Utrecht University

Challenging the Refugee gap

Labour Market Situation and Occupational Mobility among Syrian Refugees in Istanbul

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Sustainable Development – International Development

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Master thesis Sustainable Development – International Development
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Preface

This dissertation is part of a group project initiated at the Utrecht University. In close collaboration with four other students, Tamara van der Sar, Pedro Valarini, Jolinde Dermaux and Claire Pursey, Sustainable Development - International Development, research on Syrian refugees carried out with the aim of providing insights in the urban refugee experience along the borders of Europe. Group work on this topic was initiated to increase the relevance and importance of every individual research and to reach a larger public. Supervision for the group was provided by prof. dr. Annelies Zoomers and dr. Griet Steel.

Together with Tamara van der Sar, Pedro Valarini and Jolinde Dermaux, I conducted fieldwork in Istanbul, Turkey, for three months. This research focuses on the labour market situation of Syrians and their occupational mobility; Pedro Valarini analysed refugee entrepreneurship among Syrians as a means of resettlement; Tamara van der Sar focused on housing pathways and the construction of home among Syrian refugees; and Jolinde Dermaux focused on the integration of Syrian refugees and the role of social networks in this process. During the same period of time, Claire Pursey conducted research in Athens, Greece, and aimed to gain insight in the mobility and aspirations of Syrian refugees.

Upon finishing of this dissertation, the aim of the group is to produce an overarching report including all of the findings and conclusions of every team member. This document will be published in a certain form to be determined.

Although complementary research has been carried out, this document is original work by the author Teun Smorenburg. Contributions to this document from the other team members, is clearly identified and the appropriate credit is ascribed to every respective team member.

Acknowledgements

With pleasure I present my dissertation on the labour market situation and occupational mobility among Syrian refugees in Istanbul. This dissertation is a product of research carried out in the context of the master programme Sustainable Development – International Development Studies at the Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Based on nearly eight months of desk research, fieldwork, analysis and dissemination, this dissertation provides insight in the labour market situation and occupational mobility among Syrian refugees in Istanbul.

During these eight months of research there are numerous people I would like to thank. Firstly, I would like to thank every respondent in this research for their courage, willingness and time to tell their personal stories to me. Special appreciation goes out to Kafeel, Talhah and Mujab for assisting in translation during interviews. My appreciation goes out to all of you and I hope to see you again sometime, under different circumstances.

Secondly, I would like to thank Tamara van der Sar, Claire Pursey, Jolinde Dermaux and Pedro Valarini for successful and constructive group work. I enjoyed our discussions on issues and achievement and I very much valued your constructive feedback, input and advice during the whole process. On a more personal level I would like to thank you for making this research an unforgettable experience.

Thirdly, I would like to thank Joris Schapendonk for his personal involvement in this project. From the first moment we presented our group work, Joris supported us with contagious enthusiasm, which I very much appreciated.

Fourthly, a big thanks goes out to prof. dr. Annelies Zoomers and dr. Griet Steel for their supervision throughout the process. Their feedback and guidance was very useful and helped shaping me this research to its current form.

Lastly, I would like to thank all informants that I haven't mentioned by name. Everyone's input was greatly valued and helped me personally in contextualizing my research.

Teun Smorenburg,
Utrecht, 2015

Executive Summary

The Syrian crisis entered its fifth year of existence this year, displacing millions of people and forcing millions of them to search refuge in neighbouring countries. During this time, Turkey received the highest amount of Syrian refugees. In the current context, where Syrians cannot go back to their homeland because it is not safe for them to do so and resettlement through the UNHCR is done on a very small scale, integration is the only solution. A major catalyst for local integration is acquiring employment (Lundborg, 2013; Bloch, 2002; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). Against this background, and with a specific focus on Istanbul because of the high concentration of Syrian refugees (330.000), this researched aimed to get an insight in the labour market experience of these refugees. In order to achieve this aim, desk research was carried out since January 2015 and fieldwork in Istanbul was conducted from February 2015 until May 2015. During these months extensive open interviews were conducted with Syrian refugees.

Although literature suggests otherwise (Connor, 2010; Ortensi, 2015; Peromingo, 2014; Bevelander, 2011: Bloch, 2002; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014), the refugee gap is not universally applicable to Syrian refugees. They initially experience a downward occupational mobility due to the desperate need for employment (and income), depressions, a language barrier and being unknowledgeable about where to look for employment opportunities. However, subsequently, many respondents experience upward occupational mobility due to social networks and investments in destination-specific skills such as the Turkish language and understanding where employment opportunities can be found.

Accordingly, many respondents, though not every respondent, are able to (professionally) develop themselves, make progression on the labour market and pursue a career in (highly skilled) employment commensurate with their skills, education and/or experience. Consequently, along with favourable working conditions, this results in satisfaction among respondents about their current occupations. On the other hand, bad working conditions and being employed in occupations not commensurate with their skills, education and/or experience are important factors for respondents not to be satisfied with their current employment situation. The satisfaction of respondents about their occupations influences their occupational mobility and desired occupational mobility, indicating the importance of agency in occupational mobility.

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List of Abbreviations

AFAD – Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency

CBSSYR – Central Bureau of Statistics of the Syrian Arab Republic

EC – European Commission

GDMM – General Directorate of Migration Management

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

ILO – International Labour Organisation

ISCO – International Standard Classification of Occupations

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SCPR – Syrian Centre for Policy Research

SPI – Small Projects Istanbul

TP – Temporary Protection Regulation

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNSD – United Nations Statistics Division

1. Introduction

The Syrian crisis is the largest humanitarian crisis the world has faced since the second world war (European Commission, 2015). With almost eight million internally displaced people and over four million Syrians that have sought refuge in other countries, the conflict has currently displaced more than half of the Syrian population. Turkey is currently the largest receiver of Syrian refugees in the area (table 1). As of May 2014, the maximum capacity of the refugee camps in the provinces along the border with Syria (Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, Hatay, Adana, Malatya, Kahramanmaras, Adiyaman, Osmaniye and Mardin) was reached. Since then, new camps have been opening up in this border area. The camps currently accommodate over 270.000 Syrian refugees (Demirtaş, 2015). Most of the Syrian refugees, however, refrain from entering the camps due to various reasons; the camps were overcrowded, restrictions associated with living in camps, looking for (better) employment opportunities outside the camps even though they are not yet legally allowed to work (Özden, 2013). This means that most refugees have settled themselves and are more dispersed over the country. Although the majority of refugees settled in the border area, the highest concentration of self-settled refugees can be found in Istanbul. Estimates are that since 2011, 330.000 Syrians have sought refuge in Istanbul. (Erdoğan, 2014).

Table 1. Number of Syrian refugees in the region (UNHCR, 2015a)

Receiving country	Number of Syrian refugees	Date of measurement
Turkey	1.805.255	09-07-2015
Lebanon	1.172.753	06-07-2015
Jordan	629.128	17-06-2015
Iraq	251.499	15-07-2015
Egypt	132.375	05-07-2015
North Africa	24.055	13-05-2014

Syrians were able to settle throughout Turkey because of the adopted protection response from Turkey. By facilitating an 'open-door' policy, Syrians were received as ´guests´ rather than legal refugees at the beginning of the crisis in April, 2011. However, in October 2011, Turkey has afforded them a ´temporary protection´ status, ensuring no forced return and imposing no limit on their duration of stay for as long as the conflict lasts. With the emergence of terrorist groups like Islamic State, Daesh and Al Nusra and involvement of Hezbollah militia, along with the presence of the Free Syrian Army (Syrian opposition) and the Syrian National Army, the conflict is becoming increasingly complex. In addition, the conflict has become increasingly geopolitical as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey became

actively involved, supporting the Syrian National Army and the Free Syrian Army respectively, in the conflict since 2011. Therefore, a solution is not likely to be found on a short term and even in a long term a solution is questionable. Moreover, looking at other major displacement crises (Somali refugees in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp, Liberians in Ghana's Bududuram camp, Palestinians in Yarmouck camp in Syria) a trend becomes painfully evident; large displacement crises often times seem to protract (Ward, 2014; Byrne, 2013). Trends point in the direction of a long lasting conflict. Consequently, it is naïve to believe that a solution will be found within the next decade.

Accordingly, repatriation is not possible for the Syrians that fled (and flee) their country and neither is resettlement. Resettlement is the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement (UNHCR, 2015c). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has an international mandate to resettle refugees. Resettlement, as a strategy to share the refugee burden of Turkey and mitigate the impact of the mass influx of refugees, is only happening at a very small scale. While resettlement is a valid durable solution to displacement, only 123.000 out of almost four million Syrian refugees have been resettled to Europe, the United States of America and Australia (Erdoğan, 2014).

Hence, the only option remaining for Syrian refugees in Turkey is local integration (at least temporarily) because they have nowhere else to go. Refugees that chose not to settle in camps for various reasons do not enjoy the same support that camp-settled refugees enjoy. They are reliant on employment in order to generate an income and survive. In 2013, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey (AFAD) reported that about three quarters of the Syrian refugees outside the camps were looking for a job in Turkey (AFAD, 2013). As the number of Syrian refugees has increased tremendously since 2013, it is obvious that nominally even more Syrian refugees have been searching for employment. This is why the labour market situation of Syrian refugees is important to be researched. Employment is very important for self-settled refugees as they, indeed, usually do not benefit from the services offered by the host country (Ward, 2014). Moreover, Employment is an important aspect of structural integration and may facilitate access to new social networks, increase prospects for learning the native language, and provide opportunities to regain confidence and economic independence (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). Finding employment and integrating in the local labour market is thus: "...*an important indicator of*

short- and long-term refugee integration and of a successful, durable solution to the limbo and protection needs stemming from forcible displacement" (Ott, 2013, p. 3), as refugees who are working adjust more easily to the host society than those who are unemployed (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014).

However, as Chiswick et al (2005) already pointed out, international migration, including refugee flows, tend to involve occupational change due to the lack of perfect transferability of language, job related skills, labour market information, and credentials, particularly in the short run. Moreover, the necessity for employment drives refugees into downward occupational mobility. This is an interesting dynamic as the Syrians that are currently in Turkey are likely to stay for a long term. Sadik Arlsan, the Turkish ambassador in the Netherlands, expects 50% of the Syrians that are currently in Turkey to stay permanently. Therefore, the labour market situation of Syrian refugees is a salient topic for research. With a specific focus on Istanbul because of the high concentration of Syria refugees, this research aims to get a better understanding of the labour market situation of Syrian refugees and their occupational mobility. This will be done by answering the following research question:

What is the labour market situation of Syrian refugees in Istanbul and how do they experience occupational mobility?

By doing so, this research aims provide an insight in the labour market experience of Syrian refugees in Istanbul with the purpose of building up a knowledge base and contributing to the academic debate on urban refugees, employment and occupational mobility. Moreover, it aims to inform policy(makers) and to get a better picture of the Syrian refugee experience. The experience of refugees in labour market integration is often overlooked, whereas it can be an explanatory factor in the situations of Syrians on the labour market.

1.1 Relevance

The Syrian crisis and its effects on Turkey are increasingly being researched, but because the conflict emerged only four years ago, the academic knowledge base is very limited so far. Despite the high concentration of Syrian refugees in Istanbul, the city is currently under researched. This is not unique for the Syrian conflict and the context of Istanbul, but urban refugees are generally under researched in conflict studies. Moreover, there are very limited studies that contain information on occupational mobility of refugees between the home

and the destination country, representing another knowledge gap (Rooth and Ekberg, 2006). Lastly, by adopting an agency focus, this research is one of the few researches that includes the personal experience in analysing labour market situations of refugees (Ott, 2013). This research will contribute to a broader empirical knowledge base on these topics.

Institutionally, there are increasingly more reports from the UNHCR, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Brookings among other organisations. In their reports they only make general statements, noting that Syrians are willing to work for lower wages than Turkish nationals and that they therefore face a higher risk of exploitation (Kirişci, 2014). However, these reports are mostly limited to the Turkish South-eastern border region. There is no institutional emphasis on Istanbul. There is little to no in-depth research on labour market situation of Syrian refugees in Turkey, and Istanbul in particular, and limited information is available on the working conditions of Syrian workers currently making their living through informal employment (ILO, 2015). These working conditions are very important in the wellbeing of employees (ILO, 2013) By investigating the labour market situation and occupational mobility of Syrian refugees in Istanbul, this research also addresses this knowledge gap. Similarly, it contributes to the knowledge base of Syrian refugees in Turkey, which in turn could be of use to policymakers to draft (more) durable policies with regards to the Syrian refugees. The conflict has been lasting for more than four years already and Turkey and international organizations are still struggling with formulating durable policies.

1.2 Structure of the report

The next chapter elaborates on the literary discussions and debates about refugees in urban areas and employment. It conceptualizes refugees and discusses dominant theories in the academic debate on refugees and employment. Chapter three will present the research question, operationalization of concepts and the different methods used during the process in order to acquire and disseminate data, including the encountered limitations of the research. Thereafter, in chapter 4, I elaborate on the Syrian context before the war and the demographic and occupational characteristics of the respondents. In this chapter I also shortly elaborate on the motives for Syrians to leave their country. Afterwards, in chapter 5, the regional framework is drafted. In this chapter, the legal and economic context in which Syrians find themselves after entering Turkey is drafted. Consequently, in chapter 6, the initial occupation of respondents is discussed by assessing in what sectors they found

employment. In turn this will be compared to the original occupations before respondents left Syria, described in chapter 4. Chapter 7 elaborates on the current employment situation and the occupational mobility since they left Syria, entered Istanbul until the present. Chapter 8 explains whether or not respondents are currently satisfied with their employment situations and what factors are of influence on their current (dis)satisfaction. In chapter 9, the conclusion of this research is given by answering the main research question. Moreover, the conclusion is related to existing literature and suggestions for further research are made.

2. Theoretical Framework

There has been a huge growth in scholarly output in the field of refugee studies over the last 60 years. This is in parallel with the significance of the phenomenon forced migration itself, as the global number of refugees tops 50 million people (Black, 2001; UNHCR, 2014a). As the number of refugees in the world continuously increased throughout the years, the field of study acquired an institutional base in specialist research centres, academic journals and international research organizations. This is the remarkable feature of refugee studies. It has not been developed in a *"…sterile or inward-looking academic environment, but in relation to a crucial area of policy that directly affects the lives of millions of people*" (Black, 2001, p. 71). This link with policy has been present throughout the development of refugee studies and influenced the concept of refugee. This chapter will first elaborate on the concept 'refugee' and then elaborates on relevant theories used to embed this research in the academic debate on refugees and employment.

2.1 Conceptualizing 'refugee'

Since the emergence of refugee studies, 'refugee' conceptualization has been very challenging. A definition for refugees is desirable but it is only a reflection of an agreement on who is designated as refugee at a particular time, within a particular international political and economic context. This means that the definition of refugee differs geographically and over time and is influenced by the political context. An example of this influence is the 'academic' definition formulated by Simpson in 1938 who argued that: "*the essential quality of a refugee is that he has left his country of regular residence, of which he may or may not be a national, as a result of political events in that country which render his continued residence impossible or intolerable, and has taken refuge in another country, or if already absent from his home, is unwilling or unable to return, without danger to life or liberty, or as a direct consequence of the political conditions existing there*" (Simpson, 1939 as cited by Black, 2001). He excluded environmental refugees, participants in purely temporary movements and stateless persons because his definition was based on who were offered protection by the League of Nations. Institutions thus had an influence on the conceptualization of refugees, even in academic circles.

The League of Nations' successor, the United Nations formulated a new definition of refugees in 1951 at the Geneva Convention. During this convention, the definition that was agreed upon by the UNHCR was: "*A refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return*

to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (UNHCR, 2010). Despite such a formal definition, there is actually no clear consensus on what should and should not be included in the conceptualization of refugees (Black, 2001; Peretz, 1995). This results in alterations of the Geneva Convention definition of refugees. Examples are the inclusion of anyone "*who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of national habitat in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality"* into the refugee definition by the Organization of the African States in 1969 (Convention of Refugee Problems in Africa). Another example is the alterations by Turkey on the refugee definition. These are that: "*None of the judgements of this article* [Geneva Convention] *can be interpreted in the way that it provides a refugee with more rights than Turkish nationals in Turkey* (Kolukırık and Aygül, 2009, p. 71). The other Turkish reservation states that only people from Europe are regarded as refugees. In line with this reservation, people from countries outside Europe are not regarded as refugees (Kolukırık and Aygül, 2009; European Commission, 2011).

Despite the alterations made by countries, the most used definition in academics and in the policy arena is the Geneva Convention 1951 definition, which again highlights the intimate link between policy, society and the discipline. The widespread conceptualization of the UNHCR also includes two reservations. The first reservation is that the refugee definition only applies to people that left their country of origin (because of well-founded fears). The fact that a refugee crosses a national border and settles elsewhere, distinguishes them from Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and making them eligible for international protection. The second reservation is that refugees differ from migrants because of the involuntary movement rather than voluntary movement.

Their involuntary movement has consequences for their labour market situation (Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008). Firstly, refugees often flee their country on an individual basis and come from a wide range of countries. Therefore, the social network of refugees in the new host country is likely to be less extensive than that of migrants. Social networks are very important to start an integration process and to find employment (Jacobsen, 2006). In case of mass displacement, as is the situation with the Syrian crisis, this does not have to be necessarily true. Secondly, refugees have experienced traumatic events, both in their

country of origin and during flight. These experiences can cause psychological problems which hamper self-reliance and their ability to find employment. Thirdly, refugees often flee their country without knowing exactly where to go. Therefore they have less opportunity to prepare in advance for their stay in a specific place (Wauters and Lambrecht, 2008). Language and skill preparation is therefore lacking which can influence their labour market situation negatively. Lastly, among refugees are people with country-specific skills and qualifications that would have never left their home country under normal circumstances, making them unsuited for paid labour in the same kind of job.

2.2 The urban refugee

Refugees are traditionally settled in encampments by host countries for several reasons, including security reasons for both the host country and the refugee (Hovil, 2007) and concerns that refugees will compete with nationals for limited economic opportunities and scarce resources, such as water or land (UNHCR, 2014b). However, people displaced by violent conflict and the destruction of their livelihoods are increasingly likely to end up in urban areas rather than in camps (Jacobsen, 2006). This is because the world is urbanizing rapidly. In 2014, 54% of the world's population was living in urban areas. In terms of population that is 3.78 billion people (WHO, 2015). In view of these developments, it is no surprise to find that a growing number and proportion of the world's refugees are also to be found in urban areas (UNHCR, 2009). Nowadays, more than half of the world's refugees is residing in urban areas (Ward, 2014; UNHCR, 2015b). Refugees that end up in areas designated as urban by governments are defined as urban refugees, regardless where they are from. This term includes people with different legal statuses; recognized refugees (people that have achieved an official refugee status in the eyes of the government), asylum seekers (those who applied for refugee status but whose application still has to be examined), people with a temporary protection status (people granted temporary residence because of dangerous conditions in home country prevent them from returning) and those that are denied a refugee status but stay in the country.

In order to understand the position of refugees in an urban centre, Jacobsen (2006) argues that urban refugees as subsets of two larger populations; foreign-born migrants and the national urban poor. However, they differ from these larger populations in significant ways. Urban refugees and foreign-born migrants have a 'foreign' background in common, but refugees differ from migrants because of their motivations to leave their country and go to

an urban centre. As for all migrants, economic opportunities, networks and facilities are pull factors of urban centres. However, refugees also experienced forced displacement and move to urban centres because of the potential anonymity and safety it can provide. Moreover, humanitarian assistance as well as resettlement programmes are important pull factors for urban refugees as well (Jacobsen, 2006). These factors, combined with the restrictions associated with living in camps, are motivations for refugees to settle in urban areas rather than encampments. Urban refugees also differ from the urban poor because of the protection and assistance that is theoretically available to them. Recognized refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to a set of rights specified in the 1951 Geneva Convention under the international law, which the national urban poor are not entitled to. However, in practice, urban refugees experience a range of protection problems, threats, exploitation and discrimination, meaning that the legal status of refugees makes a little difference in their living experience (Jacobsen, 2006).

2.3 Local integration as solutions to displacement

The UNHCR has identified three durable solutions to displacement; voluntary repatriation, resettlement and local integration. As I explained in the introduction, there is currently no end in sight for the Syrian crisis, making voluntary repatriation not possible. Although resettlement to third countries under the mandate of the UNHCR can be a durable solution, it is only happening at a very small scale, hardly being an effective solution to the mass displacement of Syrians, whereas it could potentially be. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of countries involved in resettlement in Europe and Latin America. Despite the increase in the number of resettlement countries, the number of resettled refugees remains low. Resettlement countries (Europe in particular) are not very keen on accepting resettlement of refugees; only 123.000 Syrian refugees have been resettled in total until 2014. This means that the Syrian refugees are currently in Limbo; they cannot go back to their homeland, because it is not safe for them to do so. Most of them do not have the option of moving on, as third countries are not keen on admitting them and providing them with permanent residence rights. Although Turkey has afforded them a temporary protection status, is has not yet confirmed an allowance for Syrians to stay indefinitely (yet). In this Limbo, the only real solution applicable to Syrians in the current context is local integration, especially because at least 50% of the Syrian refugees is expected to stay in Turkey after the conflict is over.

Despite the frequent usage of the concept of local integration, there is no single, generally accepted definition for immigrant and refugee integration (Hyndman, 2011). The UNHCR defines it as: "*…a complex and gradual process by which refugees legally, economically, socially and culturally integrate as fully included members of the host society*" (UNHCR, 2013, p. 21). The integration process of refugees is thus comprised of four dimensions. Legally, refugees are granted a range of rights and entitlements that are (broadly) commensurate with the rights and entitlements of the host population. Economically, refugees attain a growing degree of self-reliance, becoming able to pursue sustainable livelihoods and thus contributing to the economic life in the host country. Socially and culturally, refugees are able to live among or alongside the host population, with no greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community (Kuhlman, 1991; Dryden-Peterson and Hovil, 2004). Corresponding with these dimensions, the *de facto* indicators for integration used in academic circles include employment status and earnings, official language abilities and educational attainment, legal or health status, and housing careers (Hyndman, 2011).

Employment is considered to be the most crucial factor in the integration of immigrants and refugees (Lundborg, 2013; Bloch, 2002; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). It allows refugees and immigrants to sustain themselves because it yields an income. Sustaining themselves with their own income is not only functional but being able to sustain a livelihood also contributes to satisfaction and wellbeing of refugees and migrants. Besides, obtaining a job increases the knowledge of refugees and migrants about the labour market, the language and culture of their host country and they create networks and bonds with their colleagues and employers. These factors all contribute to the refugees' wellbeing, facilitate the integration process and underline the importance of employment in local integration. Therefore, employment could be considered as a functional dimension of integration, because it is necessary for the integration process to start (Fyvie et al, 2003).

2.4 Refugees and employment

Research suggests that gaining employment is the main priority of those who have been awarded refugee status (Lundborg, 2013; Bloch, 2002; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). Similarly, research has also pointed out that refugees perform systematically worse on the labour market than both their native equals and their equals among other migrants and are sometimes excluded from the labour market (Connor, 2010; Ortensi, 2015; Peromingo, 2014; Bevelander, 2011: Bloch, 2002; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). This phenomenon is

being referred to as the 'refugee gap'. Although this research is mostly focused on different Western countries (United Kingdom, United States, Sweden, Italy), common factors have been researched; employment rates, occupational level (socioeconomic status of employment) and earnings. These indicators are representing economic outcomes and these studies have found that these rates for refugees are lower compared to their migrant equals and to their native equals.

The most common explanation for the refugee gap is that refugees have on average fewer socioeconomic resources and did not choose to migrate by their own initiative (Ortensi, 2015; Connor, 2011). Factors that are responsible for causing this refugee gap are generally the language proficiency (of host country's language), education levels, previous work experience and length of stay in the host country (Bloch, 2008; Ott, 2013; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014; Lundborg, 2013; Orensi, 2015; Bevelander, 2011; Connor, 2010). Refugees do not choose to migrate by their own initiative and often do not know where exactly they are going. Accordingly, they are not proficient in the host country's language and have generally less formal education (Ortensi, 2015). As language and education are very important in finding employment, they are disadvantaged on the labour market. The previous working experience of refugees influences their labour market situation as well because their acquired skills and experiences may not be completely transferable. For instance, a lawyer specialized in criminal law can usually not transfer his work experience to another country as criminal law differs per country. Therefore, the transferability of work experience, education and skills are influencing the labour market situation of refugees too. Lastly, the length of stay in the host country also influences the labour market situation of refugees in host countries. The longer the stay of refugees in a host country, the better their labour market situation becomes as they become familiar with how the labour market works, create networks with their employers and colleagues and invest time and effort in learning the language (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014; Rooth and Ekberg, 2006). Although the refugee gap becomes smaller over time, it never fully disappears (Peromingo, 2014).

Chiswick et al (2003; 2005) and Rooth and Ekberg (2006) put the refugee gap in a different perspective. Rather than looking at just the economic performance of refugees on the labour market in the host country, they include the labour market situation of refugees in their countries of origin. This is important because it helps explaining and contextualizing the refugee gap found in these Western countries. Taking the labour market situation in the

country of origin as a starting point, Chiswick et al (2003; 2005) and Rooth and Ekberg (2006) explore the refugee gap in terms of occupational mobility. Occupational mobility referring to change in the labour market situation of refugees throughout their journey. This means that they analyse the socio-economic status of employment of refugees before and after they fled.

Chiswick et al, (2003; 2005) and Rooth and Ekberg (2006) recognize the existence of the refugee gap because refugees experience an initial downward occupational mobility. They initially become employed in occupations with a relative low socio-economic level (Rooth and Ekberg, 2006). Causes for the initial downward occupational mobility are the lack of perfect transferability of language, job related skills, labour market information and credentials, particularly in the short run (Chiswick et al, 2005; Fernández-Macíías et al, 2015). Moreover, the necessity for employment also drives refugees into downward occupational mobility as it is generally more difficult to initially acquire employment with a high socio-economic status (Chiswick et al, 2003). In line with this argument, the downward occupational mobility of refugees that were employed in high-status occupations is stronger (Rooth and Ekberg, 2006). A reason is that international human capital transferability may be more difficult to achieve for certain occupations that require an academic education. For instance, lawyers that specialized in criminal law in their country of residence cannot transfer their knowledge and work experience to the host country because there is a different criminal law. Another reason for this stronger downward occupational mobility is that the initial downward movement can pass through more occupational levels for those who had a high-status occupation in the country of origin compared to those with a low-status occupation.

After an initial downward occupational mobility, there is a subsequent upward occupational mobility (Chiswick et al, 2003; Chiswick et al, 2005; Rooth and Ekberg, 2006; Fernández-Macíías et al, 2015). This is being referred to as the U-shaped occupational mobility; from an occupational status (with the required skill level) in country of origin, to an occupation requiring lower skills in host country, which in turn increases over time again. The upward occupational mobility can be attributed to the investments migrants and refugees make in destination-specific skills. These are language skills, but also education and getting to know the employment context of the country they reside in (Rooth and Ekberg, 2006). The upward occupational mobility is generally stronger for refugees that were employed in high-status

occupations in their home country compared to refugees who were employed in low-status occupations as they generally have more transferable human capital (Rooth and Ekberg, 2006). Because refugees enter the labour market in the host countries at a low(er) occupational status (requiring low skills), they have a lot of potential for progress (more so than other migrants) (Connor, 2010; Chiswick et al; 2003).

As I already mentioned, these studies have all been conducted in Western countries and have been based on the formal economy. Generally, the informal economy Western countries is small. In less developed countries, however, they are more prominently present. Rather than a specific definition, the ILO constructed a framework with parameters for understanding the informal economy as: "*all activities that are, in law or practice, not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements"* (ILO, 2013, p. 4). Informal activities often emphasize, precarious working conditions, labour-intensive and low-skilled workers and no contracts/benefits. When a large share of the host population is working informally, research on the labour market situation of refugees should not solely be focused on the formal economy, but also on the informal economy. This economy presents opportunities for refugees to become employed as well but they are often not (sufficiently) captured by national accounts and official statistics. In fact, refugees tend to find employment more easily in the informal economy, especially in situations where they are legally not allowed to work. This way they can enforce their right to work and avoid government regulations which is more easy than compliance with regulations (ILO, 2013; Ortensi, 2015). Moreover, unemployment and the lack of (formal) employment opportunities might force refugees into the informal economy (Arbex et al, 2013).

The main critique on studies on labour market situations of refugees is that the focus is predominantly on three factors only; employment rates, occupation level and earnings. Therefore, Ott (2013), drafted a comprehensive list of factors that should be included when looking at the labour market situations of refugees, based on literature that contained any aspect of labour market integration and employment situations of resettled refugees (but are also applicable to refugees that have not been resettled). Factors that should be included are; 1) Labour market participation and employment rates; 2) Earnings; 3) Poverty (income and resource poverty); 4) Socio-economic status; 5) Employment commensurate with experience and qualifications; 6) Diversity of occupation (no overrepresentation in a particular economic sector); 7) Job retention/job stability; 8) Job advancement/occupational

mobility; 9) Employment contract and/or benefits; and 9) Employment satisfaction. Ott (2013) recognizes that his list is not exclusive and that most studies on refugee employment often overlook the agency of refugees.

Their agency, however, can be very important in the labour market situation and occupational status (with required skill level) of refugees as Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) have shown in their research. They have included a more in depth analysis of the refugees' experience on the labour market and reveal that their experience plays a vital role in their labour market situation and occupational status. Refugees seem to prioritize safety and stability over finding employment commensurate their experience and education in the host country. Similarly, on the basis of economic necessity they cannot afford to invest in language skills and work experience because they cannot afford to miss their income. Also the perception of discrimination at high-status occupations seemed to discourage refugees to find high-status employment. Because of these experiences, they are willing to accept occupations with a low(er)-status than their occupation in their home country. Therefore, the agency of refugees should be included in the analysis about their labour market situations and occupational mobility.

In the situation where local integration is the only option for Syrian refugees in Turkey (and Istanbul in particular), employment seems to be crucial for the integration process to start. Especially for the urban refugee who does not enjoy the same access to services as camp-settled refugees. However, a change in occupational status (and related skill level between the last job held in the country of origin and the employment in the host country thus seems to be very typical for refugee movement, whether it is called the refugee gap or the U-shaped occupational mobility. Initially they seem to experience downward occupational mobility, but subsequently an upward occupational mobility, although it is argued that they never become on par with their native equals. A factor that is often overlooked, but of importance in labour market situations and occupational mobility is the agency of refugees. These dynamics have been analysed in Western countries, but similar research on the Syrian refugees in Istanbul is currently lacking. This research aims to explore the labour market situation and occupational mobility for Syrian refugees in Istanbul and test whether or not the refugee gap also exists in a country where the informal economy is widespread. The methodology of doing so, is described in the next chapter.

3. Methodology

This chapter elaborates on the methodology of this research. Firstly, it will highlight the research questions used for this research. This will be followed by an operationalization of relevant concepts into delineated and workable concepts. This section will also present the indicators used to assess the labour market situation and occupational mobility of Syrian refugees in Istanbul. After that, I will elaborate on the different methods used for the data collection and their implications for this research. Lastly, the limitations encountered during the fieldwork in Istanbul will be discussed.

3.1 Research Questions

As was mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this research is to get a better understanding of the labour market experience of Syrian refugees in Istanbul with the purpose of building up a knowledge base and contributing to the academic debate on urban refugees, employment and occupational mobility. To this end, the formulated main research question for this research is:

What is the labour market situation of Syrian refugees in Istanbul and how do they experience occupational mobility?

In order to achieve the aim stated above, the main research question is substantiated with six sub-questions. This should lead to a more structured answer to the main research question and an assessment of the labour market situation and occupational mobility of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

1) What were the occupations of Syrian refugees before they came to Istanbul?
2) How do Syrian refugees in Istanbul find employment?
3) What is the employment situation of Syrian refugees in Istanbul?
4) How did the occupation of Syrian refugees in Istanbul change since they left Syria?
5) How satisfied are Syrian refugees with their current occupations in Istanbul?

The sub-questions are listed in a chronological order which serves the analysis on occupational mobility and will be answered based on the agency perspective of Syrian refugees. The employers perspective on hiring Syrians and looking for personnel can add an extra dimension to the data acquired from Syrian refugee employees and on their labour

market situation as motives to hire Syrians become clear. Therefore, in answering the second sub-question, the data acquired from Syrian respondents will be compared with the data acquired from both Turkish and Syrian employers to validate and confirm data. Although it is not the main focus of this research it adds an under researched dimension to this research (Hovil, personal communication, 12-12-2014).

3.2 Operationalization

The concepts used in the research questions have been translated into workable concepts for this research. To prevent misunderstandings about these concepts, the operationalization of them is presented below.

1) Employment situation

Employment is defined as: "*An agreement between two parties for paid work, either based on a contract or not, one being the employer and the other being the employee*". Included in this definition is the absence of a contract because of the presence of a large informal economy, where contracts are rarely drafted. There is no time constraint to this interpretation of employment as paid work can also be seasonal or daily because of a large agricultural sector and the informal economy (Özden, 2013).

2) Occupational mobility

Occupational mobility refers to change in the labour market situation of a person (Chiswick et al, 2005). In this research I have looked at the specific occupations of respondents to analyse the occupational change from the moment they left Syria until their current job. In order to measure occupational mobility, the skill level of occupations is included, based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08) drafted by the ILO (2012) (table 2). As occupational status of employment is often linked to the required skill level for a job, the ISCO-08 skill level is a suitable indicator to the occupational status. The occupational skill levels are used to assess the occupational mobility of Syrian respondents. By doing so, it provides an insight in the diversity of occupations and in the labour market situation of Syrian refugees in Istanbul. In addition, I have looked at whether or not respondents were able to find employment commensurate with their skills, education and/or experience and their experience in finding a job. Adding these factors provides a better insight in the occupational mobility from an agency perspective, which in turn influences the occupational mobility again (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007).

Table 2. ISCO-08 Skill levels and description (ILO, 2012)

Skill level	Description	Indicative Education level	Examples
1	Typically involve the performance of simple and routine physical or manual tasks. Many occupations may require physical strength and/or endurance	For competent performance in some occupations at skill level 1, completion of primary education may be required. A short period of on-the-job training may be required.	Occupations include office cleaners freight handlers, garden labourers and kitchen assistants among others.
2	Require relatively advanced literacy and numeracy skills and good interpersonal communication skills.	Knowledge and skills are generally obtained through completion of the first stage of secondary education. Some occupations may require the completion of the second stage of secondary education, which may include vocational education and on-the-job training. Experience can substitute formal education levels	Occupations include butchers, secretaries, accounts clerks, sewing machinists, dressmakers, shop sales assistants, police officers, hair dressers building electricians and motor vehicle mechanics among others.
3	Typically involve the performance of complex technical and practical tasks that require an extensive body of factual, technical and procedural knowledge in a specialized field. Occupations at this skill level require a high level of literacy and numeracy and well-developed interpersonal skills.	The knowledge and skills are usually obtained as the result of study at a higher educational institution for a period of 1-3 years following completion of secondary education. In some cases extensive relevant work experience and prolonged on-the-job training may substitute for the formal education	Occupations include shop managers, medical laboratory technicians, legal secretaries, commercial sales representatives, computer support technicians and broadcasting and recording technicians among others.
4	Typically involve tasks that require complex problem-solving, decision-making and creativity based on an extensive body of theoretical and factual knowledge in a specialized field. Occupations generally require extended levels of literacy and numeracy, and excellent interpersonal communication skills.	The knowledge and skills are usually obtained at a higher educational institution for a period of 3-6 years leading to the award of a first degree or higher qualification. Extensive experience and on-the-job training may substitute or be required in addition to the formal education	Include sales and marketing managers, civil engineers, secondary school teachers, medical practitioners, operating theatre nurses and computer systems analysts among others

3) Satisfaction

Satisfaction is an important concept to link with labour market situation as it starts from an agency perspective, which is important as it can be an explanatory factor in occupational mobility among refugees. Although satisfaction (about labour market situations) is a very difficult concept to measure, two factors have been included in the analysis; employment situation in Syria (employment commensurate with their experience and education) and current working conditions. Working conditions have been included because they are a vital part of employment and influence the wellbeing of employees (ILO, 2013). Limited information is currently available on the working conditions of Syrian workers making their living through informal employment (ILO, 2015). I have turned to the ILO for operationalizing the working conditions of Syrian refugees in Istanbul, which are of influence on their satisfaction about their labour market position. The ILO has come up with a concept of decent work: "*Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men*" (ILO, 2013). In order to measure decent work, the ILO drafted a set of indicators that influence the wellbeing of employees. I adopted the set of indicators but adjusted it to the Turkish context (table 3).

Table 3. Decent work in Turkish context (based on ILO, 2013)

ILO Indicator	ILO indicator adjusted to the Turkish context
Fair income	An income that can provide the recipient with the basic needs and is at least as high as the legal minimum wage of 1304,26 Turkish Lira (TL) (€424,26) per month (Trading Economics, 2015).
Decent working hours	Under the Turkish labour law, the maximum amount of working hours per week is 45 hours, equally split among working days. Overtime needs to be paid (150% salary) or be awarded with 1.5 hours of free time per hour worked overtime (ISPAT, 2015).
Personal (skill) development	Both men and women have the opportunity to learn and develop themselves in the workplace.
Freedom to express concerns	Freedom to express concerns to their employer either by being part of a labour union or not
Equal treatment of women and men	Men and women will be treated equally (wage and opportunities). In case of Syrians, they have the same wage and opportunities as other employees.

Although not specifically mentioned, the operationalization of the concepts employment, occupational mobility and satisfaction include many of the important factors listed by Ott (2013) to assess labour market situations of refugees and migrants: 1) occupational status; 2) occupational mobility 3) Diversity of occupations among refugees; 4) Employment commensurate skills, education and experience; 5) Earnings; 6) Coverage of basic needs (poverty); 7) Contract benefits (job security); 8) Employment satisfaction and an additional factor, namely the experience of refugees in finding employment. Therefore, the framework used in this research to assess the labour market situation and occupational mobility of Syrian refugees in Istanbul is quite encompassing.

3.3 Methods used for data collection

Even though most of the data used in this research is acquired during fieldwork in Istanbul, Turkey, from the 13th of February until the 13th of May, the process started already in November. The whole process can be characterized by three phases. The first phase consisted of desk research at Utrecht University and working sessions with Jolinde Dermaux, Claire Pursey, Tamara van der Sar and Pedro Valarini. During this period I consulted academic literature and institutional reports to embed my research in the academic and institutional context and find a relevant niche. The analysis of the literature resulted in the basis of the theoretical framework described in chapter 2. During this phase, I also formulated my research questions and operationalized the used concepts. The working sessions with my four colleagues proved very useful during this time. These sessions were meant to give each other constructive comments and critique and to keep searching for complementarity in each other's researches and to prepare for the fieldwork.

The second phase started on February 13th, when I arrived (with three of my colleagues) in Istanbul and lasted until the 13th of May. During this time there was an intense cooperation between me and my other colleagues in Istanbul. As the agency of refugees can be a very important factor in their labour market situation and often overlooked, I decided to conduct qualitative research because it is more suited to analyse decisions and motivations made by the respondent. Moreover, based on our literature review during the first phase of our research, we assumed that the urban refugee would be a very difficult and vulnerable target group. Before refugees are 'opening up' or willing to be interviewed a trust relation has to be build (Jacobsen, 2006; BIlger and van Liempt, 2009). In this context, qualitative research and networking is more suitable than quantitative research in my perspective.

My research colleagues also conducted qualitative research and the networks each of us created were very beneficial to everyone. We arranged interviews for each other and helped each other with conducting interviews. Although we were also in touch with informants before and after the fieldwork, I encountered 78 informants during the whole research, of which 60 were Syrians. I based my analysis for occupational mobility on 48 Syrian respondents. I had the opportunity of having more in depth conversations with 26 of these respondents about their satisfaction about their labour market situations and their working conditions. Therefore, the analysis on the satisfaction of Syrian refugees in their current occupation is based on these 26 respondents. More (demographic and occupational) information about the respondents will follow in the next chapter. Their names, however, have been changed to guarantee anonymity of the respondents. The other 18 informants were a mix of Dutch, Turkish, Canadian, Australian, American, Congolese and Belgian people with different occupations, ranging from students and researches to owner of an Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and people employed on a high political level. They all shared their perspectives and ideas on the Syrian crisis and events happening in the region (Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan). Therefore, they were all of importance to this research; they helped in the contextualization of the research and as sources of inspiration for interviews with respondents.

In total I conducted in-depth interviews with 34 people, of which I spoke multiple times (2 – 8) to 17 respondents (table 4). For interviews with Syrian employees I used the topic list presented in Appendix 1. The topic list in Appendix 2 served as a guideline for interviewing Syrian and Turkish employers. Included in these 34 people are Syrian respondents, directors of schools and NGOs, employers, students, and people employed on high political levels, also useful for Dermaux (2015), van der Sar (2015) and Valarini (2015). Data acquired from informants that is not used in the analysis of occupational mobility and satisfaction, was important for this research as it served as background information and as sources of inspiration for other interviews. The disparity between the interviews that I conducted with 34 and the total amount of informants used in the analysis of occupational mobility and satisfaction can be explained because of the benefit of working in a group. Interviews that I conducted with the Syrian schools were useful because they provided background information for my research. For Dermaux (2015) the data acquired during these interviews

were of importance in her analysis. Similarly, Valarini (2015) and van der Sar (2015), conducted interviews that were of interest to this research.

Table 4. Amount of informants I conducted interviews with.

Interviewed people	#
Respondents	17
Syrian schools (El Zinki and El Mena Hil)	2
Syrian al Nur organisation	1
Dutch official at Syria office in Istanbul	1
Syrian entrepreneurs (Bayhas and Nadir)	2
UNHCR official	1
Lucy Hovil	1
Rami Sharrack (Syrian Economic Forum)	1
Turkish employers	6
Turkish students	2
Total	**34**

At first, I conducted semi-structured interviews with Syrian refugees and I took notes during the interview, after asking permission. I was surprised by the openness of the Syrians as literature (Jacobsen, 2006; Bilger and van Liempt, 2009) had indicated otherwise. Doing it this way worked out well for the first interviews. I kept seeing them for a drink or to hang out and got to know increasingly more about them and about their labour market situations. Repetitive meetings with respondents increased the quality of the data I collected. When I became more comfortable with interviewing them, I became less strict and sometimes stopped taking notes during the conversation (but did it afterwards). I kept the different topics that I wanted to talk about in mind, but the interviews changed from semi-structured to more open interviews. Although the respondents knew that I was interested in their labour market integration, I personally got the feeling that when I did not take notes, they were more open. Repetitive meetings with all the respondents resulted in an increased amount of data of increased quality. Sometimes, me and my colleagues had a conversation with a respondent at the same time. After these conversations we would cross check each other's information to increase the reliability of the data.

The third, and last, phase of the research took place in Utrecht again. This phase is mostly characterized by the analysis of the data acquired during the fieldwork in Istanbul. This has mainly been done by coding in Microsoft Excel. During this phase, I also reflected on the

theoretical framework (chapter 2), regional context (chapter 4 and 5) and the framing of the research. Lastly, the vast part of this thesis has been written during this phase.

3.4 Sampling

During my fieldwork, I chose for a non-probability sampling technique; snowball-sampling method (figure1). In order to find respondents, we (as a group) found a group on Facebook called 'Syrian students – Istanbul University'. We got a reply from Kafeel. Kafeel is a 22 year old geology student at the Istanbul University. He arrived in Istanbul on the 23rd of August in 2013, after leaving Egypt and Syria before that. We agreed to meet him and after discussing our research, needs and expectations, Kafeel decided that he wanted to help us. We promised him that we could give him a certificate from the Utrecht University for his help, rather than paying him for his service. He really appreciated this and connected us to his friends. He joined us for interviews that had to be conducted in Arabic because he was able to translate.

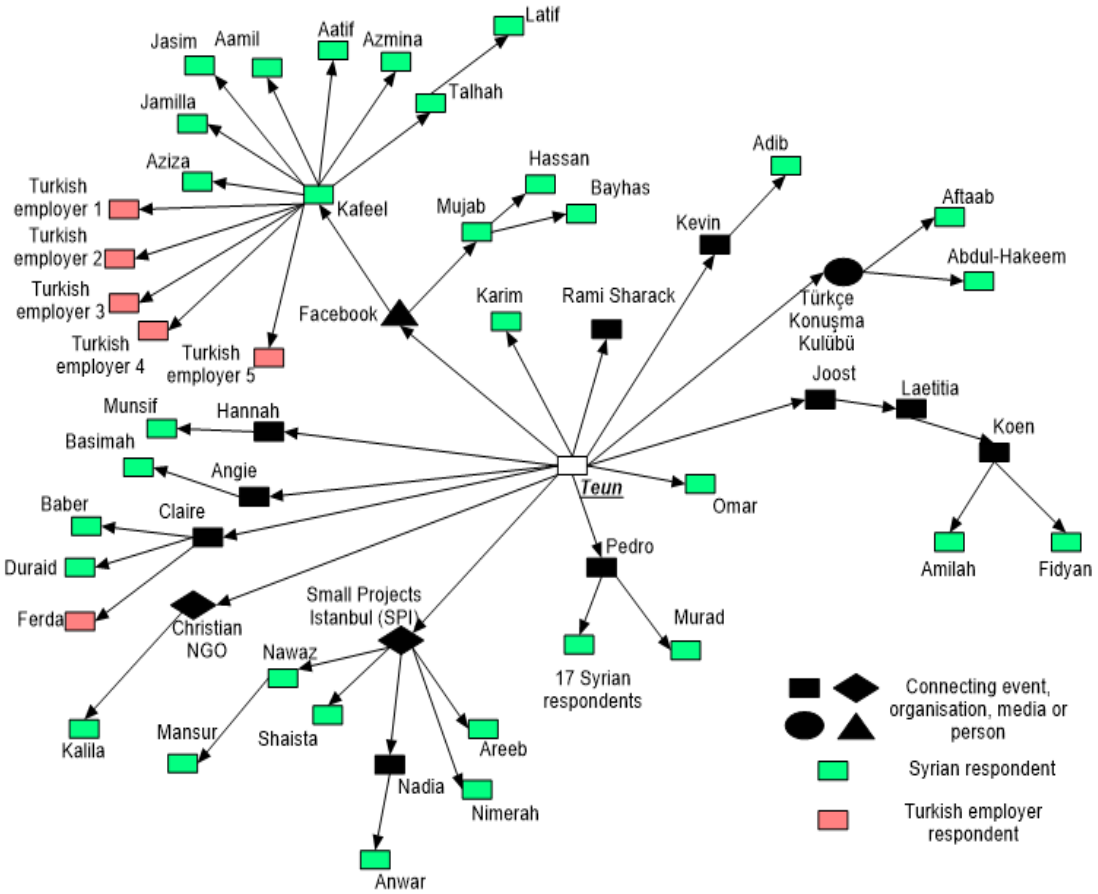


Figure 1. Snowball sample of this research.

I needed a translator for seven interviews I conducted with five respondents and two schools. Kafeel was able to translate in five interviews, while his friend Talhah (who was also given a certificate from the Utrecht University) translated in the interviews we had with the Syrian schools. Many other Syrians were able to speak English very well and a reason for that may be that many of the Syrian respondents are young and highly educated (as will be discussed in the next chapter). Kafeel helped me also to get in touch with Turkish employers at the end of our fieldwork as he was able to speak Turkish too. My sampling strategy was to pass by Turkish shops in two neighbourhoods (Lalleli and Beyoğlu) to ask for an interview.

After I conducted the first interviews with Kafeel's friends (Aziza, Jamila, Jasim, Alman, Aatif, Azmina, Talhah and Latif), I diversified my strategy. Kafeel's friends did not indicate many other Syrians that I could interview. Therefore, I needed to create a 'new' network in which I could find Syrians willing to meet and speak to me. In order to do so, I went to a brainstorm meeting from the start-up NGO Small Projects Istanbul (SPI). At the SPI meeting I got in touch with Syrians among other people. This was another network that I could use for the research, making the sample more diverse. As I mentioned before, working in a group was beneficial to everyone. For instance, even Claire Pursey, our colleague who was conducting research in Athens was able to connect me to Baber and Ferda (Turkish employer). Another network that was useful for this research was the network created at the Türkçe Konuşma Kulübü. This was an event hosted by Turkish people to help internationals speak Turkish. At this meeting I was able to have an open conversation about Syrian refugees in Istanbul with Turkish students. At this event, I also got in touch with Abdul-Hakeem and Aftaab. The last network used to find respondents was already used in the Netherlands, during the first phase. Through several people working at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both in the Netherlands and Istanbul, I was able to meet Amilah and Fidyan.

A snowball sampling methods is characterized by its focus on people and through networking I was able to find my respondents. I needed respondents who left Syria (not a Syrian nationality per se) after March 2011, that came to Istanbul. My main focus was on Syrians that were employed or had working experience. Because of the networking strategy that I used, I did not have a specific geographical focus within Istanbul. It is remarkable that many respondents came live in Avcilar and in Fatih, two neighbourhoods where Syrians are known to find a place to stay (figure 2) (van der Sar, 2015).

Figure 2. Geographic distribution of respondents over Istanbul.

3.5 Reliability and validity

A snowball-sample has some implications for the reliability and the validity of the data acquired. As a result of the snowball effect, the sample should not be regarded as being representative. This means that the findings are not generalizable and should rather be regarded as indicative. To improve the reliability of the research and findings, I used different methods. The first was to diversify my strategy to find respondents. Doing so results in a decreased bias of the sample. Jacobsen (2006) refers to this as adaptive sampling. Secondly, as I mentioned, the employers perspective on hiring Syrians and looking for personnel can add an extra dimension to the data acquired from Syrian refugee employees. Therefore, the data acquired from Syrian refugee employees was compared and triangulated with data acquired from Syrian and Turkish employers, making the findings more reliable. Thirdly, another benefit of working in a group is the possibility to increase the inter-rater reliability. By discussing the data acquired, interpretations and notes after an interview conducted with colleagues, I verified answers, interpretation and notes which in turn increases the reliability of the data. The last method used to increase the reliability of the data is asking similar questions to more than one respondent. Because of the topic list in Appendix 1, I had an idea of which questions I wanted to ask to guide the (open) interview. Asking the same question to multiple respondents increases the reliability of the answers given by the individual respondent (‘t Hart et all, 2009).

To increase the validity of the data acquired, I used the member-checking technique. This is a process in which collected data is 'played back' to the informant to check for perceived accuracy and reactions (Cho and Trent, 2006). I met multiple times with most of my respondents. These meetings were not solely about the research, but employment and life in Istanbul as a Syrian refugee were often times discussed in a less formal and more open way. During these meetings, I could verify or correct my data by referring to what was earlier said by the respondent. This always happened verbally.

3.6 Limitations of the research

During the research process, I encountered some limitations that influenced the acquired data and scope of the research. The first limitation I encountered was the language barrier. I needed a translator for five interviews with respondents and although Kafeel and Talhah were very skilled and extremely helpful, it means that some information got lost in translation. It also meant that these interviews were more formally organized, possibly resulting in a reluctance of the respondent to answer the questions completely truthful or answer the question at all. With regards to the Turkish employers, Kamal provided the translation from Turkish to English. I did not only encounter a language barrier, but also realized that a Syrian translator was interviewing a Turkish employer about Syrians. In this situation there is a risk that the employers would give socially accepted answers, obscuring the truth. However, in order to put the data acquired from employers into perspective I compared it with data acquired from Syrian respondents to increase the reliability of the used data. Unfortunately, due to a lack of time and a Turkish translator, there was no other option.

A second limitation is the fact that the research sample is not very diverse. Despite diversifying my strategy to find different kinds of respondents, It was very difficult to get in touch with women personally. I interviewed two women personally, but when I did, there was always a Syrian man present as well. Besides, the sample is relatively young because I personally was unable to get in touch with 'older' Syrian refugees. Valarini (2015) was more successful in getting in touch with 'older' Syrians than I was. Similarly van der Sar (2015) and Dermaux (2015) were more successful in personally interviewing women. Because of our fieldwork in Istanbul, I was therefore able to acquire data on both older Syrian refugees and female Syrian refugees. This was a real benefit of working in a research group.

The third limitation relates to the method I have chosen during the fieldwork. Although I started conducting semi-structured interviews in a rather formal setting, I changed my strategy to conducting more open conversations with the topic list in Appendix 1 in my mind. Because I changed my strategy, I believe that the quality of my data improved. Respondents were very open in an informal setting without me taking notes. However, this also resulted in the fact that I do not have answers from all the respondents to all the questions listed in the topic list in Appendix 1. Sometimes questions were not very appropriate to ask, sometimes not really relevant to their specific story or sometimes they did not want to answer all of the questions. Rather than enforcing an answer, I preferred to keep the informal setting as it was.

The fourth limitation is the limited availability of systematically acquired data on the Syrian economy and labour market. Although data and statistics on the economy and labour market of Syria is available, there seems to be a lack of systematically acquired annual data on both the economy and the labour market (European Commission, 2010). A consistent analysis of economic and labour market trends before the Syrian crisis is very difficult because of the lack of data. However, the data that is available on the economy of Syria and the labour market gives an indication of the economic situation and labour market situation in Syria. In 2005, the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Syrian Arab Republic (CBSSYR) was founded. This is a statistical agency responsible for the gathering of information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions. The CBSSYR is administered by an administrative council headed by the deputy prime minister for economic affairs, and is answerable to the office of the prime minister. This agency has since its foundation recorded data on the Syrian economy and labour market more systematically and digitalized data up till the 2000s. However, the database of the CBSSYR is not exclusive; economic information and data about the labour market is not available for every year. Despite the lack of available data on an annual basis, the CBSSYR increased the amount of available and reliable data, making it the best source to embed part of this research. Statistical data about the Syrian economy and labour market is thus used, based on the surveys and databases of the CBSSYR. Moreover, data acquired from the Syrian Centre for Policy Research (SCPR), the European Commission (EC) and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) is used.

The last limitation that I encountered was the time constraint. Finding respondents by means of a snowball sampling technique accelerates faster when there are more

respondents. Because we only met Kamal and his friends during the first weeks, finding respondents was going quite slowly. However, the more Syrians we knew, the more possibilities we had to meet other Syrians. A longer stay could have resulted in an (almost exponential) increase in respondents. Also, it would have enabled me to meet the respondents, that I met only once, another time to acquire more data and get even a better understanding of their labour market situation and occupational mobility.

Because of the sampling method and difficulties encountered during the research, the sample cannot be regarded as representative. However, it does give a detailed insight in the labour market situation and occupational mobility of (predominantly young male) Syrian refugees in Istanbul. Moreover, different techniques and methods were used to increase the validity and reliability of the data acquired, which will be presented in the next chapters. The next chapter will give an overview of the demographics and occupations of the respondents in Syria.

4. Syrian context before the crisis

As the title suggests, this chapter will elaborate on the Syrian context before the crisis started in 2011. Firstly, an overview of the labour market in Syria before the Syrian crisis will be given. Subsequently, a demographic and occupational overview of the (48) Syrian respondents will be presented before they fled their country. Lastly, the chapter finishes by explaining the reasons for Syrian respondents to leave their country and their decision to go to Istanbul.

4.1 Syrian labour market

As I explained in the previous chapter, the lack of systematically acquired data on the Syrian economy and labour market hampers a trend-analysis of the labour market in Syria. However, data on the labour market is available through the CBSSYR, the SCPR, the EC and the UNSD and gives an insight in the Syrian labour market. The SCPR revealed that the service sector was the most important sector in terms of contribution to the Syrian Gross Domestic Product in in 2010 and 2011 (table 4). The agricultural sector was the least important. When the division of sectors is more closely looked at, it is worth noticing that the importance of the agricultural sector has been decreasing since 2001 onwards, both in terms of GDP generation and in terms of employment opportunities (European Commission, 2010). Similarly, the importance of both the industrial sector and the service sector has been increasing over the same period of time. Employment opportunities in the agricultural sector have been decreasing in favour of the Industry and service sectors since 2001.

Table 4. GDP contribution per sector in Syria in 2010 and 2011 (SCPR, 2015).

Sector	2010	2011
Agriculture	16,6%	16,7%
Industry	25,9%	25,7%
Services	57,6%	57,5%
Total	100%	100%

There is a great disparity between the labour force participation rate of Syrian males and females (figure 3). The main reason for the difference is that Syria is a very patriarchal country which is justified on the basis of family and kinship (Kamla, 2014). Men and women have very different roles in society. Whereas men are supposed to be responsible for the income of the family, women are supposed to take care of the household. Most employed women are employed in the public sector (education and health care) and the agricultural sector (mainly subsistence) (table 5). However, women are marginally employed compared

to men. Most Syrians are employed in the service sector (55,2%), while 31,5% was employed in the industrial sector and 13,3% was employed in the agricultural sector.

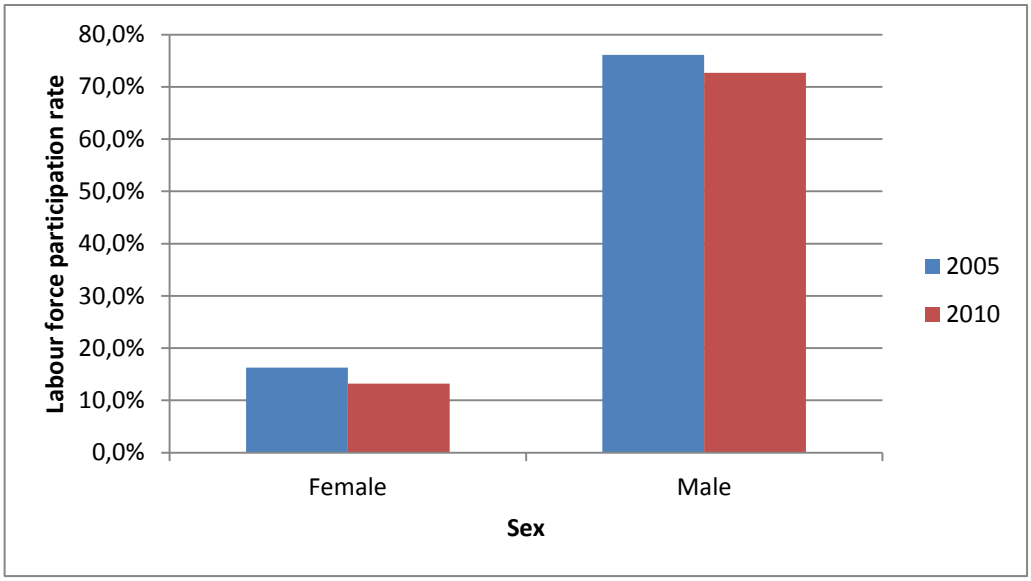


Figure 3. Female and male labour market participation rates in Syria in 2005 and 2010 (UNSD, 2015).

Table 5. Share of female and male employment per economic activity in Syria in 2010 (CBSSYR, 2015).

#	Economic activity	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
A	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	12,3%	13,3%	13,3%
B-E	Mining and Quarrying; Manufacturing; Electricity, Gas, Steam, Air conditioning Supply, Water Supply and Sewerage etc.	8,7%	17,1%	16,1%
F	Construction	0,7%	17,5%	15,4%
G-J	Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles; Transport and Storage; Accommodation and Food Service Activities; Information and Communication	24,4%	7,1%	27,0%
K	Financial and Insurance Activities	1,3%	0,4%	0,5%
L	Real Estate Activities	1,8%	2,5%	2,4%
O-Q	Public Administration and Defense; Compulsory Social Security; Education; Human Health and Social Work Activities	67,7%	22,0%	27,7%
R	Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; Other Social, Community and Personal Service Activities	0,4%	0,3%	0,3%
Total		**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Throughout the Syrian labour market, the most common employment status of Syrians in Syria in 2010 was first paid work and then self-employed and employer (table 6). Although

both categories can have partners in their business, the difference between self-employed and employer is that the employers employ employees and the self-employed do not (Kok, 1989). There was only a very limited amount of Syrians that were employers; facilitating paid work for other Syrians. Unsurprisingly, female employers were almost non-existent. The fact that most Syrians were paid employees could be attributed to the size of the public (governmental) sector. Because the public sector is very large, a lot of Syrians were employed by the government (which has not been taken into account in this figure). There are relatively more Syrian women that are family workers compared to men. This is also unsurprising because of the patriarchal society. It is remarkable that almost 30% of the labour force was self-employed. An explanation could be that there was a lack of employment opportunities in Syria, which is why many Syrians started to create employment themselves. These numbers, however, do not include the informal economy in Syria. It was estimated that 41% of the workforce was informally employed in 2007 (male 42%, female 28%) (European Commission, 2010). The difference in estimates between informal employment among men and women is related to the relatively high share of women working in the public sector where informal employment rates are expected to be low.

Table 6. Employment status of labour force in Syria in 2010 (CBSSYR, 2015).

	Employment status		
	Total	Female	Male
Employer	4,5%	1,0%	4,9%
Self-Employed	29,8%	7,8%	32,9%
Paid worker	62,6%	83,0%	59,7%
Unpaid worker/ Family worker	3,2%	9,2%	2,4%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Between 2005 and 2009, employment rates have been growing with one percent per year compared to a growth of the working-age population of nearly four percent. The resulting lack of employment opportunities was, according to Haddad et al (2009), one of the major challenges Syria faced before the crisis. The labour force participation, of both women and men, decreased. The mean reason appeared to be a substantial decline in employment rates within traditional sectors, such as agriculture, especially among women, who's labour force participation rate decreased from 21 percent in 2003 to almost 13 percent in 2009 (Haddad et al, 2009; European Commission, 2010). However, this was not the only reason. The decrease in labour force participation is also partly due to higher school enrolment and

completion rates (especially among women) (figure 4). Moreover, an expansion of higher educational opportunities in private universities and public initiative, but also because of an increase in early retirement (especially among men) (Haddad et al, 2009). Although there was an increase the share of the population in higher education, the total share of highly educated is very small (13% of men and 36% of women had a professional or university degree).

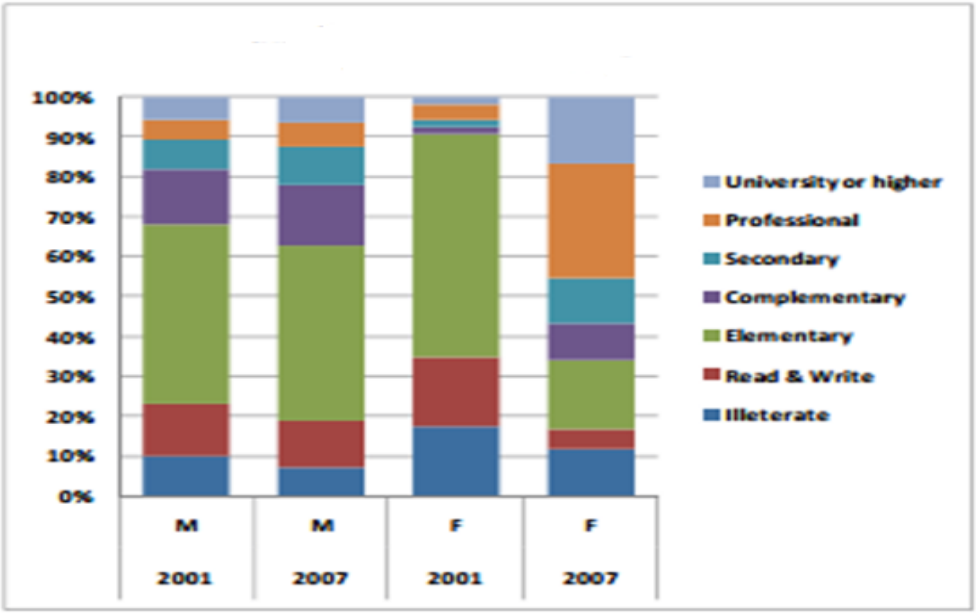


Figure 4. Education level of the Syrian population in 2001 and 2007(European Commission, 2010).

There is also a difference in unemployment rates between men and women (figure 5). Although the unemployment rates have not changed a lot between 2001 and 2010, they have been slightly decreasing over this period of time. When unemployment rates are divided by age groups, it is remarkable that the situation for men and women is relatively not very different. Most unemployment among men and women occurs among young Syrians (age 15 to 34) in 2010 (table 7). Moreover, unemployment rates are very high among all educational statuses (table 8). Among all age groups, the share of unemployed Syrians that never worked before is very high. Especially among the young Syrians (age 15 to 34). Except for the illiterate work force, 80% of the unemployed Syrians had never worked before and the higher the education level of a potential worker, the worse their unemployment situation was. Highly educated Syrians had more difficulties finding employment than illiterate Syrians.

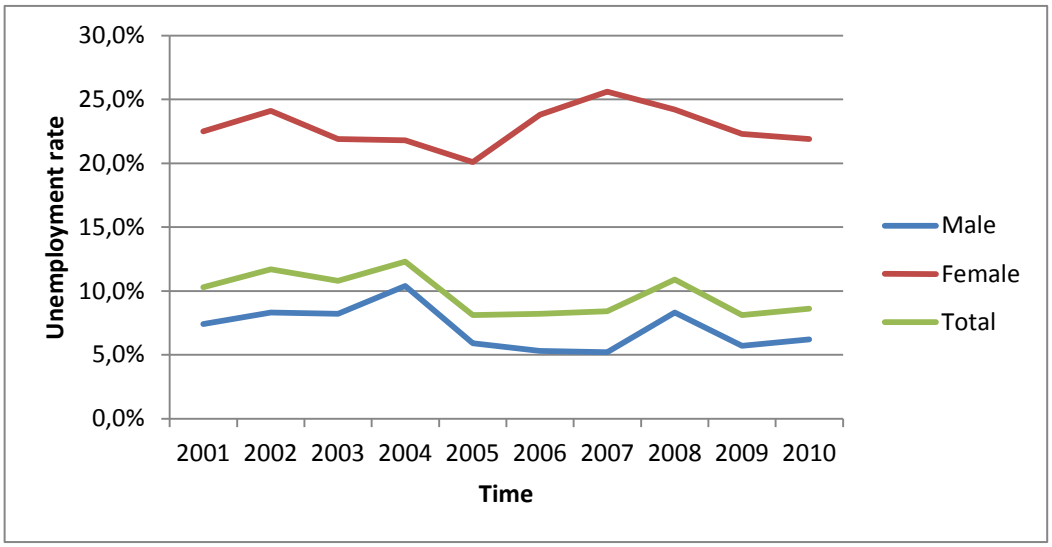


Figure 5. Employment and unemployment rates among Syrian men and women from 2001 to 2010 (CBSSYR, 2015).

Table 7. Unemployment rates per age group in Syria in 2010 (CBSSYR, 2015).

	Unemployment rate		
Age group	Total	Female	Male
15-19	21,7%	19,4%	23,4%
20-24	30,7%	32,1%	29,6%
25-29	21,1%	22,6%	20%
30-34	10,2%	11,8%	9,1%
35-39	6%	8,4%	4,2%
40-44	3,5%	3,8%	3,4%
45-49	2,8%	0,8%	4,2%
50-54	1,7%	0,1%	2,8%
55-59	1,0%	0,1%	1,7%
60-64	0,5%	0,3%	0,6%
65+	0,7%	0,5%	1,0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 8. Unemployment rates per educational status in Syria in 2010 (CBSSYR, 2015).

	Unemployment rate		
Educational status	Total	Female	Male
Illiterate	6,7%	7,5%	6,1%
Read/write	23,2%	19,8%	25,7%
Elementary school	18,5%	9,4%	25%
Complementary school	14,5%	10,9%	17,1%
Secondary school	16,9%	24%	11,8%
Intermediate institutes	10,8%	16,8%	6,5%
University and above	9,4%	11,7%	7,7%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Because of the previously mentioned situations on labour force participation and unemployment rates, migration from Syria was a common phenomenon before the conflict and was mainly driven by economic reasons (SCPR, 2015). Employment opportunities, but also working conditions were a driver for out-migration. There is very little social protection; a privatization of health care resulted in treatments being charged; retirement funds were very little and education from elementary school to university has declined in quality and students are being charged. These factors resulted in a trend of an annual out-migration between 0.51% and 0.72% of its resident citizen population before the Syrian crisis

(European Commission, 2010). Consequently, a small survey in the city of Damascus was conducted in 2008. The survey revealed that 9,6% of the resident population have emigrated of whom 15% permanently to the US, 8% long term to the US, 23% permanently to Europe, 21% long term to Europe, 33% long term to the Gulf countries (European Commission, 2010). However, this may not be characteristic of the whole country, as urban (and educated) migration destinations are usually different from rural destinations.

Before the Syrian crisis, there were definitely issues on the Syrian labour market; slow growth in employment opportunities and high unemployment rates and unemployment situations were worse for highly educated Syrians than for illiterate Syrians. Therefore, labour migration out of Syria was happening very regularly. Against this background, the next paragraph will introduce the respondents and their respective occupations in Syria before the fled their country.

4.2 Demographic overview of respondents

Table 9 presents demographic and occupational information on the respondents for this research. Only nine out of 48 respondents is female because it was difficult to get in touch with women, as mentioned in the previous chapter. As can be seen from the table and from figure 6, the sample of this research is quite young. Most respondents were aged between 20 and 34 years old. This is not surprising because Syria has a young population; almost 75% of the population is younger than 35 years old (CBS Syria, 2015).

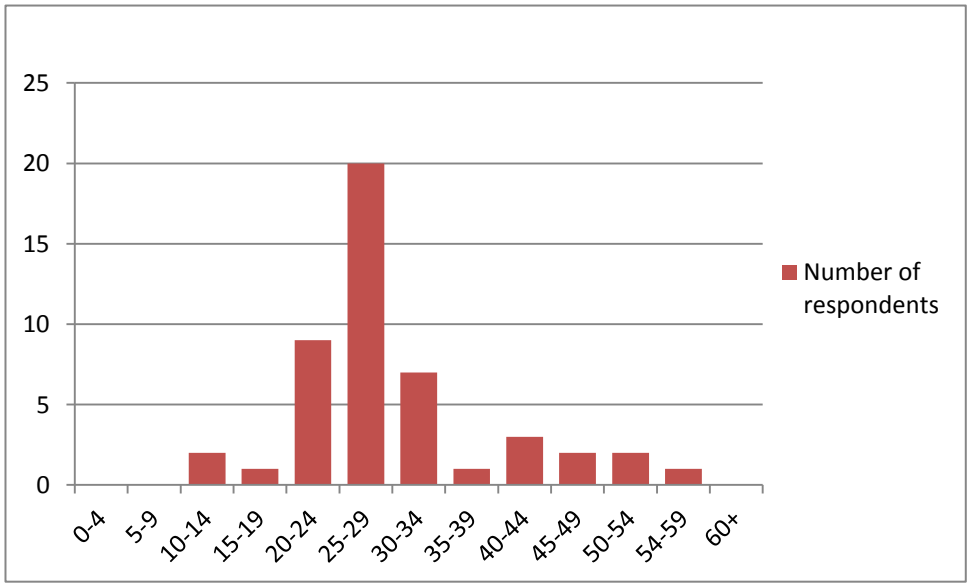


Figure 6. Respondents per age group.

Table 9. Demographic and occupational overview of respondents.

Respondent	Age	M/F	Nationality	Education level*	City of residence	Occupation in Syria	Skill level
Fidyan	30	M	Palestinian	UNI	Damascus	Student graphic design	4
Amilah	25	F	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Student medicine	(4)
Azmina	25	F	Syrian	COL	Homs	Primary school teacher	4
Aatif	31	M	Syrian	HS	Homs	Construction work	1
Aamil	28	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Owner cell phone shop	3
Jasim	26	M	Syrian	UNI	Homs	Student Arabic literature	4
Talhah	27	M	Syrian	UNI	Homs	Student Computer Engineering	4
Aziza	30	F	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Unemployed	
Jamilla	27	F	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Student law	4
Latif	23	M	Syrian	HS	Homs	Student telecommunication and engineering	(4)
Nawaz	25	M	Syrian	UNI	Aleppo	Student business administration	4
Abdul-Hakeem	25	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Employed at medical laboratory	4
Khalila	14	F	Syrian/Kurd	PS	Village at the border with Iraq	Primary school student	
Aftaab	28	M	Syrian	UNI	Lattakia	Self-employed translator	4
Shaista	25	F	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Student civil engineering	4
Areeb	28	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Student business engineering	(4)
Basimah	14	F	Syrian	PS	Yacubiye	Primary school student	
Munsif	19	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	High school student	
Karim	25	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Student Tourism	3
Hassan	21	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Self-employed graphic designer	4
Mansur	33	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Translation and administration at research centre	4
Adib	25	M	Syrian	UNI	Amman, Jordan	Pharmacist in Jordan	4
Anwar	23	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Student translation	(4)

Nimerah	22	F	Palestinian	HS	Damascus	Student engineering	(4)
Baber	25	M	Syrian	UNI	Aleppo	Student mechanical engineering	4
Murad	21	M	Syrian	NO	Damascus	Surgeon assistant	1
Firas	43	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Döner distributor and owner of a seeds shop	3
Abu Majid	58	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Doctor	4
Ammar	50	M	Syrian	HS	Aleppo	Electrician in a hotel	2
Ayman	32	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Owner wholesale clothing shop	3
Bayhas	51	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Owner of a textile factory	4
Barad	22	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Manager at plastic factory (family owned)	4
Falah	31	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Owner of a print shop	3
Halil	40	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Owner of a construction company	3
Mona	27	F	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Owner of a restaurant	3
Nizar	49	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Owner of a restaurant	3
Tahir	27	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Taxi driver and owner of a cell phone shop	3
Jamal	36	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Owner of a clothing wholesale shop	3
Duraid	26	M	Syrian	UNI	Aleppo	Owner of a games shop	3
Azado	28	M	Syrian	HS	Jordan	Owner of a restaurant	3
Bulus	43	M	Syrian	HS		Owner of a clothing shop	3
Abbas	25	M	Syrian	UNI	Homs	Student computer engineering and programmer	4
Mohammad	23	M	Syrian	HS	Damascus	Hairdresser	2
Omar	32	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Lawyer	4
Kafeel	22	M	Syrian	HS	Homs	Student geology	(4)
Mujab	21	M	Syrian	HS	Aleppo	Student engineering	(4)
Mr. Ahmad	29	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Stationery shop and English teacher	4
Farid	45	M	Syrian	UNI	Damascus	Working at a family coffee company	4

Most respondents for this research come from Damascus, Homs and Aleppo, the three biggest cities in Syria which account for approximately one third of the Syrian population (figure 7). In 2013, AFAD conducted a large scale survey among the Syrian refugees in the ten Turkish border provinces with Syria (Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, Hatay, Adana, Malatya, Kahramanmaras, Adiyaman, Osmaniye and Mardin). As the figure shows, the sample for this research differs a lot from the sample of AFAD; there seems to be an overrepresentation of Syrians from Damascus and an underrepresentation of Syrians from Idleb Raqqa and Hama. In fact, most Syrian refugees in the border region of Turkey and Syria come from these cities. These cities are close to the border with Turkey and refugees from these cities fled to Turkey because of easy transportation and proximity (AFAD, 2013). The sample of this research thus differs because of a bias in snowball samples. It is not strange that these people are coming from the same city/region in Syria. Moreover, Damascus, Homs and Aleppo are the most populous cities. Therefore, it is not surprising that many Syrians from these cities have fled.

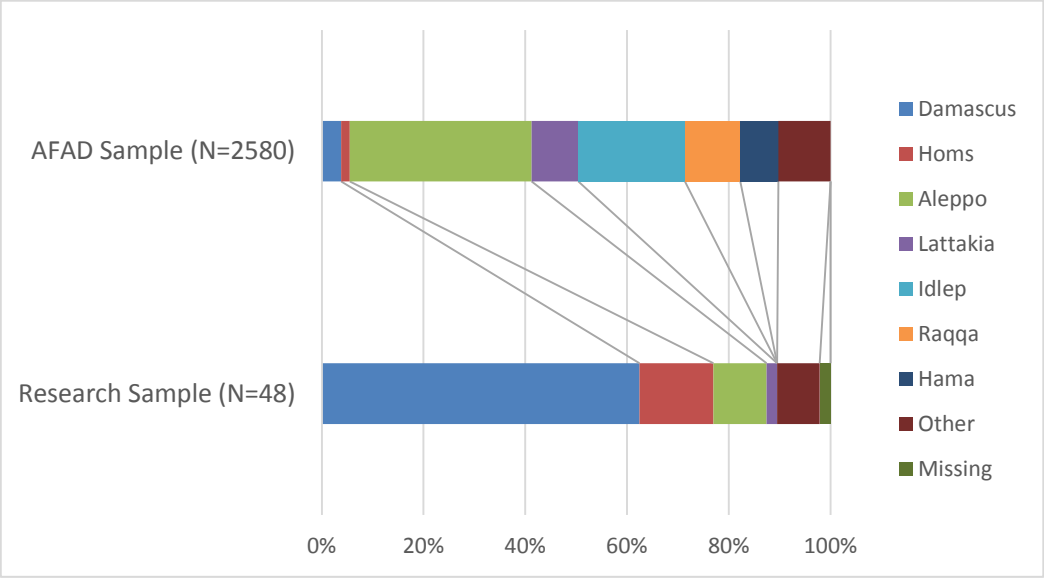


Figure 7. City of origin of respondents.

As table 9 indicates, the sample is also quite highly skilled and quite highly educated, especially with regards to the educational status among the Syrian population, presented in the previous paragraph. Almost half of the respondents (22) had a university degree and one respondent had a college degree (lowest degree needed in order to teach at a primary school). Besides, out of the 22 respondents that had a high school degree, seven Syrians were in university before they fled their country. They, however, were not able to graduate before fleeing which is why their occupational skill level is shown between brackets; it shows the potential skill level. The fact that there are many students among the respondents can

be due to two factors. The first is that the sample is quite young and therefore of a study-age. Another explanatory factor can be their city of origin. As I have just shown, most respondents come from the largest cities in Syria (Damascus, Homs and Aleppo). These cities are home to more than half of all universities in Syria. Together with the large amount of respondents of a study-age, this makes a strong case as for why the sample is relatively highly educated.

4.3 Occupational overview of respondents

The occupations among the respondents varied greatly before the Syrian crisis (table 10). In total, 28 of the respondents had gainful employment, but their employment status varied greatly. Twelve respondents were employers at shops, factories and in hospitality companies. Although the employers among the respondents were predominantly active in the service sector, there were three employers employed in the industry sector (Bayhas, Barad and Halil). Nine respondents were paid workers, mainly in the service sector as well (teacher, medical sector, lawyer etc); only one respondent was employed in the industry sector (Aatif). Seven respondents were self-employed. They either owned shops or had their own businesses in the service sector (hairdresser, graphic designer, translator). The predominant occupation of respondents who were employed in Syria was in the service sector and less in the industry sector. No one was working in the agricultural sector. This can be explained by the fact that many respondents originate from Damascus, Homs and Aleppo. These large urban areas are usually characterized by the diversity of occupation opportunities, but also by an underrepresented agricultural sector.

Table 10. Respondents' employment status in Syria.

Occupations in Syria	#
Pre-university student	3
University student	16
Paid work	9
Self-employed	7
Employer	12
Unemployed	1

All of the respondents who had gainful employment in Syria before the crisis seemed to live a comfortable life in Syria and were able to sustain themselves or their families with the income they earned. Some respondents were living with their family while they were employed, which is a factor that contributed to their comfortable lives. They did not have any expenses with regards to rent as their fathers were responsible for these costs and they

could keep the money they earned from their job to sustain themselves. The respondents who had to sustain their family were able to do so too with the income they earned.

As I mentioned before, there were many students among the respondents (16), which can be explained by both their city of origin (Damascus, Homs and Aleppo are home to half of the universities in Syria) and the fact that the research sample is relatively young. Among these sixteen respondents, seven respondents had a part time job in the service sector alongside their studies. The kind of jobs they did varied from matching medicines with particular surgeries to desk work at a refrigerator and freezer company. An important factor in finding their side jobs seemed to be their personal network:

> *"I worked for one of the biggest companies in Syria. My father worked there as well for many years. When I wanted this job, my father talked to his boss and they arranged it. I could start almost immediately. It was a good job for me" (Anwar, personal communication, 11-05-2015).*

> *"I worked at the pharmacy division in a clinic. It was my responsibility to match the medicines needed for operations with the particular surgery (…) My brother was already working there permanently and sometimes I could take over his shift. I tried to find a job in business administration, but it was very hard in Syria. It was already difficult for graduates to find a job, and I was an undergraduate" (Nawaz, personal communication, 15-04-2014).*

Murad who was working as a surgeon assistant, without any degree, had similar responsibilities to the side job of Nawaz. He got the job through connections and he did not finish high school. It was possible to do this kind of work without a degree, but with networks as Nawaz explained.

Among the 13 respondents who finished high school and became employed afterwards, eight respondents became employers mainly in trade (owning a shop), manufacturing (textile/plastic factory) and restaurants. These activities are most prominently present among entrepreneurs in the Syrian economy (Valarini, 2015). Therefore it is not surprising that many respondents owned a business in these sectors too. Reasons for opening these businesses were the presence of family in these sectors and business opportunities (Valarini, 2015). After completion of high school, Ammar and Aatif became employed in low skilled occupations such as construction worker and electrician, which fit with their highest achieved education. Aamil, Tahir and Mohammad became self-employed using their personal skills to earn an income after completion of high school. For instance, Aamil had

acquired a high school diploma only and opened an electronics shop afterwards, which was partly commensurate his education:

> *"I opened a new business on the 1st of March 2011 right before the demonstrations started. This was an electronic store. I studied electronics at school and love the subject. I really enjoyed the time with the shop. I really love electronics and to find out what kind of applications there are for smartphones and to fix computers. I like subwoofers and fixing phones the best" (personal communication, 09-03-2015).*

Despite the difficulties for highly educated Syrians (college or university degree) of finding employment commensurate with their education, 12 out of 23 respondents (Azmina, Abdul-Hakeem, Aftaab, Mansur, Adib, Abu Majid, Mona, Mr Ahmad, Omar, Duraid, Abbas and Bayhas) had found employment related to their education. They found employment in different kinds of sectors including textile industry, law, translation, health care and education. The other 11 highly educated respondents (Farid, Nizar, Fidyan, Jasim, Talhah, Aziza, Jamilla, Nawaz, Shaista, Karim, Baber) did not find employment related to their education because of several reasons. The majority of the highly educated respondents who were not able to find a job (7) just finished their university education before fleeing the country. They did not have time to enter the Syrian labour market because they fled due to several reasons, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

A second reason was that not all educations lead to a bright prospective for students on the labour market in Syria, which appeals to the notion of the European Commission (2010) and the SCPR (2015) about worse unemployment situations for highly educated Syrians. Nawaz, who finished his education just before he fled from Aleppo, argued that it was very difficult for business administration graduates to find a job related to their education. He argued that it was impossible for undergraduates to find a business administration related job. Baber, who was a mechanical engineer student, confirmed this too within his sector:

> *"As an engineer the job perspectives in Syria were horrible already before the war. Every highly educated engineer would move abroad. I too had plans to move abroad" (personal communication through Dermaux (2015), 30-04-2015).*

Farid and Nizar had a different motivation. Both of their studies were related to religion at the university in Damascus, but neither of them became employed in a job in which they could use their disciplinary knowledge because of their own choice. Farid started working at his family business after he graduated from university. His family had been in the coffee

business for decades and he continued the business by running it. Nizar argued that he had always dreamed of opening his own restaurant. After he completed his studies, he realized his dream by opening a restaurant.

It is remarkable that only one female respondent acquired a job. This is Mona. After graduating from accountability at the university she opened her own restaurant. In the context of female employment in Syria, her situation is quite exclusive as a female employer. The other female respondents were either studying (primary school and university) or unemployed (Aziza). Aziza, who graduated in Damascus on English literature, became unemployed afterwards because her father did not want her to work:

> *"I worked in a communication job for three months, but my father did not want me to work. He thought that I had to work too much and that my salary was too low. I, however, wanted to improve myself and I wanted to work. I quit the job and received support from my parents, more than I earned at the job" (personal communication, 18-03-2015).*

Thus, not everyone had the freedom to decide if and in what kind of job they want to become employed. In the very patriarchal society in Syria, the labour market participation of women is very low and it is very difficult for women to make their own decisions with regards to employment. Accordingly, it is not surprising that only one of the female respondents is employed. However, the respondents for this research differ a lot from the general labour force in Syria (shown in paragraph 4.1). They are quite highly educated and there are many employers and self-employed among the respondents, whereas national data indicates that the largest share of the labour force in Syria is paid worker. As many respondents lived a comfortable life, it can be concluded that these respondents were quite well off in Syria and on the labour market; many were employed in high skilled occupations and many were highly educated. Although finding employment commensurate with a high education is difficult in Syria, they acquire more capital and create a bigger employment potential.

However, education level is not the only factor of influence as Aziza explained. Personal situations also very much influenced the occupation of Syrians in Syria. Networks enabled students to find part time jobs and family could hinder employment. There was a great variety in the type of occupation and the employment status among the respondents, which can be partly explained by their city of origin, their (relatively young) age and their education levels. Although 12 highly educated respondents were able to find employment related to

their education, job perspectives were not equally promising in every sector, especially for highly educated Syrians as Nawaz and Baber argued. The main reason for this are the unfavourable labour market dynamics in Syria, which is why many respondents migrated out of Syria before the Syrian crisis broke out. The next paragraph will discuss whether the economic situation of Syrians was also a motive to flee the country. This notion is in line with the argument made by van der Klaauw (2010), who states that migratory movements, including refugee flows, today are of a mixed nature and that each individual within these movements increasingly presents a mixture of motives of departure from the place of origin.

4.4 Reasons to leave Syria

As expected, the occupation of many Syrians changed after the Syrian revolution started in March 2011, after which they were forced to leave. As in Tunesia, Egypt and Libya, also in Syria anti-government demonstrations took place. The demonstrations started in the city of Daraa, in the south of Syria. After that they spread throughout the country. Demonstrations were held in Homs, Damascus and even Aleppo (which is mainly pro-Assad). The demonstrations were about increasing the rights of the Syrian people and about establishing a democracy. As Talhah, whose first demonstration was on the 28th of March 2011, explains:

> *"I participated because the system in Syria was based on fear and it was undemocratic. I felt that I was doing something for my country by protesting. The Syrian people deserve better. After Tunisia and Egypt, yes, we thought that he* [Bashar al Assad] *would go down" (personal communication, 12-03-2015).*

However, the demonstrations were violently opposed by Assad's military, first in Daraa and Homs, but later also in Damascus and Aleppo. The military intervention lead to casualties and eventually escalated in what we now call the Syrian crisis, concerning millions of people. Areas became unsafe and the military blocked streets to isolate areas like the Baba Amr neighbourhood in Homs, which was infamous for its opposition sentiments. Baba Amr, however, was not the only neighbourhood that got blocked. Throughout Syria, neighbourhoods and cities were blocked and controlled by checkpoints. It became increasingly unsafe and increasingly more people had to leave their homes. Most Syrians left the areas that they were living in because of security reasons. 41 out of 48 respondents stated that the conflict was a reason to leave Syria and for 19 of those respondents, it was the most direct/important reason to leave Syria. This means that there were mixed motives for the respondents to leave Syria, which is in consonance with the notion of van der Klaauw's (2010).

The first additional reason for many respondents (10) to leave their country was the military service. Military service in Syria is mandatory but students can get suspension of their military service until they are 26 years old. However, during the summer holidays they are required to do their military service for two weeks. Due to the crisis, however, many Syrians feared that they had to do their military service, regardless their suspension or age. This was an additional motivation (young) Syrian males to leave the country.

The second additional reason was that related to the economic situation of the respondents during the crisis. Mainly the self-employed and employers were hit hard because of the conflict. Eleven respondents mentioned that running a business became impossible of which seven lost their business completely because it was destroyed. This was not the only economic reason for respondents to leave Syria. As the conflict progressed, inflation increased as well. The value of the Syrian Pound decreased while the living costs were increasing rapidly which made it impossible for respondents to stay in Syria, as Ammar, who was an electrician explained:

> *"It reached a point where one job was not enough to pay the expenses and I needed to search for a second job to keep life going (…). Still, two jobs were not enough to cover all the expenses and at a certain moment it was necessary to choose between buying food or paying for medical costs" (Ammar, indirect contact through Valarini (2015), 03-05-2015).*

A third additional reason for the female respondents Jamilla and Aziza was to leave the patriarchal society of Syria behind. Both Jamilla and Aziza had an arranged marriage with someone who they did not have a connection with at all. They wanted a divorce, but this was impossible because a divorce is not socially accepted in Syria. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier, Aziza wanted to develop herself but was not allowed to do so because her father did not want her to work. The inequality between men and women was a reason for both Aziza and Jamilla to leave Syria:

> *"I wanted a divorce but In Syria a divorce is very difficult. There is no acceptance in the Syrian society. This is why I could not divorce. Syria is a very patriarchal country. Girls are a shame. If women get a baby girl, the first thing which is often said is: 'Let's hope they won't bring shame to the family and lose their honour'. Men mean everything. I could divorce my husband because I left the country" (personal communication through van der Sar (2015) and Dermaux (2015), 18-03-2015).*

Her father allowed her to leave Damascus because of the conflict and he financially supported Aziza. Leaving Syria was also an opportunity for Aziza to develop herself again by means of employment.

A fourth additional reason for respondents to leave Syria was the segregation in the Syrian society. There are many different ethnic and religious groups in Syria that do not mix very well. Although the majority of the population was Sunni Muslim, there are many religious minorities in Syria (table 11). Even before the demonstrations against the regime started. Every religious group kept to itself in all kinds of matters, making marriage between religious groups problematic and not approved. Three of the respondents were also motivated to leave Syria because of marriage. Mansur, who was raised as a Sunni Muslim, wanted to marry his Alawite girlfriend, but their families did not approve their marriage, which meant that they could not be together in Syria. In order to marry, they would have to leave Syria. Although the conflict was the direct reason for him to leave the country, the indirect reason was to enable himself and his girlfriend to marry. Abdul-Hakeem stated that these kinds of tensions already existed for a long time. The fact that these tensions existed and other worldviews were not tolerated, was an additional reason for Abdul-Hakeem and Aftaab to leave Syria.

Table 11. Religious groups in Syria.

Religious group	Share of the population in Syria
Sunni Muslims	Around 70%
Alawites (offshoot of Shia)	Around 12%
Christians	Around 10%
Druze and Ismaili	Around 3%

Lastly, a factor of importance in leaving Syria were social networks. These networks influenced people to leave Syria. Many Syrian were advised by family, friends or employers to leave the country because of the conflict.

Many respondents went to other countries than Turkey first because of the language (Arabic) and their social networks (figure 8). However, conditions in these neighbouring countries worsened; In Jordan and Lebanon there were a lot of tensions between Syrians and natives; Egypt's policy became hostile towards Syrians after the Muslim Brotherhood was overthrown in June 2013; and Libya became very unsafe after Muammar Ghaddafi was

deposed of. Eventually, because of worsening circumstances in these previous living places, all respondents ended up in Turkey. Respondents arrived in Istanbul gradually (figure 9). Many respondents stayed in Syria as long as they could but were eventually unable to stay. An increase is noticeable since the start of 2013, when the Syrian crisis intensified in violence.

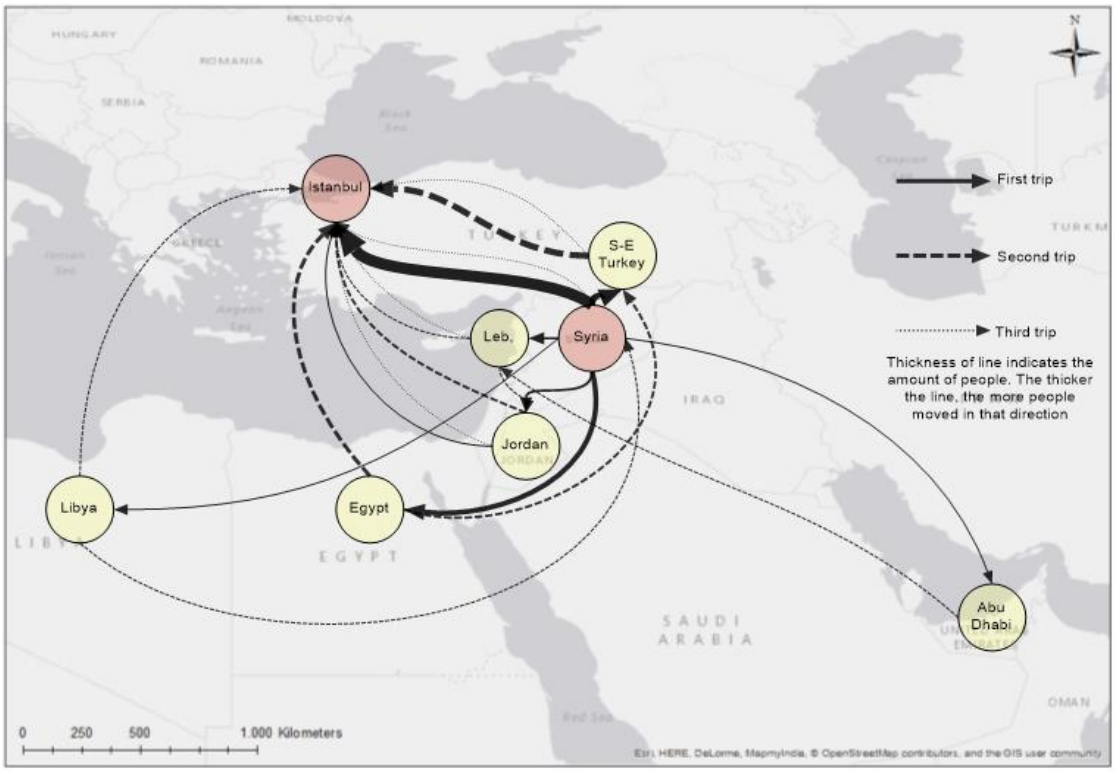


Figure 8. Trajectories of respondents until Istanbul.

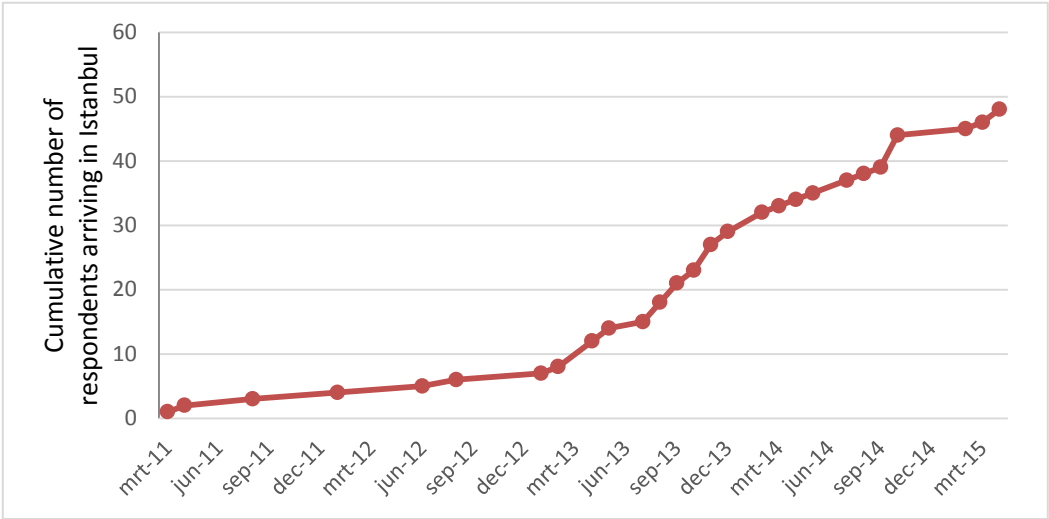


Figure 9. Respondents' arrival date in Istanbul.

Whereas external factors were forcing them out of their previous living places, the respondents purposely chose to settle in Istanbul. The primary reasons mentioned for going to Istanbul were social networks, employment opportunities, study and transit. Almost every Syrian knew someone in Istanbul before they went there. Their families, relatives, friends and acquaintances have advised and informed them, sometimes connecting them to other people. They also played a vital role in encouraging people to come to Istanbul and most of their connections were able to support them for at least the first few days, sometimes months. Knowing someone that could help them start up in Istanbul was a very important factor for choosing Istanbul. It, however, is not surprising that so many Syrians know someone in Istanbul because of the large (and growing) amount of Syrian refugees that is currently there.

Istanbul, being the economic capital of Turkey, also attracted a lot of Syrians because of economic activity. Many respondents believed that Istanbul was the best place to go to for employment opportunities and statistics are supporting their beliefs. Istanbul has the highest living standard in Turkey, accounts for 17% of the country's population and the formal economy produces about 23% of Turkey's GDP (Kopeykin and Montmaur, 2011). However, the presence of a large informal economy in Istanbul, estimated to be 30% of the formal market, has not been taken into account in these numbers. This means that the real numbers are exceeding the current data. In practice there is more money generated, there are more jobs and there are more people. The fact that Istanbul is a big and international city, lead to the believe among most respondents that finding employment in Istanbul would be easier than in other areas in Turkey (the labour market of Istanbul will be discussed in the next chapter):

> *"Istanbul is a very big city and I believed that I would be able to find a job as a pharmacist quite easily, you know. I mean, there is lots of people and lots of places to work. I thought that Istanbul was my best chance" (Adib, personal communication, 10-05-2015).*
>
> *"I went to Istanbul because it is a big and international city. I speak three languages, I believed that I would be able to find a job quickly" (Abdul-Hakeem, personal communication, 17-04-2015).*
>
> *"In Turkey there are less tensions between Syrians and local people than Egypt, Jordan or Lebanon. I chose to go to Istanbul because It's a big city in a big country with a lot of employment opportunities" (Mansur, personal communication, 02-05-2015).*

Another factor of importance for Syrians to choose Istanbul as a destination is education. Istanbul counts eight public universities and around 31 private universities and there is a possibility for Syrians to enrol in these universities. For public universities, they have to pass several tests, including a mathematics and a Turkish language test. Private universities set their own standards. Education was also an important reason for respondents to move to Istanbul. Because Syrians had to leave their country abruptly, only 9 out of the 16 university students were able to graduate before they left and three respondents never got the chance of starting university. This is a large destruction of potential. As there were opportunities for Syrians to study in Istanbul, six respondents decided to move to Istanbul because of education opportunities.

Transit was the last major factor among reasons to go to Istanbul. Some respondents never intended to stay in Istanbul, but were planning to move somewhere else, mainly to Europe (the situation of Syrians that arrived in Europe has been analysed by Pursey (2015)). However, Europe was not the only targeted destination. Hassan, who is a graphic designer and is inspired by Japanese art, wanted to go to Japan. He is one among many Syrians that got stuck in transit in Istanbul:

> *"I tried to leave Istanbul many times. The first time that I was here, it was meant to be only as a stopover on my way to Japan. I got accepted at a Japanese graphic design institute, but I was not able to apply for a visa in Syria. That is why I went to Istanbul. To apply for a visa at the Japanese embassy. When I went there, they told me that the legislation changed and that it was better for me to stay in Turkey. I got accepted by the institute, but was not allowed to go. Since then I have been trying to leave Istanbul multiple times. I do not want to stay here" (personal communication, 29-04-2015).*

On the margins, there were two 'special' reasons for going to Istanbul among the respondents. Azmina went to Istanbul because of an arranged marriage. As soon as her husband had a house and a job in Istanbul, she flew over from Damascus. The main reason for Amilah and Fidyan to go to Istanbul was to ease the communication with the UNHCR, but they also recognized that there were many job opportunities in Istanbul.

4.5 Conclusion

There is a great diversity of occupations among the Syrian respondents. This variety is partly due to their city of origin, age and education levels. When the Syrian crisis broke out, all respondents had to (eventually) quit their jobs (or education). Security issues were the main

reason for Syrians to leave their country, regardless of their occupation. Despite the variety of occupations, it is remarkable that almost all respondents had mixed motives for leaving Syria. An important motive for leaving their country and for their decision to go to Istanbul is economic opportunities. Syria was never a stranger to out-migration. In fact, before the crisis started, many Syrians already moved out of Syria because of economic reasons related to the labour market situation and working conditions in Syria in search for better opportunities abroad. Despite the conflict (or rather, aggravated by the conflict) there is a continuation of this outward labour migration trend. The perceived employment opportunities in Istanbul (among other reasons) was of major importance in the respondents' decision of moving to Istanbul. The fact that economic motives are latently present in the decision of respondents to leave their country and settle in Istanbul reflects the importance of employment for refugees, as was noted by Lundborg (2013), Ott (2013), Bloch (2002), Cheung and Phillimore (2014) and Jacobsen (2006). The next chapter will elaborate on the context of Istanbul in which the respondents arrived after fleeing their country and in which they were searching for employment.

5. The Istanbulese context

Economic motives seemed to be of major importance in choosing to go to Istanbul. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the context in which the Syrian respondents found themselves after fleeing their previous living places. First, the legal context with regards to residence and employment will be discussed. Afterwards an overview of the labour market in Istanbul will be provided.

5.1 Turkish legal framework

The first Syrian refugees thus came to Turkey in March 2011 already, yet Turkey was not new to refugee crises. From the 1920s into the mid-1990s, the Turkish republic received more than one and a half million Muslim refugees ranging from Albanians to Tatars from the Balkans (Kirişci, 1996). Close to another half a million Iraqi refugees entered Turkey in 1991 after escaping from Saddam Hussein's violence (Kirişci, 2014). The latter refugee crisis had a lasting impact on the Turkish Asylum policy. In 1994, Turkey adopted a national legislation in the form of a regulation that prioritized national security over human rights considerations (Kirişci, 2014). The regulation stated that refugees had to be stopped before they could cross the border to Turkey, unless the Turkish government decided otherwise. In case refugees were able to cross the Turkish border, they had to be contained in camps in the border regions. The encampment of refugees is not specific for Turkey, but is present throughout the world (Bududuram camp in Ghana, Dabaab in Kenya and Yarmouck in Syria are perfect examples) (Byrne, 2013; Ward, 2014).

Although Turkey is no stranger to refugees and asylum seekers, the Syrian crisis is unprecedented in three ways. The first being the sheer number of refugees that entered Turkey. Never before has Turkey experienced a larger influx of refugees (within 4 years). In fact, Turkey entered the top five refugee receiving countries in the world in 2014 (UNHCR, 2014c). As Turkey has received more refugees over the past year, it is likely that Turkey is currently in the top three refugee receiving countries. On the 25th of June, the Turkish Ambassador in the Netherlands (Sadik Arslan), noted that if Aleppo were to fall in the (near) future, another 1 million Syrians will become displaced. As Aleppo is close to Turkey, it is likely that these Syrians will enter Turkey, potentially making Turkey the largest refugee receiving country in the world.

The second reason is that the large influx of Syrians is happening simultaneously with the establishment of the General Directorate of Migration Management (GDMM). This Directorate will be responsible for implementing a new immigration law that addresses both individual and *en masse* asylum. *En masse* asylum refers to cases where very large numbers of refugees cross borders as a result of massive violations of human rights and widespread violence while the case of individual asylum seekers refers to situations in which persons facing persecution flee their countries of origin and seek refuge in another country (Kirişci, 2014). The rights and obligations of individual asylum seekers and refugees are governed by the 1951 Geneva Convention, while *en masse* asylum cases are defined by the decisions of Executive Committee of the UNHCR and international humanitarian law. The fact that this newly opened Directorate is responsible for handling the mass asylum, creates a backlog of registrations as the capacity to handle these registrations is not yet optimal.

The third reason relates to the open-door policy mentioned in the introduction. Not only did Turkey open its doors to such a large amount of people, but it also discontinued its regulation adopted in 1994. Syrian refugees are not solely accommodated in camps along the border. In fact, most of the Syrian refugees in Turkey are residing outside the camps in urban areas.

Yet, the Syrian refugees are not legally recognized as refugees by the Turkish government, because of the geographical limitation added to the 1951 Geneva convention and they were granted a 'guest' status first. Everyone, including Syrians and the international community, was expecting the revolution in Syria to be successful, resulting in a fast repatriation. This, however, was not the case and the "guest status" remained applicable to the Syrian refugees during the first six months. Since this definition did not carry any legal meaning, there was a risk of arbitrary treatment towards Syrians. Therefore, the Syrian guests were given the "temporary sheltering status" by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in October 2011 (ORSAM, 2014; Ahmadoun, 2014). Their "temporary protection" status was legally confirmed in March 2012. By Issuing the "temporary protection" status, the government of Turkey facilitates a non-refoulement policy (no forced return), imposing no limit on their duration of stay and providing shelter and basic services in camps along the border with Syria.

Currently, the GDMM is responsible for legislation concerning migration. Syrians were previously exempted from Turkish immigration restrictions and were allowed to come and

go freely. However, under new rules set by the GGDM that came into force on January 1st, 2015, Syrians can only remain in Turkey for a maximum of 90 days without a visa (Yusuf, 2015). During/after these 90 days, there several possibilities for Syrians to stay in Turkey, depending on whether or not they have a passport (figure 10). For Syrians having a passport, there are five options. If they legally enter the country, they are able to stay in the country for 90 days after which they can go out of Turkey and come back in legally again. They could stay illegally in Turkey when they overstay the 90 days and risk a fine of 570 TL (€188). With regards to settlement, they can apply for settlement in a refugee camp. Settlement in a camp, however, is not guaranteed because the camps are currently overflown with people.

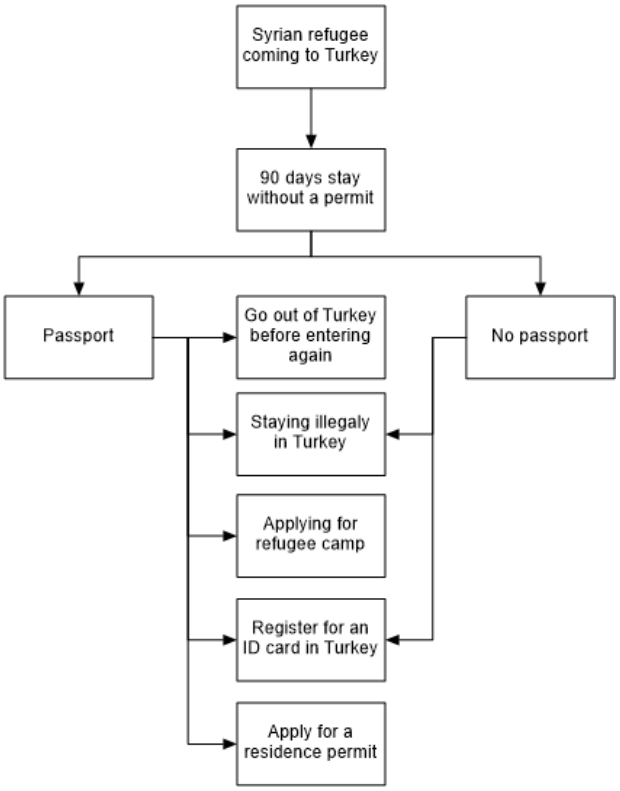


Figure 10. Residence options for Syrian refugees in Turkey.

During the 90 days, Syrians with a passport also have the opportunity to either register for an ID card in Turkey or apply for a residence permit. Acquiring an ID card in Turkey provides a legal basis for Syrians to reside in Turkey and facilitates access to medical assistance and other assistance provided through the sub-governorates (UNHCR, 2013b). Syrians who do not wish to benefit from the temporary protection framework, may apply for a residence permit. There are different residence permits for which Syrians potentially can apply at the Foreigner's Department of the Ministry of Interior (table 12). The most commonly applied for residence permit is the temporary residence permit (short term residence permit). In

order to apply for a temporary residence permit, Syrian refugees have to meet a number of preconditions including having a valid passport (which many Syrians do not have because of the conflict), having a Turkish health insurance and a bank account containing an equivalent of at least 6000 US dollars (Yusuf, 2015). These preconditions are difficult to meet for many Syrians. Syrians are not able to apply for a Humanitarian residence permit because of the geographical limitation on the 1951 Geneva convention definition of refugee. Neither can they apply for a long term residence permit because they do not meet the requirements for one (GDMM, 2014). Currently, Syrians are required to have a passport in order to enter Turkey and Syrians that entered Turkey without a passport only have two options. They can stay in Turkey unregistered and illegally, also risking the fine of 570 TL (€188). They can also register themselves at the Turkish government and can apply for an ID card. Because they entered Turkey illegally they are not eligible for settlement in refugee camps (İçduygu, 2015).

Table 12. Residence permits in Turkey.

Kind of Permit	Duration of Stay
Short term residence permit	Maximum of 1 year duration at a time
Family residence permit	Maximum of 2 years duration at a time
Student residence permit	Maximum of 1 year duration at a time
Long term residence permit	Permanent residence
Humanitarian residence permit	Maximum of 1 year duration at a time
Residence for victims of human trafficking	Maximum of 30 days duration at a time

Although the Temporary Protection Regulation (TP), adopted in 2014, provided a legal and administrative framework for access to health care, education and even the labour market and social assistance (ILO, 2015), Syrians do not automatically receive the right to work. In accordance with a large number of laws on professions, being a Turkish national is a set prerequisite for working in Turkey as dentist, veterinarian, optician, pharmacist, lawyer, notary republic, judge, prosecutor, private security force, customs broker, assistant customs broker, accountant, certified public accountant, exchange broker, captain, apprentice, crew, labourer, dock and wharf porter at Turkish vessels (Toksöz et al, 2012). The TP, however, enables (Syrian) refugees' access to the labour market, meaning that they can apply for work permits in defined sectors, professions and geographical areas (Rami Sharrack, personal communication, 10-03-2015). These sectors, professions and geographical areas, however,

are still to be defined. Until they are, Syrians are in fact not allowed to work unless they acquire a work permit; a residence permit does not guarantee the right to work. Foreigners (including Syrians up until now) have to apply for a work permit separately. Since 2015, the work permit is considered to be a residence permit as well, which means that foreigners who acquired a work permit are not obliged to apply for a residence permit too (Datassist, 2015). Acquiring a work permit thus provides an opportunity for Syrians to become employed and to facilitate a legal residence, subsequently increasing opportunities in Turkey.

Applying for a work permit, however, can be a lengthy and expensive process (ACAPS, 2013). In order to acquire a work permit within Turkey, both the foreigner and the employer have to submit documents to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Foreigners have to submit an application form for foreigners, a valid residence permit (which has to be valid for at least six months) and a notarized copy of the passport translated into Turkish (Datassist, 2015). Employers have to submit a work permit application form, a balance sheet and a profit and loss statement for the past year certified by tax authorities and the Turkish Trade Registry Gazette indicating the most recent capital and shareholding structure of the organization (Datassist, 2015). In addition, corporate bodies that intend to employ foreign experts in the fields of engineering, construction, contractor and consultancy services, payslips of Turkish citizens working in the same positions and the contract between the foreign expert and the employer have to be submitted.

Besides these requirements, employers have to employ at least five Turkish nationals for every foreigner and also have to demonstrate that a Turkish national cannot fulfil the requirements. In the extraordinary case of Syrians, the last requirement has been lifted (Kirişci, 2014). If a work permit has been continuously renewed over a period of five years, they are also able to apply for Turkish citizenship. Bayhas, who owned a textile factory in Syria before he came to Istanbul in March 2011, can almost apply for Turkish citizenship:

> *"I came as one of the first Syrians to Istanbul. I knew what would happen in Syria because the same thing happened 30 years ago. I first got a tourist visa when I arrived because a work permit is more difficult. A Turkish company helped me get one. Now, after one year I can register for the Turkish nationality because then I have this work permit for five years. I want to stay in Istanbul" (personal communication, 06-05-2015).*

Because the application for a work permit can be a lengthy, expensive and difficult process, it is not a priority for Syrians to apply for one and results in informal employment for many Syrians (Kirişci, 2014). And even when the sectors, professions and geographical areas in which Syrian will be allowed to become employed are defined, many Syrians will (continue to) work informally. The limitations set by the Turkish government will enable only a limited amount of Syrians to work formally. Syrians who are not experienced or educated to work in these sectors, will have to confine themselves to other sectors which makes working informally more likely.

5.2 Labour market in Istanbul

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, many Syrian respondents went to Turkey because they had no other option and went to Istanbul because of economic opportunities. Their perception of the presence economic opportunities is supported by (macro)economic data on Turkey and Istanbul. Turkey has been experiencing economic growth over the last four years and the financial crisis has not hit Turkey as hard as it did Europe (table 13). Although the growth rate has decreased, it remained higher than 2% over the last four years, performing at least as good as (or better than) other countries in the region.

Table 13. Turkey's economic growth compared to other countries between 2011 and 2014 (WorldBank, 2015).

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Turkey	8,8%	2,1%	4,2%	2,9%
European countries				
Germany	3,6%	0,4%	0,1%	1,6%
United Kingdom	1,6%	0,7%	1,7%	2,6%
France	2,1%	0,2%	0,7%	0,2%
Italy	0,6%	-2,8%	-1,7%	-0,4%
Countries in the region				
Egypt	1.8%	2.2%	2.1%	2.2%
Lebanon	8%	2%	1.5%	2%
Jordan	2.6%	2.8%	3.3%	3%

Along with its economic growth, Turkey witnessed an increase in employment rates (table 14). Both male and female employment rates have increased. Turkey, just as Syria, is a patriarchal country and it is often up to men's decision how women would work either at home or outside (Erdoğdu and Toksöz, 2013). Therefore, it is remarkable that female employment rates have increased relatively faster. There are two reasons for that. The first is that a (slow) emancipation process of women in Turkey is set in motion. Increasingly more

women are highly educated and the share of women in higher education (university degree) increases more rapidly than the share of men (Eurostat, 2015). Because education levels increase among women increase more rapidly, it is likely that more women find employment after graduating.

Table 14.Employment rates in Turkey from 2010 to 2014 (Eurostat, 2015).

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total	46,3%	48,4%	48,9%	49,5%	49,5%
Male	66,7%	69,2%	69,2%	69,5%	69,5%
Female	26,2%	27,8%	28,7%	29,6%	29,5%

The other factor is that there is an increased economic necessity for women to become employed. The labour force of Turkey has continuously grown over the last five years (table 15), but the labour market participation of women has increased more so than male participation. This is partly due to the fact that there are less women in the labour force compared to men. This means that the same increase in labour participation among men and women, results in a relatively higher increase in labour market participation rate than among men. However, it also relates to the increased economic necessity for women to become employed. Although there is economic growth in Turkey, not everyone seems to benefit from it. The increased national income does not trickle down to everyone. Especially low skilled Turkish nationals do not directly experience an increase in income. Since the mass influx of Syrian refugees in Turkey, tensions on the labour market arose between Syrians and Turkish nationals in the Southern border provinces. The result of the mass influx of Syrian refugees is that there is an increase in labour supply. Because Syrians are not legally allowed to work, most of them do so informally. They are often willing to work for lower wages than Turkish nationals, which is pushing wages downward (Kirişci, 2014; Erdoğan 2014). Moreover, Turkish nationals have the feeling that the Syrian refugees are stealing their jobs (Erdoğan 2014). Therefore, Turkish nationals have to deal with decreasing wages too, increasing the economic necessity for women to also become employed. More research is needed in order to investigate these dynamics more precisely.

Table 15. Growth in Labour force in Turkey from 2010 to 2014 (Eurostat, 2015).

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total	3,6%	4,2%	2,3%	3,4%	1,8%
Male	2,0%	3,3%	1,5%	2,4%	2,3%
Female	7,8%	6,4%	4,2%	5,9%	0,6%

Turkey also witnessed a decrease in unemployment rates over the last five years (figure 11). Whereas the unemployment rates for males have decreased, the unemployment rates among females have slightly increased. Women thus experienced increased employment and unemployment rates which is due to an increase in the female labour force. These indicators point out that Turkey, as a country, has been enjoying economic growth over the past four years and experienced increased employment opportunities. Compared to the average employment rates of the members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United States and Europe, Turkey's employment rate is still far behind (Figure 12).

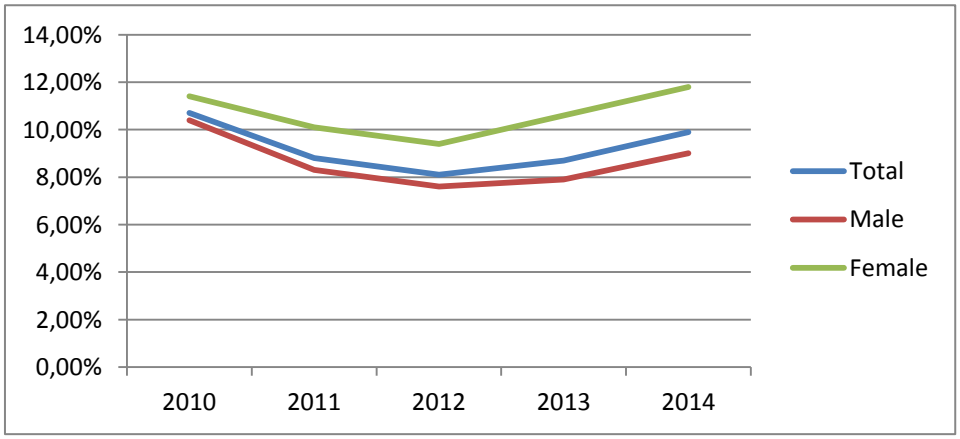


Figure 11. Unemployment rates in Turkey from 2010 to 2014 (Eurostat, 2015).

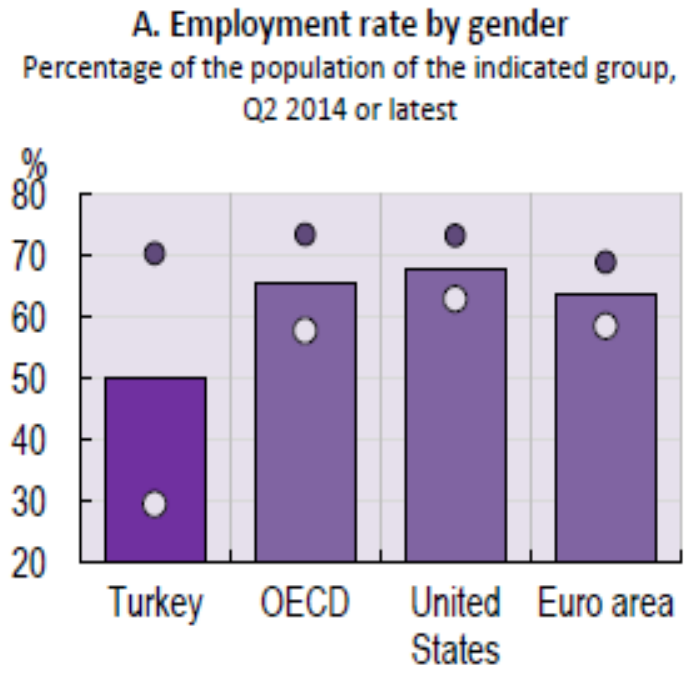


Figure 12. Turkish employment rate compared to the OECD, United States and Europe area in 2014 (European Commission, 2015).

However, it is expected that the informal economy in Turkey is larger than the OECD, United States and Europe, but data on the informal economy is non-existent and therefore not taken into account in the above mentioned data. According to Fargues (2009), 46% of the Turkish labour force was already working in the informal sector in 2009. The current amount of people working in the informal economy in Turkey is unknown and the most recent data on the informal economy in Turkey is from 2009 (Reis et al, 2009). The report states that informality in Turkey decreased between 2001 and 2006, mainly because of a decrease in agricultural employment, where most informal employment takes place. Similarly, an increase in people employed in the service sector was visible, a trend which is supported by urbanization. Since 2006, Turkey has been urbanizing (almost 2% per year) shifting towards a service sector driven economy (CIA, 2015). This makes increased urban informality likely, which results in a larger informal economy in the service sectors in urban areas.

Turkey's economic shift from an agricultural sector towards a service sector has been gradual. While Turkey was traditionally very dependent on agriculture and manufacturing (which the southeast of Turkey still is), it is currently the service sector that is of most importance. This sector currently provides employment for 52% of the national employment rates, versus 27,9% and 21,1% of the manufacturing and agriculture sector respectively (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2015).

Istanbul, being the economic centre of Turkey, shows a different picture. Although the service sector in Istanbul is also the most important sector, agriculture was almost meaningless; in 2014, 62.8% of the labour force in Istanbul was working in the service sector, versus 36,7% in industry and only 0,5% in agriculture (Eurostat, 2015). In line with the Turkish labour market statistics, Istanbul also witnessed an increase in employment rates over the last five years (figure 13). Also in Istanbul, female employment rates have increased relatively faster than the male employment rates, presumably (partly) because of the same reasons mentioned for Turkey on a national level. Although the studies of Kirişci (2014) Erdoğan (2014) have touched upon labour market issues, related to the influx of Syrians, in the southern border regions of Turkey, it is likely that similar issues are to be found in Istanbul.

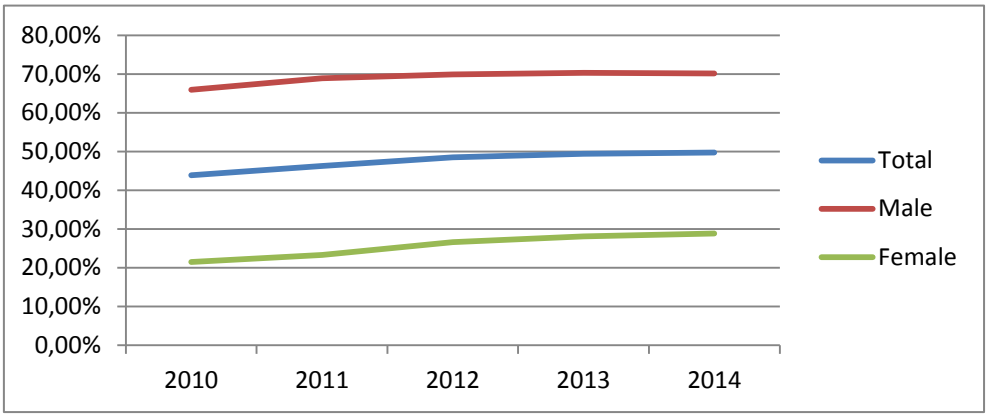


Figure 13.Employment rates in Istanbul from 2010 to 2014 (Eurostat, 2015).

The unemployment rates in Istanbul have been decreasing for both males and females (figure 14). Compared to the Turkish national unemployment rates, Istanbul shows higher rates. The main reason for the unemployment rate to be higher in Istanbul compared to the Turkish average is the almost negligible agricultural sector in Istanbul. In the rural provinces of Turkey, agriculture is an important sector for income and employment as it is labour intensive. The agriculture absorbs a lot of employment in the rural areas in Turkey in terms of family workers and self-employed people. In the context of the negligible agricultural sector in Istanbul, this is not happening. Despite the fact that these figures are less positive for Istanbul than they are for Turkey on a national level, they reflect a similar pattern; there are increasingly more employment opportunities in Istanbul. As is the case with the Turkish national statistics, the statistics on the Istanbul employment and unemployment rates do not include the informal economy, which is widespread in Istanbul (Toksöz et al, 2012). The informal economy, which was estimated to be 30% of the formal economy in Istanbul in 2011, is not taken into account in these numbers (Kopeykin and Montmaur, 2011).

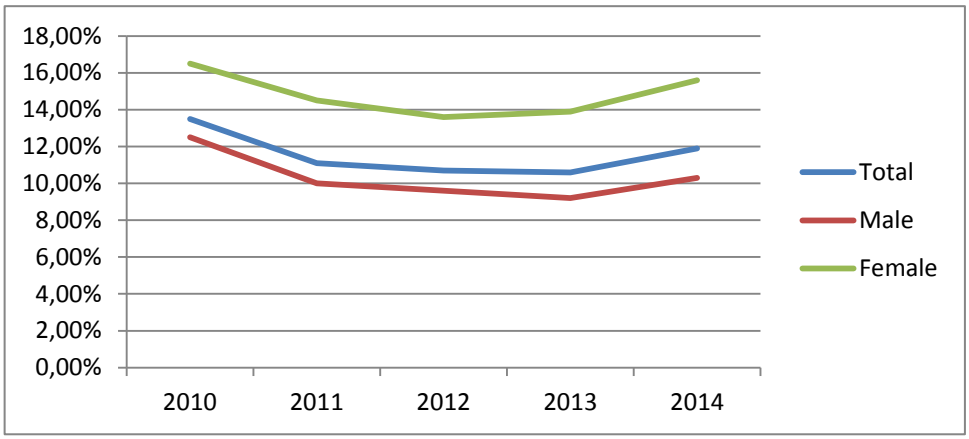


Figure 14.Employment rates in Istanbul from 2010 to 2014 (Eurostat, 2015).

With regards to the employment statuses, Istanbul differs from Turkey too (table 16). There are relatively more paid workers and less self-employed and unpaid/family workers in Istanbul, compared to Turkey. The reason for this difference can be found in the importance of the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector is of importance in Turkey. As I mentioned before, more than 20% of the Turkish labour force is employed in the agricultural sector. However, in Istanbul this percentage is only 0,5%. Many Turkish who are employed in the agricultural sector are self-employed or family workers (many women), which (partly) explains the difference between Istanbul and Turkey.

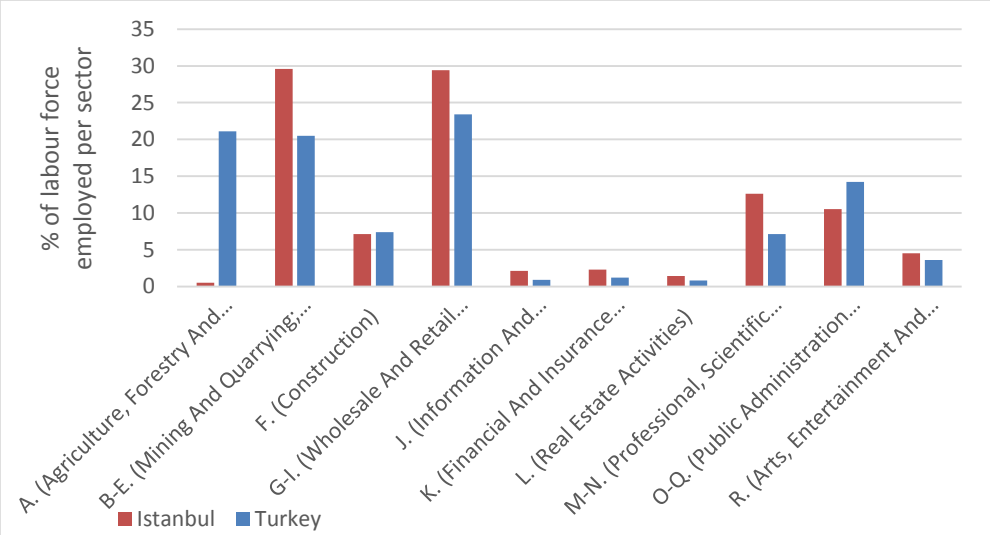
Table 16. Share of labour force per employment status in Istanbul and Turkey in 2014 (Eurostat, 2015).

	Istanbul	Turkey
Paid workers	82,8%	67,5%
Self-employed	16,0%	20,6%
Unpaid/family workers	1,2%	11,9%
Total	100,0%	100,0%

Istanbul, being the largest city of Turkey, thus shows a different composition of economy and a slightly different labour market compared to the Turkish national statistics. The difference in the importance of various sector is shown more specifically in figure 15. This figure only shifted a little bit over the last four years in favour of the service sector at the expense of the manufacturing sector. Being the economic capital of Turkey, the manufacturing sector and the trade sector are the largest sectors in terms of employment opportunities. Moreover, all service related sectors are offering more employment opportunities above the national average. Only the public administration and defence sector offers less employment opportunities than the Turkish national average. The main reason for this is that the national political functions are located in Ankara, rather than in Istanbul.

According to Toksöz et al (2012), not every sector in Istanbul is accessible for migrants and refugees. Although migrants and refugees are naturally different, the challenges they face in gaining employment in Istanbul and their legal status on the labour market bear similar characteristics. Although they are generally not allowed to work, they mainly find employment in labour intensive jobs such as care/cleaning services, textile, construction, tourism, entertainment and the sex industry in Istanbul. A reason for these jobs to be more easily accessible is that approximately 85% of the documented workplaces in these sectors consists of small businesses that have less than 10 employees (Toksöz et al, 2012). The result

of the prevalence of a large amount of small scaled businesses is that informal employment becomes more easy and common because law enforcement becomes more difficult. Therefore, these sectors allow for an absorption of migrant and refugee employment.



A. (Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing)
B-E. (Mining And Quarrying; Manufacturing; Electricity, Gas, Steam, Air Conditioning Supply, Water Supply And Sewerage Etc.)
F. (Construction)
G-I. (Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles; Transport And Storage; Accommodation and Food Service Activities)
J. (Information and Communication)
K. (Financial and Insurance activities)
L. Real Estate activities
M-N. (Professional, Scientific And Technical Activities; Administrative and Support Service Activities)
O-Q. (Public Administration And Defence; Compulsory Social Security; Education; Human Health and Social Work Activities)
R. (Arts, Entertainment And Recreation; Other Social, Community And Personal Service Activities)

Figure 15. Share of labour force employed per economic activity in Istanbul and Turkey in 2014 (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2015).

In case they choose for self-employment, bustling economic activity is recognized in bakeries, travel agencies and restaurants (Kirişci, 2014). They are able to find employment in these sectors mainly because of the large informal economy that is present. In general, informal employment is more common in small and medium sized workplaces. As these sectors consists mainly of small sized businesses, migrants and refugees tend to find employment in these sectors quite easily. As emphasised in literature on migration, the main characteristics of the jobs performed by migrants are irregularity, discontinuity, informality

and lack of security (Toksöz et al, 2012). Added to these characteristics is the infamous 'refugee gap' I described in the theoretical framework and the related over-qualifications for jobs they are doing.

Little is currently known on the employment situation of Syrian refugees in Istanbul as most research on Syrian refugees has been focused on the border regions (Erdoğan, 2014; Kirişci, 2014; Özden, 2013). There are, in fact, success stories in these border regions of Syrian refugees being employed. In Gaziantep, a lot of Syrians found employment and Syrian entrepreneurs created employment. In 2013 Gaziantep was one of the few places that reported a drop in their unemployment rates synchronously with increasing economic capacity (Kirişci, 2014). However, both Syrian refugees and Turkish nationals in this region also voiced concern about entering the local labour market and finding employment opportunities. Competition between Syrians and Turkish nationals has increased in these regions, especially for low-skilled jobs in the sectors that are typical for migrants and refugees. This creates a downward pressure on wages (ILO, 2015). Syrian refugees are desperate to find employment and are therefore willing to work for lower wages which enforces decreasing wages in these regions (Erdoğan, 2014).

As was mentioned earlier, limited information is available on the working conditions of Syrian workers currently making their living through informal jobs, but they are facing serious exploitation (Erdoğan, 2014). They work for much lower wages than their Turkish counterparts and those that are willing to take lower wages often work longer hours too. Because they are not yet legally allowed to work in Turkey, they have no recourse out of these labour conditions and provoke resentment among Turkish natives (Kirişci, 2014). Moreover, in case of employment, there are no contract benefits which deteriorates the position of Syrians on the labour market too (Toksöz et al, 2012; Özden, 2013; ILO, 2015).

5.3 Conclusion

The perception on the presence of employment opportunities in Istanbul among the respondents seems to be supported by statistics. Turkey has been experiencing economic growth over the last years and employment rates have increased. Despite the slight increase in unemployment rates in Istanbul (due to the absence of the agricultural sector), the labour market of Istanbul allows an absorption of migrant labour in low skilled labour intensive jobs (Toksöz et al, 2012). This presents opportunities indeed for Syrian refugees to become

employed. Moreover, although the Turkish society is also quite patriarchal, there seem to be more employment opportunities for women compared to Syria, as the labour market participation rates of women are higher than in Syria. The next chapter will assess in what kind of sectors the respondents initially found employment and their consequential occupational mobility in Istanbul.

6. Finding employment

In the previous chapters I have given an overview of the respondents and their occupations (table 9), I have discussed the mixed motives to flee their country and their decision of going to Istanbul and I have given an overview of the labour market of Istanbul. This chapter will analyse the occupational mobility of Syrian refugees (48 respondents) after they arrived in Istanbul. Firstly, an overview will be given of their initial occupations. Subsequently, their initial occupational mobility will be analysed. Afterwards, strategies to find (subsequent) employment and the motivation of Turkish and Syrian employers to hire Syrian refugees will be discussed as these are factors of influence in finding employment. Lastly, the current employment situations of respondents will be discussed.

6.1 Initial employment

After arriving in Istanbul, almost every respondent had a social network that could help him/her during the first couple of days or weeks. Along with the sheer amount of number of Syrians in Istanbul (330.000), it is an indication that Syrian refugees already had a present network and are therefore not very different from migrants as Wauters and Lambrecht (2008) argue. Due to the mass displacement, Syrians that came to Istanbul had a network already, which was also important in their decision to go to Istanbul. The respondents used their networks to find a house or a room for the first few days (van der Sar, 2015; Dermaux, 2015), understand how to move around in the city and to learn some basics of the Turkish language. Sometimes the support also extended to help them finding a job. The initial jobs (and the corresponding occupational skill level) found by every respondent are listed in table 17.

Irrespective of the occupational background of the respondents, almost everyone found employment initially (Mujab is the exception as he was able to enrol in university). All acquired jobs were initially informal as Syrians are not legally allowed to work. The fact that they found employment in a variety of sectors is due to the fact that informal employment is very usual in Istanbul (the informally employed labour force was estimated at 30% of the total documented employed people). However, the self-employed and employers (owners) of shops or companies are in a different situation. The legal requirement for having a company/business is to have a residence permit (short term residence permit). Opening a business is therefore legal (and self-employment as well), but legalizing the business happens usually at a later stage (Valarini, 2015).

Table 17. Initial occupations of respondents in Istanbul.

Respondent	Occupation in Syria	Skill level	First occupation in Istanbul	Skill Level
Fidyan	Student graphic design	4	Manual labour in art studio	1
Amilah	Student medicine	(4)	Manual labour in art studio	1
Azmina	Primary school teacher	4	Primary school teacher	4
Aatif	Construction work	1	Manual labour in textile	1
Aamil	Owner of cell phone shop	3	Sales in cloth shop	2
Jasim	Student Arabic literature	4	Cameraman at ABS	3
Talhah	Student Computer Engineering	4	Sales in cloth shop	2
Aziza	Unemployed	(4)	Chartering in trade	3
Jamilla	Student law	4	Administration	2
Latif	Student telecommunication and engineering	(4)	Carwash	1
Nawaz	Student business administration	4	Manual labour in textile	1
Abdul-Hakeem	Employed at medical laboratory	4	Tour guide	2
Khalila	Primary school student		Manual labour in textile	1
Aftaab	Self-employed translator	4	Self-employed translator	4
Shaista	Student civil engineering	4	Civil engineer internship	4
Areeb	Student business engineering	(4)	Tourism agent	1
Basimah	Primary school student		Sales in soap shop	2
Munsif	High school student		Street musician	3
Karim	Student Tourism	3	Garcon in hotel	2
Hassan	Self-employed graphic designer	4	Self-employed graphic designer	4
Mansur	Translation and administration at research centre	4	Manual labour in textile	1
Adib	Pharmacist in Jordan	4	Manual labour at print shop	1
Anwar	Student translation	(4)	Manual labour in leather industry	1
Nimerah	Student engineering	(4)	Waitress in restaurant	2
Baber	Student mechanical engineering	4	Garcon in hotel	2
Murad	Surgeon assistant	1	Manual labour in textile	1
Firas	Döner distributor	2	Owner of a seeds shop	3
Abu Majid	Doctor	4	Real estate middleman (he is a tenant and he sublets to other Syrians)	2
Ammar	Electrician in a hotel	2	Self-employed electrician	2
Ayman	Owner wholesale clothing shop	3	Owner of clothing shop	3
Bayhas	Owner of a textile factory	4	Agent at a clothing	3

			factory	
Barad	Working at plastic factory (family owned)	4	Employee for electrician company	2
Falah	Owner of a print shop	3	Employee in cell phone shop	1
Halil	Owner of a construction company	3	Fabric trader	3
Mona	Owner of a restaurant	3	Owner of restaurant	3
Nizar	Owner of a restaurant	3	Owner of restaurant supply company	3
Tahir	Taxi driver and owner of a cell phone shop	3	Employee in second hand furniture shop	1
Jamal	Owner of a clothing wholesale shop	3	Owner wholesale clothing shop	3
Duraid	Owner of a games shop	3	Opening wholesale clothing shop	(3)
Azado	Owner of a restaurant	3	Employer in Tourism agency	3
Bulus	Owner of a clothing shop	3	Owner of restaurant	3
Abbas	Student computer engineering and programmer	4	Employee at tourism agency	2
Mohammad	Self-employed hairdresser	2	Self-employed hairdresser	2
Omar	Lawyer	4	Translator in hospital	4
Kafeel	Student geology	(4)	Student geology and tutor at the Syrian Education Commission	4
Mujab	Student engineering	(4)	Student computer engineering	(4)
Mr. Ahmad	Stationery shop and English teacher	4	Owner of restaurant	3
Farid	Owner of a coffee supply company	4	Owner of family coffee café	3

Although many respondents found employment within the first month of their arrival, not everyone was able to do so. This very much depended on the personal situations of the respondents. A factor that is of influence is family. Respondents that had a family that supported them financially could afford longer times of unemployment compared to respondents that had to sustain themselves and/or their families without financial support. Shaista was supported by her family both in terms of housing and financially. Her sister is married to a Norwegian man, who owned a house on the princess islands (off the coast of Istanbul in the Marmara Sea) in which she could stay:

> *"My sister did not let us go back to Syria. My sister left to live with her husband in Norway and I could stay in his house on the Princess Islands. I*

felt so lonely for the first 8 months because we were very isolated there. I felt so miserable and depressed that I did not even learn the language" (personal communication through van der Sar (2015), 12-03-2015).

Because Shaista felt very miserable and isolated, she did not learn the language and did not search for employment. But the fact that her brother in law owned a house on the Princess Islands and was able to support Shaista financially, created a situation for Shaista in which she did not need employment directly (van der Sar, 2015). Before acquiring her civil engineer internship, she was unemployed for 14 months. Shaista's situation is rather an exception to the rule. Most respondents could not afford to be unemployed for such a long period of time because they did not have a source of income and/or they had a family that they needed to provide for.

6.2 Downward occupational mobility

When comparing the skill level of occupation respondents had in Syria with the skill level of the initial occupations of respondents in Istanbul, it becomes evident that the respondents, as a group, are performing worse than they did in Syria (figure 16). The amount of respondents with a skill level 4 occupation strongly decreased after the flight from Syria to Istanbul, while the amount of respondents with a skill level 1 occupation strongly increased. This corresponds to the initial downward occupational mobility as described by Chiswick et al (2003; 2005) and Rooth and Ekberg (2006).

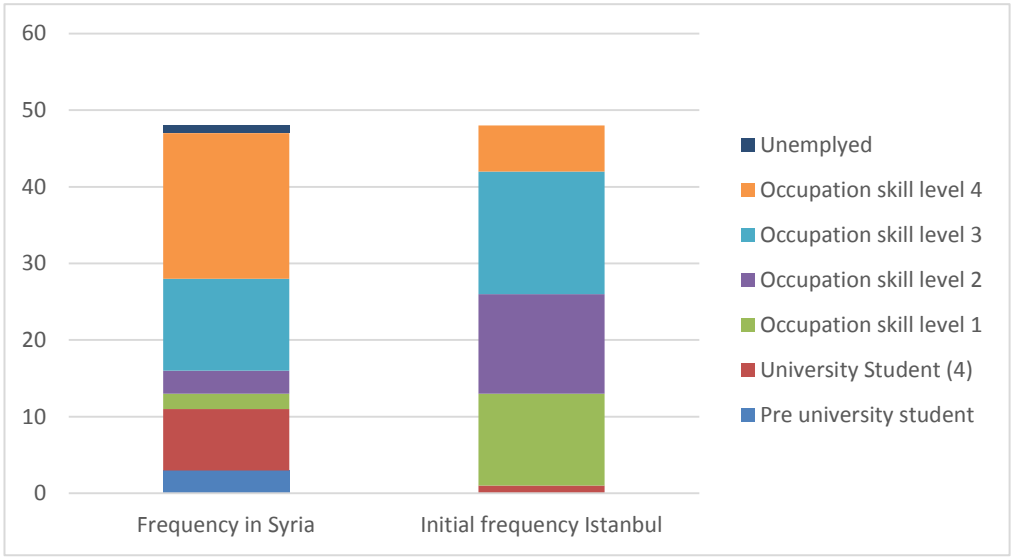


Figure 16. Occupational mobility of respondents between Syria and initial occupations in Istanbul.

The largest drop in occupational skill level occurs among respondents with the highest skilled occupation level (4), as was also theorized by Chiswick et al (2003; 2005) and Rooth and

Ekberg (2006). The second reason for the downward occupational mobility among the (highly educated) respondents is that certain occupations that require an academic education cannot be practiced by the respondents. This is a reason for the larger drop in level of occupation of highly educated respondents compared to other respondents. As I have already mentioned, Syrians are unable to become employed in the medical sector or in law. Jamilla, a female respondent who attained a bachelor degree in Law, explained:

> *"Egypt and Syria have the same law, but in Turkey there is a different system. I cannot become employed in Law because you have to have a Turkish nationality and you have to be graduated from a Turkish university" (personal communication, 24-06-2015).*

Because Syrian certificates in these disciplines are not recognized by the Turkish authorities, they are not allowed to work in their respective sectors. The transferability of these skills and certificates is thus very difficult. Moreover, the occupational skill level of highly educated respondents can also drop more levels (to 3, 2 and 1), which is also why the change in occupational skill level of the highly educated respondents is larger than that of other respondents.

It is interesting to note that both male and female respondents also found employment in high skilled occupations (skill level 3 and 4). This is surprising as female respondents were either students or unemployed in Syria and their chances for employment were very limited because of the patriarchal society. Even in Istanbul where employment rates for women are much lower compared to employment rates of men, it is surprising that all of them found employment (although Jamilla did not retain her job because the company she was working for was relocated to Tunisia). Two of the female respondents are 14 years old and should not be working at that age. However, they do so because they need to sustain their families as their parents do not work or do not earn enough to sustain their families. The other female respondents found employment and most of the female respondents were very happy to have found employment too because they can sustain and develop themselves (chapter 8 elaborates on satisfaction about employment).

Respondents who formally did not experience downward occupational mobility are predominantly self-employed, opened a shop, restaurant of business, university students or pre-university students. Many of the self-employed and employers among the respondents were able to transfer their business to Istanbul or open a new shop, restaurant or business (Valarini, 2015). Their skill level is measured against their occupational status (being an

owner of a business requires a high skill level) rather than the sector in which they opened a shop restaurant or business. University students and pre-university students also did formally experience a downward occupational mobility. Despite having the potential of becoming employed in high skill level occupations, they became employed in low skill level occupations (1 and 2). Because they were not able to graduate from their universities, their highest completed education level is high school. This has a negative influence on their potential opportunities in Istanbul. Kafeel was the only exception, becoming employed as a tutor during his application time for university. Kafeel was asked by the Syrian Education Commission (SEC) to help other Syrian students with their university applications because he had experience of applying to university. However, six of the seven respondents that were university students and three pre-university students became employed in low skilled paid work because they (and their families) needed an income desperately. These students thus experienced a destruction of potential (at least on the short term).

Corresponding to the downward occupational mobility of the Syrian respondents, the respondents who found paid work initially predominantly found employment in manual labour, tourism and sales (figure 17). Tourism and sales are sectors in which the Arabic language proficiency can be very useful and wanted because there are many Arabic speaking clients in Istanbul. The fact that they find employment in these sectors stems with the findings of Toksöz et al (2012) who states that migrants and refugees predominantly find labour-intense jobs and in tourism among other sectors. However, these sectors are not exclusively the sectors in which respondents found employment. In contrast with Tosköz et al (2012), respondents also found employment in high skilled occupations such as trade (Aziza), journalism (Jasim) and as tutors/teachers (Azmina and Kafeel). They were able to do so because of their networks. Aziza found her job because of an Afghani friend she had met in Mersin, before she went to Istanbul. Jasim was hired by his friend Khaled, who was office manager of an Jordanian media centre in Istanbul. Kafeel helped Azmina acquiring a job as primary school teacher after he got in touch with the Syrian Education Commission.

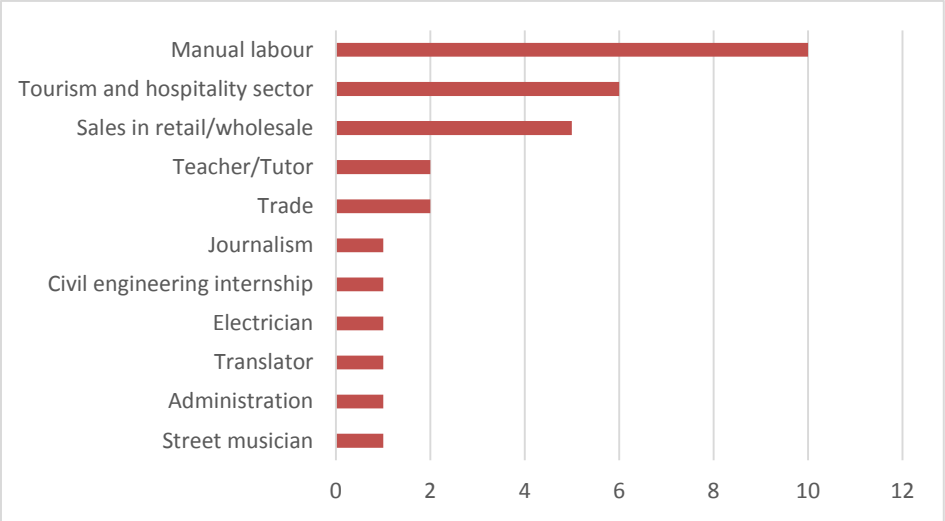


Figure 17. Initial sectors in which respondents found employment.

Not everyone was forced into paid work. Former employers and self-employed respondents could retain their employment status. They predominantly created employment in similar sectors (figure 18). Although the two figures (17 and 18) do not correspond completely, many former self-employed and employer respondents opened (small) retail and wholesale shops (predominantly in clothing) or opened restaurants or cafés. As was noted by Kirişci (2014), a sector in which self-employment became very apparent was the catering sector (restaurants). This is a sector in which many self-employed and employer respondents found opportunities to start a business (Valarini, 2015). Because of the presence of a large Syrian community in Istanbul, there was a client base. Moreover, they were able to use their social capital in order to find financial and/or human capital for opening these businesses (Valarini, 2015). Self-employed respondents also found employment in high skilled occupations such as translation and graphic design because they were able to transfer their business from Syria to Istanbul.

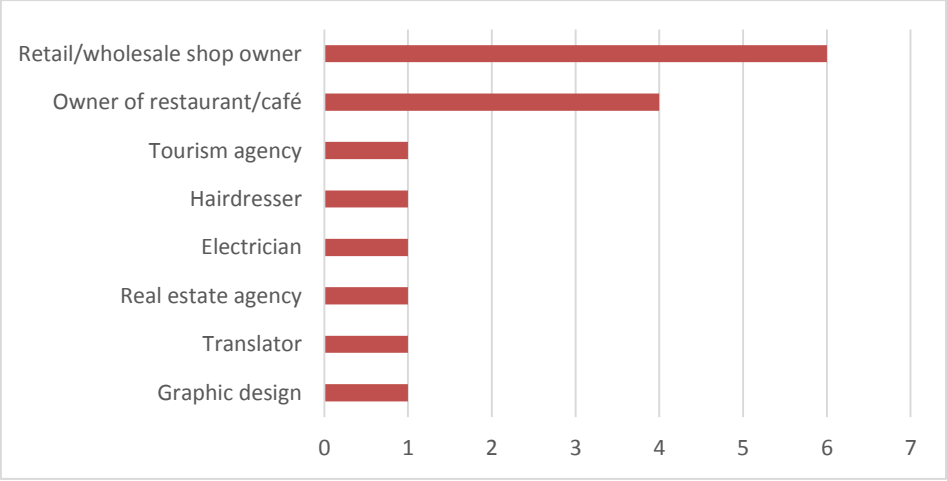


Figure 18. Initial sectors in which respondents created (their own) employment.

Although not every respondent experienced downward occupational mobility after they left Syria, a trend seems evident. Many respondents initially experienced downward occupational mobility. They experienced several obstacles in finding employment which all contribute to the downward occupational mobility. The first obstacle is that respondents were generally in desperate need of employment (in contrast with Shaista's situation) as was just mentioned. They (or their families) did not have a source of income anymore to provide themselves and/or their family with. Because of that situation, many respondents take the first employment opportunity they get. Anwar, who fled Damascus with his parents and his brother, explains:

> *"I found a job but it was a very bad job. I only earned 600 TL (€198). I was desperate to find a job because my family needed an income. No one of my family worked. I was the only one and I had to take care of my family" (Anwar, personal communication through van der Sar (2015), 10-05-2015).*

The result of taking the first opportunity that they get is that many end up in low skilled (manual labour) jobs as they are more easy to find than highly skilled jobs. Because of the high necessity of finding a job, respondents are willing to work for very low wages (Anwar initially earned 600 TL (€198) per month) making them a cheap labour force. This is attractive for the labour intensive manufacturing industry which requires mostly cheap manual labour. This was also recognized by Toksöz et al (2012).

The second reason that hinders finding employment is depression, experienced by various respondents (Latif, Talhah, Shaista, Munsif and Adib). Not being able to find employment right away (after having experienced traumatic events), contributed to having a depression and having a depression resulted in an inactivity of Syrians to find a job. This feedback loop has also been described by Jacobsen (2006). She stated that the mental health problems of refugees can create difficulties in establishing livelihoods. Adib experienced this vicious circle:

> *"I was convinced that life in Istanbul was not meant for me. I had a really heavy depression and remained unemployed for three months. During this time I was planning my trip to Europe and did not search for work at all" (personal communication, 10-05-2015).*

Although not every respondent experienced this negative feedback loop, many Syrians recognized that all Syrians could use encouragement. After the crisis emerged, an online platform (Dubarah) was created for the purpose of supporting Syrians all over the world (Dermaux, 2015). But also other respondents have voiced their concern about the mental

health of Syrians. Areeb, who's application for the university took seven months, met many Syrians that were very discouraged and depressed:

> *"During my application time for the Bahçeşehir University I met many Syrians. I noticed that the Syrian people need encouragement to achieve their potential. Many Syrians complained that the Turkish people would not hire them, but they hired me right? They are depressed and need encouragement" (personal communication, 22-04-2015).*

After experiencing traumatic events, being unfamiliar in a new environment did not help, according to Talhah, who fled Homs after heavy bombings on his neighbourhood Baba Amr. This was the third reason for an initial downward mobility in occupation. Various respondents did not know where to start looking for employment. Jasim, who left Syria after his undercover journalism activities became too dangerous, took the first weeks to get to know the city and the public transportation system which consists of Metro, Metrobus (a bus with a specific traffic lane ranging from the east to west of Istanbul), bus, tram and dolmuş (a minivan for short distance transport) before searching for employment. Latif, however, did not take this time and searched for employment immediately. However, Istanbul, about three times as big in area as London, can be a very confusing city:

> *"I looked for a job for four days but I got lost twice. I was not able to speak Turkish, but I knew two Turkish sentences: "çalısmak istiyorum. Iş var mı [I am looking for work. Is there work]?". Eventually I found a job at a carwash and I could start immediately. The owner was nice and brought me home by car after work, but the next day I did not know how to get to the carwash again, so I quit working, also because the salary was insufficient. Looking for a job was very difficult and I got depressed" (personal communication, 23-03-2015).*

His depression lasted for two months in which he did not search nor find employment. During this time he relied on the income of his brother in law who supported his wife and Latif from the income he gained from working in a textile factory.

The fourth reason relates to the language spoken in Turkey and Syria. Based on the stories of the 48 respondents, the language barrier between the Turkish natives and the respondents was one of the major obstacles in finding employment at all. Many Turkish nationals are not able to speak English nor Arabic mainly because the Turkish language is new (box 1), but also because of low education levels. Syrians did not have the opportunity to prepare for their stay in Istanbul which resulted in the fact that they did not prepare their Turkish language skills. This confirms the argument of Wauters and Lambrecht (2008) who stated that

refugees generally do not have time to prepare for their travel because they are abruptly forced to leave. The most common language proficiencies among respondents were Arabic and English. Because many Turkish nationals did not speak these languages, created a language barrier which was experienced as an obstacle by respondents. Adib, did not manage to find a job in the first three months. In order to find a job, he believes that you need to speak Turkish. Not being able to speak Turkish, makes finding employment more difficult:

> *"When you speak Turkish and Arabic, you can find a job easily. When you speak Turkish and English you can also find a job easily. When you speak English and Arabic, it is more difficult" (Adib, personal communication, 10-05-2015).*

Box 1. Background of the Turkish language (Accredited Language Services, 2015).

The language used in the Ottoman empire was rooted in Arabic, Turkish and Persian due to the history of the region. Since 1923 the Turkish language has been reformed under Kemal Atatürk to support a strong Turkish national identity. Persian and Arabic loanwords were replaced by new Turkish words. In fact, new Turkish words are still being developed. In order to strengthen a Turkish nationality, there is a strong focus on the Turkish language.

The importance of the Turkish language in finding a job was recognized by most respondents. However, the obstacles experienced because of a language barrier were different. The respondents with a self-employed and employer status in Syria, did not experience the language barrier as an immediate obstacle to start a new business (Valarini, 2015). However, in legalizing and in expanding their businesses it became a hindrance as compliance with Turkish laws is required for the process of legalizing their business and addressing potential Turkish clients is needed to expand their businesses. Other obstacles specifically experienced by self-employed Syrians and Syrian employers in creating their own employment were a lack of human, financial or social capital (Valarini, 2015). In order to overcome this obstacle they used their social capital to find human and/or financial capital. However, a lack of social capital hindered the ability of self-employed Syrians and Syrian employers to find financial/human capital.

These obstacles all influenced the occupational status (and skill level) of the respondents and predominantly resulted in a downward occupational mobility (although there are some exceptions). Only 18 respondents retained their first occupation, which means that the other

30 respondents changed their jobs. Because most respondents could not afford to be very selective in finding their first job(s), they did not acquire a job that they were satisfied with. Their dissatisfaction with their job derived from two factors; bad working condition and the promise for better opportunities. Bad working conditions include low salaries as Anwar experienced. He changed his job because he needed a higher income. Adib, who was doing manual labour in a print shop, also quit his job because of low wage:

> *"I worked for long hours and the work was really boring. I earned 35 TL per day, which is about 1000 TL per month (€330). This is not a lot. I got dinner at the job, but I could barely survive with this money. After one month I quit because I needed to find a better paid job" (Adib, personal communication, 10-05-2015).*

However, the bad working conditions respondents experienced were not limited to low wages. conflicts with their colleagues, and mainly their employers, made them quit the job. These conflicts range from being pushed to their limits, to unfair payment, to relational issues between colleagues. Karim quit his job because his employer was not paying him what he should be and Aziza shared her experience of relational problems within her team:

> *"My boss took me with him to Algeria to sign a big contract with a big company there. I was the salesman in the shop and because I made this deal I should have received commission for making that deal. My boss did not pay me anything for that deal. Also when I worked overtime, I did not get paid extra. I did not like that and started searching for another job" (Karim, personal communication, 29-04-2015).*

> *"The accounting boss in the company was the girlfriend of the owner of the company. I was doing a good job but she was a jealous woman and told her boss that he had to choose between me or her. My boss chose for her and fired me. The owner of the company was not a good man. "Go back to Syria, you have no future here" is what he said to me" (Aziza, personal communication, 18-03-2015).*

The other factor for respondents to quit their job was the promise of better opportunities. This influenced the decision of eight respondents to quit their initial occupations, among them, Nawaz;

> *"Something had been bothering me for a while. I told my friend that I was so sure that I could find a better job. I was not about to search for a better job but that I was about to find a better job. My friend was the only one supporting me in this" (Nawaz, personal communication, 15-04-2015)*

An additional reason for respondents not to retain their first jobs (or were not able to) was that companies either moved away or did not have work anymore for the respondents. The company that Jamilla worked for moved from Istanbul to Tunisia, leaving her unemployed. The factory where Mansur worked closed down because it was bankrupt and Jasim was laid off because there was no more work:

> *"After six months I got fired. ABS fired employees because there were too many employees. They were needed because there was a lot of work, but when the amount of work decreased, the employees were not needed anymore. In total, three employees were fired, including me. I was fired because the other employees were more experienced than I was and worked at ABS for a longer time" (personal communication, 11-03-2015).*

6.3 Conclusion

Although all respondents were able to find employment initially, it very much depended on the personal situations of the respondents how long it took to find their first jobs. Respondents experienced common obstacles in their search for a job which resulted in an initial downward occupational mobility for many respondents. This initial downward mobility was also recognized by Chiswick et al (2003; 2005) and Rooth and Ekberg (2006) as I elaborated on in chapter 2. However, many respondents did not retain their initial occupations because of the abovementioned reasons and started searching for subsequent employment opportunities. In order to find (subsequent) employment, respondents employed different strategies. These strategies will be discussed in the next chapter along with the occupations respondents eventually found in Istanbul.

7. Upward occupational mobility

Many respondents changed their occupations after their initial employment situation. This chapter will discuss the different strategies respondents used in order to find (subsequent) employment prior to elaborating on the subsequent occupational mobility of the respondents and their current occupations.

7.1 Strategies to find (subsequent) employment

As became clear already from the previous chapter, social networks played an important role in finding employment. This is the first out of two strategies that Syrians employed in order to find another job; using their social network of friends and/or family (Dermaux, 2015). These networks can be both networks that already existed in Syria and newly established networks after they left Syria, including Turkish people. These networks can be both networks that already existed in Syria and newly established networks after they left Syria, including Turkish people. Old friends or family from Syria who had already moved to Istanbul before the respondents did, were able to help. They got to know the city and found employment. When their friends or relatives came over, they were able to help them find a job, either at their own company, the company they worked for or at another company. Jasim found his first and second job this way:

> *"Khaled helped me finding a job. Khaled is a friend of my family and I knew him already before the war when we were still living in Homs. When the revolution started, Khaled could stay in our house to avoid the regime. When I needed a job in Istanbul, he helped me. He is the office manager of ABS media centre in Istanbul. He said that I needed a job and he helped me… While I was working at ABS media centre, he asked me to help setting up another media office while I was working at ABS media centre. Because there was not enough work anymore, I got fired. Because I helped Khaled in setting up the new media centre I could change my job and he promoted me to editor" (personal communication, 11-03-2015).*

Jasim was not the only one who found employment by using his network. In fact, 19 other respondents did so too. However, the networks of Syrian refugees extended further than the network they were already maintaining in Syria. New relations were also made with other Syrians but also Turkish natives and people having other nationalities. Despite the tensions on the labour market between Syrians and Turkish nationals, as I have mentioned before, Turkish natives also helped respondents to find employment after they got to know them. Anwar who was working at a suitcase company, received help from his newly established social network. His Turkish colleague helped him searching for a job:

> *"Unur told me one day that I was too skilled to be doing a job like we were doing. He told me that I should be able to find another job with my skills because I could speak Arabic, Turkish and English. I did not want to take the risk of losing my job and I did not have time to search for a new job. Unur offered me to help and on a Friday I received a call from Unur saying that he found a place where they were interested in me. I was hired almost immediately" (personal communication through van der Sar (2015), 11-05-2015).*

These networks proved to be very valuable in finding another job as nine respondents found (subsequent) employment by using their new connections.

According to various respondents (Mansur, Nawaz, Adib and Anwar), social networks are essential in finding a job in Syria and finding employment in Syria was very difficult without connections. Because many job applications are handled informally, connections are very important to find employment as friends, acquaintances and family were almost always preferred over 'unknown' people. This made Syrians increasingly dependent on their networks to find a job. Although the strategy of using social networks to find a job is not exclusive, it was customary in Syria to find employment by using their networks. The fact that many respondents employed this strategy both in finding initial employment and subsequent employment, indicates a continuation of a familiar strategy in Istanbul.

Although social networks are important for respondents to find employment, it was not the only strategy they used to find employment. There were also respondents who searched for a job without (initially) relying on their social networks. In fact, although they acknowledged social networks can be important, they believed that the reliance on social networks alone is not sufficient to find a (good) job. They argued that actively passing by shops to ask for jobs, hand out CVs and reacting on (online) vacancies would be more important to find a job. This is the second strategy that respondents employed in order to find (subsequent) employment. Syrians have to do this and recognize their opportunities, according to Nawaz and Areeb:

> *"It is all about the attitude. You have to believe in yourself. Stop thinking negatively. Start thinking positively. When you think positively, you will chase opportunities. That is the key to success. In Syria it is common that you find a job through family or friends. Basically everything is arranged in this way in Syria. In Turkey the system works differently. You have to build your CV and react on online vacancies." (Nawaz, personal communication, 15-04-2015).*

> *"It is about taking advantage of opportunities after recognizing them. This is a combination of skills and connections. This combination is also needed when you want to find a job. In Syria, people mostly depend on their connections to get a job. Although that is also true in Turkey, you really have to have some skills. You need to use these skills to find a job and recognizing opportunities is a skill. Actively searching for jobs by reacting of vacancies is needed, but a lot of people do not do this. Just "Do you have a job for me? No. Ok" is not enough. You have to be assertive and persistent" (Areeb, personal communication, 22-04-2015).*

However, success is not guaranteed when this strategy is applied. Abu Majid (doctor), Abdul-Hakeem (having a degree in medical engineering) and Adib (having a degree in pharmacy) started searching for employment by using this strategy but it did not work out for them. Although they handed out CVs and passed by employers directly, they were not able to find employment they were searching for, namely a job commensurate with their education and experience. Because this strategy did not work for them, they chose to change their strategy and also used their social networks to find employment:

> *"Believe me when I say that I gave my envelope to a lot of pharmacies. I passed by and told them: "This is my CV and some more information about me. Please read it. You don't have to do anything with it, but just have a look and then decide what you want to do with it. You can even throw it away. Just not in my face". When I did not hear anything from any pharmacy, I changed my strategy because I needed money. I saved up money in Jordan, but I did not allow myself to use this money unless there was an emergency. I contacted some friends and they found me a job at a print factory" (Adib, personal communication, 10-05-2015).*

The primary reason for not being able to find a job commensurate their education and experience for Abdul-Hakeem and Adib was the sector they were searching a job in. As I explained before, to practice a profession in health care (or law), you need either to be a Turkish national (Toksöz et al, 2012) or to have graduated in Turkey. As none of these respondents did, they were not allowed to work in this sector.

The strategies the respondents used to find (subsequent) employment are in sync with the strategies Syrian and Turkish employers use to find employees. They use a combination of the two strategies to find employees. Their friends or employees are always able to indicate people that are in need of a job. This is an easy way to find employees and it is the way many Syrians are used to. The other strategy is to put advertisements on the windows of their respective businesses or put vacancies online, which complements the search of individuals that pass by employers and/or look on the internet for vacancies.

Based on interviews with six Turkish employers in the catering sector (4), hospitality sector (1) and in small scale retail (1) and seven Syrian employers (Ayman, Nizar, Mona, Bulus, Farid, Jamal and Bayhas) in the catering sector (5), manufacturing sector (1) and wholesale (1), three motivations to hire Syrian refugees become apparent. The first factor is their Arabic language proficiency. As became clear from the previous chapter, not being able to speak Turkish was experiences as an obstacle in finding employment. However, their Arabic language proficiency makes them attractive to employers, especially if they also speak Turkish. Turkey, located between the Arab world and Europe, serves markets in both regions. A lot of economic activity is concentrated in Istanbul, making it a place where English and Arabic are important languages for economic activity in all kinds of sectors. All Turkish employers made clear that Arabic language skills are very attractive and in demand. They specifically look for people with Arabic language proficiency and therefore hire Syrians because of their Arabic language proficiency. Esra, a female Turkish employer owning a women's clothing shop in Lalelli, explains:

> *"I was looking for an Arabic speaking employee because I get a lot of Arabic customers. I asked a friend of mine if she knew somebody and this friend happened to know my new employee. It had to be a female because it is a female clothing shop" (personal communication, 10-05-2015).*

Not only Turkish employers are looking for Arabic speaking employees. The Syrian employers were also looking for Arabic speaking employees but for a different reason as they were already able to speak Arabic. They prefer to work with Syrians because they are able to speak the same language and share a culture which makes working together more easy (Valarini, 2015; Dermaux, 2015). Despite the importance of Turkish language proficiency, the fact that Syrians are able to speak Arabic can thus be an advantage in finding employment.

The second reason for employers to hire Syrian refugees is a humanitarian concern. Some of them are able to relate to the situation of the Syrian refugees and try their best to help them. Ferda, a Turkish owner of a French vegetarian restaurant, was in need of a dishwasher and explained:

> *"If I hire a Syrian without permits and the policy will check on me, I will have to pay a zillion of Turkish lira on fines. I was not sure if I wanted that, but I decided that I did not want to be the person being restricted by the legislation. This man needed work and I could help him. So I hired him. If he wanted to work in my restaurant he could, if he did not want to,*

he did not have to. It was his decision to make" (personal communication, 28-04-2015).

Syrian employers were motivated to hire Syrians because of similar humanitarian concerns. They hire them because they believe they have the biggest need for a job, employing more than they need to facilitate employment and income for other Syrians and sometimes even help them find employment at other companies. That is what Bayhas, a Syrian owner of a textile factory, does:

> *"it is my duty this volunteer work. When you do something good for someone, you will get something good back. Not money but also something else. I was one of the first Syrians in Istanbul and many friends contacted me for advice on where to go, how to start a business and how to find a job. I helped them, but their families and friends also needed help. That is when I started helping many people. I try to help them and I put advertisements on Facebook to help more people. I now help people in two ways. I employ them in my textile factory or I help them find employment at other companies. I ask for information about the people like their name, surname, age, profession, experience, family members etc. With this information I got an idea who is in what situation and I can find a suitable match. I helped over 100 people already and I am very busy. That is why I stopped advertising on Facebook" (personal communication, 06-05-2015).*

However, not every entrepreneur is motivated to hire Syrians because of humanitarian concerns or their language. The third motivation of employers to hire Syrians relates to labour costs. Syrians are cheap labour are known to be willing to work for low wages, as I also explained in the previous chapter. Their willingness to work for these low wages stems from the dire necessity for employment. Moreover, because almost every Syrian is informally employed, they receive lower wages than formally employed paid workers. The result of informal employment is that they are not entitled to employment benefits like a health insurance and a pension. As employers are not required to facilitate these benefits for Syrians, they are willing to hire them because of lower wages. Especially in manual labour, where language is not really of importance for increased productivity, low wages for Syrians is a factor to hire them. The three motivations to hire Syrians are not mutually exclusive as Bulus, owner of a restaurant, explains:

> *"All my employees are Syrian. The law stipulates that I need to employ 5 Turkish employees for each foreigner employee. However, I just make fake contracts and will just pay the health insurance, pretending that I am employing Turkish people. A Turkish employee is too expensive. Besides, I prefer to work with Syrians because I know how Syrians work and we*

speak the same language so it is easier to understand each other" (personal communication through Valarini (2015), 16-03-2015).

By employing the two different strategies, Syrians are thus able to find (subsequent) employment. Both because these strategies are complementary to the strategies of employers to find employees and because of the above mentioned motivations of employers to hire Syrians. A combination of the previous mentioned factors (obstacles, bad working conditions, more promising opportunities, strategies to find employment and motivations of employers to hire Syrians) resulted in their current employment occupations in Istanbul. These occupations will be discussed in the next paragraph.

7.2 Pursuing a career?

Out of the 48 respondents, 18 respondents kept their initial employment. They did so because of various reasons. Some respondents found occupations (with a high skill level) which were commensurate with their experience and education levels. Azmina was able to teach at a primary school, Aziza became employed as a chartering agent in the harbour, Shaista found an internship which was commensurate with her education and several former employers were able to restart a business in Istanbul (Valarini, 2015). Two self-employed Syrians were able to transfer their business to Istanbul; Hassan and Aftaab (self-employed graphic designer and translator respectively). Hassan was already a self-employed graphic designer in Damascus and had an additional job in the IT department of a ceramic factory. Because he relies on the internet to find and deliver his work to clients, he was able to transfer his work to Istanbul. He enjoys this kind of work very much and is able to provide himself with everything he needs. Aftaab is in a similar situation. He was a self-employed translator in Lattakia and was able to transfer his business to Istanbul. In fact, he was happy to do so:

"My work is better in Istanbul than it was in Lattakia because Istanbul is much more internationally oriented. I mostly mingle in the international network in Istanbul and I feel that this society is giving me more opportunities" (personal communication through van der Sar (2015), 18-04-2015).

However, not every respondent retained their initial job because it was on par with their education level or experience. Fidyan and Amilah among other respondents simply needed a job in order to survive. Fidyan and Amilah were enrolled in the UNHCR resettlement programme and moved initially to Istanbul for the communication with the UNHCR. During

the process of resettlement, they had to rely on their own income. As soon as they found their job, they retained it to secure an income until they were resettled on the 9th of April, 2015. They were far from satisfied with these jobs, but the fact that the jobs were only temporary (until the resettlement procedure was completed) made them retain these job.

This leaves 30 respondents that changed their jobs (multiple times) throughout their stay in Istanbul. With regards to the employment statuses of the respondents it is noteworthy that the amount of paid workers decreased and the amounts of students, self-employed and employers increased (table 18). The current occupations (and skill level) compared to the initial occupations (and skill level) of the respondents are depicted in table 19. A complete overview of occupations and occupational levels of the respondents from Syria to their current situation can be found in appendix 3. Out of the 23 respondents that acquired a university degree in Syria only three respondents did not acquire a high skill level occupation. Talhah continued his education by starting a master course and Fidyan was overqualified for his job. Jamilla became unemployed after the company she worked for reinstalled itself in Tunisia. She was not able to find a new job and is currently studying for her TOEFL test in order to start an online master programme in maritime law. However, the other 20 respondents with a university degree, seemed to have attained an occupation which requires a high skill level (skill level 3 and 4). Moreover, apart from Jamilla, none of the respondents experienced a subsequent downward occupational mobility. These factors are indicating a trend of upward occupational mobility.

Table 18. Current employment status of respondents in Istanbul.

Employment status	First status in Istanbul	Current status in Istanbul
Pre-university student	0	0
University student	1	5
Paid work	30	21
Self-employed	8	10
Employer	9	11
Unemployed	0	1

Table 19. Current occupations of respondents in Istanbul.

Respondents	First occupation in Istanbul	Skill Level	Current Occupation in Istanbul	Skill Level
Fidyan	Manual labour in art studio	1	Manual labour in art studio	1
Amilah	Manual labour in art studio	1	Manual labour in art studio	1
Azmina	Teacher (primary school)	4	Teacher (primary school)	4
Aatif	Manual labour in textile	1	Manual labour in textile	1
Aamil	Sales in cloth shop	2	1) Money exchange business 2) Real estate middleman 3) Tourism agency	3
Jasim	Cameraman at ABS	3	Editor at SAS	4
Talhah	Sales in cloth shop	2	Student computer engineering	(4)
Aziza	Chartering in trade	3	Vessel broker at the port	3
Jamilla	Administration	2	Unemployed	
Latif	Carwash	1	Manual labour in cloth hanger factory	1
Nawaz	Manual labour in textile	1	Real estate consultant manager	4
Abdul-Hakeem	Tour guide	2	Translator for agency	4
Khalila	Manual labour in textile	1	Manual labour in textile	1
Aftaab	Self-employed translator	4	Self-employed translator	4
Shaista	Civil engineer internship	4	Civil engineer internship	4
Areeb	Tourism agent	2	Tourism agent and student economics	2
Basimah	Sales in soap shop	2	Sales in soap store	2
Munsif	Street musician	3	Sales in tourist shop	2
Karim	Garcon in hotel	2	1 and 2) Translator in student accommodation centre and beauty centre; 3) sales in jewellery shop	4
Hassan	Self-employed graphic designer	4	Self-employed graphic designer	4
Mansur	Manual labour in textile	1	Real estate consultant	3
Adib	Manual labour at print shop	1	Pharmacist	4
Anwar	Manual labour in leather industry	1	Sales at the spice bazaar	2
Nimerah	Waitress in restaurant	2	Catering and student engineering	2
Baber	Garcon in hotel	2	Catering	2
Murad	Manual labour in textile	1	Manual labour in textile	1
Firas	Owner of a seeds shop	3	Owner of a seeds shop	3
Abu Majid	Real estate middleman	3	Real estate middleman	2
Ammar	Self-employed electrician	2	Self-employed electrician	2
Ayman	Owner of clothing shop	3	Owner of restaurant	3
Bayhas	Agent at a clothing factory	3	Owner textile factory	3

Barad	Employee for electrician company	2	Self-employed electrician	2
Falah	Employee in cell phone shop	1	Owner of cell phone shop	3
Halil	Fabric trader	3	Owner of restaurant	3
Mona	Owner of restaurant	3	Owner of restaurant	3
Nizar	Supplier for restaurants (owner)	3	1) Owner bakeries, 2) Owner of bakeries	3
Tahir	Employee in second hand furniture shop	1	Owner second hand furniture shop	3
Jamal	Owner wholesale clothing shop	3	Owner wholesale clothing shop	3
Duraid	Opening wholesale clothing shop	3	Opening wholesale clothing shop	3
Azado	Employer in Tourism agency	3	1) Employer in Tourism agency; 2) Owner in restaurant	3
Bulus	Owner of restaurant	3	Owner of restaurant	3
Abbas	Employee at tourism agency	2	Self-employed programmer	3
Mohammad	Self-employed hairdresser	2	Self-employed hairdresser	2
Omar	Translator in hospital	4	Translator in hospital	4
Kafeel	Student Turkish language	4	Student geology and tutor	4
Mujab	Student computer engineering	(4)	Student computer engineering	(4)
Mr. Ahmad	Owner of restaurant	3	Manager of restaurant	3
Farid	Owner of family coffee café	3	Owner of family coffee café	3

This indicates that many respondents, after their initial employment, experienced an upward occupational mobility towards more highly skilled occupations or became students again (figure 18). The amount of respondents with a high occupation increased (both the amount of respondents in skill level 3 and skill level 4), as did the number of respondents that became students. The amount of respondents working in lower skilled occupations (skill level 1 and 2) has decreased since their arrival in Istanbul. This indicates a U-shaped occupational mobility among Syrian refugees in Istanbul and points out that respondents are able to pursue a career in Istanbul and find employment commensurate their experience and education level. Fifteen former self-employed and employers were able to retain/maintain their occupation as self-employed and employers, compared to eleven respondents that found paid work commensurate with their education and experience. This contradicts with the wide variety of literature on the existence of a refugee gap (Jacobsen, 2006; Peromingo, 2014; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014; Connor, 2010; Ortensi, 2015;

Bevelander, 2011) and confirms similar patterns found by Chiswick et al (2003; 2005) and Rooth and Ekberg (2006).

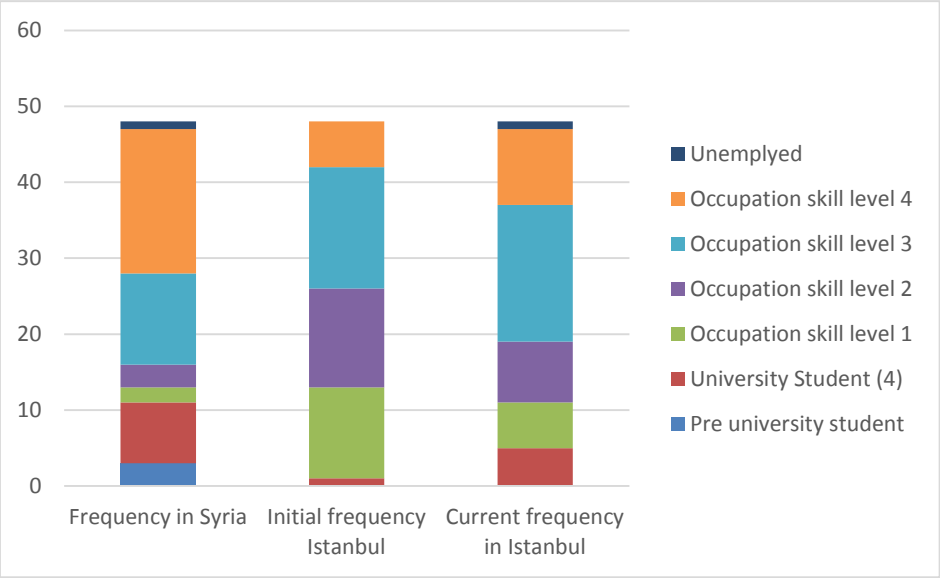


Figure 19. Occupational mobility between Syria and current occupations of respondents in Istanbul.

The main reason for the upward occupational mobility among the respondents is that they started to invest in destination-specific skills. The most important destination-specific skill that was invested in by the respondents was the Turkish language. As became clear in the previous paragraph, when Syrians are able to speak both Arabic and Turkish they become an attractive labour force for employers, but if they do not it can be an obstacle in finding employment. Based on respondents' own perception of their Turkish language skills most respondents argued that they got better over time. Five respondents (Jasim, Jamilla, Latif, Shaista, Hassan) believed that they were only able to speak survival Turkish (table 20). They could indicate what they wanted or needed, but their language skill did not extent beyond that. Most respondents were able to speak basic Turkish. They argued that they were able to get around and have small conversations with Turkish nationals. Most of these respondents learned Turkish because of their interaction with Turkish nationals. There were 15 respondents that argued to have mastered the Turkish language to a moderate or even good level. These are respondents who did a Turkish course (Talhah, Kafeel, Mujab, Adib) or who interact intensively with Turkish nationals (clients and employers) every day (Aziza, Aftaab, Karim, Anwar, Nimerah, Bayhas, Nizar, Omar). Many of these respondents did a self-course to master the Turkish language and use the language very frequently to do business or to study.

Table 20. Turkish language proficiency among respondents.

Turkish language skill	#
Survival	5
Basic	28
Moderate	4
Good	11

Turkish language proficiency played an important role for Karim and Adib, among other respondents, as they were hired because of their language skills. Karim was able to use his Turkish and Arabic language proficiency to translate for a student accommodation centre and for a beauty centre, both dealing with many Arabic clients. When Karim entered Turkey he started practicing Turkish immediately and was able to use his language skills to become a translator, rather than a garcon in a hotel. Adib was able to start working as a pharmacist in a touristic area of Istanbul. He graduated from pharmacy so he already had acquired the job-specific knowledge and skills. These skills became transferable after he became proficient in the Turkish language. His language skills made his employer hire him:

> *"She* [his employer] *needed someone that could speak Arabic and English to the tourist who passed by her shop every day. But she also needed someone with a pharmacy degree that could speak Turkish, because she could not speak Arabic and her English was very bad. That is why I was hired" (personal communication, 10-05-2015).*

Both Karim and Adib are good examples of the benefits reaped from investing in destination-specific language skills. However, not only paid workers, self-employed and employer respondents reaped benefits from investing in the Turkish language. Former students, of whom many initially started working, also reaped benefits from learning the Turkish language. In order to apply for an education at a public university in Turkey, students have to pass several tests, including a mathematics and a Turkish language test. Private universities set their own standards. Nimerah, Talhal, Kafeel, Mujab all had to pass these tests in order to start their university courses again. Another important factor in respondents' ability to continue their education is their family situation. Nimerah was the only student who had to support her family financially, which is why she was also working in catering services. The other student respondents (including Areeb, who applied for a private university and therefore did not have to pass the Turkish language test) did not have to provide for their families. In fact they received support from their families which enabled them to study.

The second destination-specific skill that respondents invested in was becoming knowledgeable about different markets and the context of doing business in Istanbul. This mainly applied to the self-employed and employer respondents (Valarini, 2015). Falah, who was the owner of a print shop in Syria, initially became employed as a salesman in a cell phone shop with the purpose of acquiring knowledge about the suppliers, clients in this sector and about favourable areas to open a cell phone shop. After having worked for six months in a cell phone shop, he felt that he was ready to open his own cell phone shop, becoming self-employed. Falah was not the only respondent who first wanted to acquire knowledge about the business climate in Istanbul before opening a business himself. Barad purposely employed the same strategy. He became an employee at an electrician company before he started an electrician business himself. Other self-employed and employer respondents who were not knowledgeable about the different markets and the context of doing business in Istanbul used their social capital (networks) to find a partner who had the knowledge (Valarini, 2015).

Paid workers do not necessarily need to become knowledgeable about the different markets and the context of doing business in Istanbul. For them, it is more important to become knowledgeable about where to find good employment opportunities, according to Nawaz, Areeb. This is the third destination-specific skill that contributes to better employment opportunities. As I explained in the previous paragraph, Nawaz and Areeb argued that Syrians have to search in the right way to find employment and recognize opportunities as they did themselves. Mansur did so as well:

> *"After I quit my third job I decided that I needed to do some research on where good opportunities are for jobs. After surfing on the internet I found that the real estate market was growing really fast and I found some opportunities for Syrians too. I applied to a company and I got the job" (personal communication, 02-05-2015).*

Although this helped Mansur, Areeb and Nawaz in acquiring good employment opportunities, not every respondent saw the need to become knowledgeable about the labour market in Istanbul as they found good jobs through their network (Jasim, Azmina and Shaista). They received help from both 'old' friends from Syria and newly made friends in Istanbul in acquiring high skilled occupations (respectively, editor at a media centre, primary school teacher and civil engineer internship). These social networks are the last factors that are of influence on finding subsequent (better) employment opportunities as was elaborated on in the previous paragraph.

7.2 Conclusion

After the respondents arrived in Istanbul, many first experienced a downward occupational mobility, mainly because of the high necessity of employment which resulted in accepted the first opportunities they got. These were mainly in low skilled occupations as these are more easy to access initially (Toksöz et al, 2013). However, they subsequently experienced an upward occupational mobility as they invested in destination-specific skills. Because they did so, acquired skills and certificates in Syria became more transferable than they initially were, they became more attractive employees for employers and self-employed respondents and employers became more acquaint with doing business in Istanbul. Consequently a majority of the respondents (both male and female) acquired occupations requiring a high skill level (skill level 3 and 4). This is a confirmation of the U-shaped occupational mobility among refugees as Chiswick et al, (2003; 2005) and Rooth and Ekberg (2006) have theorized. Moreover, it also shows that the refugee gap does not seem to be universally applicable in the context of Istanbul, as some respondents were able to pursue a career into highly skilled occupations. The next chapter will discuss the satisfaction of 26 respondents in their respective occupations. Their satisfaction is of great importance as it potentially influences the occupational mobility of respondents.

8. Satisfaction

Although the initial employment situations, strategies to find (subsequent) employment and their current employment situations have been described, the satisfaction of respondents has not been discussed yet. This is an important factor as it influences their occupational mobility (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007; Ott, 2013), as I also highlighted shortly in chapter 6. This chapter elaborates on the satisfaction among 26 respondents about their current employment situation, which is indicated in table 21.

Table 21. Satisfaction about current occupation among respondents.

Respondent	Occupation in Istanbul	Skill level	Satisfaction with current occupation
Fidyan	Manual labour in art studio	1	Not satisfied
Amilah	Manual labour in art studio	1	Not satisfied
Azmina	Teacher (primary school)	4	Satisfied
Aatif	Manual labour in textile	1	Unknown
Aamil	1) Money exchange business 2) Real estate middleman 3) Tourism agency	3	Satisfied
Jasim	Editor at SAS media centre	4	Satisfied
Talhah	Student computer engineering	(4)	Satisfied
Aziza	Vessel broker at the port	3	Satisfied
Jamilla	Unemployed		Not satisfied
Latif	Manual labour in cloth hanger factory	1	Satisfied
Nawaz	Real estate consultant manager	4	Satisfied
Abdul-Hakeem	Translator for agency	4	Not satisfied
Khalila	Manual labour in textile	1	Unknown
Aftaab	Self-employed translator	4	Satisfied
Shaista	Civil engineer internship	4	Satisfied
Areeb	Tourism agent and student economics	2	Satisfied
Basimah	Sales in soap store	2	Satisfied
Munsif	Sales in tourist shop	2	Not satisfied
Karim	1) Translator in student accommodation centre and beauty centre; 2) sales in jewellery shop	4	Satisfied
Hassan	Self-employed graphic designer	4	Satisfied
Mansur	Real estate consultant	3	Satisfied
Adib	Pharmacist	4	Satisfied
Anwar	Sales at the spice bazaar	2	Not satisfied
Nimerah	Catering and student engineering	2	Satisfied
Baber	Catering	2	Not satisfied
Murad	Manual labour in textile	1	Satisfied

It is remarkable that 17 respondents argued to be satisfied with their current employment situation after the events they experienced compared to 7 respondents that were not satisfied. The satisfaction of two respondents (Aatif and Khalila) is unknown. Satisfaction derives from personal experiences and situations and is different for everyone, meaning that different factors are of influence for different respondents. The reasons why respondents are currently satisfied or not satisfied about their employment situation will be discussed throughout this chapter.

8.1 Employment commensurate with skill/education/experience

The first reason for satisfaction among the respondents about their current occupation is whether or not they have found employment commensurate with their skill, education and/or experience. The importance of finding high skilled employment was especially recognized by the highly educated respondents. Out of the 14 highly skilled respondents, eight respondents were able to find employment commensurate with their skill, education and experience because they invested in destination-specific skills and because of their social network. They argued that being challenged was very important to them as that would lead to self-improvement, a goal every highly educated respondent was aiming for. They were able to pursue a career in Istanbul which is in line with self-improvement, as Jasim states exemplary:

> *"I like my job. I can get experience in the field of journalism and develop myself in a professional way. This is important to me because I will try to do a master in Arabic literature or in media study. My dream is to become a journalist and work for a TV channel. This is a good start" (personal communication, 11-03-2015).*

For Aziza, who is currently working as a vessel broker at the harbour in Istanbul, connecting ship brokers with charterers, this was very important too:

> *"It is very difficult to develop yourself as a woman in Syria. I wanted to work and I wanted to develop myself, but my father did not want me to work. Now I have a good job. I get a lot of satisfaction of connecting a broker with a charterer. It is very exciting and I learn something new every day" (personal communication, 18-03-2015).*

Moreover, acquiring a high skilled occupation does not solely appeal to the goal of self-improvement, but also to self-esteem. As I already highlighted in the previous chapter, Nawaz wanted quit his job because he was very certain and confident that he would find a

better occupation which would give him a better feeling about himself. Mansur experienced the same feeling when he was doing manual labour in a textile factory:

> *"I needed the job to survive, but it was a job that everyone could do. (…) I had a very bad feeling when I was working there. It was not 'my' job. When I was working there I did not have a good feeling towards myself" (personal communication, 02-05-2015).*

However, not all highly educated respondents were able to find employment commensurate with their skills, experience and education. As I have already mentioned, Jamilla is not allowed to practice law in Turkey and Talhah was able to enrol in university for his master degree. Fidyan, Abdul-Hakeem, Karim and Baber did not. Despite investing in Turkish language proficiency, they were not able to find employment commensurate with their skills, education and experience. Fidyan was doing manual labour in an art workshop. Although he was not satisfied, he retained his job because he knew it would be temporary. He would be resettled by the UNHCR to Sweden. Although Karim found employment in the hospitality sector (he is a tourism graduate) he did not like it and found an opportunity to become translator, which he enjoys better. His dream is to open his own tourism agency in the future, but for now he is satisfied with his translation jobs. Abdul-Hakeem and Baber were both engineers and are qualified for different work. Abdul-Hakeem works for an agency (located in Belgium) that is contracted by Google to translate Wikipedia pages about sports and films into Arabic. They outsource the translation services to Istanbul among other places. Besides translating, he also checks the sources to see if the content matches the text written on the Wikipedia page. He strongly expressed his discontent about his employment situation;

> *"I am totally not satisfied with my job. I did not study for 7 years to do this kind of job. (…) I don't know what I am doing now" (personal communication, 17-04-2015).*

Abdul-Hakeem graduated as medical engineer and according to Baber (graduated mechanical engineer), many engineers are not able to find employment commensurate their education. An explanation could be that the engineering sector is relatively insensitive towards language skills or cheap labour, making it more difficult for Syrians to find employment in that sector. More research is needed though, in order to confirm this sentiment.

Among less highly educated respondents, only three less highly educated respondents mentioned the importance; Aamil, Hassan and Murad. Hassan purposely chose not to go to

university because he knew that he wanted to become a graphic designer and started educating himself. When he arrived in Istanbul he was able to continue his work as a graphic designer because he finds his clients mostly online. Although he did not like to live in Istanbul at all, he was happy that he could still perform the job he wants to do. Although Murad argues that he is satisfied with his current employment situation, he also argued that his current job was temporary because he dreams to become a surgeon assistant again. Aamil specifically stated that he is happy to be self-employed again (even before he opened his tourism agency):

> *"I prefer my current situation over the job at the clothing shop. It is better now, but also more intense. I have to be 'sharp' constantly and I am also exploring options to open a tourism agency in Antalya. I am a business man" (personal communication, 09-03-2015).*

The other less highly educated respondents were not specifically looking for employment commensurate with their education or experience because of several (personal) reasons. Eight respondents were not able to start or graduate from university before they left Syria, leaving them with just a high school or primary school certificate. They were more concerned with providing themselves and/or their family (Basimah, Munsif, Khalila and Anwar), finding stable employment (Latif and Amilah) and finishing their university degree (Areeb, Nimerah), rather than finding employment commensurate with their skills, education and experience. However, for the highly educated respondents it was a factor of major importance.

8.2 Wage and basic needs coverage

Another factor of importance in satisfaction about employment situations are the wages received by the respondents and their ability to cover their basic needs and the basic needs of their families. As salary levels were quite sensitive, only 19 respondents were willing to specify their salary (figure 19). It is worth noting that eleven respondents earned less than both the legal minimum wage and the average wage per sector, across a variety of sectors. The explanatory factor is that almost every respondent was working informally. Under the TP regulation Syrian refugees are legally not allowed to work, forcing most of them into informal employment. A classic characteristic of the informal economy is that legal standards are not (everywhere) respected, resulting in longer working hours (as will be discussed in the next paragraph), no job security (as will be discussed in paragraph 8.4) and wages lower than the legal minimum and/or the average wage.

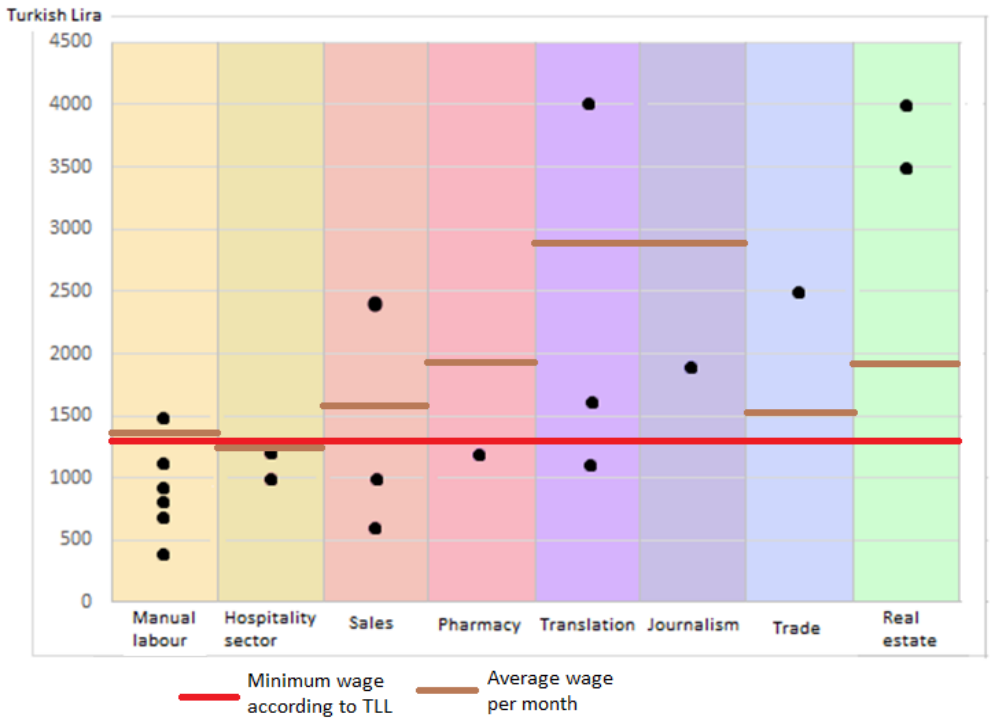


Figure 20. Wages of respondents.

The inter-sectoral differences in wage between the respondents are logical. Respondents that are employed in low skilled occupations (manual labour, hospitality sector and sales) earn generally less than respondents in high skilled occupations (pharmacy, translation, journalism trade and real estate). This depends on the exclusivity of the skills and knowledge employees have; exclusivity increases the higher the skills needed for occupations. The intra-sectoral differences, however, are the result of a variety of factors. Here too, informal employment is an explanatory factor. Because legal standards are not respected there are no 'pre-set' wage levels. Different employers can therefore offer different wages and Syrians are willing to accept low wages because of the necessity of employment. Other factors of influence are working hours, the age of the employees and the amount of time employees have been working for the same employer. However, more research is needed to identify the importance of every factor on wages,

Worth noticing is that Anwar is the only legally employed respondent. He started working as a salesman at the spice bazaar because of his language proficiency. He is fluent in Arabic, Turkish and English and could therefore address many clients. Informal employment is not possible at the spice bazaar due to regular checks from the police. Therefore, his employer applied for a work permit for Anwar (figure 20). He is currently earning 2400 TL per month (€791). Another remarkable feature is that Karim is earning 4000 TL per month (€1318) by

translating is due to the fact that he is currently employed in three jobs. He is currently working three jobs because he wants to earn a high salary and save money in case he needs it in the future.

Figure 21. Anwar's work permit.

Satisfaction about the wages respondents earned is not solely derived from the monetary value of their wage. In fact the extent to which they can cover their basic needs and the basic needs of their families seems to be even more important. Despite the differences in wages between respondents and the fact that many respondents earned less than the legal minimum and average wage, everyone seems to manage to provide themselves and their families with their basic needs. However, this happened to different extents and in different ways. The first is that respondents only had to provide for themselves (Jasim, Latif, Nawaz, Aftaab, Areeb, Abdul-Hakeem, Karim, Hassan, Adib and Murad) without receiving or providing financial aid to their families. The income of these respondents ranges from 900 TL (€297) for manual labour (Murad) to 4000 TL (€1318) for real estate consultancy (Nawaz). However, all of them were satisfied with the amount of salary they earned because they were able to cover all their expenses and basic needs. A strategy they use to decrease their expenditures relates to housing (van der Sar, 2015). All of these respondents share a house by renting a room or renting a bed in an overcrowded house, except for Jasim (van der Sar, 2015). Jasim is able to sleep at his office at SAS media centre for which he does not pay.

There are also respondents who were able to take care of themselves and their families, by the income they personally earned (Aamil, Aziza, Mansur and Anwar). Although Aamil did not want to specify his income, he did state that he is currently the breadwinner for his family (5 family members) and is able to cover everyone's basic needs. He rents out three apartments, has a money exchange business and owns a shop (selling Syrian products) in

which his father is working. Although the shop does not generate a lot of profit, it is important for his father's wellbeing. Aziza, Mansur and Anwar are able to cover all the basic needs of themselves and their family members (respectively, 1, 1 and 4). Aziza and Mansur earned enough (respectively 2500 TL (€824) and 3000 TL per month (€989)) to easily sustain themselves and their family members and share an apartment (van der Sar, 2015). This enables Jamilla to be unemployed and study for her TOEFL test to eventually start a master course in maritime law. Anwar was in a more difficult situation. Although he is able to provide himself, his two sisters and his parents with the basic needs, he is just barely able to. As he is the breadwinner for his family, he is under a lot of pressure:

> *"My parents are both old and cannot find a job. I am the only one that is working in my family. This gives me a lot of pressure. My boss is always pushing me to sell more. I always have to be happy which is very tiring. I really want to quit my job because I am stressed. But I am not able to because then my family would not have an income anymore. I am stuck right now" (personal communication, 01-05-2015).*

Fidyan, Amilah, Azmina, Aatif, Khalila, Basimah, Munsif, Nimerah, Baber also have to provide themselves and their family members (or partner) with the basic needs. However, they are not able to do so, based on their personal income alone. They need an additional income to sustain themselves and their families. They do so by pooling their income. This means that the money they personally earn is added to the wage of a partner or sibling. This results in a higher spendable income for them and their families and partners, which in turn results in the ability to cover the basic needs and expenses. By pooling their income they are able to sustain themselves and their family/partners in Istanbul. However, Fidyan, Amilah, Munsif are just barely able to cover their basic needs. Fidyan and Amilah are not able to buy clothing and live in a very moist and cold basement where the heater does not work and the windows could not be opened. Moreover, they are not able to buy clothing from the salary they earn (combined 1200 TL (€396)). Munsif had to manage his pooled income with his brother very carefully too:

> *"I live with my brother, a Syrian friend and six others. Together with my brother I pay 900 TL per month (€297) for rent, electricity, gas and water but we are managing this very carefully. I take one shower per week. My brother earns 1100 TL (€362) per month and together we can manage" (personal communication, 23-04-2015).*

Because they struggle to cover their basic needs, they are very unsatisfied about their wage. However, family does not necessarily have to be present in Istanbul in order to receive

financial support. Baber, who also pools his income with his brother's income, does so to provide themselves with basic needs but also to send remittances to their family in Syria. Together they earn 2200 TL per month (€725) and send 1000 TL per month (€330) home. Their father is a gambler and wasted all of their money, so they transfer these 1000 TL (€300) to their mother and sister. This is helping them covering their expenses and tuition fee for their sister, who is going to University in Aleppo.

Legally, Khalila and Basimah are not allowed to work because of two reasons; 1) they are under the TP regime and 2) they are only 14 years old. The Labour act of Turkey states that "*…employment of children who have not completed the age of fifteen is prohibited. However, children who have completed the full age of fourteen and their primary education may be employed on light works that will not hinder their physical, mental and moral development, and for those who continue their education, in jobs that will not prevent their school attendance*" (ILO, 2003, p. 28). The fact that they do work is because their parents were unable to find employment or were not earning enough to sustain their families. Therefore, both of them are currently employed. Khalila and two siblings are working in textile factories. Basimah and her sister are both working in sales because they are able to speak Arabic, Turkish and English. By pooling their income with their siblings, they are able to cover the basic needs of their families.

Lastly, Talhah and Jamilla currently receive financial support from their families. Jamilla is unemployed and Aziza (her sister) is able to sustain both of them. Talhah was very happy that he could study again and his father is financially supporting him from Saudi Arabia.

Although wages differ greatly between respondents, all of them are able to cover their basic needs in different ways, as was just explained. Those who struggle to provide for themselves and their families are not satisfied, whereas respondents that are able to cover their basic needs and their families are generally satisfied. However, the responsibility of being breadwinner can cause stress among respondents and can result in them being stuck in their job.

8.3 Working hours

The third factor that influences the satisfaction of respondents about their occupations were the amount of working hours. Like the occupations and wages of the respondents, their

working hours differ per sector (figure 21). Almost all respondents are working more than the average hours per week and the legal maximum. The TLL states that the maximum amount of working hours per week is 45 hours (ILO, 2003). These working hours have to be distributed evenly among the working days unless the contrary is decided with the provision that the daily working time may not exceed 11 hours. The total overtime work may not be more than 270 hours per year (about 5 hours per week). In total this amounts up to a maximum of 50 working hours per week. In case employees are working overtime, they have to be compensated with a 150% pay rate. Only four out of 18 respondents adopted in the figure (not everyone was able to specify the amount of hours he/she was working) was working less than the legal maximum amount of hours per week.

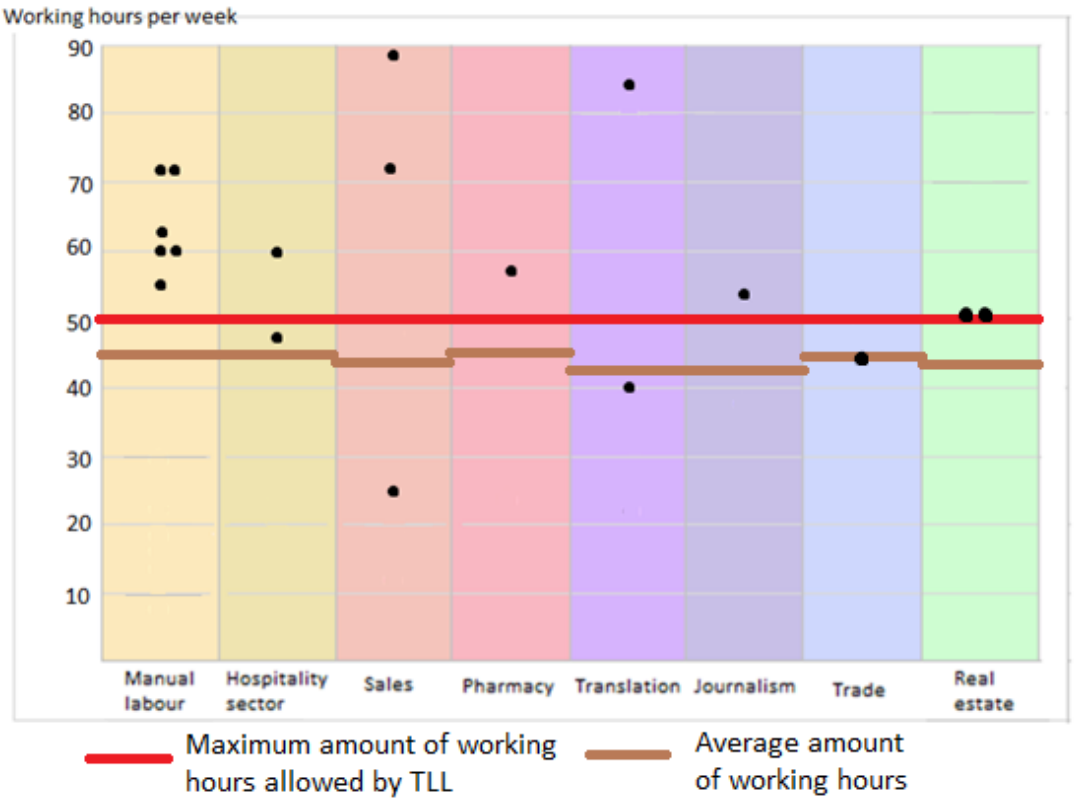


Figure 22. Working hours of respondents

Based on this sample, it seems that the amount of working hours in low skilled jobs is larger than for professional jobs. However, respondents argued that they were not working more hours than their Turkish colleagues which means that this is not specifically because they are Syrian, but rather depends on the sector they are working in and on the fact that they are working informally (compliance with the law is not enforced). All respondents in manual labour stated that they had to work their shifts, just like everybody else in the work place; they worked the same amount of hours as their Turkish colleagues. In case of overtime,

every respondent in manual labour had to work overtime but was not paid extra, as is the legal standard.

Although many respondents regarded their working hours as normal, since they worked as many hours as their colleagues, Fidyan, Amilah, Munsif and Anwar were specifically not satisfied with their working hours. They worked respectively for 72 hours, 72 hours, almost 90 hours and 72 hours per week. Fidyan, Amilah and Anwar are exhausted because of the long working hours. They have only one free day per week and need that to recover and to prepare for the next week. Munsif starts every day in the morning and continues until late in the evening. The fact that he works seven days per week, adding up to almost 90 hours per week, deprives him from opportunities to do something else as he explains:

> *"My hands are permanently cold. I fell of a horse in Damascus and broke both of my hands and elbows. Since then my hands were cold (…) I want to go to a doctor sometime, but I don't have time to go there. I work 12, 13, 14 hours a day. I start at 09:00 and continue until 23:00 or 00:00. How can I go there? Today is my first free day in a month. I needed it to relax. I am just working and working and working. I don't see my brother, my parents are in Damascus. I could study here, but if I do I cannot pay my rent and other things anymore. I am stuck in one big prison and I cannot get out. I have no future here. I don't know what I am doing now. I am just working" (personal communication, 23-04-2015).*

Munsif is not the only one working that many hours. Karim, who almost works an equal amount of hours, also states that he is very busy. However, he manages with one free day per week. His translation jobs at the student accommodation centre and the beauty centre are not very intensive. He has to translate when there are Arabic customers. He has to be continuously available (on two phones), but the actual work is not very intense. His job at the jewellery shop is only for three hours per evening, which is not a problem for him.

Thus, not everyone disliked their working hours. In fact, Aziza, Mansur, Nawaz and Basimah were satisfied with the amount of hours that they worked. For Aziza, Mansur and Nawaz, long working hours generally pay off. They receive commissions on sales and deals they make. In case they work more hours, they are more likely to make sales and deals on which they receive commission, in turn increasing their wage. Although Basimah would like to continue her education, she was very happy with the amount of hours she worked per week. She works 25 hours per week, equally spread over five days:

> *"I do not work too much so I can keep up some schoolwork at home. I hope I can arrange my application for a Turkish school somehow. It would be perfect because I can combine it with my job. I really enjoy working here. I get a proper salary and I work five hours for five days per week. After that, I have two free days" (personal communication through Dermaux (2015), 22-04-2015).*

Although long working hours can have a devastating impact on respondents' lives, many respondents seem to find the amount of working hours normal as they work as many hours as their colleagues. In fact, favourable working hours, in the case of Aziza, Mansur, Nawaz and Basimah contribute to the occupational wellbeing of respondents.

8.4 Atmosphere at the workplace

Another factor that influences the wellbeing and satisfaction of respondents about their occupations is the atmosphere at the work place. This atmosphere is created by the interaction between colleagues and with employers. As I mentioned in paragraph 2.4, migrants and refugees create networks and bonds with their colleagues and employers, which in turn facilitate the integration process and contributes to their wellbeing. Many respondents (12) found their current occupation through their social networks. It is therefore not surprising that many respondents argued to have a good relations with their colleagues; they knew each other before they became colleagues. Jasim's situation is exemplary. He got his first job through Khaled, whom he already knew from Homs (Syria). When he was fired because of a lack of work, Khaled transferred him from the ABS media centre to SAS media centre, owned by Khaled's. There, Jasim met Syrians whom he worked with in Syria during the time he was doing freelance journalism there. They knew each other already quite well and became friends rather than colleagues. Respondents that found their current occupation by applying to vacancies and passing by employers also predominantly argued that they had a good relation with their colleagues and employers, which they value very much:

> *"I really like the job a lot because the people that are working there are so nice. Syrians and Turkish people work together as a family. We help each other when we need it and we make a lot of jokes. We have a very good relationship and there is a really nice atmosphere" (Latif, personal communication, 23-03-2015).*

Not everyone had a good relationship with their colleagues. Among the respondents who did not, one common factor could be identified. Amilah, Areeb and Adib felt that their Turkish colleagues are behaving unfriendly towards them, which is why they do not have a very good relationship with their Turkish colleagues. Unfriendly behaviour ranges from disparaging behaviour, as Amilah experienced to gossiping and slandering in the case of Adib:

> *"I am doing the same job as my colleagues, but mainly light work. Sometimes my colleagues ask me to make coffee or that I have to clean something. May be because I am a woman or because I am new. I don't know. Why don't they do that themselves? I find that very frustrating because they are younger than I am. They are 18 and 20. I do it, though, because I have no choice" (Amilah, manual labour in art workshop, personal communication, 08-03-2014).*

> *"When I am in direct contact with my colleagues they are nice. Our relation is professional. They are all Turkish. I am the only Syrian. They respect me and I respect them, but I understand Turkish and not all of my colleagues realize that. I sometimes overhear them talking to me in a funny way. It is annoying, but what can I do? I do not do anything yet. If I pretend that I do not hear anything and that I am doing my job, they have to respect me. But their gossip still bothers me" (Adib, pharmacist, personal communication, 20-07-2015).*

Although Adib states that the gossiping bothers him and influences his wellbeing at work, he also notes that his satisfaction about his occupation is not hindered too much because he is currently employed in an occupation commensurate with his skill, education and experience.

The other factor that is of influence on the satisfaction of respondents about their occupation is the relationship they have with their employers. Despite low salaries and long working hours, many employed respondents (17) had a good relationship with their employers. Some respondents found their current occupation through their social networks, their current employers being acquaintances or friends and therefore have a good relation with them, like Jasim who enjoys his work very much. Another dominant reasons for a good relation with employers is that respondents felt grateful towards them for being employed. Because of the current legal framework, employers are not allowed to hire Syrians because Syrians are not allowed to work. If they do, they will be fined. Therefore, Fidyan, Amilah and Latif are very grateful towards their employers for the fact that they got a job. Fidyan and Amilah found their jobs at the art workshop through their social network but did not know

their employer before they started working. Despite the low salary and long working hours they maintained a good relation with him:

> *"Although our job is not good because of the long working hours and the low salary, it was good luck to find our employer. He is quite flexible and when we need a day off for the UN resettlement procedures we can get it. We are thankful for that" (Fidyan and Amilah, personal communication, 08-03-2015).*

Besides the gratefulness towards their employer for employing them, despite the legal framework, Latif was also very happy that his employer provided a stable working environment. Latif, first went to Jordan before going to Istanbul. His time in Jordan was very tumultuous; his parents went through a divorce and he had eight different jobs in 16 months. The fact he is now being employed in Istanbul, after having a particular difficult time also results in satisfaction about his current occupation.

Several respondents (5) also argued that they were satisfied with their occupations because their employer supports and trusts them. This ranged from trust and confidence in their skills and working activities to backing them up in case of a dispute between a respondent and a client. Nimerah and Baber, both employed in the hospitality sector, have a representative job; they are in direct contact with their client on almost a daily basis. Both Nimerah and Baber experience bad treatment from customers when they discover that they are Syrians:

> *"Every day it happens at least one time that Turkish people recognize my accent and ask where I am from. When I tell them I am from Syria, they drop their stuff and leave the shop because they do not want to buy from me or they say that they do not understand. My boss always takes my side and tells them to pay anyway. He supports and protects me" (Baber, personal communication through Dermaux (2015), 30-04-2015).*

Nimerah experiences similar situations when she explains customers that she is from Syria. However, both Baber and Nimerah are always supported and protected by their employers about which they are very satisfied.

Bad relations with employers could result in great dissatisfaction among respondents about their occupation. Aziza and Abdul-Hakeem quit their initial jobs because of bad relations with their employers and Talhah and Karim quit their second jobs because of bad relations with their employers. These bad relations were mostly the result of unfair payment, where

agreements about salary or commissions were not met by the employers. One of Nawaz's employers was very corrupt and almost stole 10.000 TL (€3295) commission from Nawaz:

> *"A very important deal was coming up and I was working on it. My 'bad' employer told me that if I could close this deal in one month I would receive a double commission, 20.000 TL (€6591). I worked really hard and I succeeded. The only thing that did not happened was the full payment, but the prepayment had already been done. He used this as an excuse not to pay the double commission. In the end, he did not pay me anything. The buyer appeared to be a friend of my employer and they split the commission" (personal communication, 15-04-2015).*

The corruption of this employer did not go unnoticed. Nawaz and two of his colleagues complained about the behaviour of this employer to their other 'good' employer. If nothing would be done about it, Nawaz stated that he would quit his job with four colleagues and open his own real estate consultancy agency. However, his good employer was able to solve this problem in June, fired the pushy employer, paid Nawaz his commission and promoted him to leader of a team of real estate consultants.

Another factor that contributed to the dissatisfaction of respondents about their occupation was a compelling employer.. Anwar and Munsif mentioned that their employers are pushing them to work harder. They have a bad attitude towards their employees, not just to their Syrian employees, but to all their employees:

> *"My boss has a bad attitude. Not just my boss, but all the bosses working at the spice bazaar. They behave like we are only there to make them money. They are always pushing us to sell more. I never receive a compliment for my work. Only when I make a very big deal my boss would thank me. Besides that, he normally just remembers when I make mistakes. It is a stressful environment" (Anwar, personal communication, 01-05-2015).*

These relations with employers and employees are thus very important for the satisfaction of respondents about their occupation and bad relations can lead to stressful situations.

8.5 Job security

The aforementioned factors were all important factors in the satisfaction of respondents about their occupations. An additional concern among respondents was job security although they did not directly influence their satisfaction. As I already mentioned several times throughout this report, all respondents (except for Anwar) are working informally which results in the absence of contracts. Apart from Anwar, every employed respondent

had a verbal agreement with their employers and had therefore no formal job security. Moreover, because most respondents do not have a contract, they are not a member of a labour union. Labour unions can influence job security and working conditions because it is a collective voice of employees committed to secure fair labour. However, labour unions in Turkey suffer from three problems in Turkey (Dinler, 2012). Turkey's restrictive trade-union legislation has made it difficult for unions to obtain legal recognition. Secondly, Dinler (2012) argues that employers use various tactics to discourage unionisation, including intimidation, harassment and dismissals of union members, which often go unpunished. Lastly, there are more than fifty labour unions in Turkey with ideological differences, which hampers the ability of these unions to collectively bargain as they are not united in their work. Because of these reasons, the political influence and social support has been limited; the real unionisation rate is estimated to be 8,9% of the entire workforce in Turkey. When the informal employment is taken into account, estimates drop to a mere 3%.

Labour unions thus do not have the social acceptance and support to bargain for job security and better working conditions. As Syrian refugees are not yet legally entitled to work, they are unable to join any labour union at all. Even if they were, it would not really matter as the collective bargaining power of labour unions is very limited which means that these unions cannot help Syrians in securing job security. Job security is a concern among respondents because employers can fire them for any reason without giving prior notice. Despite the absence of a contract, some respondents created their own job security as Mansur explains:

> *"I am not employed in a legal way, so I do not have 100% job security. I don't have a contract. But I create my own job security now. When I was working at the textile factory, I was doing a job that everyone can do. I did not need any extra skills or experience. Now I am working in real estate and I created a position for myself in which my boss needs me too instead of just me needing him. I can speak Arabic, which is important for the customers, I have experience now as a salesman and I know how the real estate market in Istanbul works. This is why my boss needs me and why I have some job security now" (personal communication, 02-05-2015).*

Creating a position in which employers need them, is the only way for Syrians to have some job security in the informal economy; when they become acquainted with their working activities and the sector they are operating in, they can create their own job security. In fact, Nawaz was able to create a very important position within his real estate consultancy firm that he was awarded with a promotion:

> *"After the 'pushy' boss was fired, we worked really hard to improve the company and we did good business. The team was growing bigger because we were working very hard and because we grew, my employer needed a team leader to manage a small team. I got a promotion and I will be managing a small team" (personal communication, 09-06-2015).*

In light of these events, Nawaz believes that he now ensured his own job security and if he continues working hard, he might even make it to office manager.

Creating their own job security, however, mostly applies to the people that are employed in professional jobs as Mansur just explained. This is more difficult in low skilled jobs as no specific or unique skills are required for these kind of jobs. Because many respondents are employed in low skilled jobs, their job security is of concern to them. For the self-employed respondents, Aftaab and Hassan, it is slightly different. They do not have an employer but rather clients on which they depend for an income. Their job security is therefore not depending on their employer but on their clients (as is also described by Valarini, 2015). Finding and retaining clients is essential for them as that provides them with job security. As quoted earlier, Aftaab was happy to transfer his work to Istanbul because the city offers him more possibilities than Lattakia. Being a graphic designer, Hassan uses the internet to find customers for work (Valarini, 2015). He uses mainly Facebook to get in touch with potential new clients. This is how he gets in touch with most of his clients. He has to spend quite some time in finding new clients because most clients only offer a onetime project. However, he also got in touch with an American company and a Japanese company, both giving him a contract for more regular work. He ensured these contracts because he did a good job, but also because of friendly and polite communication:

> *"My relation with both of the companies is very good, although there were some problems in the beginning with the American company. They paid me too little in the beginning and I was not happy with that. However, I kept being friendly and maintained a professional relationship with them. That is the benefit of working online. You can take some time to react and you can always react in a friendly way. Because I did it I got a contract with them. There is really no choice. You have to be polite, because otherwise your reputation will be damaged" (personal communication, 29-04-2015).*

Currently, Hassan is able to live from the income he earns from his graphic designs. Besides the onetime projects and the more regular work, he is also focusing on personal projects that will yield income in the future (developing his own games and put them on an online

platform called ‘Steam’ and making his own YouTube channel). Therefore, he has always got work to do.

8.6 Conclusion

Although most respondents are currently satisfied with their occupation, the reasons for satisfaction are very diverse and differ per individual based on personal experience. It became, however, clear that there are some common denominators that are influencing occupational satisfaction (commensurate with skill, education and/or experience, wages and basic needs coverage, working hours, relations with colleagues and employers and job security). A negative experience in the previously mentioned factors can lead to occupational mobility (either downwards, stable or upwards), whereas a good experience leads to job retention. Therefore, their satisfaction is of great importance for occupational mobility (downward, stable or upwards).

9. Conclusion and discussion

In light of current events, the only option for the Syrian refugees in Turkey is local integration. A major facilitator for local integration can be employment as it creates networks with natives, increases prospects for learning the native language and provides opportunities to regain confidence and economic independence (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). With a specific focus on Istanbul because of the high concentration of Syrian refugees (330.000), this research aimed to get an insight in the labour market experience of these refugees. In order to achieve this aim, the following research question was posed: "*What is the labour market situation of Syrian refugees in Istanbul and how do they experience occupational mobility?".* To formulate an answer to this question, desk research was carried out since January 2015 and interviews with Syrian refugees were conducted in Istanbul from February 2015 until May 2015.

Based on the findings of this research, the refugee gap is not universally applicable to the Syrian refugees in Istanbul. In fact, there are opportunities for both Syrian men and women to (professionally) develop themselves, make progression on the labour market and pursue a career. Whether they are paid workers, self-employed or open a business, many are able to find high skilled occupations in different sectors. They are able to do so because of the presence of a large informal economy which enables them to work in a context where they are formally not allowed to work.

Progression on the labour market, however, does not happen instantly. Initially, many respondents experienced a downward occupational mobility and were not able to find employment commensurate with their skill, education and/or experience, meaning that their initial occupational status (and required skill level) was not equal to their previous occupation. The reasons for that were their desperate need for employment (and income), depressions, a language barrier and being unknowledgeable about where to look for employment opportunities. However, although not true for every respondent, many respondents have experienced upward occupational mobility after the initial downward occupational mobility. This is due to social networks and investments in destination-specific skills such as the Turkish language and understanding where employment opportunities can be found. The investments in destination-specific skills result in a higher transferability of other skills of respondents, including their Arabic language proficiency and academic

certificates. Because of these factors, respondents were able to attain their current, predominantly high skilled occupations.

The fact that many respondents found employment commensurate with their skills, education and experience, along with favourable working conditions, is the main reason for many respondents to be satisfied in their current occupations, despite the circumstances that drove them to Turkey. On the other hand, bad working conditions and being employed in occupations not commensurate with their skills, education and/or experience are important factors for respondents not to be satisfied with their current employment situation. The satisfaction of respondents about their occupations is of influence on their occupational mobility and desired occupational mobility. This, in turn, shows that the agency of refugees is important in their occupational mobility and in their attainment of high skilled occupations. This shines new light on the existing literature on the refugee gap and challenges the notions of Connor (2010), Peromingo (2014) and Bevelander (2011), stating that the refugee gap never fully closes.

9.1 Discussion

This research has given an insight in the labour market situation of (predominantly highly skilled and educated) Syrian refugees in Istanbul and how they have experienced occupational mobility since their arrival in Istanbul. It becomes clear that the notion of a U-shaped occupational mobility pattern, as described in Chiswick et al (2003; 2005) and Rooth and Ekberg (2006) is also visible among many respondents in this research. They are able to find employment not only in the low skilled manual sectors, as Toksöz et al (2012) stated, but also in highly skilled sectors with a high occupational status, such as journalism, trade and real estate. This, in fact, is in contrast with the notion of Toksöz et al (2012). These are high skilled occupations and respectable jobs which are not typical for refugees to become employed in (Toksöz et al, 2012; Connor, 2010; Bevelander, 2011). However, the sample for this research was predominantly highly skilled and educated which result in better opportunities on the labour market and should therefore not be regarded as representative.

However, the fact that Syrians are able to find employment in these highly skilled sectors strongly contradicts with the existing literature on the refugee gap, stating that refugees systematically perform worse on the labour market compared to natives and that the gap never fully closes (Connor, 2010; Peromingo, 2014; Bevelander, 2011). The disparity

between the findings of this research and the existing literature on the refugee gap could be explained on the basis of four factors. Firstly, the existing literature is focused on Europe, USA and Australia, whereas this study focused on Turkey. These western countries have relatively small informal markets, making it possibly more difficult for them to become employed in highly skilled occupations. Secondly, cultural differences between migrants/refugees (most commonly coming from the Middle East and Sub Saharan Africa) and the native population are smaller in the case of Turkey, possibly making it easier for Syrians to become employed (in highly skilled occupations). Thirdly, the visible differences between migrants/refugees from the Middle East and Sub Saharan Africa and native Europeans, Americans and Australians are bigger, resulting in discrimination (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007). The visible differences between migrants/refugees from the Middle East and native Turks are smaller, likely resulting in less discrimination compared to western countries. Lastly, related to the second and third factor, in Western countries language proficiencies other than the native language and English are not assets per se. However, in the case of Turkey, which has many historical, cultural, political and economic ties with the Middle East Arabic language proficiency proves to be an asset, especially when Syrians are also proficient in Turkish. However, more (comparative) research on these factors has to be conducted in order to confirm these sentiments.

Most research on the employment situation of refugees in host countries, refugee gap and occupational mobility are quantitative studies that explore correlations between several factors (education levels, length of stay and language skills) and occupation. The agency perspective is generally overlooked, although it can be an (important) explanatory factor in occupational mobility and in explaining the refugee gap. Therefore, future research on the refugee gap and occupational mobility among refugees should have a larger qualitative focus in order to understand what personal motivations are of influence on occupational mobility and the refugee gap. Moreover, in order to get a better understanding of the employment situation of Syrian refugees in Istanbul (and Turkey), more research has to be conducted on the employment situations of Syrians (what sectors, formal/informal employment, age and gender) but also on the informal economy and the respective working conditions in Istanbul. Data on the informal economy in Istanbul is lacking which makes it difficult to correctly contextualize findings on Syrian employment. For now, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first research based on empirical evidence on the employment situations of Syrian refugees in Istanbul.

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Appendices

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview guide for interviewing Syrian refugees

The headlines indicate the different topics of interest to me. The specific questions listed under these different themes are all the questions that I would like to ask. The questions, however, do not dictate the interview/conversation. The aim is to have an open interview with these questions in the back of my head during the open interview. This way I would be able to influence the direction of the conversation, but do not enforce uncomfortable questions, which might scare the respondent off.

General

- What's your name, age and do you have an education?
- Do you speak Turkish?
- Where are you from (country and city)?
- When did you leave your country?
- Why did you leave?
- Since when are you in Istanbul?
- Why did you decide to stay in Istanbul?
- What is your religion?

Employment commensurate with experience and qualification and job retention/stability

- What did you do in your country of origin?
- What are your qualifications for the labour market?
- In what sectors have you been working?
- What is your current job/occupation? Since when?
- Did you have other jobs in Istanbul before this job? If so, what kind of jobs?
- Why/why not is your job commensurate with your experience and qualification?
- Do you think you can exercise your original job in the future in Istanbul?

Employment opportunity

- Is/was it difficult to find a job? Why?
- Do you need a work permit in order to get a job? Do you have one?
- Do you feel like you are at a disadvantage/advantage because you are Syrian or refugee?

Employment satisfaction

- How do you like your job?
- Are you satisfied with the job you are currently having? Why?
- Would you like to find a different job?
- How is your relation with your colleagues?
- Do you feel discriminated in any way at work?

Power relation between employee and employer

- How many days per week are you working? Is it a stable amount? Why/why not?
- Do you need to work extra when your employer needs you?
- Is your employer forcing you to do activities that you would rather not do?
- Do you have free days?
- Is there a labour union that you are a member of?
- Do you have a contract with your employer? Why/why not?

Earnings/poverty

- Dollar/Euro/TRY per day/week/month/year ((ir)regular payment)?
- What (basic needs) can it cover? What are things you cannot provide for?
- Do you receive remittances?
- Are you dependent on other people or organisations?

Job advancement/occupational mobility

- Is it possible for you to make promotion in this company/business? If so, what do you need to do for it? If not, why not?
- Is it possible for you to make promotion in a different company? Can you get a better job at a different company? Why/why not?

Future

- How long do you plan on staying here? Why? Where otherwise?
- Do you consider yourself to be a refugee?
- Do you have an intention to go back?
- Do you have an intention to go to Europe?

Appendix 2 – Topic list employers

Recruitment policy

- How do you find your employees and how do they find you?
- How do they apply for a job at your business?
- What do you find important when hiring new employees?
- Are you active on the internet (Facebook, LinkedIn, Dubarah)?

Employee inventory

- How many employees do you have?
- Where do they come from?/How many come from Syria?
- How many men and women do you employ?
- What is their salary (range)?
- What are the working hours of your employees?
- Do your employees have contracts?
- Do you provide insurances for all your employees?

Relations with colleagues

- What do you do to increase the team spirit?
- Are your employees meeting outside of work as well?
- Are there any troubles among employees?

Syrian businesses

- Do you notice the presence of Syrian business around the area of your company/restaurant/firm?
- Do you know or have a good relation with them?
- What do you think about the presence of Syrian enterprises in Istanbul?

Appendix 3 – Occupational overview of all respondents

From their last occupation in Syria to their current/last occupation in Istanbul

	Occupation in Syria	Skill level	First occupation	Skill level	Second occupation	Skill level	Third Occupation	Skill level	Fourth occupation	Skill level	Fifth occupation	Skill level
Fidyan	Student graphic design	4	Manual labour in art studio	1								
Amilah	Student medicine (N/G)	(4)	Manual labour in art studio	1								
Azmina	Primary school teacher	4	Teacher (primary school)	4								
Aatif	Construction work	1	Manual labour in textile	1	Manual labour in textile	1						
Aamil	Owner of Cell phone shop	3	Sales in cloth shop	2	Money exchange business	3	Real estate middleman	3	Owner of tourism agency	3		
Jasim	Student Arabic literature	4	Cameraman at ABS	3	Editor at SAS	4						
Talhah	Student Computer Engineering	4	Sales in cloth shop	2	Employee at Syrian Education commission	2	Student computer engineering	(four)				
Aziza	Unemployed	(4)	Chartering in trade	3	Vessel broker at the port	3						
Jamilla	Student law	4	Administration	2	Unemployed							
Latif	Student	(4)	Carwash	1	Manual	1						

	telecommunication and engineering (N/G)				labour in cloth hanger factory							
Nawaz	Student business administration	4	Manual labour in textile	1	Sales in bag store	2	Real estate consultant	3				
Abdul-Hakeem	Employed at medical laboratory	4	Tour guide	2	Receptionist in hotel	2	Tour guide	2	Translator for agency	4		
Khalila	Primary school student		Manual labour in textile	1								
Aftaab	Self-employed translator	4	Self-employed translator	4								
Shaista	Student civil engineering	4	Civil engineer internship	4								
Areeb	Student business engineering (N/G)	(4)	Tourism agent	2	Tourism agent and student	2						
Basimah	Primary school student		Sales in soap shop	2	Sales in soap store	2						
Munsif	High school student		Street musician	3	Sales in juice shop	2	Sales in tourist shop	2				
Karim	Student Tourism	3	Garcon in hotel	2	Sales in cloth shop	2	Receptionist in hotel	2	Translator in student housing	4	Translator in beauty centre and sales in jewellery shop	4 and 2
Hassan	Self-employed graphic designer	4	Self-employed graphic designer	4								

Mansur	Translation and administration at research centre	4	Manual labour in textile	1	Owner of retail shop	3	Sales in kitchenware	2	Real estate consultant	3		
Adib	Pharmacist in Jordan	4	Manual labour at print shop	1	Construction	1	Pharmacist	4				
Anwar	Student translation (N/G)	(4)	Manual labour in leather industry	1	Manual labour in wholesale cloth store	1	Sales at the spice bazaar	2				
Nimerah	Student engineering (N/G)	(4)	Waitress in restaurant	2	Sales in cloth shop	2	Catering and student engineering	2				
Baber	Student mechanical engineering	4	Garcon in hotel	2	Manual labour in leather industry	1	Sales in a shop	2	Manual labour in textile industry	1	Catering	2
Murad	Surgeon assistant	1	Manual labour in textile	1	Manual labour in textile	1						
Firas	Döner distributor	2	Owner of a seeds shop	3								
Abu Majid	Doctor	4	Real estate middleman	3								
Ammar	Electrician in a hotel	2	Self-employed electrician	2								
Ayman	Owner wholesale clothing shop	3	Owner of clothing shop	3	Owner of restaurant	3						
Bayhas	Owner of a textile factory	4	Agent at a clothing factory	3	Owner textile factory	4						

Barad	Working at plastic factory (family owned)	4	Employee for electrician company	2	Self-employed electrician	2						
Falah	Owner of a print shop	3	Employee in cell phone shop	1	Employee in cell phone shop	1	Owner of cell phone shop	3				
Halil	Owner of a construction company	3	Fabric trader	3	Owner of restaurant	3						
Mona	Owner of a restaurant	3	Owner of restaurant	3								
Nizar	Owner of a restaurant	3	Supplier for restaurants (owner)	3	Owner of restaurants	3	Owner of bakeries	3				
Tahir	Taxi driver and owner of a cell phone shop	3	Employee in second hand furniture shop	1	Owner second hand furniture shop	3						
Jamal	Owner of a clothing wholesale shop	3	Owner wholesale clothing shop	3								
Duraid	Owner of a games shop	3	Opening wholesale clothing shop	(three)								
Azado	Owner of a restaurant	3	Employer in Tourism agency	3	Owner in restaurant	3						
Bulus	Owner of a clothing shop	3	Owner of restaurant	3								

Abbas	Student computer engineering and programmer	4	Employee at tourism agency	2	Self-employed programmer	3						
Mohammad	Hairdresser	2	Self-employed hairdresser	2								
Omar	Lawyer	4	Translator in hospital	4								
Kafeel	Student geology (N/G)	(4)	Student Turkish language	4	Trainer at Syrian Education Commission	4	Student geology and tutor	4				
Mujab	Student engineering (N/G)	(4)	Student computer engineering	(four)								
Mr. Ahmad	Stationery shop and English teacher	4	Owner of restaurant	3	Manager at a restaurant	3	Manager of restaurant	3				
Farid	Owner of a coffee supply company	4	Owner of family coffee café	3								