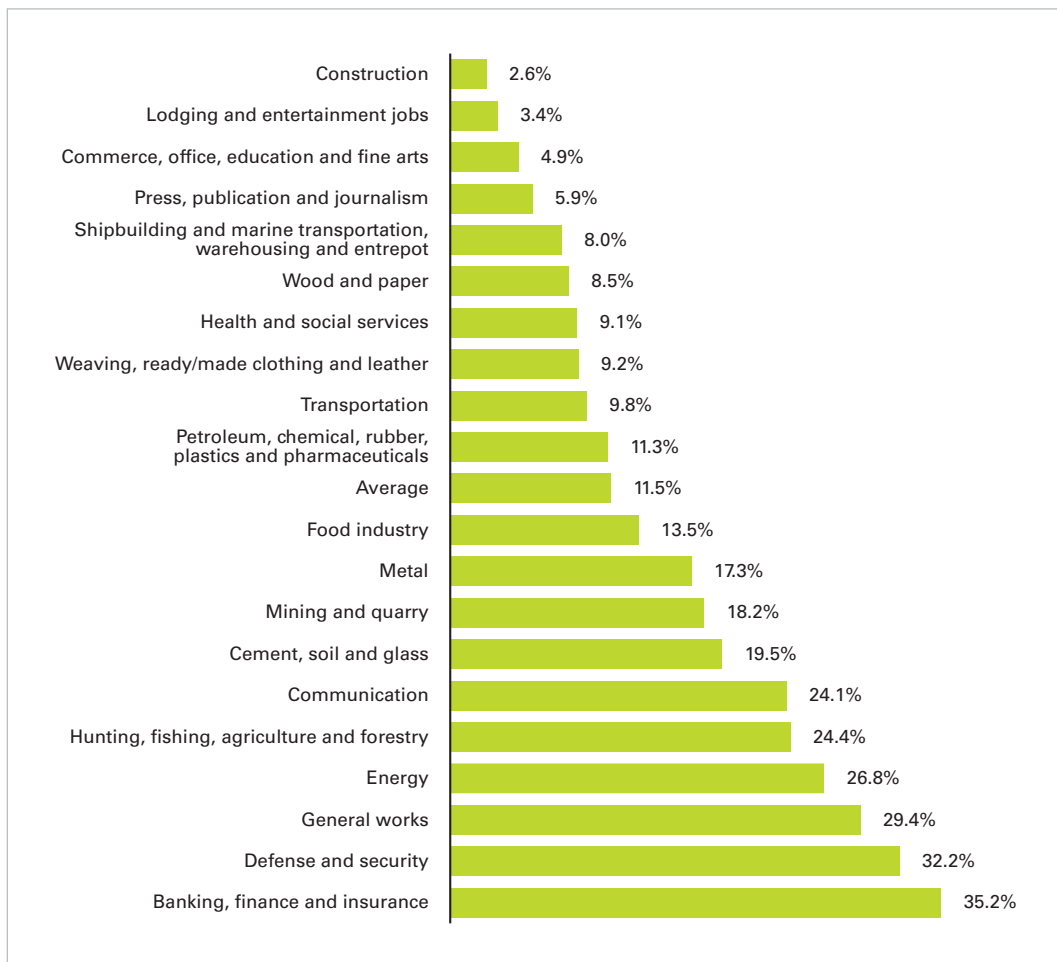


Source: DİSK AR (2016: 3)

¹⁰ The report by DİSK has been prepared by relying on the official data which was published in the Official Gazette dated July 2016.

The unionization rates, according to the branch of industries as seen in **Figure 4**, are higher than average in the manufacturing and public sectors. The highest level unionization rates are seen in banking-finance, defence-security and general work¹¹ sectors, in which public institutions are the major actors. As mentioned earlier, the construction sector was seen as the “locomotive sector” for the Turkish economy for a while in the post-2001 period and as seen from the **Figure 4**, the sector, in which many Syrian workers are employed now, has the lowest level of unionization.

Figure 4: Union density according to the branches of industry (July 2016)



Source: DİSK AR (2016: 5).

¹¹ By the term general works, workers in the municipalities are mentioned.

3 The Syrian refugee crisis in the world: an overview

The basic aim of this report is to evaluate and document the situation of the Syrian refugees in Turkey through the “fishbowl session” hence, this chapter presents only a general overview on the situation of the Syrian refugees in the world.

According to Aiyar et al. (2016: 6), at the end of 2014, the amount of displaced people by force around the world reached almost 60 million. While 14.4 million of the displaced population were refugees, 25 percent of this amount appeared since the end of 2013, mostly, under the effect the civil war in Syria that began in 2011. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ data (UNHCR) shows, the number of displaced people around the world increased by 10 percent from 2014 to the end of 2015, reaching 65.3 million, the highest number since the end of World War II. UNHCR also points out that the main reason behind the recent increase has been the conflict in Syria (European Stability Initiative, 2017: 3). According to **Table 4**, 4.9 million of 12.3 million refugees in the top 10 countries consisted of Syrian refugees. The second highest nation of refugees has been Afghanistan hosting half the amount of Syrian refugees by the end of 2015.

Table 4: Top 10 nationalities of refugees at end of 2015* (Worldwide)

COUNTRY	NO.OF REFUGEES
1. Syria	4.9 million
2. Afghanistan	2.7 million
3. Somalia	1.12 million
4. South Sudan	778,700
5. Sudan	628,800
6. D.R. Congo	541,500
7. Central African Rep.	471,100
8. Myanmar/Burma	451,800
9. Eritrea	411,300
10. Colombia	340,200
TOTAL	12.3 million

* The table does not include the 5.2 million Palestinian refugees inside and outside Palestinian territories and registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

Source: European Stability Initiative (2017:4).

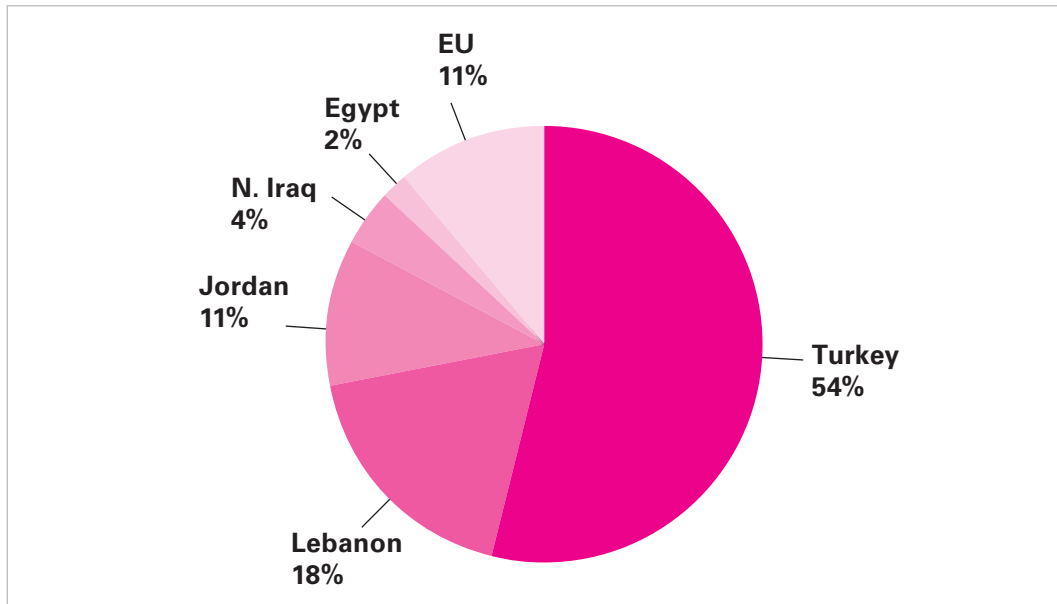
As evident from **Table 5**, Turkey ranked at the top at the end of 2015 for hosting refugees with the number reaching 2.5 million. However, in the earlier sections of the report it had been pointed out that the refugee population in Turkey essentially comprises of Syrian refugees.

Figure 5 also explains the situation of Turkey in terms of Syrian refugees in comparison with the European Union, Egypt, North Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. According to **Figure 5**, showing the distribution of Syrian refugees in different countries, Turkey's share had reached 54 percent of the 5.7 million Syrian refugees in December 2016.

Table 5: Top 10 countries hosting refugees at end-2015

COUNTRY	NO.OF REFUGEES
1. Turkey	2.5 million
2. Pakistan	1.6 million
3. Lebanon	1.1 million
4. Iran	979,400
5. Ethiopia	736,100
6. Jordan	664,100
7. Kenya	553,900
8. Uganda	477,200
9. D.R.Congo	477,200
10. Chad	369,500
TOTAL	9,3 million (of 16,1 million)

Source: European Stability Initiative (2017: 5).

Figure 5: Distribution of Syrian Refugees in Different Countries (Dec. 2016/5.7 million)

Source: Erdoğan (2017a: 22).

As pointed out, Germany had the highest number of asylum claims at the end of 2015. While the number of asylum claims in Germany has been 441,900, the percentage share of Germany among the top 10 countries in 2015 was 22. As seen from **Table 6**, by 2015, the US followed Germany with 172,700 asylum claims consisting 8.5 percent of the top ten countries. In a more recent study, Aslı Selin Okyay (2017) explained the policies on the Syrian refugees by the German authorities:

Since October 2015, Germany has been privileging those asylum-seekers who are highly likely to be recognized as refugees, and hence to be allowed to stay in Germany for the long term. From October 2015 onwards, asylum seekers from countries with recognition rates higher than 50 percent (including Syria) are given access to integration courses, labour market participation assistance, and vocational language training programmes. Furthermore, the “Integration Act” that entered into force in August 2016 further eased asylum-seekers’ and refugees’ access to work by, for example, temporarily suspending the “priority check” in certain sectors. At the same time, a more restrictive and disincentive-based approach towards asylum-seekers with low recognition possibilities, specifically those from countries of origin Germany considers to be “safe”, was adopted. None of the abovementioned privileges apply to those asylum seekers, while the list of “safe countries of origin” has been expanded in 2015 (Okyay, 2017: 6).

Table 6: Top 10 Countries recording new asylum claims in 2015

COUNTRY	NO.OF INDIVIDUAL CLAIMS	SHARE %
1. Germany*	441,900	22.0
2. US	172,700	8.5
3. Sweden	156,400	7.7
4. Russia	152,500	7.5
5. Turkey	133,300	6.5
6. Austria	85,800	4.2
7. Italy	83,200	4.1
8. Hungary	74,200	3.6
9. France	62,200	3.6
10. South Africa	62,200	3.1
Other	603,600	30
TOTAL	2,040,000	100

* According to the European Stability Initiative (2017), in 2015 Germany recorded the arrival of 890,000 asylum seekers. However, only 441,900 claims were approved by its asylum authority.

Source: European Stability Initiative (2017: 6).

As the report published by OECD shows OECD countries registered more than 1.6 million new asylum requests in 2016 and almost three-quarters of this number were registered in the European OECD countries. According to the report, the Syrians made up more than 20 percent applications in the OECD area. During the same year, Germany registered 720,000 formal asylum applications consisting of the highest application in comparison with members of the OECD in proportion to its population (0.9%) (OECD, 2017b: 9). In the same year, first-time applications for the asylum recorded by Germany consisted of 44 percent of the total OECD area. In addition, Syria remained as the leading home country of asylum seekers, although there was a decrease of 10 percent in absolute terms in 2016 when compared to 2015 (OECD, 2017b: 14).

As to the effects of the immigrants in the labour markets or the situation of immigrants in the developed countries' labour markets, as revealed by OECD report, more than two in three immigrants are employed in OECD; unemployment rate of foreign-born workers was 8.3 percent in OECD countries and 12.4 percent in European OECD countries in 2016. These portions are 1.8 percentage points higher than the rate of native-born workers in OECD countries and 4.3 points percent higher than the European OECD countries. In addition, migrants are exceedingly employed in the jobs related to routine tasks, making them more vulnerable for job loss, especially under the condition of automation progresses. In the European OECD countries, for example, 47 percent foreign-born workers are employed in occupations that relied upon routine tasks (OECD, 2017b: 10).

4 The situation of the Syrian refugees and labour markets in Turkey

The chapter has been divided into two sub-chapters – first, a general overview on the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey and second, focussing on the labour market in Turkey.

4.1 The situation of the Syrian refugees in Turkey: an overview

Turkey with its Syrian immigrants has a highly flexible labour market as well as a rising unemployment rate. After the conflict started in Syria in 2011, the expectation was that the conflicts were to be resolved in a relatively short time. It did not take a long time for the conflicts to lead towards a massive exodus from Syria to Turkey and to the other neighbouring countries. Since the beginning of the conflicts in Syria, Turkey, under the AKP rule, took a critical position against the regime in Syria although before the conflicts, AKP tried to push the Syrian regime to change by establishing strong ties with President Bashar Assad.

At the initial stages of the conflicts that soon transformed into a civil war in a short period, Turkey accepted Syrians who escaped from the conflicts by relying on the “open door policy” and “temporary protection” policies in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Convention of 1951 (Erdoğan, 2014: 12; İçduygu and Millet, 2016: 5). However, the “open door policy” was also a part of the decision which was implemented in 2009 to lift visa requirements from the citizens of Syria (Development Workshop, 2016: 96).

In 2011, during the first year of the conflicts, around 250–300 Syrian citizens came to Turkey to seek asylum. As per the UN reports, by the end of 2011, the total number of registered refugees was around 8,000 (Ceritoğlu et al., 2017: 8). Under the “open door policy”, the government of Turkey established camps for Syrians in the city of Hatay, located in the south of Turkey and has a border crossing gate with Syria (Development Workshop, 2016: 96). During the period, the expected duration of stay of the Syrian refugees was between one and three weeks and the number of Syrian immigrants expected was between fifty and hundred thousand. However, as the turbulence seemed to continue, the anticipated number was revised. Finally, terrorist activities of the Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria became a turning point for the refugee crisis by leading an influx of thousands of Syrians towards the border, as it was seen in the Kobani case (Erdoğan, 2014: 12). After the increase of tension in the region, the people started to leave their

homes in a very short period of time. Most of them fled the cities of intense conflict to the Syria-Turkey border, especially cities including Aleppo (36%), Idlep (21%), Raqqa (11%), Lattika (9%), Hassakeh (5.4%) and Hama (Ceritoğlu et al., 2017: 7).

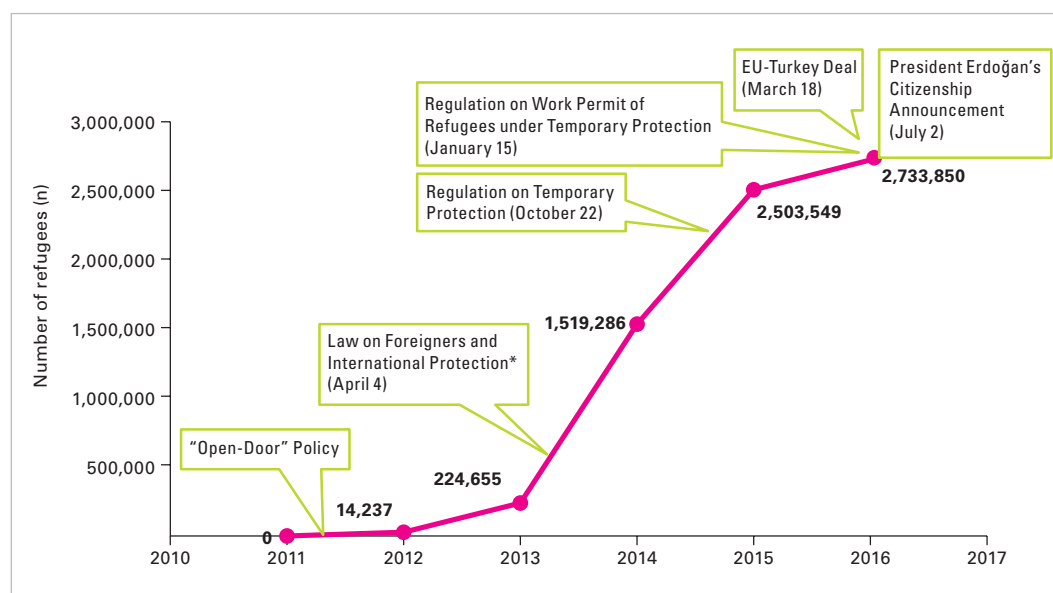
International obligations of Turkey regarding the refugee issue are based on the framework of the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Legal Status of Refugees and the 1967 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, although Turkey had become a party to the 1967 protocol, it put a geographical reservation on the protocol with the claim that Turkey would only accept those who come from European countries under the fear of oppression in their home countries due to their race, nationality, religion, membership of a particular social group or political opinions as “refugees”. When the Syrian crisis came out, the reservation by Turkey on the 1951 and 1967 conventions started to become a problem (Erdoğan, 2014: 16; Development Workshop, 2016: 98; Okyay, 2017). Accordingly, those who come from countries other than Europe might be placed temporarily and granted the status of temporary asylum seekers. Such a framework meant that in the beginning, the people coming from Syria were not granted the status of refugee and but were defined as “guests” (Development Workshop, 2016: 98).

Therefore, after the Syrian civil war erupted, Turkey made a lot of regulations regarding the Syrian immigrants. In 2013, for instance, “Law on Foreigners and International Protection” was enacted under the influence of the European Union. While the enactment of the law relied heavily upon the idea that Turkey would become the “target” country for irregular and mass migration from Syria, within the framework of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, the Directorate General of Migration Management was established. In October 2014, along with the Regulation of Temporary Protection, the concept of “conditional refugee” together with “refugee” in connection with the geographical reservations of Turkey in the Geneva Convention was initiated. While the Regulation of Temporary Protection did not define a time limit for “temporary protection”, it put into the words the framework of services to be delivered for “conditional refugees” (Erdoğan, 2014: 17)¹².

Figure 6 below shows the relationship between the number of Syrians and the regulations made regarding Syrian refugees, and both showing a rising trend. However, the increase sharply accelerated by 2013, the year in which the regulations mentioned earlier had started, not to limit but to control the immigration.

¹² For the effects of the conflicts in Syria on the Middle East foreign policy of Turkey, see Saraçoğlu (2018).

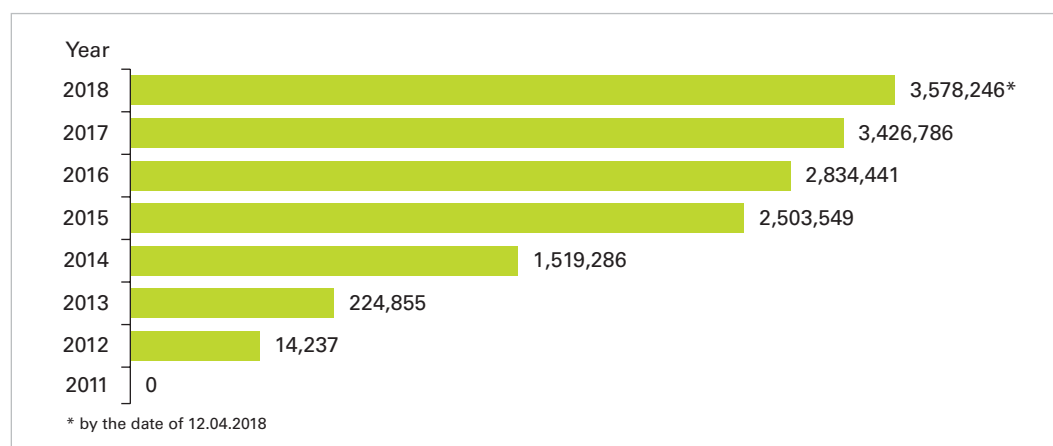
Figure 6: Trends of the Syrian Refugee Flow and Timeline of Legislative Process



Source: İçduygu and Millet (2016: 4)

As seen from the **Figure 6** and **Figure 7**, in the beginning of 2015 the number of registered Syrians in Turkey exceeded 2.5 million while that at the onset of 2017 exceeded 2.9 million. In addition, almost all Syrian refugees benefitted from the status presenting temporary protection without requiring the submission of an asylum application (OECD, 2017b: 26).

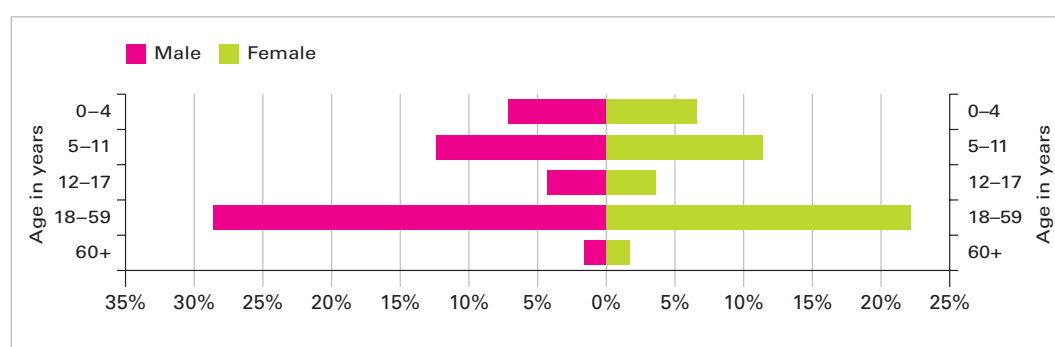
Figure 7: Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Year



Source: Directorate General for Migration Management (2018)

According to the last data provided by the Directorate General for Migration Management (2018), registered Syrian refugees under “Temporary Protection” in Turkey by 12 April 2018 reached 3,578,246 as evident from **Figure 7**. Although there has been a rising trend from 2011 to 2012, after 2013, there has been a sharp increase from 224,655 in 2013 to 1,519,286 in 2014.

Figure 8: Demographic Composition of the Syrian Refugees in Turkey (2018)

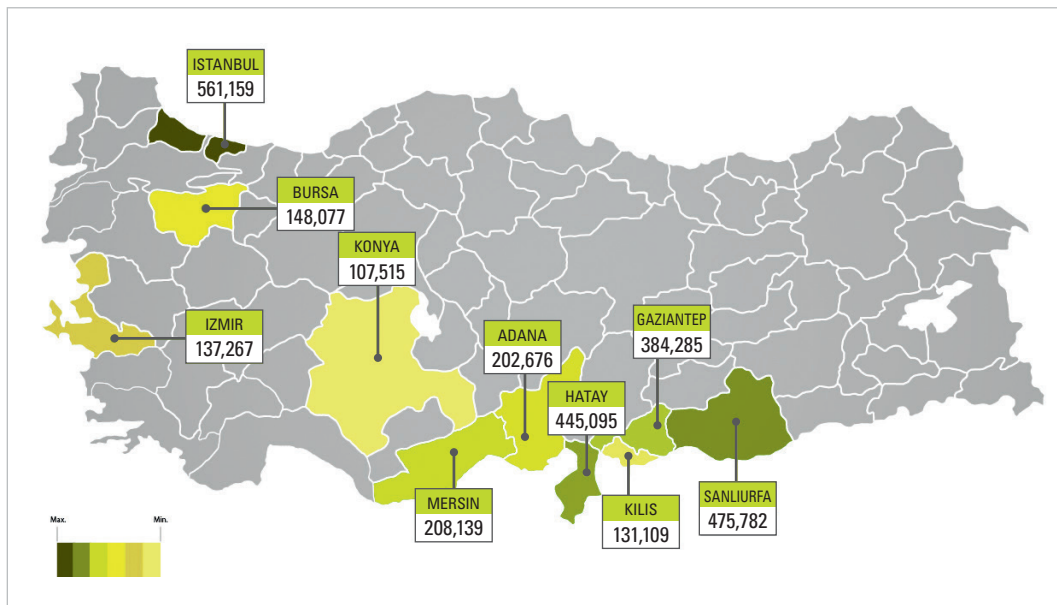


Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2018).

Figure 8 shows the demographic composition of the Syrian refugees by 12 April 2018. Accordingly, around 54 percent Syrian refugees in Turkey are male and around 46 are female. While 28.7 percent of the male refugees are between 18 and 59 years old, 22.3 percent of the female refugees belong to the same age group. These percentages show that more than half of the Syrian male population and almost half of the female population are in the working age group. As for the numbers of the Syrian children in school age, as seen from **Figure 8**, the portion of male Syrians in school age is 12.5 percent for the ages between 5 and 11 and 4.5 percent for the ages between 12 and 17. The portions of females under the same categories are 11.6 and 3.6, respectively (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018).

Regarding the question on where Syrian refugees live, as evident from **Figure 9** below, 556,663 Syrian refugees live in Istanbul, the most important industrial city of Turkey. As the figure shows, the number of Syrians living in Şanlıurfa is 476,766; 443,214 in Hatay are; 379,989 in Gaziantep are; 207,067 in Mersin are; 194,983 in Adana are; 144,667 in Bursa are; 130,263 in Kilis are; 136,137 in İzmir and 105,241 in Konya. Although Adana may also be called as an industrial city, it is the most important city for agricultural production not only in the Çukurova region but also in Turkey. While agricultural production plays a significant role in Mersin and İzmir, important commercial port cities, Bursa is significant in Turkey for the textile sector. Textile is a crucial sector with flexible and precarious working conditions not only for the Syrian immigrants but also for domestic workers. Şanlıurfa, Hatay and Gaziantep are also agricultural cities, although there has been a significant development of small and medium enterprises in Gaziantep. In addition, all of these three cities have borders with Syria. As for Kilis, a border city with Syria, the most important economic activity is unregistered border trade with Syria. Konya is an agricultural city of Turkey though it has small and medium-sized industries located in the city.

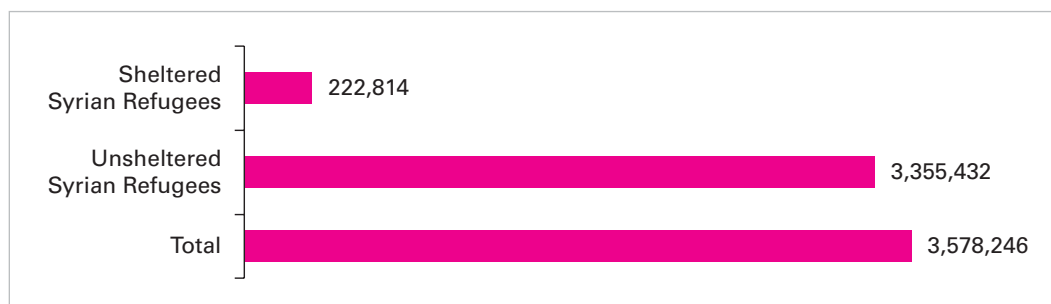
Figure 9: Distribution of Syrian Refugees in the Scope of Temporary Protection by Top Ten Provinces (by 12 April 2018)



Source: Directorate General of Migration Management (2018).

As seen from **Figure 10**, majority of the Syrian population, 3,355,432 of a total 3,578,246 live outside the camps.

Figure 10: Sheltered and Unsheltered Syrian Refugees by Temporary Shelter Centres (by 12 April 2018)



Source: Directorate General of Migration Management (2018).

As Figure 10 shows, the number of Syrian refugees leaving the camps after they are admitted is fairly high. Erdoğan (2014: 19) explains the reasons being extreme discipline, lack of employment possibilities, religious bias and feeling of isolation-exclusion experienced by the residents of the camps.

4.2 The Syrian Refugees and the Labour Markets in Turkey

As discussed earlier, labour markets in Turkey has been flexible since the early 2000s. This means that the Syrian refugees entered a flexible labour market in which, as it will be seen below, they were much more vulnerable to the flexible working conditions in comparison with the domestic employees. In other words, the inclusion of millions of Syrian migrants into a labour market with its flexibility and structural problems forced them to work for precarious and unfair works without any social right.

According to the report published by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Syrian refugees in Turkey mainly engage in informal works and reportedly receive as low as a fraction of the minimum wages. In addition, even in the formal sector, for many times, they face language barriers, unsuitable skill sets and lack of formal work permits (FAO, 2017: 5). Such conditions often force them to change jobs or city. In other words, as stated by FAO, the Syrian refugees do not only emigrate from Syria to Turkey but also emigrate inside Turkey from one city to another, and search for employment is the basic motive of the internal migration of Syrians within Turkey (FAO, 2017: 4).

Besides the conditions of the labour markets of Turkey, as noted by Okay (2017: 5), despite the regulations on Temporary Protection, had a general section for the employment of the Syrians, though the procedures by which their right to work could be used were not identified until the Regulation on the Work Permits of Foreigners under Temporary Protection in 2016. Therefore, practically, the Syrian refugees under temporary protection did not have the right to work in formal jobs in the period between 2011 and 2016 (Okay, 2017: 5). This situation became another factor forcing Syrian refugees to be involved in informal work practises.

Development Workshop (2016) found that Syrians enter the labour markets of Turkey in three ways. The first group set up their own companies in collaboration with domestic commercial partners from Turkey. However, in that way, the Syrian entrepreneurs have many difficulties, varying from involvement in the banking sector to gaining property rights. The second group works as independent traders or artisans, and the third group, the biggest and most vulnerable one, consists of wage labourers (Development Workshop, 2016: 101–102). Without doubt, during their initial involvement in the labour market or prior to their entry into the labour processes, they need to overcome certain basic problems like language barriers, inadaptable qualification, lack of official work permits and so on (FAO, 2017: 4).

In the working process, low wages, long working hours in comparison with the domestic workers, non-payment or late payment of the wages, working without social benefits/security, child labour, discrimination at the workplace are among the problems they face. All these may be seen from a field research conducted through interviews with 300 Syrian and 304 Turkish workers by Erol et al. (2017).¹³

One of the important points the report underlines is the wide use of child labour. Although it is illegal according to the employment law in Turkey, number of children below 15 years is substantially high in the sector. While the portion of child workers below 18 is 19 percent of the total number of employee in the sector, this portion is 29 percent among Syrian employees (Erol et al., 2017: 31).

Another problem that Syrian immigrant workers face is employment below their qualification/skill level. As the research mentions, 7 percent of the Syrian respondents in the scope of the research (which was the textile sector in Istanbul) graduated from university while around 2 percent of the Turkish respondents have graduated from the university. In addition, it is pointed out that the education level of the Syrian respondents is higher than Turkish respondents. Hence, it is evident that the Syrian immigrants are not employed in accordance with their level of qualification (Erol et al., 2017: 33–34).

¹³ The English translation of the field research is “The Syrian Immigrant Labour: Istanbul Textile Sector Research”.

It should also be pointed out that there is a significant wage gap between the Syrian and Turkish workers in the sector. **Table 7** shows the wages differences between the Syrian and Turkish workers on the basis of gender.

Table 7: Monthly wages in textile sector (Istanbul) according to gender and country of origin¹⁴

	AVERAGE WAGE	NUMBER OF OBSERVATION
Female	1,106.538	117
Male	1,304.048	480
General	1,265.34	597
From Turkey	1,394.811	301
Female from Turkey	1,183.053	95
Male from Turkey	1,492.466	206
From Syria	1,133.632	296
Female from Syria	776,136.4	22
Male from Syria	1,162.361	274

Source: Erol et al. (2017:53)

As seen from the **Table 7**, while the average wages in the textile sector is 1,492.466 Turkish Lira (TL) for Turkish male workers and 1,183.053 for Turkish female workers, the wages for Syrians, male and female, are much lower than these amounts. While the average wage is 1,162.361 TL for the Syrian male workers, it is 776,136.4 TL for the Syrian female workers. According to the data, provided by the interview and seen from **Table 7**, the average wage level of the Syrian female workers is half of the Turkish male workers (Erol et al., 2017: 53).

According to the study, the working hours in the textile sector have always been higher than the official level and only 2.3 percent of the workers stated that they worked 45 hours a week. 14 percent of the respondent workers have worked between 46 and 50 hours, 32 percent between 51 and 55 hours, around 20 percent between 56 and 60 hours, 16 percent between 61 and 65 hours and 15 percent for more than 65 hours a week. In the report it is stated that the working hours are dramatically worse for Syrian workers. In addition, the report points out that 99.63 percent of the male Syrian workers and all the female Syrian workers are employed without social security (Erol et al., 2017: 58).

¹⁴ The table is translated from Turkish to English by the author.

Regarding the housing issue, research by Erol et al. (2017) finds that around 98.6 percent of the Syrian respondents live in a rented house, 30 percent of them stated that they live in İstanbul already together with 7–10 people. The portion of the people sharing accommodation with 5 or more people is more than 85 percent. Around 7 percent of the respondents point out that they share their house with 16–20 people, another 7 percent of the respondents live together with more than 20 people in the same house (Erol et al., 2017: 48). As for health conditions, 79 percent of the respondents point out that they cannot access public health services while 79 percent cannot access medicine (Erol et al., 2017: 49).

Similar findings are also found in another field research conducted in the agricultural sector by the Development Workshop in 13 cities including Ordu, Giresun, Trabzon, Rize, Artvin, Malatya, Kars, Ardahan, Adana, Mersin, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Ankara between July and November 2015 through interviews with 110 people involved in the production of goods such as hazelnuts, tea, animal products, apricots, citrus fruits, cotton, vegetables and pistachios. According to the study, the Syrian immigrants, making of a significant labour pool for seasonal agricultural production, are widely employed in the harvest of apricots, citrus fruits, cotton, vegetables and pistachios in Malatya, Mersin, Adana, Urfa and Gaziantep (Development Workshop, 2016: 84). While they work for a lower wage level in comparison with the other immigrants and the domestic workers in the sector, they also play an important role in keeping wage level stable or at a low level. However, labour force provided by Syrian immigrants led to rise of output. The difference between the wage levels of immigrant workers in the agriculture sector can be seen from **Table 8** (Development Workshop, 2016: 186–188).

Table 8: Daily wage rate for seasonal agricultural workers in 2015

WORKER GROUP	PRODUCE / ACTIVITY	DAILY WAGES (TL)	ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS
Georgian workers	Tea – leaf cutting	90–100	Lunch, cigarettes, phone credits
Azerbaijani workers	Fodder cutting	90–100	Lunch, cigarettes
Georgian workers	Hazelnuts	45–50	Lunch, accommodation, dinner
Domestic migrant seasonal agricultural workers (from Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Adiyaman etc.)	Hazelnuts	42	Lunch, tent space or accommodation allocation
Syrian workers	Apricots	42	Lunch, tent space allocation
Domestic migrant seasonal agricultural workers (from Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Adiyaman etc.)	Apricots	42	Lunch, tent space allocation
Syrian workers	Citrus fruits, vegetables, pistachios	24–40	N / A

Source: Development Workshop (2016).

Syrian immigrants generally find their jobs through informal methods, including relatives, intermediaries, parks and workers' coffeehouses and this plays a negative role in the working conditions of the Syrian workers, putting them into informal relations (Development Workshop, 2016: 153–154). In addition, working hours can extend up to 12 hours a day (Development Workshop, 2016: 186–188).

During seasonal agricultural production, while women and children constitute the most important group of employees, as pointed out by research, the low rate of schooling is an important factor which explains why there is a high proportion of child labour in the sector. In addition, children working in seasonal agricultural production are vulnerable to many risks including poor nutrition, hygiene, safety and health, harassment and negligence (Development Workshop, 2016: 186–188). Although only two sectors, textile and seasonal agriculture, have been dealt with by these two reports, it is possible to point out that the working conditions of the Syrian refugees in other sectors do not differ from these two sectors.¹⁵

¹⁵ For more recent studies on Syrian refugees in Turkish literature, please see: Lordoğlu (2018); Adar (2018); Dedeoğlu (2018); Mutlu et al. (2018); Korkmaz (2018); Çınar (2018); Gökmen (2018); Akbaş and Ulutaş (2018); Çoban (2018).

5 Insights from the Workshop “Syrian Refugees and Integration of Syrians”

During the four-day workshop in February 2017, scholars, trade unionists and human rights activists from Turkey and Germany presented 28 papers. For details of the workshop regarding preparation, supporting institutions, participants and outcomes, refer to Appendix I. The third day of the workshop was organized as a “fishbowl session” with Syrian and Turkish workers. This chapter documents and evaluates the “fishbowl session”. Its first part focuses on the composition of the participants, the second part on the participants’ narratives.

5.1 Documentation of the Fishbowl Session: The Composition of the Participants

The “fishbowl session” was closed to the audiences and speakers due to the fact that it was organized only for the Syrian and Turkish participants. Moderators of the session were Sinem Bayraktar from Development Workshop and Kamil Orhan from Pamukkale University. Overall profile included: female and male Syrian workers working in the textile sector, between 20–50 years, who have migrated from Aleppo and Damascus.

Before the session, every participator filled a form called „About You“ that collected information on their living/working conditions and status in Syria and Turkey. Moderators made every participant to take turn to speak on their life. Furthermore, the moderators collected written documents that presented their own statements on the discussed issues. The workshop organizing team joined the session as an observer for documenting the discussed issues and creating policy suggestions to present related authorities as a recommendation.

The fishbowl, “the art of active listening”, is defined as “a tool for facilitating dialogue between experts in a way that exposes others to their knowledge while expanding the collective understanding of a subject” by United Nations Human Right Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR, 2017). Accordingly, in a fishbowl meeting, the knowledgeable participators called ‘the fish’ should sit in a circle to discuss a series of questions by being surrounded by a bigger group of observers in an outer circle that is called “the bowl” (OHCHR, 2017). In the first step, the inner circle speaks and the outer circle actively listens. However, according to the definition by OHCHR, the outer circle moves into the role of fish when they

want to participate in the discussion (OHCR, 2017). As for the advantages of “the fishbowl” method, OHCR underlies five points: The first is to have an alternative to traditional debate methods, the second is to have a substitute for panel discussions, the third is to promote a dynamic participation, the fourth is to address controversial issues, and fifth is to avoid lengthy presentations through the traditional methods (OHCHR, 2017).

Regarding the activity, “the fishbowl” session was organized with the aim of encouraging the discussion within a large group and in that way allowing the entire group to participate in the conversation. In the preliminary step of the workshop, the fishbowl method took into consideration the attendance of the Syrian refugees creating a situation in which they felt comfortable to openly narrate their individual experiences. Therefore, the session was closed to the audiences and speakers and only the Syrian and Turkish participants stayed in the session.

Another aim of the session was to create a network and solidarity between Syrian and Turkish workers by understanding the common problems they face. To create network between Syrian and Turkish workers with a holistic approach to their common problems, the Fishbowl Technique and Critical Incident Technique were used in the session by enabling the participants to speak about their problems on working and living conditions without feeling any pressure when they discussed about their personal difficulties.¹⁶ The session began with a warming up activity to make them feel more comfortable when they discussed problems including accommodation, living conditions, working conditions, language, discrimination etc. in Turkey.

In the following pages, first, the composition of the participants of the “fishbowl” session will be dealt with through figures and tables, thereafter, testimonies will be presented to show how/what difficulties they face in Turkey.

As Scholar Murat Erdoğan, Director of the Hacettepe University (Ankara) Migration and Politics Research Centre (HUGO) points out:

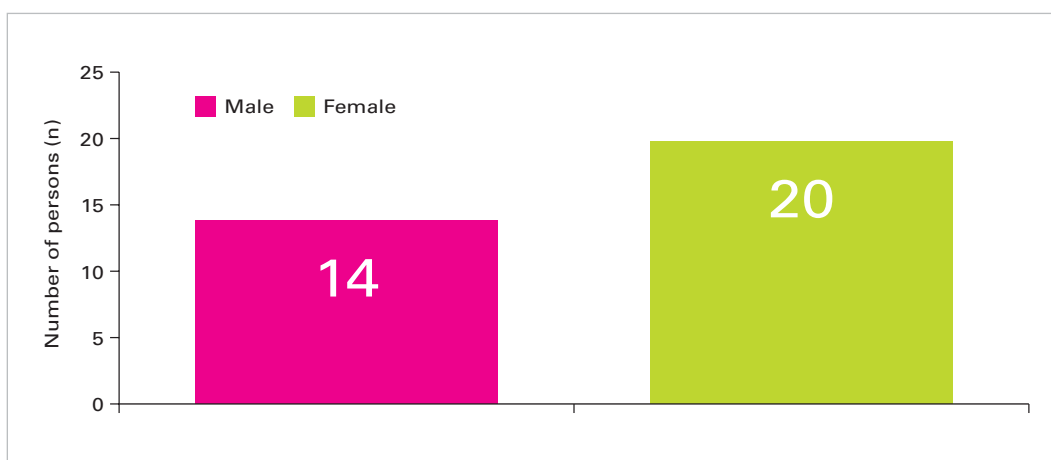
The emergence of these urban refugees has important implications for local governments, especially municipalities, which have taken on the direct work of caring for this vulnerable population. These newcomers arrive with a number of humanitarian and economic needs, ranging from housing and education to language support, and their sheer numbers in some cities have caused tensions with the local populace (Erdoğan, 2017b).

¹⁶ In these paragraphs, Diyar Erdoğan’s notes were used. The author would like to thank Erdoğan who is one of the members of Global Labour University Alumni Network in Turkey.

Regarding the “fishbowl” session, it should be noted that although a limited numbers of Syrian refugees participated in the session it is possible to argue that the participants and their narratives constitute a small section of the general picture of the Syrians living in İstanbul metropolitan area in terms of work and living conditions.

As seen in **Figure11**, 14 Syrian female and 20 Syrian male workers attended the session.¹⁷

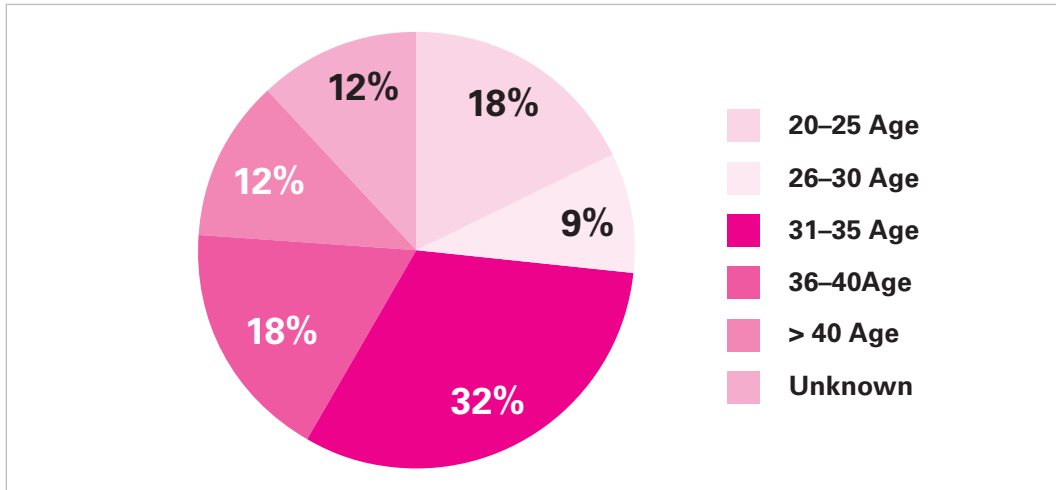
Figure 11: Number of persons separated by gender attending the session.



With regard to age distribution, the number of Syrian workers in the age between 20 and 25 was 6, in the age between 26 and 30 was 3, in the age between 31 and 34 was 4, and in the age between 36 and 40 was 6. While there were 4 Syrian workers older than 40, 4 workers did not point out their age. Accordingly, as it will be seen from **Figure 12**, 18 percent of the Syrian workers were between 20–25; 9 percent was between 26–30; 32 percent was between 31–35; 18 percent was between 36–40; and finally, 12 percent was older than 40.

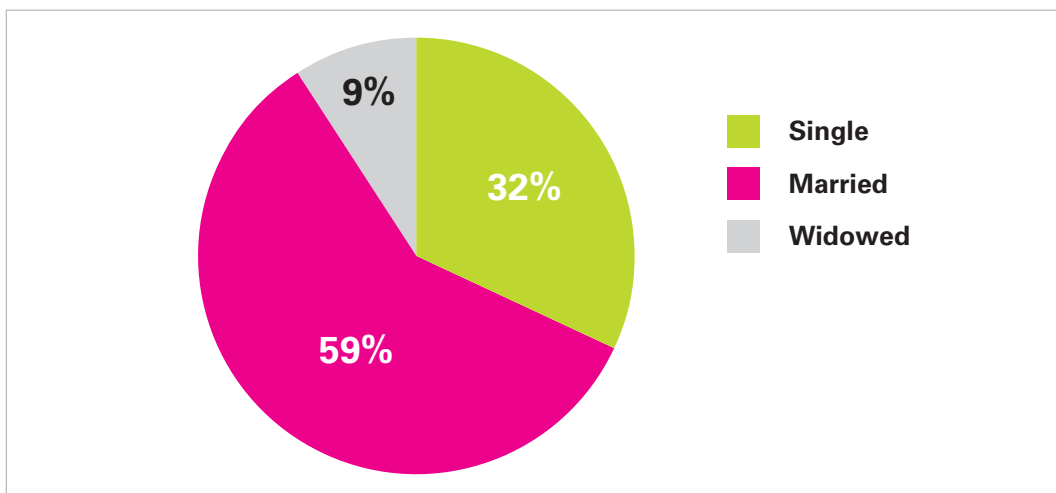
¹⁷ Forty workers attended the session, 34 Syrian and 6 Turkish. Only responses from the Syrian workers are included in this section of the report. In addition, all figures in the fifth chapter of the report are produced by the author, relying on the answers of the participants to the “about you” forms mentioned on page 31 of this report.

Figure 12: Age



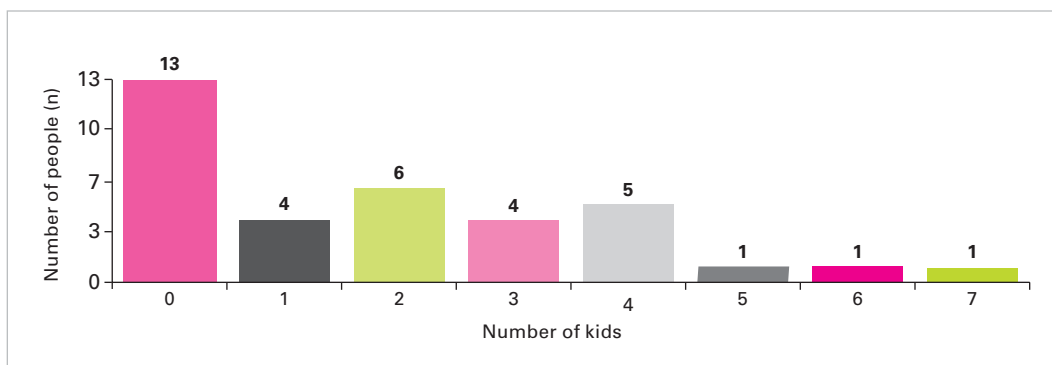
Regarding the marital status, as evident in **Figure 13**, 20 respondents constituting 59 percent of the Syrian participants stated that they were married, 11 respondents constituting 32 percent of the Syrian participants stated they were single and 3 respondents constituting 9 percent of the Syrian participants stated they were widowed.

Figure 13: Marital status



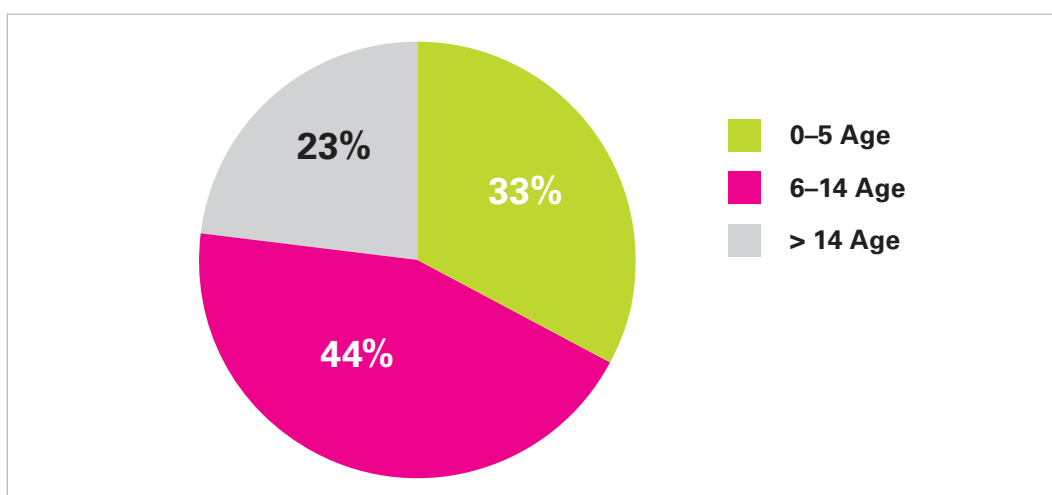
As seen from the **Figure 14**, majority of the Syrian workers attending the activity had children. Accordingly, while 13 workers stated they do not have kids, 4 workers had only 1 kid, 6 workers had 2, 4 workers had 3, 5 workers had 4, 1 worker had 5, 1 worker had 6 kids and another one had 7.

Figure 14: Do you have kids?



As **Figure 15** reveals, most of the Syrian workers' children are in the age of dependent population, which is defined as the ages between 0 and 14 and higher than 65. A detailed study reveals that the number of kids of the Syrian workers between 0 and 5 years is 19, constituting 33 percent of the total Syrian attendance, while the number of kids between 6 and 14 is 25 making up 44 percent. The number of kids older than 14 is 13 thereby constituting 23 percent.

Figure 15: How old are the kids?



As seen from **Figure 16**, in the beginning of the Syrian war, migration from Syria to Turkey was relatively low, that is, only 1 and 3 of the participators had come to Turkey, constituting 3 and 9 percent of the total participators. However, by 2013, as explained in the early parts of the report and from **Figure 16**, there has been a sharp increase of immigrants from Syria to Turkey.

Figure 16: When did you come to Turkey?

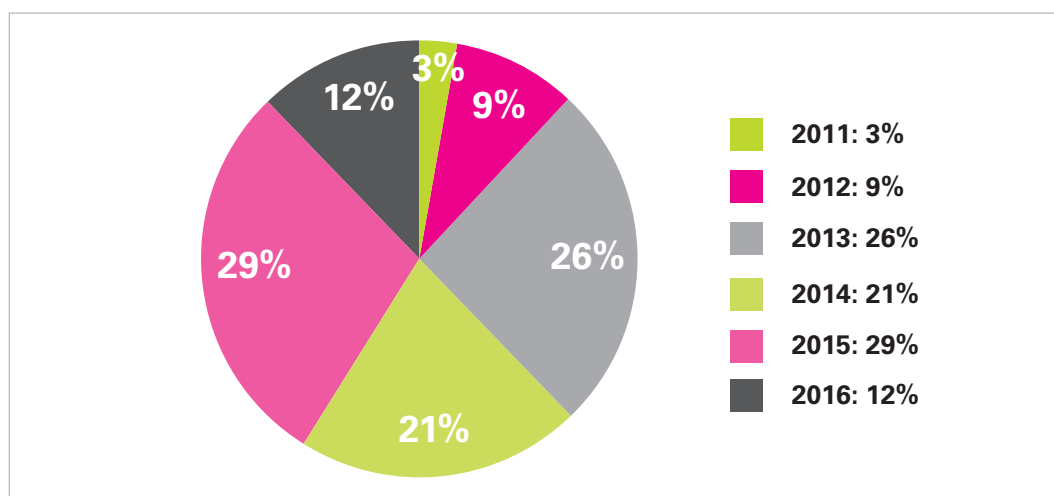


Figure 16 shows 9 people in 2013, 7 people in 2014 and 10 people in 2015 migrated from Syria to Turkey constituting 26, 21 and 29 percent of the participants respectively. As for 2016, only 4 with 12 percent of the participants moved to Turkey.

Figure 17: With whom did you come to Turkey?

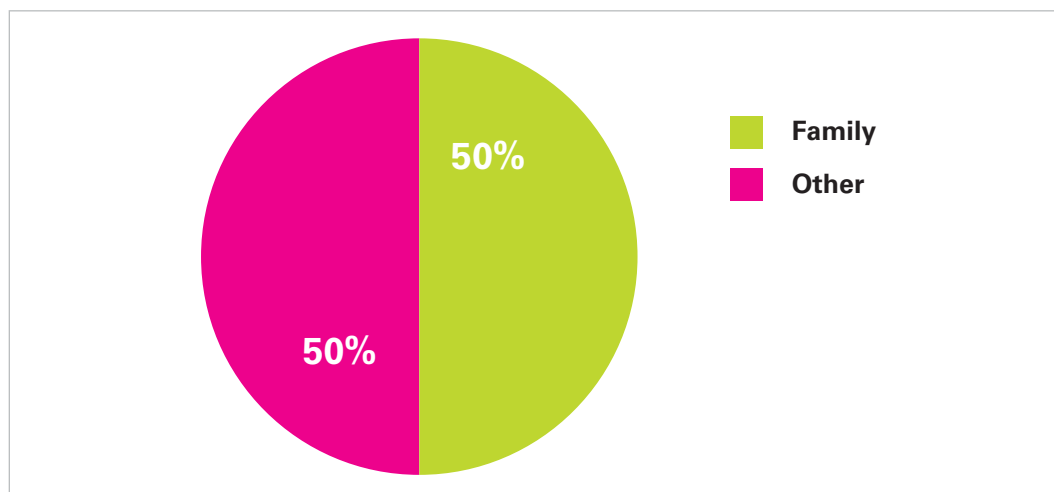


Figure 17 shows the percentage of participants with whom they came to Turkey. As seen from the figure, half of the participants came to Turkey with their families.

Figure 18: Education in Syria

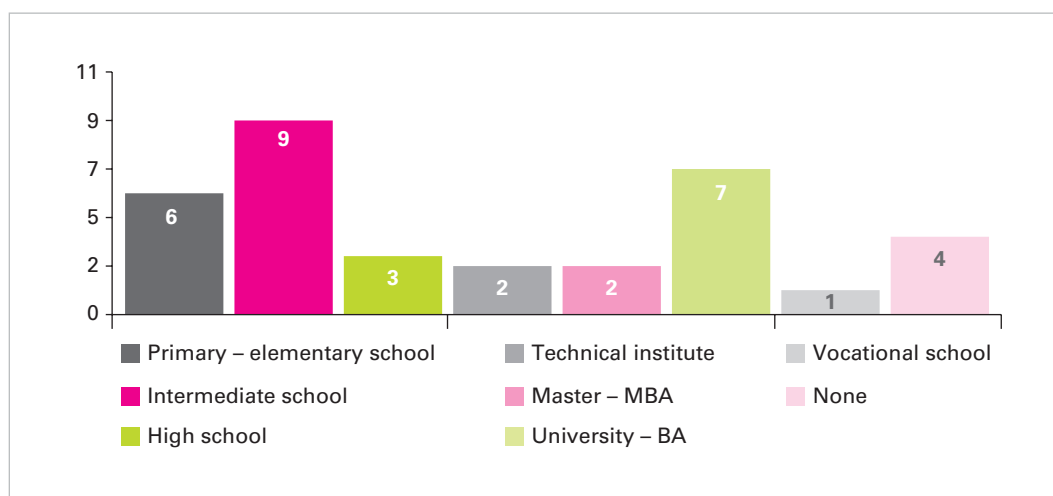
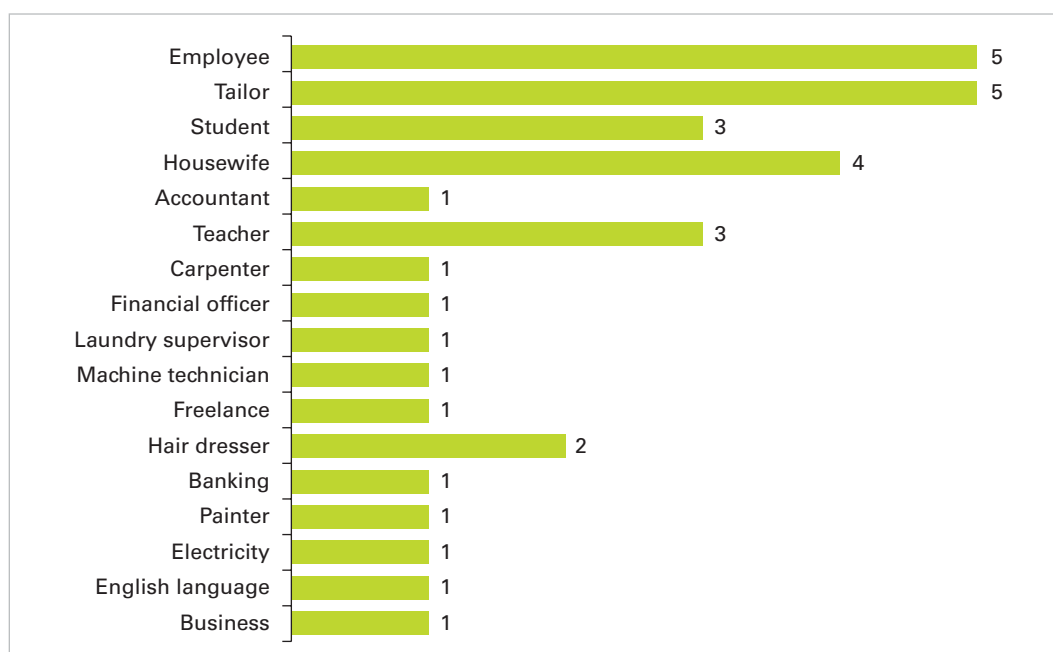


Figure 19: Jobs in Syria



Figures 18 and 19 have respectively shown the education and job situation of the participants in Syria. As seen from the **Figure 18**, the majority of the participants may be defined as educated. Accordingly, only 4 of the participants (12 percent) have no education and 6 of them have only primary and / or elementary education (18 percent).

While the number of participants having intermediate school education is 9 (26 percent), the number of participants having high school education, vocational school education and technical institute education is respectively 3 (9 percent), 1 (3 percent) and 2 (6 percent). In addition, there are 2 participants (6 percent) with master or MBA degree and 7 participants (21 percent) with university or BA degrees. In addition, as depicted in **Figure 19** majority of the participants had an occupation in Syria. As seen from **Figure 20**, 73 percent of the participants or 24 people were working in Syria in the fields as shown in **Figure 17**.

Figure 20: Working status in Syria

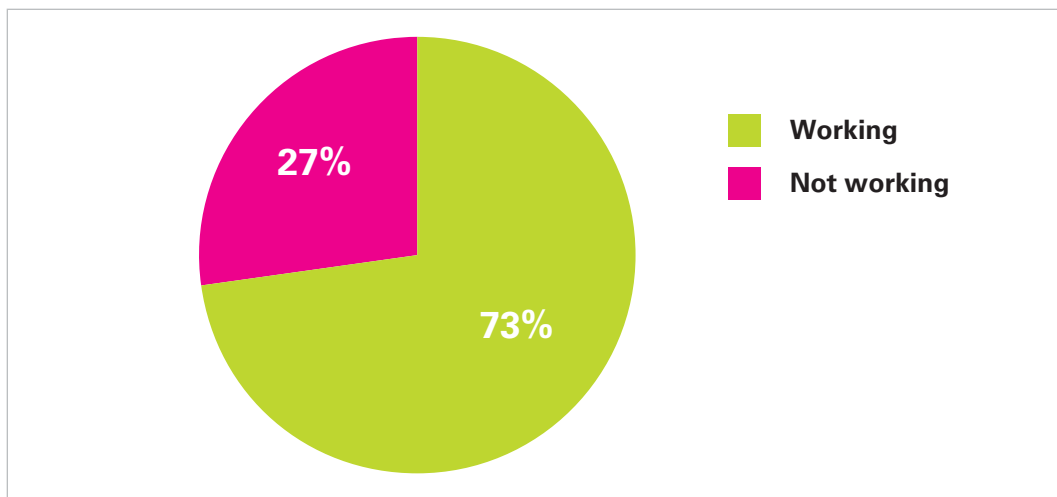


Figure 21 shows the condition of accommodation of the participants. Of the 21 participants, 7 people were paying rent for accommodation while half of the participants (17 people) were living in their own houses. However, regarding the percentage of “the others” category in **Figure 21**, including the “family’s house” and “relatives’ house”, 29 percent and 10 people, respectively, it is possible to point out that the majority of the participants had accommodation possibilities before the war and prior to coming to Turkey as a result of the war.

Figure 22 seen below shows the answers to the question: “are your family members with you right now? If it is not where are they?”. As evident in **Figure 22**, while 47 percent of the participants (16 people) left the question without an answer, 53 percent of the respondents (18 people) were away from one of their family members. In more detail, while 15 participants had at least one family member in Syria, 5 of them had family members only in Syria. In addition, 6 families were divided between Syria and Germany.

Figure 21: Accommodation in Syria?

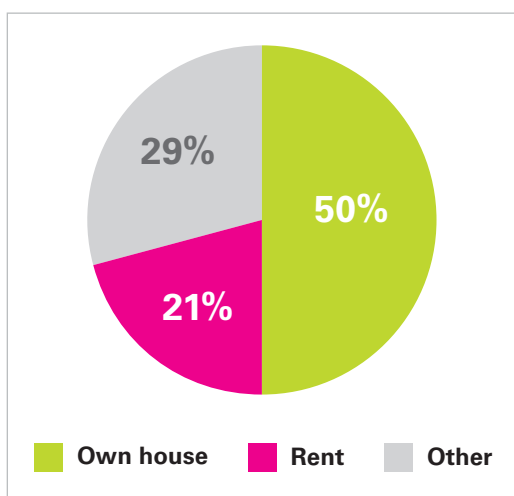
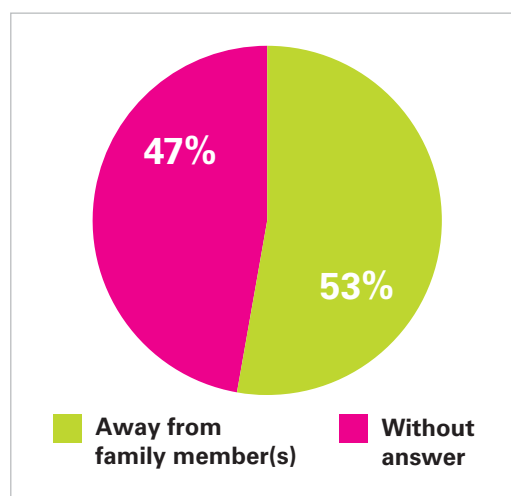


Figure 22: Is your family with you right now?



Figures 23 and 24 respectively deal with the sectors that participants work for and the number of people they live with. As seen from **Figure 23**, even if 53 percent of the participants (18 people) live with less than 4 people, an important percentage, 47 percent (16 people) live with more than 4 people. In more detail, while 41 percent of the total participants (14 people) live with household members between 5 and 8, 2 participants or 6 percent of the total participants live more than 8. According to the answers to the survey, one of these 2 participants lives with 10 people while the other lives with 14 people. As **Figure 24** shows, a significant portion of the participants, 47 percent or 15 people, work for the textile sector, while the second biggest portion with 17 percent and 5 people belong to the handicraft sector.

Figure 23: How many people are you living with?

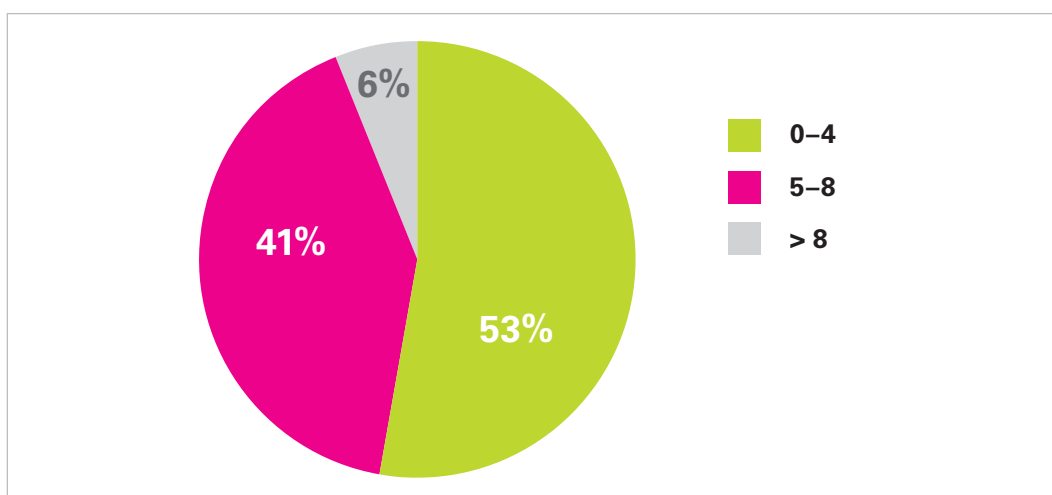
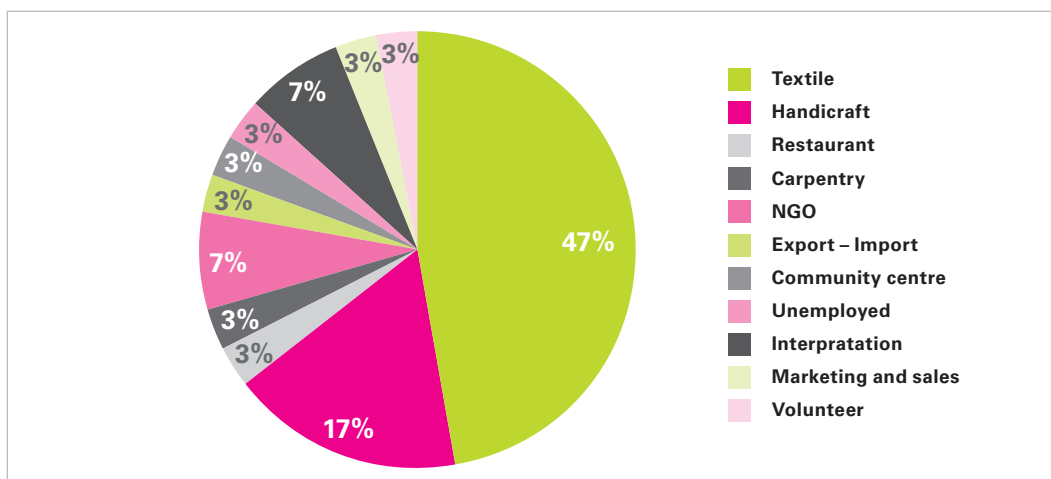
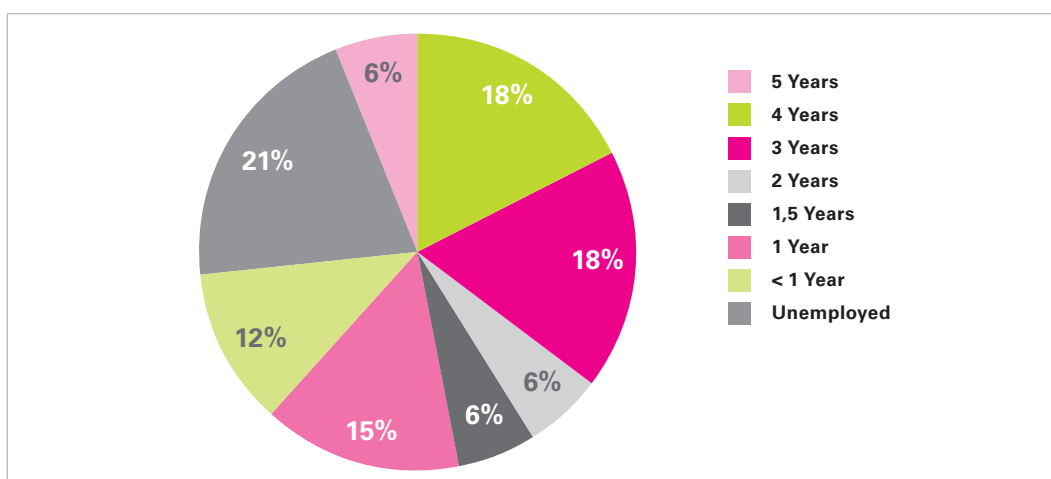


Figure 24: Which sector are you working in Turkey?



Finally, **Figure 25** shows the answers of the question that “how long have you been working in this job?”. As it is seen from the figure, the portion of participants working for the same job for the period less than 1 year, or for 1 year, 2 years, 3 years 4 years 5 years is 12, 15, 6, 18, 18, 6, respectively. As seen from **Figure 23**, the portion of unemployed participants is 21. These portions mean that in total 54 percent of the participant is unemployed or work for the same job for the period less than 2 years.

Figure 25: How long have you been working in this job?



This section of the report presents the conditions of the participants of the fishbowl session through visual materials. Although we deal with only 34 Syrian refugees here, what is clear is that their situation in terms of their living and working conditions is consistent with the general picture of the Syrian refugees living in Turkey. It is also possible to see this from their narratives which will be dealt with in the next sub-chapter of the report.

5.2 The Participants' Narratives

In this section, although the narratives by the Syrians is classified according to working conditions, living conditions, social rights and discrimination, it should be pointed out that such a definite classification is quite difficult to maintain because of the fact that almost all problems including language barrier, flexible working conditions, child labour, etc. are enmeshed with each other.

Working conditions, lower wages and longer working hours in comparison with the Turkish workers, working without social security benefit have been the basic problems at the workplace. In addition, sometimes, as some workers pointed out, their salaries were not paid. The experiences of a Syrian female worker is presented as an example.¹⁸

My husband had a workshop there [Syria]¹⁹ but he became a worker here (Turkey). He worked until 11 o'clock at night without any holiday. It is totally a torture. They were paying half of what was being paid to the Turkish workers in the same period. At the end of three years ... He [the boss] did not pay my husband's salary, though his status as a business owner was good. ... We could not take an action about the health insurance because of language.

As understood, lower payment in comparison with the Turkish workers, working without any social benefit, discrimination at the workplace and language barriers in finding job or in taking action against the abuses are experiences generally shared in the narratives. Another Syrian female participant recalled:

I want to clarify something for the Turks to understand. Some think that the Syrians have taken the jobs from Turk's hands. The Syrians came here not to steal the jobs but because they were compelled to come. However, they [the employers] pay for two Syrians what they pay for one Turk. We also work for a half salary and live very bad lives. We have no sin. Turkish employers are employing us with the lowest salaries for their individual interests.

This shows that by differing from the majority of their Turkish counterparts, the reason for the low labour standards or the employment of Turkish workers lies in the employment practices of the employers in Turkey.

¹⁸ All conversations have been translated by the author, relying on the records of the session. Therefore, no reference to any source is given.

¹⁹ The words or sentences in the square brackets are added by the author.

Regarding working without social insurance, another Syrian female participant reveals the kind of problems they face in their daily lives:

I am from Damascus. I have five children. My 16-years-old child was martyred. My husband has been missing for five years. I do not know where he has been. I was pregnant, my baby died in my belly. I came to my brothers with my two little children. I stayed five months with them and met with respectful people. I know tailoring. I worked for five months. When I was at work, my kid had fallen and his head had been broken. I have been struggling with the hospitals for one year and the kid has various troubles in his brain. He had another surgery which was not successful. We are going from one doctor to the other. I have applied for asylum but I do not have an identity card. I succeeded to take my kid to Turkey through illegal ways. My brother supports me. He is working as a translator. I want to go to another country for my kid's treatment.

Such accounts reveal the problems Syrian refugees face in their lives without a social security, at the same time showing the gender dimension of their conditions. As understood from her words, while she tries to survive by working under harsh conditions at the workplace, she also struggles at home to make her family survive.

Under such difficult conditions, another problem that Syrian refugees face is violence at workplace.

Our situation is better than earlier. But the rents are higher now. I have been working as a seamstress since I was 15 years old. I learned to operate a little machine here. I left because they mistreated me. I worked for another workplace, where they did not give me the salary. The system is quite different here. In Syria you work from 07.30 to 16.30, here you work from 08.00 to 21.00. The people ask me that why I came here instead of fighting for my country. I thank you. First time I came, I worked in a workshop for two years. The behaviour was so bad. I was very tired. They tried to hit me two times. I tolerated for a while then I left. Now our master is a very good person. I am not a "ortacı"²⁰. I became a forewoman. They said Syrians do not understand anything but if I do not understand how do I work. Working hours are long, we are paid low salary ... There should not be any distinction between the Turks and Kurds. A Turk came and told he would not work for less than 500 TL but then I was being paid 400 TL. We stay in houses that may not be called as a house. There is a lot of trouble with the rent. ...We are paying 500 TL rent in Okmeydanı, too bad to live. We, as eight people, stay in two small rooms. Turkish people maybe paying 200–250 TL.

²⁰ "Ortacı" in the textile sector refers a worker servicing for errand, cutting, packaging etc.

The narrative from another Syrian female worker, Ayşe, also describes the problems Syrian refugees encounter with regard to housing, discrimination, working conditions, health and the effects of poor regulations.

Hello, I am Ayşe. I have seven children—five girls and two boys. My husband has a heart problem. My two children are working here. They worked for six months and suffered from various problems. [One of the children] fell here [at the workplace] and suffered. We asked for a work contract from the employer but he did not accept. He said you cannot ask for a break. He told us not to mention that the accident occurred at the workplace. He gave some money to him, but if he had a job contract... Now, his wife is pregnant. He cannot get healthcare services. If something happens to me, I am responsible. We pay 900 TL rent for two rooms. We are not treated like humans as refugees. My other child worked in the textile sector. He worked for two weeks and then came back. He does not go to work anymore. He got fired for not going to work. And they did not pay off his dues. When I need to go to hospital, my children help me. My husband is sick in Greece. We have a lot of problems ... Two of my children go to school. The landlord comes and asks for increase in the rent. How to increase it? I changed two houses in four months. I pay the down payment and commission.

Ayşe's words also reveal the child labour issue, the fragmentation of the Syrian refugee families as a result of war and their psychology in Turkey under such working and living conditions. The language issue constitutes another problem for Syrian refugees not only in terms of communication in the society but also in terms of using their rights at the workplace or in bureaucratic processes. Another female worker's recalled:

I have a 15-month-old child. I have myopia. I am in the textile sector. There is difficulty in being treated at the hospital. No money is paid. There is problem on the issue of rent. Thank god I have children but everything is expensive. My uncle was working for construction. He worked for two months. But then there was trouble. He had cut his 3 fingers at the saw. The employer treated him but did not give his salary. They complained, but did not get the money. There are familial problems but I cannot explain to the police, there are language problems too. There is family violence as well.

Reiterating problems like bad working conditions with low wages, long working hours, without social benefits as well as job security, prejudgement and individual violence as well as unpleasant working conditions as faced by Syrian refugees, another Syrian female worker narrates:

I am from Damascus. I am in the textile sector. Our financial situation was good. We came to Antakya. We worked as porter, and we were taking 100 TL, but we had to work. We worked under very hard conditions. The owner of business, who was very young, forced my child to polish his shoes... they did not pay my salary for one–two months, so I moved to another job. The owners of the workshop behaved badly, even if someone was unwell, they would not let you go. My daughter was unwell, but he did not let me go again. Some of Turks were good some of them behaved badly at the same workplace. They made fun of you asking if you stay in a tent or in a house. There were also well-cultured, good people. If there had not been a war, we would not have left. I wish the Turkish people look at us like human beings and do not abuse our rights. They would ask us to report to the authorities i.e., “inform against” them because they know we cannot. I worked for 500 TL from morning to night but could not get [my salary]. ... But we are still in a better situation than the initial point when we started.

As pointed out earlier, inadequate regulations and controls in Turkey made the Syrian refugees more vulnerable and the problem of work permit has been one the areas of inadequate regulations and controls. Although they try to obtain a work permit, for many times, they have to struggle for it and this forced them to work illegally. A male Syrian participant describes his experience:

I went to many places. I think my Turkish is good. I wanted to work in a nice place. Wherever I went, they ask for a work permit. They said that you are from Syria and the work permit is not issued for you. I have five children. My children are working now. I am sitting. If I can find work permit, there are many jobs. My 18 and 16 years old children are working now. They are doing tailoring. I have another 12 year-old child. I feel very sad, how many places I went to, they ask for a work permit.

Difficulties in obtaining work permit leads to unemployment of adults of the Syrian families and for many a time, the result of unemployment of adults in families leads to children being forced to take up work to feed the family.

Another bureaucratic problem the Syrian refugees face is identity card. To obtain work permit, identity card problem becomes a barrier in the use of rights. In addition, the process of obtaining such documents forces the Syrian refugees to pay additional money to the commissioners as seen from the words of a female Syrian refugee.

I was an English teacher. I had a house, a car, and a beautiful life. I remained unemployed for five months. I found a job in the field of education. I gave language and Koran training during summer. The Ministry of Education offered a course to us in the field of education. I graduated with a good score. Then I learned that I needed to have an identity card to be assigned to a school. It was a nightmare to realize my dreams as I had no identity card. Once we had arrived in Istanbul we were told that we should have obtained an identity card. We applied to all institutions, we waited for hours, but could not get an identity. However, there were commissioners and finally we obtained the necessary document for identity. When the time came to begin school, we were told that we did not have the 1999 identity card. When it was my turn, I was told that I could not pass the security control. I could finally get an identity card. Afterwards, fifteen courses became Turkish. Only one course was in Arabic. One course was in Arabic, meaning that the child will return to his country one day and he or she will not know his own native language...The children have to learn Turkish from the first grade. In addition, I still wait for assignment. My husband could not find a job either.

However, paying money to the commissioners does not guarantee that one solved the bureaucratic problem s/he faced. In other words, the people making money by exploiting the situation of Syrians are not only employers or home owners. The narratives of the Syrian refugees do not begin and end with the human traffickers in the Mediterranean or Aegean seas. In contrast, as they are always vulnerable to lower wages, long working hours, unemployment in the workplace, they are also vulnerable to paying bribe or commissions or to fraud. This is evident from the following incident narrated by a male Syrian participant:

I was a student at the university. I was working with computers. I was arrested and thereafter I left, I escaped to Istanbul, found a scholarship and became a designer of information technologies. Most of the Turkish companies did not respond. One of them said that it is okay if I had a residence permit. There are commissioners giving quick residence permit for 1500 Euros. At the end of the two years, 1999 and 1998, identity card-related laws were released. I got a 1998 identity card through a commissioner. It was clear that it was fake. I was offered a job from the US in 2016 but I could not go. I found it suitable to stay here. I left school because I could not get an identity card and I got training in formation²¹. However, I could not be appointed. I worked at an import export company. I was told that I did not have a 1999 identity card. I could not transform the 1998 identity card to 1999 because I had been given fake documents by the commissioners.

It should also be pointed out that for Syrian refugees, it is not easy to afford the high cost of these documents. In addition, even if it is illegal to employ anyone without registration, employers prefer employing Syrian refugees without a work permit. As a male Syrian refugee show:

“My child is 17 years old. We asked for a work permit [to the employers], they said that there were other Syrians who demand job, if we asked [for a work permit], they would employ another Syrian”. Although the alternative way is to claim for the resident permit from employer, at that time, the Syrian refugee workers are directed to pay “the monthly costs” of the resident permits as may be seen from the following words of a Syrian male worker: “I asked [work permit] while I was working for a company before. I was told that there was a monthly payment of 400–450 TL and they would take the costs from me”. Therefore, the Syrian refugee workers demand some extent of state control. A male worker observes: “When one employs a Syrian it is not required to make social insurance. If you want a work permit, you will be fired. Normally, the work permit can be taken very easily. Our demand is not enough; but the state has to control it and follow it”.

Discrimination at the workplace and in daily life is one of the biggest parts of the narratives of the Syrian immigrants leading to the decline of self-confidence or feeling of despair. Syrian female narrates²².

²¹ In Turkey, as a result of high unemployment rates, there is a tendency among people having university degree to work as a teacher in public schools. However, if one is not graduated from the Faculty of Educational Sciences, s/he has to attend a specific certificate programme organized by a Faculty of Educational Sciences under the acceptance of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). These certificate programmes include the courses related to educational sciences and one only gains a chance to be appointed as a teacher to any public school after s/he completes these certificate programmes, which is called “pedagogical formation” or, shortly, “formation”.

²² She is the English teacher cited above.

Our teacher had passed out. We tried to call an ambulance and it took an hour. We hospitalized [the teacher]. They laid her on the stretcher [in the hospital] and even did not check if she had died. Turkish people value more even their animals and even animals do not act like that to humans.

The feeling of insecurity not only for oneself but also for the children is another dimension of the narratives under such conditions as seen from the sentences of a Syrian male worker: “I am a tailor, I live on rent, if a needle is broken, if it pricks my finger who will make me a health aid, if something happens to me, who will help to me, to my children?”

However, as a result of patriarchal relations, all female Syrian refugees have at least dual responsibility: One is in the workplace and the second is in the household as understood from the words of a Syrian female. The education of the children in a new country and a language that is not the mother language is an important dimension of this responsibility. The other important dimension is parental communication with the children under such conditions as the Syrian female revealed:

I came with my family. I have two little children who need to be educated. Turkish education has been compulsory and I have to teach Turkish [to the children]. But I also want to teach Arabic [to the children]. At least Arabic can also be taught at school. I do not know Turkish but maybe this time my child will speak Turkish and I will lose my communication with my children. S/he should take Arabic education. Kindergartens have fees and Arabic schools are also expensive. We also want Arabic lessons to be put into the curriculum of Turkish schools.

However, the problems the Syrian children face at school are not only related to language or education. In general, Syrian children experience discriminative behaviour at school. A Syrian female observes:

One day, one of my children did not return from school. In the school, the Turkish children were beating and dragging my child on the ground. What was the problem? [My child] said “During all day they said ‘you are a terrorist, you are Syrian and kill us’ and beat me in the evening”. They are 8 years old. They have attributions that Syrians are terrorists. [The child] draws a Syrian flag on the wall and says “Yes, I will not go to school, I will go to Syria”. I went and complained. What are you doing to these children, what you are putting into their minds, you are provoking?

Unfortunately, the discriminative behaviour against Syrian children at schools do not come only from students but also come from teachers or the school administration. A Syrian woman narrates:

One of my children is very successful in chess. They do not accept him when he wants to participate in a chess contest. Although [the child] has been studying at this school for two years, they say “you do not have a record”. My child says that all of his [or her] friends compete with other schools. How will we respond to the question of this child that although s/he is better than others why s/he cannot attend [the chess competition]? In the other folkloristic activities²³, it is said that Syrian children should afford themselves even in the situation that the expenses of the other children are paid by the school. We cannot afford these kinds of expenses.

The last two citations show that in the narratives of the Syrian refugees in Turkey, poverty of the refugees, discrimination and violence from domestic people, language problems, lack of enough regulation and bureaucratic difficulties play a vital role at the same time. The language issue also creates problems in availing the healthcare services; unfortunately they are left in a vulnerable situation of discrimination:

I was going to give birth. I called my interpreter so that s/he talks over the phone [with the doctor]. The doctor threw my phone to the ground. I have an identity card in my hand, if you want an interpreter, it exists too. It is not an issue that can be rejected in terms of humanity.

²³ In Turkey, in some secondary or high schools, traditional dances are studied as applied courses or as social activities. These are called as “folkloristic activities”.

6 Conclusions

Since the beginnings of the 1980s, under the neoliberal export-led growth regime, Turkey had a labour regime with minimal wages, low unionization, rising unemployment rates and high informality. As pointed out in the first chapter of this report, 1980, the year of military coup, witnessed the introduction of the neoliberal export-led regime; 2001 was also another turning point for the capitalist development process of Turkey. After the economic crisis of 2001, the Turkish economy was restructured through a stabilization programme leading to a transition to strong economy. This restructuring complemented the policies introduced after the military coup of 1980 but in a more institutionalized way. In other words, after the crisis of 2001, neoliberalism in Turkey was institutionalized in a short period of time. The formation of independent regulatory institutions including the central bank, the term of primary budget surplus, reform in the banking and social security systems, wide privatization and commercialization programmes were some elements of this process. All these policies were complemented with the Labour Relations Act, 4857, which legalized the informal work practises including part time working and subcontracting relations.

As pointed out in the report, Turkey had stable economic growth rates during the period between 2002 and 2008. However, this 'stability' did not guarantee high employment rates in the same period. In other words, although 'positive macro-economic' records of the Turkish economy were highlighted by international financial institutions, unemployment and informality became significant elements of the 'stability' or 'positive macro-economic' records as mentioned earlier. Therefore, many progressive economists or social scientists described the route of Turkish economy as "growth without employment".

Although the prime minister and economy bureaucrats of Turkey insisted on the idea that Turkey was not affected by the crisis of 2008, as discussed in the early sections of this report, reality was totally different. As evident from the data, Turkey in fact was one of the most affected countries. In addition, after the crisis of 2008, the government introduced new economic policies relying heavily upon more flexible labour relations. Labour policies, mentioned earlier, were complemented with the state of emergency regime declared after the attempted military coup on 15 July 2016. Although the Turkish government pointed out that the state of emergency regime was declared to struggle against the military coup, under the state of emergency regime almost all functions of the parliament was replaced with the decree laws that made possible to dismiss hundreds of thousands of the waged people from their positions. In addition, strike bans and closure of trade unions have become the new norms of the 'new Turkey'.²⁴

As discussed in the early sections of the report, the conflicts that began in 2011 in Syria led to a massive migration of Syrians to different countries. As explained in the report, the most important hosting countries have been Turkey and Germany. When the conflicts in Syria had begun, the authorities in Turkey expected a low number of Syrian immigrants. However, by 2013, the expectations had to be revised and varying regulations regarding Syrian refugees were made. These regulations did not create a social environment in which the Syrian refugees would have decent work and living conditions. One of the most important causes in this situation was the highly informal labour markets of Turkey. In other words, as highlighted in the initial sections of the report, Syrians entered a labour market which had high unemployment and informality, especially among the youth, since the beginning of the 2000s. All these combined with lack of enough regulations, discrimination and prejudgement against Syrian refugees. The result has been the settlement of the Syrian refugees in the lowest and the most vulnerable strata of the labour markets of Turkey. Besides documenting the fishbowl session of the workshop of "Syrian Refugees and Integration of Syrians", the report also aimed to show the reality and document the session together with the developments in the labour markets in Turkey since the beginning of the 2000s. As discussed in **Chapters 3 and 4**, Syrian refugees have a very difficult life in Turkey in terms of working conditions, living conditions, discrimination, bureaucracy, lack of enough regulation, child education, language barriers etc.

In terms of working conditions, as discussed in the early sections of the report, one of the most important problems is child labour and the unemployment of the Syrian. The adults of the families remained unemployed because they have no work permit, hence,

²⁴ For the effects of the state of emergency on academic freedoms, on freedom of expression and on the other democratic rights, see Yilmaz and Tören (2017) and Tören and Kutun (2018).

children are forced to be involved in the labour market to sustain family life. However, the basic reason making the prevalence of child labour widely desired is because it enables employers to reap higher profits; the state also exercised no control. As seen from the early parts of the report, the other problems that Syrian refugees face in the labour markets are low wages, longer working hours, employment without social insurance, late payment or non-payment of the wages, discrimination at the workplace, etc.

Regarding housing problems, the majority of the Syrian refugees live in crowded household. In addition, they pay higher rents for lower quality houses in comparison with other domestic inhabitants.

As pointed out in the report, the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey has a strong gender dimension. First, Syrian women work as flexible labourers at the workplace and at the same time, look after their families. Therefore, they struggle on both ends – the production and re-production sides of life. At the workplace, they are the most affected and vulnerable agents of the labour market because they are employed with lower wages in comparison with males from other nations; Syrian males are employed with lower wages in comparison with the Turkish male workers. In addition, Syrian female refugees also take the responsibility of the education of their children who have to struggle with language barrier, violence and discrimination practiced against them in school only by peers but also school administration, and have to adapt themselves to new educational regulations etc. All these problems, low working conditions without social security or registration, discrimination, language barriers, violence, prejudgement, low quality housing, integration problems into society create many barriers for them in using their rights at the workplace and in public institutions. As explained in the report, for example it is very difficult for them to benefit from health services not only because of lack of social security but also owing to language barriers.

As mentioned before, Syrian refugees consist of the lowest strata of the labour markets in Turkey. However, although, under conditions of rising ultra-nationalism in Turkey, many domestic people from the working class or from middle class accuse Syrians for worsening the working or living conditions of all in society, the reality is totally difficult. In other words, while the Syrian refugee population constitutes “a cheap labour power pool” for the capitalist class of Turkey, the state has, directly or indirectly, actively or passively, become a factor in the creation of a labour pool that neither exercises control nor grants equal rights to Syrian refugees. Therefore, the highest responsibility in creating a better life for Syrian refugees should be undertaken by the labour movement, keeping in mind that if there is no better life for Syrian refugees the capitalist state would fail to prosper. To be sure, such an understanding requires a labour movement that incorporates the traditional as well as all factions of the working class including immigrants and informal workers.

Appendixes

APPENDIX I: Documentation of the Regional Workshop on Syrian Refugees and Integration of Syrians

10th–13th February 2017, Boğaziçi University, İstanbul

Organized by Global Labour University (GLU) Alumni Network in Turkey

1. Preparation Process

With the proposal by the Global Labour University (GLU) Alumni Network in Turkey after the “Call for Proposal for Regional Alumni Workshops in 2016 and 2017” by Global Labour University (GLU) in accordance with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) a preliminary meeting entitled “Preliminary Meeting of Regional Workshop on Syrian Refugees and Integration of Syrians” was organized with the participation of Christoph Scherrer (the University of Kassel/the Global Labour University – GLU), Frank Hoffer (International Labour Organization – ILO and GLU), Simone Buckel (International Center for Development and Decent Work – ICDD), İsmail Doğa Karatepe (the University of Kassel), Özge Berber Ağtaş (ILO Ankara Office, GLU Alumni), Bilge Pınar Yenigün (ILO Ankara Office, GLU Alumni), Gaye Yılmaz (Boğaziçi University, GLU Alumni), Zeynep Ekin Aklar (Support to Life Foundation), Diyar Erdoğan (GLU Alumni), Tolga Tören (Mersin University, GLU Alumni), Saniye Dedeoğlu (Muğla University), Meral Apak (Boğaziçi University) and Cihan Hüroğlu (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Turkey Office) on 05.11.2016 at the North Campus of Boğaziçi University in İstanbul. Following the “Brief Information on Current Situation of Syrian Refugees in Turkey/Region” by Saniye Dedeoğlu, overall scope, objectives, programme, the content of the sessions, participant profile, speakers, financial and organizational matters were discussed in the meeting.

2. The aim of the workshop

The workshop aimed to increase international solidarity for the situation of Syrian refugees and create a platform for collaborations on solidarity actions by having a participatory discussion on what should be the role of civil society organizations, trade unions and academia on the issue of Syrian refugees' integration into society where they face problems such as human trafficking, labour exploitation, discrimination, child labour, absence of decent living and working conditions.

To achieve the aims mentioned above scholars from Turkey and Germany, experts from trade unions and NGOs, and Syrian refugees were invited and during the four days, between 10–13 February 2017, the Syrian refugees issue was discussed from different aspects.

3. The list and background of speakers and moderators

Following people contributed as speaker or moderator to the workshop²⁵:

- Alp Biricik, Expert, Human Resource Development Foundation, Speaker.
- Ayşe Beyazova, Expert, Candidate PhD./Boğaziçi University, Speaker.
- Beril Sönmez, Activist, "Refugees, We Are, Neighbours" Solidarity Network, Speaker
- Bilge Pınar Yenigün, Expert, ILO Ankara Office / GLU Alumni, Speaker.
- Bilge Seçkin Çetinkaya, Expert, Speaker.
- Burcu Karakaş, Journalist, Speaker.
- Christoph Scherrer, Prof. Dr., the University of Kassel / GLU, Opening speech, speaker.
- Ergün İşeri, Expert, Textile Workers Union, speaker.
- Ezgi Koman, Expert, Agenda: Child Association, Speaker.
- Floris Biskamp, Dr., the University of Kassel, speaker.
- Gaye Yılmaz, Dr., Boğaziçi University/GLU Alumni, Speaker and moderator.
- Gülay Toksöz, Prof. Dr., İstanbul University, Moderator.
- Helen Schwenken, Prof. Dr., University of Osnabrück, Speaker.
- İrfan Kaygısız, Expert, United Metalworkers' Union, Speaker.
- İsmail Doğa Karatepe, Candidate PhD./the University of Kassel, Speaker and moderator.
- Kamil Orhan, Assist. Prof., Pamukkale University, Moderator.
- Lisa-Marie Heimeshoff, the University of Osnabrück, Speaker.

²⁵ Contributors are listed by name.

- Melda Yaman, Assoc. Prof., Speaker.
- Meral Apak, Dr., Boğaziçi University, Opening speech.
- Metin Çorabatır, Expert, Center for Asylum and Migration Studies (İGAM), Speaker.
- Murat Erdoğan, Assoc. Prof., Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Centre, Speaker.
- Nuran Gülenç, Expert, United Metalworkers' Union, Speaker.
- Özge Berber Ağtaş, ILO Ankara Office/GLU Alumni, Speaker.
- Pinar Uyan Semerci, Assoc. Prof., İstanbul Bilgi University, Speaker.
- Polat Alpman, Assist. Prof., Yalova University, Speaker and moderator.
- Reyhan Atasü Topçuoğlu, Assoc. Prof., Hacettepe University, Speaker.
- Saniye Dedeoğlu, Assoc. Prof., Muğla University, Speaker.
- Seda Akço, Expert, Humanist Bureau, Speaker.
- Selim Hüzmeli, Expert, The Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants, Speaker.
- Selmin Kaşka, Assoc. Prof., Marmara University, Speaker.
- Seyhan Erdoğan, Prof. Dr., Ankara University, Moderator.
- Sinem Bayraktar, Expert, Development Workshop, Moderator.
- Soner Çalış, Activist, "Refugees, We Are, Neighbours" Solidarity Network, Speaker.
- Tolga Tören, Dr., Mersin University and GLU Alumni/Turkey, Moderator.
- Volkan Görendağ, Expert, Amnesty International, Speaker.
- Zeynep Ekin Aklar, Expert, Support to Life Foundation, Speaker.

4. Supporting institutions

- **Boğaziçi University Centre for Educational Policy Studies (BEPAM):**
The hosting organization.
- **Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Turkey Office.**
- **German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD):** The funder.
- **Global Labour University Alumni Network in Turkey:**
Responsible for the organization of the workshop.
- **Global Labour University.**
- **International Center for Development and Decent Work (ICDD).**
- **The University of Kassel:** Initiator of the workshop.

5. The brief of the Sessions²⁶

During the four days, in addition to the opening and closing speeches, 28 papers were presented in 9 sessions by scholars studying on migration, refugees and labour-related issues from Turkey and Germany, experts from trade unions especially organized in sectors widely relying on precarious and flexible labour, and professionals/activists from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the field of Syrian refugees.

In the first day of the workshop, following the opening speeches, respectively, by Professor Christoph Scherrer from the University of Kassel, Dr. Meral Apak from Boğaziçi University/BEPAM and Diyar Erdoğan from the Global Labour University (GLU) Alumni Network in Turkey, under the general headline of “General Overview of the Current Status of Syrian Refugees in Turkey”, 12 papers dealing with the refugee policies of the Turkish government and effects of Syrian refugees in labour markets and various sectors in Turkey were presented in three sessions.

In the first session, moderated by Professor Dr. Seyhan Erdoğan from Ankara University Faculty of Political Science Department of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations, three papers were presented under the headline “The Situation of the Labour Market in Turkey after the Syrian Crisis”. The first presentation, entitled “Turkish Business and Refugees: ‘Developmentalist’ or ‘Uncontrolled’?” by Associate Professor Murat Erdoğan from Hacettepe University Migration and Politics Research Centre, gave an overview on the situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey with particular focus on the use of the concept of refugees in Turkey, working and living conditions of the Syrian refugees and the Syrian refugee policies of the Turkish government.

The other presentations in the session, respectively, “Class, Identity and Immigration: Guide to Watching the Market and Wars” by Assistant Professor Polat Alpman from Yalova University and “the Effect of Syrian Refugees on the Labour Market” by İrfan Kaygısız from the United Metalworkers’ Union dealt with the situation of labour markets after the Syrian crisis with particular attention to the relationship between class, identity and working conditions of the Syrian refugees. While Alpman moved from the question whether Turkey is ready to live together with the refugees in terms of economic and social conditions, Kaygısız shared his observations on the working conditions of Syrian refugees by relying on a report prepared for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Turkey Office.

²⁶ The documentation report in the Appendix-I is provided to the ICDD in April 2017 by the author. Dr. Melehat Kutun contributed for the compilation of the notes of the documentation report. The author would like to thank Dr. Melehat Kutun for her help and support for the first documentation report.

The second session, moderated by Dr. Gaye Yılmaz from Boğaziçi University and GLU Alumni Network in Turkey, focused on different sectors including agriculture and textile, and the conditions of a joint struggle of the refugee and settler workers against the precarization under the headline of “Reflections of Precarization on Different Sectors in Labour Market”. In the first presentation entitled “Live on the Razor’s Edge: Syrian Migrant Workers in the Supply Chain of International Brands” Bilge Seçkin Çetinkaya shared the results of a field study she conducted with Syrian workers at workplaces producing for international brands throughout the supply chains in the garment sector with particular focus on Batman, a province located in the south east of Turkey. In the second presentation entitled “Joint Struggle of the Working Class against Precariousness” Ergün İşeri, trade union expert from the Textile Workers’ Union, discussed the conditions of a joint struggle of the working class against precarious working conditions by underlining the need for solidarity of trade union movement with the Syrian refugee workers. While the third presentation by Associated Professor Saniye Dedeoğlu from Muğla University dealt with the dynamics of precarization with particular focus on the Syrian agricultural workers under the headline of “Dynamics of Precarization in the Turkish Labour Market: Syrian Agricultural Workers’ Case”, Associated Professor Selmin Kaşka from Marmara University addressed the immigration issue within the context of migration practises by various agents including Syrians and the other immigrants in İstanbul.

The focus of the following session of the first day was labour migration policies in Turkey and the situation of Syrian refugees in the Turkish labour market. In the session, entitled “Labour Migration Policies in Turkey: Situation of Refugees in Turkish Labour Market” and moderated by Assistant Professor Tolga Tören from Mersin University and GLU Alumni Network in Turkey, four papers were presented. In the first presentation entitled “Syrian Refugees and Turkey’s Labour Market: The State and Capital Perspective”, İsmail Doğa Karatepe from the University of Kassel discussed the possible strategies of integrating the Syrian refugees to Turkey’s labour market by revealing agencies, strategies, structures, institutions and discourses while the second presentation, entitled “Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labour Market: Legal Framework and Current Situation” by Bilge Pinar Yenigün from ILO Ankara Office and GLU Alumni Network in Turkey, shared observations from the field researches conducted by the ILO Turkey office. The other presentations of the session were made by the representatives of NGOs working in the field. While Selim Hüzmeli²⁷ from The Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants dealt with the difficulties that Syrian refugees face in accessing the labour

²⁷ Although Gizem Demirci Al Kadah appears on the programme, Selim Hüzmeli from the same institution with Al Kadah attended the workshop instead of her.

market in his presentation entitled with “Challenges of Accessing the Job Market”, Alp Biricik from Human Resource Development Foundation shared his observations on the working conditions of the Syrian refugees under the headline of “Observations from the Field about Syrian Refugees’ Working Life”.

The second day of the workshop consisted of four sessions and addressed the labour markets in Germany, experiences from the field, gender and child labour dimensions of the Syrian refugee issue in Turkey. In the first session, entitled “Session of German Situation” and moderated by İsmail Doğa Karatepe, the refugee issue in Germany with particular focus on the media discourse on refugees and debates on minimum wage for refugees in Germany was dealt with by two presenters. While Lisa-Marie Heimeshoff from the University of Osnabrück discussed the different types of discourses on refugee issue in Germany under the headline of “The Media Discourse of Work and the Labour Market in the Context of Refugee Migration – Insights from the German Case”, Floris Biskamp from the University of Kassel addressed the German labour market before the minimum wage law, debates on labour, migration, and refugees in Germany and exemptions from the minimum wage for refugees under the headline of “Lowering the Barrier by Lowering the Wage? The German Debate on a Suspension of the Minimum Wage for Refugees”.

In the second session of the second day, experiences and observations of the experts, scholars and researchers from the field of the Syrian refugees were shared with particular focus on social integration, accessing to economic, social and cultural rights, and education issue of the Syrian children in İstanbul. The session, entitled “Labour Migration: Experiences from the Field” and moderated by Özge Berber Ağtaş from GLU Alumni Network in Turkey and ILO Ankara Office, consisted of three presentations. In the first presentation, entitled “Refugee Integration: A Right and an Urgency”, Metin Çorabatır from the Center for Asylum and Migration Studies focused on social integration of refugees and refugee rights, and specified the failure of legal regulations in ensuring the integration of the Syrian refugees. Volkan Görendağ from the Amnesty International, second presenter of the session, pointed out the impossibility of the realization of economic, social, cultural rights of the refugees in Turkey by underlining the political dimension of the refugee issue and the role played by the developed countries under the headline of “Problems of Refugees in Turkey to Access Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”. The third presentation “Syrian Refugee Parents’ Pursuit of Education for Their Children in İstanbul” by Ayşe Beyazova from Boğaziçi University addressed the relationship between education issue and integration of the Syrian refugees by questioning the educational policies of the Turkish government for the Syrian refugees.

Main debate in the third session of the second day was gender dimension of the migration issue in Turkey and Germany with particular focus on women employment, patriarchy and the working conditions of immigrant female workers. In the session, moderated by Professor Gülay Toksöz from İstanbul University, three presentations were made. In the first presentation, entitled “Participation of Syrian Women Refugees to Employment and Their Labour Conditions”, Associate Professor Melda Yaman discussed the problems arising from gender, age, marital status, number of child, household situation before entering the labour market by relying on a field study conducted by Women’s Solidarity Foundation (KADAV). In her presentation entitled “Migrant Women’s Labour in the Articulation of Patriarchy and Informal Capitalism”, Associate Professor Reyhan Atasü Topçuoğlu from Hacettepe University addressed the relationship between patriarchy, capitalism and woman identity by moving from the results of field studies with seasonal agricultural workers and immigrant children between 2012–2014. Another presenter in the session, Professor Helen Schwenken from the University of Osnabrück approached the refugee issue in Germany from a feminist perspective by addressing the qualification, education, debates on labour market inclusion, interest of business sector, language, violence, trauma and job training under the headline of „Between Invisibility and Hyper-visibility: Gender and Refugee Issues in Germany”.

The fourth session of the second day, moderated by Associate Professor Pınar Uyan Semerci from İstanbul Bilgi University, was specifically devoted to child labour issue entitled “Child Labour and Syrian Refugees”. In the session four presentations were made. In the first presentation, entitled “Is Law a Convenient Tool for Combating Child Labour?”, Seda Akço, expert from the Humanist Bureau, an NGO operating in the field of human rights and child rights, addressed the child labour issue with regard to the inadequacy of international law in preventing the use of child labour by underlining the idea that the struggle should not begin with law but with the questioning of global capitalism.

In the second presentation of the session, under the headline of “Child Labour in Turkey and Employment of Refugee Children”, Ezgi Koman, expert from the Agenda: Child Association, an NGO carrying out its activities in the field of children’s rights, discussed the employment of the refugee children issue within the context of social rights by standing on the subjects of inadequacy of legal regulations and monitoring mechanisms, and general tendency in Turkey towards precarious and flexible working. The following presentations focused on child labour issue in two different sectors. Zeynep Ekin Aklar, an expert from Support to Life Foundation, a humanitarian aid agency, discussed the issue with particular focus on child labour in seasonal migratory agriculture by relying on the field studies conducted by Support to Life Foundation in Adana, Urfa and Hatay since 2015 under the headline of “Child Labour in Seasonal Migratory Agriculture: A case study in Kadıköy district of Adana”. The last presentation, entitled “Textile Sector and Syrian Refugee Children” by Nuran Gülen, an expert from the United Metalworkers’ Union, is based on the experiences and observations obtained through the contacts with the employers in the textile sector.

The third day of the workshop was organized as a fishbowl workshop with the Syrian and Turkish Workers. This session was closed to the audiences and speakers due to the fact that it was organized only for the Syrian and Turkish participants. Moderators of the session were Sinem Bayraktar from Development Workshop and Kamil Orhan from Pamukkale University. The aim of the fishbowl workshop was to create a network between Syrian and Turkish workers through developing an understanding of solidarity for common problems that they face. Overall profile included: female and male Syrian workers working in the textile sector, between the ages of 20–50, from Aleppo and Damascus; male and female Turkish workers in textile and metal sectors and member of the Textile Workers’ Union²⁸.

²⁸ Diyar Erdoğan’s notes were used to give a brief on the Fishbowl Workshop.

In order to create a network between Syrian and Turkish workers with a holistic approach to their common problems, the Fishbowl Technique and Critical Incident Technique were applied to the workers in this session. These techniques enabled workers to speak about their problems on working and living conditions without feeling pressured to talk or objected. The session began with a warming activity to make them feel more comfortable to discuss the issues of livelihood, working conditions and discrimination in Turkey. Every participator filled a form called „About You“ that collected information on their living and working status in Syria and Turkey. Moderators made every participator to take turn to speak on their life. Furthermore, the moderator collected written documents that presented their own statements on the discussed issues. The workshop organizing team joined the session as an observer for documenting the discussed issues and creating policy suggestions to present related authorities as a recommendation.

The last day of the workshop consisted of two sessions. In the first session, following Christoph Scherrer’s frame presentation entitled “Drivers of Labor Market Informality” and addressing the questions of “Why States Formalized Labour Relations and Provided Some Rights and Security” and “Why States Tolerate Informality”, three papers were presented. In the first presentation, entitled “Being Both Refugee and Worker in a Society That Is at Fight with Itself”, Gaye Yılmaz from Boğaziçi University and GLU Alumni Network in Turkey discussed discrimination against the Syrian refugees by relying on the field research she conducted in Berlin, London and İstanbul with the immigrant domestic female workers on the question of whether the religion perception creates an obstacle in being organized. In the second presentation entitled “What’s going on in the neighbourhood?” Soner Çalış and Beril Sönmez, activists from the “Refugees, We Are, Neighbours” Solidarity Network, shared their experiences from the neighbourhood, in which their association operates, with particular focus on solidarity with the Syrian refugees, problems women Syrian refugees face, accessing the services provided by municipalities. The last presentation entitled “Media Trial: Are the Refugees an Angel or a Demon?” by Burcu Karakaş, journalist, analysed the antiimmigrant, specifically anti Syrian refugees, discourse in the mainstream media²⁹.

²⁹ Although Cahide Sarı appears in the programme of the workshop she did not attend.

As a conclusion, during the four days the problems the Syrian refugees face in Turkey were discussed by relying on the studies conducted by scholars from Turkey and Germany, the experiences of experts working in the field and the narrative of the Syrian refugees. In the first day, the current situation of the Syrian refugees in Turkey with particular focus on labour markets, precarious and flexible employment, relationship between class, identity and migration, legal regulations and political dimension was dealt with. In the second day, experiences from the field were addressed by experts studying in the field with special attention to child labour, gender dimension, debates on minimum wages in Germany, application of legal regulations and global capitalism. The third day was devoted to narratives of the Syrian refugees while the last session³⁰ of the workshop was devoted to the summary of all the recommendations that was gathered from previous days and general discussion with the audience. Some of the suggestions from the audience are listed below:

- Provide information material in Kurdish language
- Define integration
- Conduct more research on Syrian refugees
- Map migration and supply chains
- Create an information pool
- Work to change public opinion and prevent prejudices against Syrian refugees
- Take into account the work of the local authorities on the subject

³⁰ In the preparatory phase, Prof. Kuvvet Lordoğlu was invited to the workshop to present a paper and he notified that he would not be able to attend. Therefore, his name was not included in the program. However, because of the change in his personal agenda, he attended the workshop and presented his research entitled: “Five Border Cities and Change in Labour Markets, 2011–2014”.

6. Outcome(s) and recommendations

The most important outcome of the workshop has been the creation of a platform and a potential network involving academics, trade unionists, NGO representatives and activists studying/working on the field of Syrian refugees from different point of views. However, in order to move this outcome one step further, the following recommendations of the organizing team, which were discussed in the brainstorm meetings by the organizers of the workshop, should be considered in addition to the recommendations of the audience.

- In the context of knowledge production on the issue of the Syrian refugees:
 - An edited volume
 - bringing together all the perspectives discussed during the workshop.
 - A policy paper
- addressing the official institutions related to the Syrian refugees issue in Germany.
- addressing the official institutions related to Syrian refugees' issue in Turkey.
- addressing the trade unions and NGOs being interested in the Syrian refugee issue.
 - Sector or region-based data collection
- in order to bring together the scattered data from the field and studies
 - A mapping study, especially in the textile sector, in order to follow up the relationship between the big and small companies that open up the precarious work through supply chains
- In the context of capacity development,
 - Brochures, videos or social media accounts that would provide information on how to get work permits in Arabic,
 - Works against xenophobia in collaboration with the NGOs to address the society in Turkey,
 - Creation of a network involving the NGO's working in the field of Syrian refugees.

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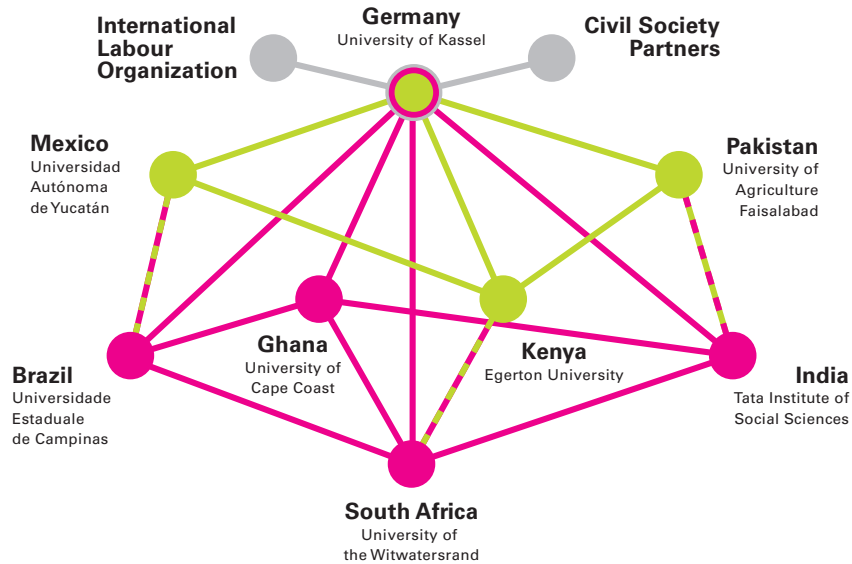
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