

## The Social, Cultural and Economic Impacts of Syrian Refugees on the Governorate of Maan: An Analytical Field Study

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### Abstract

The study aims to inform the public of the impact of Syrian refugees on the social, cultural and economic aspects of Maan Governorate. Official statistics state the existence of 1,541 Syrian refugee families in Maan, amounting to 6,607 persons at the time of the study. The percentage accounts for 2% of total Syrian refugees in the country and 6% of Maan's population. The refugees in question do not live in standalone camps or an independent community but in the local communities. This fact facilitates their social interaction with the local community, especially given the compatibility between the two populations in terms of religion and ethnicity. Consequently, many refugees started to integrate, though partially, in the local communities. Their integration has taken place thanks to labor relations and stronger ties in the community, such as intermarriages. However, it is apparent that the two populations still have some cultural differences. Such differences incurred an invisible cost manifested in the form of direct and indirect impacts on the governorate. The abrupt demographic growth is putting more pressure on the infrastructure and public facilities, particularly education, electricity, water and health care, and especially on the labor market. In light

of this situation, the study searches to find the cultural, social, and economic impacts of Syrian refugees on the Maan Governorate. The study describes the demographic, social, cultural, and economic characteristics of Syrian refugees living in Maan. It will also define the nature of social capital between Syrians and Jordanians. Additionally, the study shows that Syrians have had a significant impact on the labor market in the Maan Governorate, and the following discussions will describe the positive and negative impacts. Finally, the study will address findings concerning the Jordanian mindset and conception of how refugees affect their home country. From the findings of this study on the Maan Governorate, using both quantitative and qualitative measures, decision makers and refugee assistance organizations will be able to better assist Syrians who are integrating into Jordanian communities. Additionally, the research serves to show where Jordanian communities can improve on societal infrastructure to better improve the livelihood for both Jordanians and Syrians because the Syrian crisis will have a prolonged effect.

**Key words:** Syrian refugees; Ma'an; Jordan; Economic; Social and cultural impacts

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### INTRODUCTION

The issue of refugees constitutes the most precarious aspect of the Syrian crisis, given the accompanied humanitarian, social, economic and educational dimensions. Jordan faces a host of challenges, but they are dwarfed by its unique geographical location, which

makes it most vulnerable to political events. Jordan's experience with refugees is not new. In recent decades, the country has received several influxes of forced migrants. However, the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011 has created an unprecedented intensity of migrants coming into Jordan. The impact of the Syrian refugees on Jordan has multifaceted dimensions. Geographically, the crisis reverberated around all governorates, with the majority of refugees centered in the northern regions adjacent to Syrian borders. The vast spread of refugees in all parts of Jordan could be attributed to the open border policy maintained by the government in respect of the Syrian refugees. Consequently, the adverse impact of the crisis went beyond the mere humanitarian sphere and seeped into the social, economic, political and security conditions.

The impact has been unprecedentedly intense all over Jordan, in general. Demographically, the mass displacement of Syrians increased Jordan's population by 3% in less than a year from the start of the 2011 crisis. Today, Syrians living in Jordan account for 1,300,000 persons, including 600,000 officially registered as refugees. Out of this figure, only 127,000 live in designated camps, according to official statements, while the vast majority (around 80%) lives in local communities nationwide. By making specific reference to Maan Governorate, this study is meant to usher in a series of similar studies to gauge the impact on each governorate. One particular goal is to learn how Syrian refugees impact local development efforts and how the refugees can be integrated within the country's developmental frameworks. However, the situation of Maan Government is highly important, given the vulnerability of its environment to changes on both the regional and the national level. Historically, Maan has always surfaced during political, economic and social events throughout Jordan's development phases. The Syrian refugee issue certainly has had vital effects on several sectors in the governorate, which the study tries to expose using both field and secondary sources of information.

Maan is the largest governorate in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, accounting for about 37% of the country's total area. Its location in the southern part of Jordan gives it the privilege of connecting the country with Saudi Arabian borders. However, Maan's population is the lowest, amounting to less than 122,000, with a density less than 3.7 people per sq. km. Accordingly, population centers sprawl over vast sporadic areas of the governorate. The governorate is administratively divided into four districts. Those districts are further subdivided into seven municipalities in addition to the special Petra Development, the Tourism Region Authority and Maan Developmental Region. From a socio-demographic perspective, the governorate's population accounts for around 2% of the country's overall population, 52.4% males and 47.6% females. There are around 20,000 families with an average size of 5.9, which is higher than

the 5.4 national average. Economically active people fall in the age group 15-64, accounting for around 58% of the total population, slightly below the national rate of 59%.

Poverty rates in the Maan Governorate hit 26.6%, which is nearly double the national average of 14.4%, according to 2010 official statistics. The number of poor populations reaches almost 31,000, around 3.5% of the total population under the poverty threshold in the country, with poor families in the governorate accounting for around 3.3% of the national poor family count. Yet, more alarming figures pertain to food poverty rates, as statistics indicate that Maan accounts for 16% of the national gross figures of people below the food poverty line.

On the educational level, the student-teacher ratio is better than the national ratio, but this advantage is ruined by high drop-out rates, which is almost double the national drop-out average. Illiteracy is also high, standing at 13% compared with 7% at the national level. University education is provided by one public university, Al Hussein bin Talal University, which has eight faculties, in addition to Maan College and Al Shoubak College, which are two colleges affiliated with Balqa Applied University. Medical services, according to official statistics, have the best coverage ratio in the country and are provided through two hospitals, 24 health care centers and 15 rural clinics. However, official indicators also show the inefficiency of the health sector due to a shortage of medical equipment and lack of specialized medical staff.

When analyzing developmental economic indicators, data shows that there are 1,400 economic enterprises that are running business in industry, real estate, transportation and trade. Employed people amount to around 23,000, accounting for about 19% of the governorate's total population. Unemployment rates, however, are higher than 15%, which exceeds the official 12% national rate, according to official statistics. The distribution of the employed people, with the highest percentage of their working for the public sector, account for over 64% of overall manpower. Around 13% work in general trade, and only 6% work in tourism and agriculture. Migrant workers in the governorate account for 1.6% of overall migrant workers in the country.

In the labor market, the economic participation of women in Maan accounted for 43.7% of total manpower compared with 12.1% on the national level. This fairly high rate is attributed to the nature of economic activities that give room for more working women, particularly in health services, defense and public administration (*Labor and Unemployment Survey*, General Statistics Department, 2013). The economic participation of women in Maan is concentrated in education (54.5%), followed by public administration and defense (19.1%), and lastly human health care and social service (16.2%) (National Center for Human Resources Development (NCHRD), 2012).

In the economic sectors, mining and extractive industries, particularly phosphate, have proven to be a

promising sector in Maan. The sector attracts job seekers, thanks to the immense underexploited natural resources bestowed upon the governorate. The invaluable natural resources, in addition to phosphate, include limestone, clay, sandstone, basalt, semi-precious gemstones, and more. However, the resources are exploited mainly as raw material, and the region needs more integrated industrial structures to increase employment opportunities and production. Hence, more industrial structures would increase the income for the overall governorate population.

In conclusion, the Maan Governorate Developmental Program clearly shows that the main developmental problems facing the governorate are poverty, unemployment, school dropouts, reduced passing rates at the secondary educational level, increased illiteracy, decreased income and spending, shortage of health care professionals and increased family sizes. All of those challenges oversize similar ones at the national level. Of relevance is the abnormal 6% increase in population caused by Syrian refugees, adding to the huge developmental burden on the already strained governorate. Therefore, the developmental pressures imposed by the migration of 7,000 Syrian refugees pose a serious challenge to developmental efforts, human resources and households living in the governorate. By relying on field analysis of the Syrian refugee burden, the present study seeks to uncover the real situation as felt by both the Maani hosts and Syrian refugee guests. Perhaps, this will inform decision makers and donors in taking appropriate measures to overcome, if not prevent, a social, cultural or economic crisis that may erupt at any time. Maan is a disadvantaged governorate according to all official economic, development and social indicators, and the situation may become alarming if more burdens are placed on it.

The next chapter will describe the scientific methodology used in the study to expose the economic, social and cultural effects of the Syrian refugee issue on Maan. The discussion ensues on the findings attained from interviewing a sample population of Syrian refugees and Maanis. The resulting outcomes and recommendations are meant to contribute to the policy making exercise for the integration of refugees and mitigation of current and projected disputes between the hosts and refugee populations.

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## 1. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

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The present study used the “social survey”. The purpose was to observe the various conditions of the Syrian refugee families in Maan Governorate in terms of size, economical, educational and social levels.

The collection of firsthand quantitative and qualitative data took two months (September-October 2014). The study applied a sample population from the local

community, and another from the Syrian refugees in Maan Governorate.

### Samples

**The First Sample:** A stratified random sample was taken representing around 28% of total refugee families in Maan Governorate, amounting to nearly 440, geographically distributed all over the governorate.

**The Second Sample:** For the application of the questionnaire to measure the social, cultural and economic impact of Syrian refugees in Maan Governorate, the study’s sample population comprised 440 individuals who are Jordanians. They were distributed in the various areas of the governorate. They have been chosen by using the simple random sample technique. The number of informants was defined by analyzing an optional random sample comprising 30 individuals covering the targeted areas.

In total, 72.2% of respondents were from the Maan Capital District, 18.2% were from Petra, and 9.6% were from Shoubak District.

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## 2. DATA COLLECTION

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**Secondary Sources:** The bulk of statistics and studies issued by several agencies and published in books, periodicals and statistical pamphlets released by the General Statistics Department, including a variety of data that relate to the economic and social information of the study population.

**Survey:** Information from this source has been obtained using the following techniques:

i) **Questionnaire:** Being the most appropriate tool for a social survey applied to a large population, questionnaires have been used in collecting data from the study sample in two ways:

a) The first questionnaire was used to collect the required demographic, social, cultural and economic data of Syrian refugees in Maan Governorate.

b) The second questionnaire was meant to gauge the economic, social and cultural effects of the Syrian refugees, and then measure the resulting data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

ii) **The Interview Guide:** Interviews form a sort of an oral questionnaire in which questions and answers are exchanged orally. An interview guide was devised for the purpose of making in-depth studies to learn about the following issues: Social relations networks, cooperation between Jordanians and Syrians, level of confidence between the two populations or trust in charitable organizations and UNHCR, the nature of social relations and method of integration in the labor market.

iii) **Participant Observation:** Observation is an important means of data collection requiring the researcher to be a member of a group of individuals so that they freely cooperate with him. The purpose is for the researcher to observe the dynamics of social

relations, customs and traditions, and the culture of Syrian refugees.

### 3. RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHICS

**Table 1**  
**Economic and Social Characteristics of the Maan Governorate Population, 2010**

Indicator	On the governorate level	Nationwide
Per capital household income (JD)	7513.7	8823.9
Average household annual spending on services and health care (JD)	113.5	212.9
Average household annual spending on food (JD)	2866.2	3812.4
Average household annual spending on education (JD)	224.8	549.4
* General unemployment rate (%)	15.7	12.5
* General unemployment rate among males (%)	12.9	10.4
* General unemployment rate among females (%)	26.4	21.7
* Poverty rate (%)	26.6	14.4
* Revised economic activity rate (%)	41.7	39.5

Source: *General Statistics Department, Labor and Unemployment Survey, 2012-2013 General Statistics Department, Household Spending and Income Survey, 2010.*

According to Table 1, the per capita household income in Maan Governorate is JD 7513.7, compared with JD 8,823.9 on the national level. As for household spending, spending is less than nationwide figures on services like: health care (JD113.5), food (JD2,866) and education (JD549). Nationwide household spending averages amount to JD212.9, JD3,812 and JD549, respectively. Poverty rates in Maan Governorate are the highest in the country hitting 26.6% compared with 14.4% on the national level. Unemployment is also the highest in the country, reaching 15.7%, with the national average standing at 12.5%.

### 4. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SYRIANS

The field data breaks down the study population by age groups. The highest is the age group 15-64 years (55.3%), the majority of whom are in the labor market. It is followed by the age group 1-14 (43.7%), which is a youthful group, finally followed by the age group >=65+ (1%).

The field data reflects a high rate of single individuals (60%), which is higher in males (62.3%) than in females (57.8%). It is followed by married couples (38%), which is higher among females (39.1% compared to 36.9% of males). This concentrates the majority of the study population in the largest two categories: single and married, which can imply youthful population among the Syrian refugees. Widows and widowers come next with a percentage of 1.7% followed by divorced and separated with percentages of 0.2% and 0.1%, respectively.

The field data shows the percentage of those who have acquired only a basic education to be 72.7%, followed by those who completed secondary education

The first part of this study already referred to the socio-economic characteristics of Maan Governorate, but perhaps it is useful here to refer to some socioeconomic indicators of the governorate in light of available updated official data as shown in Table 1 below:

(10.9%). Illiterates comprise 7.4% of the population, followed by those who can read and write (6%), holders of intermediate college degrees (1.9%), and holders of postgraduate diplomas, master's and doctorate degrees (0.1%). The data shows a low level of education among the study population, which is reflective on the type of economic activities the informants pursue.

Learning about the economic characteristics of Syrians is significant because the characteristics naturally reflect the needs of Syrians and their ability to cope within the Jordanian society. The rate of employed people is 45.3%, which is significantly higher among males (73.1%) than females (16%). Following positions are housewives (30.6%), students (17.2%), unemployed (previously employed) (3.7%), unemployed (never employed) (2.3%), persons with a disability (0.6%), and those who identified as "other" (0.3%). The effect of such rates on the local labor market will be discussed later in the ensuing chapters.

The field data shows the highest rate of people identifies their career as "worker" at 26%. The ratio of male workers rises to 29.4% compared to 9.3% of females. Next, technicians (electricians, mechanics, hairdressers, tailors) constitute a percentage of 19.1%. Farmers account for 18.3% followed by freelancers (7%), construction contractors, wood framers and painters (5.3%), merchants (4.1%), cooks (3.5%). The table clearly shows that the majority of those careers are skillful jobs, which answer the demands of the craftsmanship local market. In fact, skillful jobs can easily make Syrians integrate in the local community and play a role in shaping the social relations between Syrians and their Maani hosts. Interestingly, however, the majority of those careers are not pursued by the Jordanians, which implies that several Syrians have created their own sources of livelihood without competing with Jordanian or migrant laborers. This point will be elaborated later on in this study.

The field data shows 46% of Syrian refugees work in services (46%), which reflects an interdependency of services and needs of the population in Maan Governorate. In turn, the services industry encourages social and cultural interactions between the Syrians and local community. Syrian workers are increasingly employed for competitive wages in restaurants, commercial stores and handicraft shops. One main effect of this phenomenon is the deprivation of large numbers of nationals to receive employment opportunities in these sectors. Affected sectors also include agriculture (17.7%), industries (17.5%), trade (10.2%), constructions (7.3%), and other activities (1.3%). There is no doubt, however, that this distribution of Syrians in various economic activities reflects integration in the labor market and in social life in Maan Governorate. The effects of Syrians entering the labor market have also been negative, as several Jordanians were reported to have lost their jobs to the Syrians.

Field data shows that 52.1% of Syrians are making between 100-199JD per month. 29% are earning 200-299 JD, and finally 16.1% earn less than JD100 a month. The finding reflects a divergence in income levels among the majority of Syrian informants, but it is also an indication that Syrian workers accept lower wages, despite the minimum wage limit of JD190 mandated by the law. Next, individuals with monthly incomes ranging from JD300-399 comprise 2.5%, followed by those who earn JD400-499 (0.3%). Therefore, 68% of Syrian refugees work below the minimum wages, and the vast majority of them (98%) accept incomes less than JD300. JD300 is less than satisfactory for Jordanian workers. Given that the average family in Maan is 5.9 individuals, an income of 300JD makes one of the most impoverished families in the country. Accepting such low income jobs will be a big challenge for any local family. However, Syrians agree to take low-paying jobs because they already receive cash and in-kind assistance from official, international and non-official organizations.

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## 5. SYRIANS' SOCIAL RELATIONS NETWORK

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Social relations are important to build the social capital. They grow in a specific network governed by a number of norms and values, such as mutual trust and respect, commitment and cooperation.

Field data shows the number of Syrian people who maintain social relationships with Jordanians in Maan Governorate to be 71.1%. Males have more relationships than females (72.6% compared with 60.4%). Belonging to a community is achieved through individuals interacting and building relationships with each other. The data indicates a rising trend of social capital, which springs from common social relations and is nourished

by building trust and collective work. It also appears that interactions are not limited to monetary considerations, but they also relate to symbolic values such as approval and respect. However, social interactions require placing trust in others to promote interpersonal and mutual relations. In contrast, there are still Syrians who do not maintain social relations with Jordanians in Maan Governorate (28.9%). The percentage of individuals who do not maintain relationships with Jordanians is higher among females (39.6%) than males (27.4%).

The relations bonding Syrian refugees with Jordanians varied as follows:

Field data shows neighborhood relations are 57.5% of interactions, and such relations will surely allow for several forms of social and cultural interaction. They also help integration into the cultural context. Next is workmate relations with a percentage of 22%, followed by friendship (19.5%). Other forms of ties account for 1%. This data reflects the nature and form of interaction between Syrians and the Maan Governorate population, showing a high level of social interaction.

However, there is nothing in the above data that would guarantee intimacy of relations between Jordanians and Syrians. Evidence collected from the field and qualitative analysis of interviews shows that such relations exist, but also show that they are abnormal and imbalanced.

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## 6. JORDANIANS AFFECTED BY SYRIAN CRISIS

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### 6.1 The Social and Economic Characteristics of the Jordanian Study Population

The sample of Jordanians who participated in the study were distributed as follows: The Al Qasabah District accounts for 72.2% of the sample, followed by Petra District (18.2%) and Al Shoubak District (9.6%). The distribution of the Jordanian study population is commensurate with the number of Syrian refugees in each area.

In terms of sex, there is a slightly higher representation of males (50.2%) than females (49.8%). Age groups are distributed as follows: The majority of informants of all are within the age group 18-28, composing 33.8% of the sample, followed by 29-38 (30.7%), 39-48 (19.6%) and 49+ (15.8%). The distribution shows the diversity in ages is dominated by the youth. The findings agree with the rise in the relevant population category.

Holders of bachelor's degrees account for 36.2%, followed by secondary education graduates (21.3%), preparatory schooling (11.5%), postgraduate (4.2%) and illiterates and literates (4%). While this diversity can be accounted for in several ways, the presence of Syrians has had an influence not only on university graduates but also at other educational levels. The rates also agree with the rise in the educational level of the local community reaching 87%.

In terms of marital status, the majority are married (60.2%), followed by single persons (34.5%), followed by widows and divorced (5.3%), which confirms that the study population has covered the various marital statuses. The distribution also leads to different opinions about the presence of Syrians in Maan Governorate.

Field data shows that 47.8% of the sample works in the public sector, an indication that individuals desire employment in the public sector because it provides stability. The second largest group is the unemployed (18.5%), followed by workers in the private sector (17.8%), freelancers (8.4%) and retired (6.7%).

Field data shows the monthly incomes of the study population. The largest group earns JD301-400 (27.2%), followed by those who earn JD401-500 (24.3%) and JD501+ (14.5%). It indicates that the majority of the study population earns less than JD600 (89.2%), reflecting the average economic level of the study population.

## 6.2 Syrians in the Eyes of the Jordanian Study Population

Long before the Syrian crisis, Jordanians' formed stereotypes of Syrians from indirect experience from their local Syrian community members. Various means of communication and the modern mass media, especially through Syrian drama, played an important role in building up such stereotypes. However, from a cognitive perspective, it seems that such conceptions have been distorted from reality. Naturally, a mental image or conception builds off generalizations, as an individual's practice is automatically perceived by others as characterizing the whole group. Therefore, individual differences do not seem to prevent the local community from drawing their own perceptions and mental images about the Syrians. In this connection, the study has found that the subject Syrian refugees are divided into: urban (49.8%), rural (49.3%) and originally nomads (less than 1%). This finding refutes the current mental image about the Syrians.

The data shows a rising trend of Jordanians who feel that Syrians are exploiting others (42.2%) while 26.6% believe Syrians show individualistic behaviors. In contrast, various behaviors of the local community were driven by sympathy and emotions, as a response not alien from religious beliefs. In reality, the issue reflects on the various forms of cooperation shown towards Syrians at the beginning of the migration. There are also those who believe that Syrians cooperate with each other (24.8%) followed by those who feel the Syrians are hospitable (6.4%). From daily interaction with Syrians, the local Jordanian community formed stereotypes of Syrians.

Additionally, the rate of those who believe that Syrians have different traditions is significantly high, 81.8%, which reflects the cognitive mindset of the local community and their accessibility to first-hand experience in Syrian culture. Data reports more than one manifestation of how Syrians differ from local community traditions. First, they differ in social communication (45.1%), which reflects the mental perceptions of Jordanians about Syrians in terms of interpersonal skills. Another area of difference is the Syrian cuisine, such as different types of *Kubbeh*, *mahshi*, *yalanji*, etc. (28.2%). This difference highlights cultural aspects emigrating with the refugees. Syrians are keen to bring their cultural heritage to their new local community, which serves as a vehicle to present and assert their identity to others. There are also perceived differences in dress (16.4%) and entertainment habits (10.2%). All of the above indicate how the image of Syrians is perceived in relation to the habits of food, dress and social communication.

A rising trend of the sample agrees that the government should establish a camp for the Syrians so that they live separately from the local community in Maan Governorate, just like Al Za'atari Camp (64.4%), compared with 35.6% who reject the idea.

**Table 2**  
**Reasons for Agreeing to Establish a Camp for the Syrians Separately From the Local Community.**

Why do you agree to establish a camp for the Syrians separately from the local community?	Number	Ratio (%)
Their traditions are different	45	12.7
This will reduce real estate rental prices	100	28.2
It will make their return to their country easier.	61	17.2
To avoid contact with them	87	24.6
To reduce the burden on services	16	4.5
To improve the economic conditions of Jordanians	21	5.9
To improve security control	24	6.8
Total	354	100

The data in Table 2 reveals several reasons why the local community believes there should be a separate camp for Syrian refugees. Among the participants who want a separate camp for Syrians, 28.2% of the informants wanted the camp because they believe this would lower the rising real estate prices. Avoiding interactions with the

Syrians comes as the second reason (24.6%), followed by a belief that this solution would facilitate their return to their country (17.2%). Other reasons include different traditions (12.7%), improving security (6.8%), improving the economic conditions of the local community (5.9%) and easing the pressure on services (4.5%). The analysis of

this table explains that the behaviors of local community members reflect their negative attitudes towards the Syrians. This trend came as a result of several factors. The Syrian refugees had an impact on unemployment rates, standards of living and costs of everyday life. Refugees also have the advantage of receiving salaries and aid from the international community while competing with the Jordanians on small-sized and trade enterprises. They are also blamed for the rising apartment rental prices, as landlords prefer to let their apartments to Syrians for double the usual rent prices afforded by nationals.

The stereotype, which is formed in the minds of Jordanians because of first-hand or second-hand experience, can be rational or irrational. It is a representation of reality for those who uphold such beliefs. It is also the result of a combination of historical, cultural and social factors.

### **6.3 The Impacts of Syrian Refugees on the Labor Market**

In some cases, the presence of Syrians contributed to a perceived lack of employment opportunities. The vast majority (97%) agreed that Syrians hurt their employment opportunities. Syrian workers are seen as more qualified in the governorate than workers of other nationalities, including Jordanians. The answer "Yes" accounted for 67.6% compared with 32.4% who said "No," which confirms that most Jordanians believe Syrians have the skills and experience lacked by local workers. The main characteristics that give Syrian workers a privilege over other nationalities in the governorate were asked from Jordanians. The highest indicator is "more efficient" (32.5%), followed by "less paid" (30.4%), commitment and quality of work both at 15.9%.

In fact, 50% of the study population in Maan Governorate makes their preference of whom to employ on the basis of quality, regardless of the nationality of workers. This indicates that customers usually care more about time, effort and efficiency of the services provided rather than the nationality of the worker. 24% prefer Jordanian workers followed by those who prefer a non-Syrian Arab category of workers (14.5%). At the bottom is preference of Syrian workers standing at 9.3%.

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## **7. FIELD ANALYSIS DISCUSSION: THE PERCEPTION OF SYRIANS IN JORDAN**

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The main finding of the study in respect to the impact of refugees on the labor market in Maan Governorate is that Syrian workers have had the ability to easily access the labor market. They did not face any competition from members of the local community, which had the ability to accommodate the new comers. Syrian workers have also proved to be able to generate new job opportunities in technical and craftsmanship areas. Alternatively, those

opportunities were already open to the new comers. However, regardless of whether the opportunities were new or old, the majority of such jobs are not a preference of national workers. Rather, their non-occupancy reflects a Jordanian preference to work in public service, given its added values and privileges (job security, in particular). Another factor is that Syrian workers accept wages lower than the legal limit of JD190. In some cases, Jordanians lost their jobs to Syrians because employers could pay the Syrians less.

Syrian workers have also demonstrated skills and experience, which strengthened their competitive edge given the lower level of experience of the locals and other migrant workers. The sophistication and history of the labor culture in Syria led its manpower to work in many traditional areas that require technical and commercial knowledge. Such reflections on the Syrian labor culture have also infiltrated the labor market. According to Hani Al Khouri's study, *Strategies of Employment and Human Resources Development in Syria*:

*The culture of individual work or workshop still dominates the minds of Syrian workers and employers. All new methods of organization and work are still imposing complex concepts that do not fit in the current environment of work behavior, particularly in relation to the enterprise culture. Rather, the principle of protecting technical know-how is prevalent to prevent workers from joining a competitor or be competitors themselves one day. Similarly, the culture surrounding work in public service goes along the lines of: salaries are insufficient, workers' performance depends on the paid salary, and 'a day' is for a public servant a chance for making multiple profits derived from corruption in Syria.*

The effect of Syrians in the labor market is only one aspect of the current situation in Maan. Another determining factor of integration is the interactions between Jordanians and Syrian refugees. The arrival of Syrian refugees to Maan Governorate increased the number of Syrians who maintain social relations with Maanis (71.1%). 57.5% of Syrians reported they have relationships with their neighbors, and 69.6% reported they exchange visits with the locals. The visits were exchanged for different purposes, including acquaintance building and intermarriages. The visits lead to social interaction in the society. However, Syrians also reported that the social interaction led them to resort to several types of "social tricks" to coexist with the local community. Social interactions between Syrians and Jordanians fall under different categories of relations. The Syrians act as if they were on the stage, meaning the relationships they build are not genuine. The need to acquire more benefits through the sympathy of Jordanians and charitable organizations is one motive for such a tendency. On the other side, the reaction of Jordanians was emotional and driven by religious edicts of showing solidarity, as they sympathized with and hosted the Syrians in their plight and offered them assistance and support. The result is that an individual tends to show,

while on a stage, the positive aspects of his character and hide his downsides.

During the field research, several interviews took place that are of importance because they reflect the level of trust Syrians have of Jordanians and the organizations who are offering assistance.

Interviewed Syrians said they hated life in their new setting because seeking social protection and satisfaction of needs meant they had to be submissive. A.Y.S said: *"I wish to go back to Syria as soon as possible."* *"Jordanians do not seem to know Syrians. They have a misconception about us... I know that through my interactions with them,"* he/she added.

The type of behavior shown to Syrians and their reaction to it indicates that Syrians dislike having to submit to other people for their own survival.

Another informant (M.A) reiterated the same thoughts as he/she said:

*My problem with people, I always have to accommodate a lot of them because there is no one to stand at my side. I keep silent a lot [when encountering them] and feel that they are angry with our presence and that they think we are competing with them in labor and economic and social life. I keep silent because I need to work.*

However, refugees try, in one way or another, to conceal their real feelings and tend to praise and flatter the locals. J.A said: *"I arrived here in Maan at the beginning of the events in Syria. I have been working here for three years.... There were good people who helped me in the beginning, but I am now bent on flattering."* R.A said: *"The Maanis helped us. They supported us with furniture. I did not buy any piece."*

Commenting on social relations between Syrian refugees and Jordanians, M.G said:

*I got to know the people in the neighborhood through the Mosque. After prayers, we used to sit for a chat, but that is the limit of my contact with them. I do not exchange visits with them. I saw people envying us for receiving aid.*

A.M said: *"I have very little contact with Jordanians. I deal with them as customers only. But I have good relations with my neighbors. They helped me in the beginning."*

A female informant choosing the nickname Um Mahmoud said: *"I see young Jordanian men here not keen on work. They are not ambitious, and people here are very simple."* The relations reflect the social capital. According to Kohlman, "social capital exists neither in persons nor in the physical environment, but in interpersonal relations and the ability to access information and benefits."

The analysis of interviews correlates with Goffman's dramaturgy theory, "all life is a stage on which we are all players." He said

life is, to a large degree, similar to the roles performed by actors on the front stage. Those are different from what is performed in the backstage, as the actors tend to hide before their audience their real life experience.

Thus, the Syrian refugee is presenting his personal character in the context of imitation because his livelihood imposes imitation.

## 8. ANALYSIS: SYRIAN LEVEL OF TRUST

Trust is an essential component in a man's life. The loss is grave if there is no trust, but when relations are built on trust, the social texture becomes more cohesive. Trust can remove all uncertainties and doubts, removing skepticism from a society.

The study's informants stress the relevance of Syrians' trust in the Jordanian society and refugee supporting organizations. Um Mahmoud said *"I live on UNHCR subsidies and I trust UNHCR. I have good relations with my Jordanian neighbors and exchange visits with them. They helped us."* Other informants (M.N, R.A, M.A and S.M) agreed saying *"We trust UNHCR."*

Trust is based on accessibility to information and transparency. For that reason, Syrian refugees seem to trust UNHCR, which is an official organization. In contrast, they do not place their trust in other non-governmental organizations, on the assumption that the others lack transparency in the flow of information. Cooperation and trust both serve as an indicator in measuring the social capital.

Some informants refer to cases where they place their trust.

M.H said: *"In this area, the society is conservative. You are not afraid for your wife if she wishes to go shopping because people are religious and will not harass her."*

M.N said: *"I only trust my employer. In cases of emergency, he is the one I go for. He has good means and is able to solve any problem. They have helped me a lot in money, medicine and treatment."* S.M, however, said: *"I only trust, to some degree, a selection of Jordanian friends. They are very few. I do not trust local non-governmental organizations but I trust UNHCR."*

Z.M said: *"I do not trust any civil society organization. I trust only UNHCR. I do not trust Jordanians or even Syrians. If anything happens to me, I call UNHCR's hotline."*

Sheikh Abu Ahmad said: *"I trust UNHCR and Jordanian official organizations. In this area, power is with tribal chiefs. The law is poorly enforced, which makes me resort to notable figures known for sympathizing with Syrians and offering them charity."*

The field analysis explains trust as an important element of social capital in the personal level, but also in institutional and public services levels. It provides security and confidence in interpersonal relations and a sense of satisfaction about the services offered to them. It also reflects mutual expectations and obligations by neighbors, voluntary institutions and the local community.



The last element to be analyzed concerning Syrian integration into Maan is the Jordanian perception of the migrants. The study shows that a high numbers of locals believe that Syrians exploit other people (42.2%). Other locals believe that Syrians are individualistic (26.6%), Syrians cooperate between one another, and Syrians are hospitable. Jordanians believe the Syrians have different traditions in several respects. The first difference is in methods of social communication (45.1%), followed by differences in Syrian cuisine (28.2%), differences in costumes (dress) (16.4%), and differences in entertainment related traditions (10.2%).

Having reviewed the prevalent perceptions of Syrians, the study has found that Jordanians look at Syrians as people who are in need, and are therefore trying to extract maximum benefits to avoid poverty and unemployment. The perceptions are a product of a set of judgments and negative impressions that Jordanians have formed about Syrians. Jordanians use such perceptions to assess Syrians and decide what attitude or behavior they will pursue in their interactions with Syrians.

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## CONCLUSION

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In the final analysis, the study shows a need to find appropriate methods of real integration between refugees and the host communities. Such integration must seek to achieve mutual benefits and reduce controversies with the Syrian refugee crisis, which offers no hope for a solution in the near future. Because of the current situation on the ground, it is imperative that decision makers to take appropriate measures to bridge the gap between the controversy of Syrians in Jordan the necessity of accommodating them. In parallel, a system of common interests must be created to serve local development in the country to ease the additional pressure in infrastructure services such as roads, water, electricity and communication. The superstructure services also need support, mainly education, health care, employment, skill acquisition and transfer of experience. The urgent need is to figure out appropriate ways to strike a commercial and practical reconciliation between the two sides through the creation of real partnerships in all facets of professional and practical life. It is also of essence to create a sort of social harmony that is viable and sustainable in the foreseeable future. The Syrian refugee issue is by no means a temporary phenomenon, nor can its burdens be easily tolerated by the local communities, unless an appropriate mechanism is devised to achieve integration and communication. Hopefully, this study will pave the way for more work on the Syrian refugee issue in other

governorates and open up the way for more studies that try to come up with a practical and field database. If such studies are made, they will definitely inform decision makers on the economic, social and cultural levels. They will hence be helpful in realizing Jordan's national interests while reducing the huge burdens placed on the governments because of the significant presence of Syrian refugees there. Finally, Jordan must work today to devise a clear plan and find a mechanism to solve the problems associated with Syrian refugees. It should also find successful ways of integrating refugees and minimizing their burdens. By doing so, weaknesses will be turned into opportunities for the service of refugees and their host communities alike.

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