

SYRIAN MIGRANTS IN TURKISH LABOUR MARKET

Çağla ÜNLÜTÜRK ULUTAŞ

Yrd. Doç. Dr., Pamukkale University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences,
Denizli/ Turkey, E-mail: caglau@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Turkey which is one of the border neighbours of Syria, is the most affected country by the refugee crises. However, until recently Syrian migrants' residency has been regulated under non-permanent immigration status such as "guest migrant" or "temporary protected". Until Regulation on Work Permit of Refugees Under Temporary Protection issued in the Official Journal No. 2016/8375, legal working opportunities of refugees were not in question. In order to survive and to ensure their basic needs, they have entered into informal labour market. Most of the studies which are conducted both in the eastern region of Turkey and in biggest western cities have found that Syrian migrants are usually working in less favourable conditions than domestic labour, longer and more cheaply in many cases. As a result this migration flow engendered replacement of local workers by migrants and in some cases formalization of informal local labour.

Key Words: Syrian Migrants, Labour Market, Labour Migration, Refugees

JEL Codes: J61, F22

1. INTRODUCTION

Nobody could have anticipated that the Arab Spring would eventually create the largest refugee crisis of the century. As Syria's largest neighbour Turkey has been significantly affected by the crisis. The number of registered Syrian migrants living in Turkey has reached to 2.733,044 million since April 2011¹, and it is estimated that more than 300 thousand of them are employed informally (TİSK, 2015: 45). The expectation that the conflict in Syria would end and refugees return to their homes soon is no longer realistic. However, until recently Turkish policy makers perceived the migration flows from Syria to Turkey as a temporary phenomenon. The residency

¹ http://www.goc.gov.tr/icerik6/gecici-koruma_363_378_4713_icerik

of Syrian immigrants has been regulated under non-permanent immigration status such as “guest migrant” or “temporary protection”. Until the “Regulation on Work Permit of Refugees Under Temporary Protection” was issued in the Official Journal No. 2016/8375, legal working opportunities of refugees was not considered as a part of the issue. Formal employment is the most important instrument towards ensuring the socio-economic integration of immigrants; in fact, 85% of Syrian migrants live out of the camps and have already integrated into Turkish informal economy in order to meet their basic needs. Some studies report that, most refugees earn far less than the minimum wage while working more than eight hours. Consequently, a strong competition between Syrian and Turkish labour force has developed, especially in border cities hosting most of the refugees. According to the research of Erdogan (2014), 56.1% of the Turkish public, support the proposition "Syrians are taking away our jobs", while in the border provinces the support increases to 68.9 %.

In this study I will analyse the situation of Syrian migrants in Turkish labour market within the context of legal regulations and existing literature. In the first section, I will present an overview of Turkey’s immigration laws focusing on the labour rights and employment of refugees and asylum seekers. The second section will examine the condition of Syrian migrants in the labour markets in terms of wages, work hours, social security, child employment, and competition with native workforce.

2. LABOUR RIGHTS IN TURKISH IMMIGRATION LAW

Although, there are ubiquitous incongruities between the legal framework and actual government practices, regulations nevertheless have an impact on determining the socio-economic conditions of Syrian migrants and their position within the labour market.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created in 1950 as a response to the mass migrations that took place after World War II. The Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, signed in 1951, provided legal definitions for refugee and asylum seeker, while the New York Protocol of 1967 removed the temporal and regional restrictions of the convention and made it applicable to cases out of Europe as well (USA, 2013). Turkey signed and ratified the Geneva Convention in 1961, but agreed to the New York Protocol with the stipulation that it would retain the regional restrictions of the original document. As a result, Turkish law afforded the status of refugee only to immigrants originating from Europe and granted them the associated rights. Whereas, immigrants arriving from elsewhere were categorized as asylum seekers, and their stay was deemed temporary. They were granted residency until they left Turkey for another country and did not enjoy the same rights as refugees during this period (Erdogan, 2014).

Until 2013, the primary legal document on refugees has been the 1994 migration regulation (no 94/6169), which preserved the duality between refugee and asylum seeker, while continuing to limit the application of refugee status only to migrants from Europe. The regulation did not provide specifics on employment, instead article 27 of the regulation stated, “the employment and education of refugees and asylum seekers, limited by the duration of their stay, are subject to general provisions.” The 2006 application instructions for the regulation allowed refugees and asylum seekers with a residency permit of at least 6 months to apply for work authorization. In fact, immigrants were encouraged to do so, in order to enable them to earn their living and participate in the economy. However, until the establishment of Directorate General of

Migration Management in 2013, law enforcement agencies continued to mark the residence permits they provided, stamping “does not grant work authorization” on them. This caused confusion and posed a practical –if not legal- obstacle against migrants applying for work permits (Sensoy 2016:3).

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, ratified by Turkey in 2001, aims to protect the rights of migrants in irregular situations as well as those of regular migrants. The introduction to the Convention explicitly states this purpose:

Bearing in mind that the human problems involved in migration are even more serious in the case of irregular migration and convinced therefore that appropriate action should be encouraged in order to prevent and eliminate clandestine movements and trafficking in migrant workers, while at the same time assuring the protection of their fundamental human rights,

Considering that workers who are non-documented or in an irregular situation are frequently employed under less favourable conditions of work than other workers and that certain employers find this an inducement to seek such labour in order to reap the benefits of unfair competition,

Considering also that recourse to the employment of migrant workers who are in an irregular situation will be discouraged if the fundamental human rights of all migrant workers are more widely recognized and, moreover, that granting certain additional rights to migrant workers and members of their families in a regular situation will encourage all migrants and employers to respect and comply with the laws and procedures established by the States concerned,

Convinced, therefore, of the need to bring about the international protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families, reaffirming and establishing basic norms in a comprehensive convention, which could be applied universally,

Article number 25 of the convention specifically deals with employment and labour rights:

1. Migrant workers shall enjoy treatment not less favourable than that which applies to nationals of the State of employment in respect of remuneration and:

- a) Other conditions of work, that is to say, overtime, hours of work, weekly rest, holidays with pay, safety, health, termination of the employment relationship and any other conditions of work which, according to national law and practice, are covered by these terms;*
- b) Other terms of employment, that is to say, minimum age of employment, restriction on work and any other matters which, according to national law and practice, are considered a term of employment.*

2. It shall not be lawful to derogate in private contracts of employment from the principle of equality of treatment referred to in paragraph 1 of the present article.

3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that migrant workers are not deprived of any rights derived from this principle by reason of any irregularity in their stay or employment. In particular, employers shall not be relieved of any legal or contractual

obligations, nor shall their obligations be limited in any manner by reason of such irregularity².

In 2013 the Law on Foreigners and International Protection -numbered 6548- was passed and went into effect, establishing a renewed general framework for migration and asylum. Its provisions cover the principles and procedures regarding activities of foreign nationals; their entry into, stay in, and exit from Turkey as well as the scope and implementation of the protection to be provided to those seeking safety in Turkey. The law grants international protection status to three categories of migrants: refugees, conditional refugees, and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. However, Syrian migrants are placed into another category as beneficiaries of temporary protection, which is defined by article 91 as “the status applied to foreigners, who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country they left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection”.

Article 89 regulates immigrants’ access to the labour market:

- a) *an applicant or a conditional refugee may apply for a work permit after six months following the lodging date of an international protection claim.*
- b) *the refugee or the subsidiary protection beneficiary, upon being granted the status, may work independently or be employed, without prejudice to the provisions stipulated in other legislation restricting foreigners to engage in certain jobs and professions. The identity document to be issued to a refugee or a subsidiary protection beneficiary shall also substitute for a work permit and this information shall be written on the document.*
- c) *access of the refugee and the subsidiary protection beneficiary to the labour market may be restricted for a given period, where the situation of the labour market and developments in the working life as well as sectoral and economic conditions regarding employment necessitate, in agriculture, industry or, service sectors or a certain profession, line of business or, administrative and geographical areas. However, such restrictions shall not apply to refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries who have been residing in Turkey for three years; are married to Turkish citizens; or, have children with Turkish citizenship.*
- d) *ç) the principles and procedures governing the employment of applicants or international protection beneficiaries shall be determined by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in consultation with the Ministry.*

The law does not have any particular provision regarding the situation of beneficiaries of temporary protection. Under the Regulation on Temporary Protection, issued in October 2014, determining the principles and procedures regarding employment of migrants under temporary protection is left to the Council of Ministers:

- 1) *Principles and procedures regarding the employment of persons benefiting from temporary protection shall be determined by the Council of Ministers upon the proposal of Ministry of Labour and Social Security after receiving the opinion of the Ministry.*

² <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/cmw.htm>

- 2) *Persons, who hold a Temporary Protection Identification Document, may apply to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security for receiving work permits to work in the sectors, professions and geographical areas (provinces, districts or villages) to be determined by the Council of Ministers.*
- 3) *Provisions under this Article are without prejudice to the provisions stipulated in other legislation regarding the jobs and professions in which foreigners may not be employed.*
- 4) *Validity period of the work permits given to the persons benefiting from temporary protection shall not be longer than the duration of the temporary protection. The validity of the work permits issued within this scope shall end upon the end of temporary protection.*
- 5) *The work permits issued to persons benefiting from temporary protection shall not substitute residence permits regulated in the Law.*

Until the Regulation on Employment Permits for Foreigners Under temporary Protection was issued in January 2016, majority of Syrian migrants could not work in the formal economy. A small number of Syrians escaping the war entered Turkey legally and received residency permits as regular migrants and they were able to apply for work permits –a total of 3686 Syrians received work permits in this manner- (Şensoy, 2016:5).

The Regulation on Employment Permits for Foreigners Under Temporary Protection allows Syrian migrants to receive work permits but their employment is conditional and subject to many restrictions: they can be employed only within the province they are registered, the number of refugees employed is limited to ten per cent of the number of native workers, enterprises employing less than ten workers are allowed to hire only one refugee worker. Refugees working without permits and those employ them are to be persecuted in accordance with the provisions of migration law. Refugees under temporary protection can apply for work permits six months after their initial registration; the application for those working under contract has to be filed by their employer. Refugees working in seasonal agricultural jobs are exempted from work permit requirements, but the Ministry can impose quotas or geographic restrictions to the employment of refugees in the agricultural sector. Refugees that want to work in healthcare and education are required to get further permission from the related ministries. Moreover, some professions are restricted to Turkish citizens only; pharmacist, optician, veterinary, administrative positions in private hospitals, judge, prosecutor, attorney at law, notary public, seamanship, and security personnel are among the professions off-limit to Syrian refugees.

Providing a framework for legal employment of those under temporary protection is a very important step. However, the flow of refugees from Syria began in 2011 and ideally these steps should have been taken earlier in order to enable the integration of refugees into the formal economy. Although, the 2014 Regulation established the basic framework, it took more than one year for the creation of legal arrangements regarding work permits, and it could have taken even longer if it wasn't for expediting the E.U.-Turkey Joint Action Plan (Şensoy, 2016:10). Immediately after the government's issue of regulation on work permits in January, E.U. and Turkey signed the Joint Action Plan on March 15, 2016. According to the agreement:

All new irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands as of 20 March 2016 will be returned to Turkey. For every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU. Turkey will take any necessary measures to prevent new sea or land

routes for irregular migration opening from Turkey to the EU. Once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU are ending or have been substantially reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme will be activated. The fulfilment of the visa liberalisation roadmap will be accelerated with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens at the latest by the end of June 2016. Turkey will take all the necessary steps to fulfil the remaining requirements. The EU will, in close cooperation with Turkey, further speed up the disbursement of the initially allocated €3 billion under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. Once these resources are about to be used in full, the EU will mobilise additional funding for the Facility up to an additional €3 billion to the end of 2018 (EC, 2016).

With this agreement Turkey's role in the refugee crisis has become more critical. In order to uphold the terms of the agreement while maintaining socio-economic balance, Turkey has to accelerate its efforts at regulating migration and ensuring the socio-economic integration of Syrian refugees. However, under these circumstances it is questionable whether the new regulation can solve the problems regarding refugees' access to the formal labour market. Severely prosecuting illegal employment of unskilled Syrian workers –as stipulated in the law-, would likely result in employers downsizing and replacing refugee workers with native workers (Şensoy, 2016:11).

On the other hand, issuing of the new regulation coincided with the 30% increase of minimum wage, which was a major election promise of the ruling Justice and Development Party. Raising the minimum wage will force some enterprises to downsize, while pushing others to the informal sector. These economic conditions compounded with the restrictions over their employment, makes it unlikely to reach the goal of high levels of formal employment among Syrian refugees. Certainly numerous other factors have an effect on the process; macro-economic policies, economic growth patterns, developments in other dimensions of migration policies, and prosecution of child labour are just a few among them.

Six months after their registration, foreigners under temporary protection can participate in vocational education programs offered by Turkish Labour Agency. They can also receive on-the-job training for one year with their expenses covered by the Unemployment Fund. After completing their training, immigrants can have the opportunity to work in the same enterprises and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security is able to adjust employment quotas accordingly (ÇSGB, 2016:6). This provision not only provides a level of flexibility in implementing the foreign worker quota system; it also can help Syrian workers to acquire vocational skills and facilitate their formal employment.

The International Labour Force Law No. 6735 came into force on 29 July 2016. *This Law includes foreigners who apply for working or currently work, apply for having or currently having occupational training from an employer, apply to do internship or currently doing their internship in Turkey and foreign cross-border service providers who are in Turkey for rendering temporary services and real and legal entities which employ or apply to employ foreigners. According to Law No. 6735, foreigners who are provided with temporary protection can apply for a work permit or work permit exemption six months after their temporary protection ID is issued. Work permits or work permit exemptions shall be cancelled by the Ministry upon the decision of Council of Ministers or notification by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the event that the temporary protection is cancelled with the decision of the Council of Ministers or terminated individually in accordance with the article 91 of the Law No 6458.*

3. NEW GUESTS OF TURKISH SECONDARY LABOUR MARKET: WORKING CONDITIONS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES

3.1. The Impact of Migration on Urban Labour Markets

Turkey's 51.6% labour force participation rate is relatively low in comparison to EU-28 and OECD averages (58.1%, 60.1% respectively), and partly is a result of the even lower rate (31.8%) of women's participation in the labour force. The overall unemployment rate is 10.5% but youth unemployment stands at 19.3%, and unemployment rate among women (13.3%) is significantly higher than men. Although it has been shrinking during the recent period, the informal employment rate is still 33.6%, and the secondary labour market in Turkey is quite sizeable as a result.

As Turkey received the highest number of Syrian refugees, undocumented refugees have been living in most provinces of the country –particularly those at the border-(ORSAM 2014). Although, camps have been set up by the Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD), 88 to 90 % of the refugees are living outside these (TISK 2015:21). The living conditions of the refugees in camps differ significantly from those living outside; therefore in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issue, it is important to consider their situations separately. Refugees living in the camps enjoy relatively better level of welfare and social services; yet they face problems arising from being isolated and lack of permanent housing (ORSAM 2015). Meanwhile, employment of refugees living outside the camps has created a set of different problems. Until recently, legal limitations left the refugees with no option but to participate in the informal labour market in order to earn their living. As Turkish public officials realized the necessity of providing refugees with legal employment opportunities, the new immigration regulation allowed the refugees to work legally in Turkey (Akgul 2015:12). However, the potential impact of the new regulation has been curbed by the limitations it prescribes, stratified structure of the labour markets, and discrimination. Therefore, the bulk of Syrian workforce still remains primarily within the informal market. An informal employment agency, operating under the name of Rizik Foundation, has been established in Sanliurfa; within two years it has received 20,000 applications and facilitated the employment of 4000 refugees within the informal labour market (ILO 2015:17).

The impact of Syrian migration on the labour markets varies among provinces, based on several factors such as the ratio of refugee population within each city, the specifics of local labour market, and the level of industrial development. About half of all Syrian migrants live in the provinces of Sanliurfa, Istanbul, Hatay, and Gaziantep. Adana, Mersin, Kilis, Mardin, Bursa, and Izmir are other major destinations for the refugees; refugee populations in other provinces are relatively small. Undoubtedly, immigration has different effects on large industrialized cities of western Turkey -like Istanbul, Bursa, and, Izmir- than it has on small border towns. But even among these border towns its impact varies depending on local socio-economic dynamics. The table below illustrates the changes in the unemployment rates of border provinces that received most refugees since the crisis began. Except in Gaziantep and Kilis the unemployment rates are higher than Turkey's average. However, it should be noted that the unemployment rates in the region has already been higher than the rest of the country due to its predominantly agricultural economy and three decades of conflict between Kurdish separatists and government forces.

Gaziantep, on the other hand, has been an important industrial center with a growing economy since the 1990s (Lordođlu ve Aslan, 2015:253).

As seen above, following the refugee flow unemployment rates in Gaziantep and Kilis have decreased, while in other cities the rates have increased. During the same period, industrial and commercial sectors in Gaziantep benefited from the growing consumer demand, the low cost labour supplied by the refugees, and Syrian investments.

Table: 1 Unemployment rates in border provinces receiving largest numbers of immigrants.

Years	Sanliurfa	Hatay	Gaziantep	Adana	Mersin	Kilis	Mardin
2011	8.0	12.7	14.4	11.9	9.2	12.6	12.3
2012	6.2	11.4	11.2	11.4	9.5	10.4	20.9
2013	16.3	12.2	6.9	13.2	12.4	7.7	20.6

Source: Turkstat, Province Based Main Labour Indicators, 2011, 2012, 2013, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1007

The ongoing war in Syria brought cross border trade to a near halt, depriving the region's towns from one of their primary sources of wealth. In an interview a shopkeeper from Kilis describes the adverse economic impact of war: *"Previously hundreds of trucks carried good through Oncupinar border gate, and most of them were serviced by mechanics in Kilis; nowadays there is no job for them"*.

The war affected Sanliurfa's economy less due to its limited commercial ties to Syria. Businesses in the city are not disturbed by the existence of refugees; on the contrary, many regard it positively as refugees fill the employment gap in sectors, where the local population is unwilling to work in. Syrian investments in the organized industrial zone, amounting to \$2 million, have very little impact on city's economy. On the other hand, numerous stores opened by Syrians have been important in their integration to the local economy. Furthermore, local firms supply the needs of the camps and refugees in the camps also contribute to the city's economy. (ORSAM, 2015: 23).

In their study of the border cities Lordođlu and Aslan (2015) identify three basic ways Syrians participate in the labour market:

- a) The first group of Syrian immigrants are participating in working life as employers by setting up independent commercial or industrial companies in cities like İstanbul, Mersin and Gaziantep. Some of these enterprises are established in partnerships with Turkish entrepreneurs. According to the official register of foreign enterprises, there were 2827 Syrian firms operating in Turkey in June 2015. However, if firms with Turkish partners and those operating informally are included in the count, the estimated number of Syrian enterprises exceeds 10 thousand. According to the official data more than 60% of registered Syrian firms are located in İstanbul, which is followed by Gaziantep and Hatay as the other major destinations of Syrian businesses. Wholesale commerce, auto repair, and construction stand out as the three major areas of activity for Syrian enterprises (TISK, 2015:53-54). Many of these immigrant-entrepreneurs arrived in Turkey after the war and were attracted to

industrial cities like Gaziantep, where the number of Syrian firms exceeds 600, and cities with developed infrastructure like Mersin –a major port city. Although, there are no tax breaks or subsidies available to Syrian enterprises, they are afforded a level of leniency by tax inspectors and government officials (Lordođlu ve Aslan, 2015: 253-254).

b) The second group of Syrian immigrants are proprietors of small businesses such as coffee shops, hairdressers, restaurants and jewellers.

c) The third group enter the secondary labour market as employees primarily concentrated in construction, agriculture, textile and service sectors. Some of the refugees employed in these sectors have skills appropriate to the work they do, but others are overqualified resulting in significant brain waste (Lordođlu and Aslan, 2015: 253-254). Especially in border provinces some of the refugees work informally at enterprises established by Syrians, most of which are unregistered business with a few operating with permission (Şensoy, 2016:9). In all provinces contractual work is the most common form labour relationship for refugees. According to a research by ORSAM (2015a: 29) more than 50% of the refugees participating reported having a job. However, this is primarily due to Gaziantep’s large industry, as the proportion of refugees with jobs in other cities is substantially lower. Only one-third of refugees in Hatay and one-fourth of them in Sanliurfa have jobs, while the employment rate goes further down to 13% in Kilis. About half of the refugees in Gaziantep are paid in rates close to minimum wage, while 28% of refugees in Hatay and 38% of those in Sanliurfa earn less than the minimum wage. Meanwhile the cost of living for the refugees is higher than that of the local population as Syrians are overcharged for nearly everything - from rent to items of daily consumption-. A participant quoted in Akdeniz’s study (2014:60) provides a striking example: *“For example, the other day I was buying tomatoes in the market, the person before me paid 1.5 TL but I was asked to pay 3 TL. We don’t speak the language here and they take advantage of us.”*. This suggests that the real wages of refugees are lower than those of the local population even in sectors where nominal wages of refugees are equal to the local population.

It is estimated that wages in Kilis have dropped from about 60 TL to 20 TL. Syrians, who are willing to work more for less pay, create resentment among the native labour force despite they are being exploited more (Kirişçi, 2014:30). Undergoing their own crisis, Turkish labour unions do not have the capability to organize and mobilize the migrant workers. The organically emerging informal networks among refugees hold more promise as a basis for the organization and mobilization of migrant labour (Şenses, 2015:8).

3.2. Competition With Local Workforce

Competition between Syrian migrants and Turkish citizens for work has increased particularly in low-skill and agricultural jobs. In the already economically disadvantaged border regions, the competitive pressure is felt even more acutely. As a consequence Syrians are often left with no option but do the hard, dirty, and low-paying work that locals do not want to do (UNCHR, 2015: 78).

Carpio and Wagner’s study (2014) shows that immigration inflows decrease the employment rates among the local workforce. In the informal labour market every 10 refugees

replace 6-7 native workers, while among the unskilled workforce each refugee replaces one native worker. On the other hand, the growth of labour supply caused by immigration also led to an increase in formal employment in the border regions, where for every 10 refugees, 3 or 4 formal jobs are created. These conditions resulted in a segment of native workforce losing employment, yet they also enabled others to transition from the informal to the formal labour market. Unfortunately, the push towards formal employment did not affect all groups within the native workforce equally; for example low-skilled female workers were almost completely replaced by refugees and left without any opportunity for formal work, resulting in 7 women being displaced for every 10 refugee (Carpio ve Wagner: 2014: 20). ORSAM's study on the economic effects of Syrian migrants shows that in border provinces 40-100% of those, who lost their jobs believed it was because of the Syrians (ORSAM, 2015b, 19).

It is common practice among employers in some sectors to hire refugees and native workers under different conditions and pay them unequal wages for same amount of work (Akgul et.al., 2015:12). For unskilled work refugees often receive only about 50% of what native workers are paid, resulting in significant decrease in general wage rate. On the other hand, in sectors requiring skilled labour (such as masonry) Syrian workers receive the same amount with native workers. In some cases refugees are denied earned wages at the time of payment, but their informal status prevents them from seeking justice. (Lordoglu ve Aslan, 2015: 254). A participant in Akdeniz's study (2014:60) explains the situation: *"Here, the bosses are comfortable. They usually have us working at night. They don't want us to be seen around during the day, which is hard for me. The boss tells you when the payday is and you plan accordingly. But when the day comes we cannot get our money, I have at least ten wages I didn't receive yet."* An NGO worker who participated in a research on the employment of refugees provides some insight to the situation: *"Some of the arriving Syrians wanted to find jobs. Among them there were those with professions like judge, pharmacist, or doctors. Young ones wanted to work as apprentices. While others had jobs like mechanics, masons, painters. Some of them found employment, which enabled employers to pay less for work. Some Syrians were very good at electrical wiring, plumbing, and stonework; this disturbed some Turkish workers. It was felt particularly in construction and agriculture; when labour became cheaper it was the Turks that were left behind."* *"There are many that work illegally; they are grateful for a full stomach. Initially the shopkeepers were welcoming them, but now some of them are disturbed by the refugees. On the other hand, a new attitude developed in the camps that expected everything from the government. Hospital, food, work, education etc."* (Akgul et.al., 2015:12).

In response to the influx of cheap labour, native population began blaming Syrian migrants for rising crime rates, prostitution, and increased cost of living. In several instances their frustration led to protests and even violent attacks against Syrians; as in June 2014, when protests in Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, and Adana escalated into vandalism against shops and vehicles of refugees. Within this context, researches show prevalence of negative attitudes among Turkish population against Syrians. 56.1% of participants agrees with the statement "Syrians are taking away our jobs", whereas only 30.5% disagreed. As can be expected, support for the same statement is higher in border provinces with 68.9% agreeing with it (Erdogan, 2015:31, Ahmadoun, 2014:3). Responding to the question "Which of the following describes your opinion regarding the employment of Syrian refugees?" 47.4% of Turkish public expressed support for completely denying them work permit, but imposing temporal and sectoral limits to the

employment of Syrians garnered more acceptance. Support for allowing Syrian migrants to work without any restriction stands at a mere 2.7% in border regions and only 6% in other areas. (Erdogan, 2015:32)

4. AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND SYRIAN WORKFORCE

Seasonal agricultural work has been another important source of employment for the Syrian refugees. The new immigration law allows refugees without work authorization to be employed in seasonal jobs with provincial governorate's permission. Thousands of families seeking seasonal employment in agriculture move across southeast Turkey every year. Harsh working and living conditions of seasonal workers and their limited access to public services, has been a major social policy problem that remains unresolved (Çınar ve Lordoğlu, 2011; Yıldırak vd., 2003).

Raising livestock has been an often-suggested source of employment for Syrian refugees. Turkey has nearly 60 million heads of livestock –mostly sheep and goats- yet the native workers have been unwilling to seek employment in animal agriculture. It is argued that up to 100 thousand refugees can be employed in this sector, while Agricultural Credit Cooperatives provide them with vocational training (TİSK, 2015:65). Partly as a result of these suggestions the new regulation exempts animal agriculture sector from work authorization requirements. However, following the issue of the regulation no steps have been taken to provide vocational training to refugees. Under the existing conditions, Syrian workers' entry to the agricultural sector did not result in filling the gap in the labour market, on the contrary it aggravated the existing problems of agrarian labour relations. A study carried out by Support to Life (2014), a non-governmental humanitarian agency, found that Syrian families employed as seasonal workers live under worse conditions than their native counterparts. While native workers have durable portable shelters, Syrians live in tents handed out by relief agencies or in makeshift shelters that does not provide adequate protection against the elements. The same study also found that Syrian workers' entry to the labour market caused stagnation of wages and less work being available for each family; as a result labour exploitation in the sector intensified and tensions among groups of labourers increased. An interview with a seasonal worker in Adana Tuzla camp illustrates the link between decreasing wages and negative attitudes towards Syrian refugees:

“The Syrians came here to work, they are lying, there is no war over there. The Syrians here left for Syria to work in their fields and returned once they were done. Only those living in the camps are really escaping war. Everything has gone down; wages decreased, there is less work. In the past the government was providing assistance to Turkish citizens, today they help the Syrians.”

The interviews conducted as a part of the study also illustrate that cheap and abundant refugee labour led to the emergence of a sizeable class of intermediaries capitalizing on the work relations:

“Wages of orange pickers in Antalya has dropped from 55 to 40 when the Syrians came. They work for sub-contractors, who don't pay 40 to Syrians, they only get 15 or 20.”

“Some contractors agree to receive 100 TL for each worked acre, but they pay the Syrians 25 TL wage. Syrian’s don’t know money, that’s how they are deceived.” (Hayata Destek Derneği, 2014: 74-75).

Another main issue in agricultural work is the intensive use of children as workers. Child labour has already been an important problem for the native population and it is deepened further by Syrian children’s entry to the labour market. To cover their basic needs and escape poverty many families have no other option but to have their teenager children work. (Amnesty International, 2014: 26)

In a study conducted by Turkish Employer’s Union (2015: 55-64) employers in agriculture, manufacture, and textile sectors express demand for Syrian labour. Whereas, employers in tourism preferred to keep their distance and voiced concerns about the potential negative impact refugees can have on their sector.

5. CONCLUSION

The influx of Syrian migrants has significantly affected the labour market in Turkey. Until January 2016 the legal status of Syrian migrants prevented them from participating in the formal labour market and led them to the informal labour market. Most of the time Syrians work for longer hours, under worse working conditions, and receive less pay than native workers. The most common result has been refugees replacing native workers; while in some cases the dynamic led to the creation of new jobs and a segment of native workforce transitioning from informal to formal employment. Although, regulation 6575 opened the way for refugees to receive work permits, the restrictions it imposes make it unlikely for Syrian migrants to transition into the formal labour market.

According to the accord between E.U. and Turkey, signed on March 18 2016, Turkey agreed to regulate immigration from Syria and ensure the prevention of irregular immigration to Europe. Under these circumstances, the need to develop policies that would facilitate the integration of refugees has become more pressing. Participation in the formal labour market is the first step in the socio-economic integration of Syrian refugees. Policies aiming at formalization of migrant workforce must be developed. These policies should not disrupt the employment of native workers while preventing refugee employment from reproducing and intensifying the exiting problems of work relations. In order to protect native workforce Regulation 6575 imposes extensive limits on the formal employment opportunities for the refugees. The most probable outcome of will be Syrian workers’ remaining stuck in their current position in the informal labour market. Thwarting this depends on the creation of employment opportunities in sectors with low supply of native labour, and providing refugees with vocational and language education.

The needs of employers within the labour market can be determined with the help of studies on Syrian immigration and the labour market analyses conducted by provincial ISKUR directorates. But there is still no detailed data on the level of education or skills of Syrian refugees. A study that organizes and maps such data should be conducted, which would allow skilled refugees to be placed in appropriate jobs, and help provide education to unskilled ones.

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