



SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA

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MEDİNE DERYA CANPOLAT

**MIGRATION, INTEGRATION AND PERCEPTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF
AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS IN SIVAS**

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MEDİNE DERYA CANPOLAT

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THESIS SUPERVISOR

ASST. PROF. DR. K. ONUR UNUTULMAZ

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STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this work. I declare that this thesis is written according to the writing rules of Social Sciences University of Ankara, Institute of Social Sciences.

Name and Surname: Medine Derya CANPOLAT

Signature:

ABSTRACT

MIGRATION, INTEGRATION, AND PERCEPTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS IN SIVAS

Medine Derya Canpolat

MA International Relations

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. K. Onur Unutulmaz

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The ultimate goal of this study is to analyze the local people's perception of Afghan asylum seekers' integration processes within the framework of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in the case of Sivas city of Turkey. Since 1979, Afghans, who have fled from their countries due to invasions and civil war which caused political instabilities, economic insufficiencies, and concerns for the future, have represented a visible example of human mobility. In the literature, although there are various studies on Afghans related to security-oriented themes such as war, terror, and drug trade, studies focusing on local people's perception regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers are unfortunately insufficient. Sivas satellite city, similarly, has not been examined in this context, although it has been transformed into a city of immigrants due to the Afghans' influx. Therefore, this study concentrates on Afghan asylum seekers who constitute the second largest immigrant group in Turkey, and aims to examine their integration processes in Sivas with a focus on the perceptions of

local people. In particular, it investigates the factors that have determined the perceptions of local people on Afghan asylum seekers' integration processes. Also, it questions whether the arrival of Syrian refugees to Sivas affected the local people's perceptions of Afghan asylum seekers and their integration processes.

As the study deals with many concepts and topics, it employs a mixed research design based mostly on qualitative methods, and uses Grounded Theory as the theoretical framework to have a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The mixed research methodology includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. This study depends not only on the data derived from the analytical review of the relevant academic studies on migration but also on the data derived from a fieldwork that includes surveys and in depth interviews. Particularly, a survey was conducted with 400 local people and interviews were conducted with 50 local people. The data derived from the survey was analyzed by a qualitative data analysis software, SPSS IBM Statistics 20, while the data obtained from the interviews was analyzed through creating codes and themes. The quantitative data was presented by tables and graphs with the percentages and frequencies. The qualitative data, on the other hand, was presented through codes and themes referring to the statements of local people to enable the readers to hear the voice of the research subjects. All this data was discussed in a comparative manner. The study completes its discussion by making some suggestions and recommendations based on its findings.

Keywords: Afghan asylum seekers, integration, migration, perception, Sivas, satellite city, Syrian refugees.

ÖZET

GÖÇ, ENTEGRASYON VE ALGILAR: SİVAS'TAKİ AFGAN SIĞINMACILARA YÖNELİK BİR DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

Medine Derya Canpolat

Yüksek Lisans, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi K. Onur Unutulmaz

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'nin Sivas şehrindeki Afgan sığınmacıların entegrasyon sürecine yönelik Sivas halkının algısını nitel ve nicel yöntemlere dayanarak analiz etmektir. 1979 yılından itibaren Afganistan'da yaşanan işgaller ve iç savaşın yol açtığı siyasi istikrarsızlık, ekonomik yetersizlik ve gelecek kaygısı gibi nedenlerden dolayı ülkelerini terkeden Afganlar, insan hareketliliğinin canlı örneğini oluşturmaktadır. Fakat literatürde Afganlara yönelik işgal, iç savaş, terör, uyuşturucu ticareti gibi güvenlik temalı araştırmalar yapılıyor olmasına rağmen, Afganların entegrasyon süreçlerine yönelik yerel halkın algısını ölçmeye yönelik yapılan çalışmalar ne yazık ki yeterli düzeyde değildir. Göç veren bir İl olmasına rağmen, Afgan sığınmacıların akınına uğrayan Sivas uydu kenti ise bu bağlamda daha önce hiç incelenmemiştir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, Türkiye'de sayıca ikinci sırada bulunan Afgan sığınmacılar üzerine yoğunlaşmış ve onların kente entegrasyonu konusunu yerel halkın algısı üzerinden incelemeyi konu edinmiştir. Çalışmada, yerel halkın Afgan sığınmacıların entegrasyon sürecine yönelik algılarını belirleyen faktörlerin neler olduğu araştırılmıştır. Suriyeli mültecilerin kente

gelişinin, Afganlara ve onların entegrasyon süreçlerine yönelik algıyı etkileyip etkilemediği araştırılmıştır.

Çalışma, çoğunlukla nitel yöntemlere dayanan karma bir araştırma tasarımı kullanarak birçok kavram ve konuyu ele aldığından, konunun kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılması için çalışmanın teorik çerçevesi olarak Gömülü Teorinin kullanılması tercih edilmiştir. Çalışmanın yöntemini nitel ve nicel verilerin analizine dayanan karma araştırma yöntemi oluşturmaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışma, konu ile alakalı akademik çalışmaların analitik değerlendirilmesi ile anket, derinlemesine mülakat ve gözleme dayanan saha çalışmasından elde edilen bulgulara dayanmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, yerel halktan 400 kişiye anket yapılmış olup 50 kişiye ise derinlemesine mülakatlar yapılmıştır.

Anketten elde edilen veriler nitel bir veri analizi yazılımı olan SPSS IBM Statistics 20 tarafından analiz edilirken, görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler kodlar ve temalar oluşturularak analiz edilmiştir. Nicel veriler, yüzdelik ve sıklık değerleri ile tablo ve grafikler ile çalışmada sunulmuştur. Nitel veriler ise okuyucuların araştırma gruplarının sesini duymasını sağlamak için yerel halkın ifadelerine atıfta bulunarak kodlara ve temalara uygun olarak sunulmuştur. Tüm bu veriler karşılaştırmalı olarak tartışılmıştır. Bu çalışma, elde ettiği bulgulara dayanarak bazı önerilerde bulunarak tartışmasını sona erdirmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afgan sığınmacılar, entegrasyon, göç, algı, Sivas, uydu kent, Suriyeli mülteciler.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD	Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Republic of Turkey
ASAM	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers & Migrants
DGMM	Directorate of General Migration Management, Republic of Turkey
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
EU	European Union
FA	Friendly Association
GT	Grounded Theory
HÜGO	Migration and Politics Research Center, Hacettepe University
IOs	International Organizations
IOM	International Organization of Migration
LFIP	The Turkish Law on Foreigners and International Protection
LTA	Life Tree Association
MFLSS	Ministry of Family, Labour, and Social Services, Republic of Turkey
MiReKoç	Migration Research Center at Koç University
NAND	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PDMM	Provincial Directorate of Migration Management
SASF	Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation
SSC	Social Services Center
TL	Turkish Lira (currency)
TRC	Turkish Red Crescent
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines three crucial and intertwined phenomena: migration, integration, and perceptions. In this context, it focuses on the perception of local people regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas, an important province in eastern Turkey. Here, three important issues need to be highlighted. The first one is that in the thesis, the definition of integration was not mainly concentrated on. Instead, it was focused on the perceptions of the local people regarding integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers and intended to understand how the local people perceive this processes. That is because, during the data collection from the field, in order not to direct the field work participants, as a concept of integration was not defined before asking the questions them. The second one is that in the thesis, as a concept of perception expresses the picture of the local people that appear in their mind when they were asked about Afghan asylum seekers. Also, their opinions whether Afghan asylum seekers live in an integrated part of local people in Sivas. The third one is that in the thesis, as a concept of local people. The fact that the local people refers the people, who was born in, grown up in, and live in Sivas, participated in the field work of the thesis. All participants of the field work were identified in accordance with this reference. However, the findings was not generalized to the universe.

In the thesis, thanks to a mixed type of research methodology, not only perceptions of the local people were grasped deeply but also a more powerful voice to local people's imagery of Afghan asylum seekers in their own words was illustrated.

1.1. AIMS OF THE THESIS

Studying Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey is relevant and timely for two main reasons: on one hand, Afghanistan, which has only recently out-ranked by Syria, comes second in terms of producing the highest number of refugees globally, on the other hand,

Turkey is the country hosting the greatest number of refugees¹. Due to the ongoing conflicts in Syria, almost 4 million Syrian refugees currently live in Turkey (Directorate of General Migration Management [DGMM], 2020). This enormous number has led most of the academic studies to focus on Syrians in recent years, while only a limited number of studies have been conducted on Afghans who are the second largest group in Turkey.

The wave of Afghans' immigration began with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, continued with the policies of Taliban that have caused civil war in 1996 and United States of America's invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 (Koç M., 2018). As Afghans have escaped violent conflicts and political instabilities generations after generations, the number of Afghan asylum seekers increased globally and in Turkey. This rising number of asylum seekers has brought up the issue of integration processes which have political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Integration is a multi-faceted phenomenon which has a complex set of impacts both on the local people in terms of recognition of asylum seekers and on asylum seekers in terms of their adaptation to local people and the environment (Çetin, 2016). Perception, on the other hand, is one of the most important factors affecting the processes of integration. The social acceptance of the asylum seekers, who became residents while being seen as guests, and the start of their integration processes are heavily shaped by the perception of the society (Tuncay, 2011). Thus, the main aim of this thesis is to measure local people's perception of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in the case of Sivas, to fill the gap in the literature with reliable empirical data based on field work, and to produce useful data to inform the policymakers through the primary data collection methods.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the thesis, local people's perception of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers was analyzed regarding social, cultural, economic, political, and security-oriented dynamics. In addition, the factors which have impacts on the perception of local people were examined. Although the survey did not include any specific comparisons between Afghan asylum seekers and other displaced groups of people as a factor, while

¹ Syrians are referred to as refugees and Afghans are referred as asylum seekers in this thesis. A more detailed discussion of the asylum system in Turkey and the status of Afghans will be provided in the later chapters.

conducting interviews, the question whether the existence of Syrians was an important factor affecting the perception of local people appeared as a crucial one. Thus, local people's perception of Syrian refugees' integration processes was compared with local people's perception of Afghan asylum seekers' integration regarding effective factors.

The main research question of the thesis is "how do local people perceive the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas?" In order to find a comprehensive answer for the research question, following two questions were stressed, as well:

- What kind of factors have affected the local people's perception of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers?
- Did the arrival of Syrians in Sivas affect the local people's perceptions on this issue?

1.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THESIS

Afghans used to be the most crowded asylum seeker community around the globe. However, with the Syria crisis in 2011, they became the second (Global Trends, 2018), and with the Venezuela crisis in 2016 they became the third most crowded asylum seeker group (Global Trends, 2020). In Turkey, on the other hand, they are the most crowded group of displaced people after Syrians (DGMM, 2020). Despite the density of Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey, there are very few studies on Afghan asylum seekers. In addition, their integration processes, and the perception of local people in Sivas on the issue have not been examined yet. Therefore, the first importance of the thesis is to contribute in filling this gap in the literature. The second importance of the thesis is derived from its methodology. The researches on the issue were commonly handled with qualitative or quantitative research methodologies, usually separately. However, in order to obtain reliable and comprehensive data, this thesis used a mixed research method and analyzed the data obtained from qualitative and quantitative methods as complementary to one another. In this context, secondary resources were analyzed, and primary data was obtained. The statistical data from the survey and the un-numerical data from the interviews were gathered, synthesized and comparatively analyzed. In addition, interviews enabled the researcher to obtain additional qualitative information by taking

advantage of their flexibility. This methodology increased the comprehensiveness, in-depth understanding and reliability of the thesis. The third importance of the thesis is derived from its ability to illustrate the perception of local people by analyzing the factors affecting this perception and comparing the Syrian refugees with Afghan asylum seekers. In the literature, Syrians in Sivas have not been focused yet. Comparing the Syrians with the Afghans from the perspective of local people contributed a unique study to the literature. The final importance of the thesis derives from its attempt to produce useful data to inform the policymakers through the fieldwork.

1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Undoubtedly, this thesis also has limitations. Firstly, the thesis only reflects the perception of the sample which was constituted by 400 survey participants and 50 interviewees. While it is a large sample and all efforts have been paid to make it as diverse as possible, since it is not constructed to be representative, the findings cannot be generalized to the universe. In related manners, it reflects only the center of Sivas province, with the samples selected by a convenience sampling. Thus, further studies can be conducted on this topic.

1.5. SYNOPSIS OF THE CHAPTERS

The thesis is composed of six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. In this chapter, justifications of the thesis' subject take place. In this context, both aims, importance and limitations of the thesis are illustrated. Also, the research questions of the thesis are identified.

The second chapter includes analytical background and theoretical framework of the thesis. Analytical background is composed of definitions of concepts and literature review. In this framework, the concepts of migration, integration, and perception will be defined. In the context of literature review, Afghans, Syrians, and Turkey will be concentrated on. Turkey's migration policy and studies in relation to Syrians and mostly Afghans will be exemplified. Also, studies related to Afghans in the global literature will be dealt with. Theoretical framework will explain the difficulties of illustrating this issue by one theory, and demonstrates the grounded theory adopted by the thesis.

The third chapter is methodology which endeavors to justify the case study. It concentrates on the reasons why Afghan asylum seekers and Sivas are determined as the cases for this study. It demonstrates the methods of data collection and analysis that include survey, interviews, and review of secondary sources. It explains the presentation of data, in other words, research design. In addition, this chapter reflects the ethical matters, and methods of analysis, as well.

The fourth chapter includes the general perception and experiences of the local people regarding Afghan asylums seekers. In this chapter, the survey findings are interpreted and analyzed within five subtitles: socio-cultural, economic, political, and security-oriented perception of local people, and the future of Afghan asylum seekers.

The fifth chapter includes a deeper understanding of the perceptions and their reasons. In this chapter, interview findings are illustrated and analyzed within six categories: sample of the interviews; socio-cultural, economic, political and security-oriented perception of local people, and existence of other displaced people: Syrians. These categories are explained around the following codes: language, education, friendship and marriage; economic burden, exploitation of economic resources; policies of the government, Turkish citizenship and state-centric approach; security; and Syrians as a factor affecting the perception of local people.

The sixth chapter is discussion and conclusion. This chapter includes the explanation of the statistically significant findings, a general summary of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas, arrival of Syrians as a factor affecting the perception of the local people, contradictions derived from the survey and interview findings, concluding remarks, and recommendations. In this chapter, the concept of integration within the framework of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas will be questioned, and the factors which affected the local people's perception of Afghan asylum seekers' integration processes will be discussed. In addition, the differences in the findings of the survey and interviews will be discussed. After that, the research will be summarized, the contribution of the thesis to the literature will be highlighted, the limitations of the thesis will be reiterated, and outlines for further studies will be suggested.

CHAPTER 2: ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter examines the analytical background and theoretical framework of the thesis. The analytical background is composed of two parts which are definitions of related concepts, and the literature review. The theoretical framework is also composed of two parts. The first part turns at theoretical considerations and the second part draws the theoretical framework adopted in this thesis.

2.1. ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND

The analytical background contains two main parts. The first part defines and discusses the main concepts of focus: migration, integration, and perception. The second part engages in a comprehensive review of the relevant academic literature, as well as policy documents and reports produced by NGOs to conceptualize itself in relation to the existing field.

2.1.1. Definitions of Concepts

This part of the thesis is very important in order to understand the concepts concentrated on, and it links these concepts to each other. In this context, firstly migration will be defined so as to draw a general framework. Types of migration will also be explained to specify the status of Afghan asylum seekers. Next, integration will be defined to identify the consequences of migration. Finally, the concept of perception will be defined so as to understand its role to determine the attitudes of local people towards the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers.

2.1.1.1 Migration

Throughout history, a large number of reasons and motivations have led to migration movements which demonstrate the tendency of human beings to move (Toksöz, 2014; Adıgüzel, 2016; Uslu & Bayındır Goularas, 2016). Human beings have a desire to reach better life standards and to escape economic inadequacy, political instabilities and

security problems like civil war or oppression occurring in their territories (Günay, Atılğan, & Serin, 2017). In this context, it can be asserted that migration is not only a phenomenon as old as human history (Aydın-Yılmaz, 2016; Ertürk & Günel-Yılmaz, 2017; Arınç, 2018), but also a multidimensional movement of population, which contains various definitions (Audebert & Dorai, 2010; Ökten, 2012; Sağıroğlu, 2016; Gül, 2018; Kılınç, 2018; Küçükali & Çevik-Özemir, 2018; Şemşit, 2018). According to the International Organization of Migration (2020), migration is:

...the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a state. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.

In terms of this conceptual definition, migration has an immense diversity and a variety of categorizations. Although typologies of migration constantly change and gain new forms, they can be categorized according to general criteria, such as nation state borders: internal-international migration, period: temporary-permanent migration, legal procedure: regular-irregular migration, and formation processes: voluntary-forced migration (Yıldız, 2018). Since this thesis primarily focuses on the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas, the literature on international, irregular, and forced migration needed to be attended.

According to the Turkish Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013, p. 18), “*Irregular migration* refers whereby foreigners enter into, stay in or exit from Turkey through illegal channels to work in Turkey without a permit or seek international protection.” In this regard, the concept of irregular migration is related to immigrants who are not legally allowed to remain in the country. On the other hand, *regular migration* is related to immigrants who arrived to the country for employment, education or other purposes with the necessary documents for residence and work (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012). Therefore, irregular migration includes various illegalities that are perceived as a national threat (Atasü-Topcuoğlu, 2016). *Forced migration* refers to people who are forced to leave their regions as a result of wars, religious-political-ethnic pressures, natural disasters, security needs and so forth (Ekici & Tuncel, 2015). In other words, it can be

stated that forced migration relates to the survival of people. In this context, since Afghan asylum seekers arrived in Turkey due to conflicts and instabilities in their country and through illegal channels, they can be considered as international, irregular and forced immigrants. However, their legal status is different because Afghan asylum seekers fled to Turkey so as to benefit from international protection. Further information about this subject will be given in Turkey's migration policy section of this thesis.

Overall, the most basic feature of migration is to change geography as well as the associated social, cultural, political, and legal contexts. These changes bring the concept of integration into question (Aktepe, Tekdere, & Gürbüz, 2017). The next section, therefore, turns to this issue.

2.1.1.2. Integration

Human beings usually move towards more affluent places due to personal, social, economic, political or other reasons, and they find themselves in a foreign context with a different language, legal system, customs, and traditions. Therefore, they need to go through an integration process in the fields of social acceptance and interaction, health, education, economy and so forth. Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninx (2016, p. 14) define the concept of integration as “the process of becoming an accepted part of society”. However, this concept is a controversial phenomenon which does not have a generally accepted definition (Martikainen, 2006; UNHCR, 2013; Unutulmaz, 2016; Göksel, 2019), especially in relation to refugees or asylum seekers, whose integration is further complicated by the fact that they are forced immigrants usually traumatized by the conflicts or disasters that dislocated them. In addition, although the concept of integration is almost universal in the literature of migration, alternative concepts such as harmonization, acculturation, and multiculturalism continued to be used, yet none of which can be said to have universal definitions, either (Unutulmaz, 2016). For instance, according to Şeker, Sirkeci and Yüceşahin, the concept of integration can be considered as a harmonization process with respect to the mutual changes in legal, economic, social and cultural aspects of immigrant groups and indigenous groups in the post-migration period (Şeker, Sirkeci, & Yüceşahin, 2015). Also, according to the article 96 of the Law (2013, p. 86), harmonization is preferred to be used as a concept, and defined as a process which occurs in the fields of rights and obligations, political structure, language, law

system, health services, culture, history, education, occupation, social and cultural interaction, and accession of public and private goods.

It is understood that, as a dynamic phenomenon, integration affects all the groups in society (Berry, 1997; Çağlar & Onay, 2015; Şeker, 2015; Adıgüzel, 2016; Canbey-Özgüler, 2018). Therefore, successful implementation of integration is as complex as its conceptual definition. As reported by Ager and Strang (2008), successful integration can be achieved through putting into practice the following four dynamics: providing housing, employment, education, and health services; practicing rights such as human dignity, equality, justice and security; connecting groups socially to each other; diminishing structural barriers in terms of language, culture, and the local environment. As it was also stated by Wang and Ning (2016), providing housing, employment, education, and health services is the first step of integration. In this context, housing is so important that it makes immigrant groups to feel at home and secure. Employment affords self-esteem to immigrant groups through supplying economic power. Education supplies a place for immigrant groups in which they get closer with the host society by learning its language, values, and norms without exclusion. Health services assure immigrant groups to benefit from the state agencies. Practicing rights is the second way of integration in terms of bringing a multicultural society through respecting diversification of immigrant groups and host-societies. The third way of integration is connecting groups socially with each other, and the last way of integration diminishes structural barriers in terms of language, culture, and the local environment in order to establish a two-way understanding of integration. All these steps can be categorized as psychological, economic, social, and cultural integration.

In the thesis, although the Law prefers to use the term harmonization, integration was preferred to be used as a concept due to its common use in the literature. In addition, despite several definitions of the term, it was understood that the local people perceive integration as “the process of becoming an accepted part of society.” This process includes settlement, interaction, and change, in other words, integration starts with migration, continues with settlement to new places, requires social interactions with host societies, and brings changes.

Therefore, this thesis is closer to the Ager and Strang's practice of integration and it questions the perception of local people of Afghan asylum seekers' social, cultural, and economic integration. In addition, it questions the political and security related dimensions of integration, as well. The fundamental reason is to grasp how local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers' integration processes, which is advocated by the Turkish government as a harmonization process through providing self-confidence, and granting knowledge and skills in order to make their life easier with a cooperation among the DGMM, governmental institutions like local administrations, NGOs, and IOs. Besides, Turkey prepares foreigners to live not only in Turkey but also in third countries where they will be settled, or their country of origin when they return (Asar, 2015).

As a concept, integration brings the concept of perception into question. Hence, the next section turns towards this issue.

2.1.1.3. Perceptions

Meanings occur in the minds of people in accordance with the process of thinking that begins with the perceived event (Özdemir, 2017). According to Tuncay (2011), it is the perception that shapes the attitudes of the individuals or social groups who must live together. At that point, perception is a key factor triggering human beings to do certain behaviors and is mutually constructed by foreigners and local people. In other words, the attitudes of foreigners affect the attitudes and perception of local people, and the attitudes of local people affect the attitudes and perception of foreigners (Özüdoğru et al., 2018). In this context, opinions are one of the certain factors that shape the attitudes of local people who care about ethnicity, socio-economic status or culture, and are an effective step for the formation of perception. In addition, political discourses and media are also effective factors that shape the perception of local people or create a public opinion towards foreigners (Kolukırık, 2009; Eşigül et al., 2017).

In fact, many problems arise from perception. Therefore, achievement of integration is based on the consciousness about and the acceptance of this concept which emphasizes respect for differences. Hence, this thesis aims to put forth the perception of local people on Afghan asylum seekers. It highlights how local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers, how the perception has been shaped, and what kind of factors have

affected this perception through the analysis of interviews and surveys conducted with local people in Sivas.

2.1.2. Literature Review

The field work of this thesis was carried out in Turkey, and rather than global studies, Turkish literature was benefited from mostly. Academic studies are categorized under the two general titles: Afghans in the literature, and Turkey and migration in the literature. The latter title was divided into three sub titles as follows: Turkey as an emigration, immigration and transit country; Turkey and migration: conceptual framework and legal regulations; and the studies on migration, integration, and perception in Turkey. The last sub title was also divided into three sub titles: the studies on Syrian refugees in Turkey, the studies on Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey, and the studies on Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas. The studies related to these categorizations were reviewed and most of them were illustrated in the following sections.

2.1.2.1. Afghans in the Literature

The studies on Afghans can be categorized in the axes of structure of Afghanistan, violence in Afghanistan, and creation of a future for Afghans. To illustrate the structure of Afghanistan, the following topics are dealt with: Afghanistan's history, policy, economy, culture and so on. As for violence, the followings can be given as examples: the great game between Russia and the Britain; wars: Soviet occupation, NATO intervention; history, culture, politics, and economy of Afghanistan; ethnic groups in Afghanistan; Islamic militants in Afghanistan: Taliban, Mujahids; terrorism; drug trade; security; human rights; policies of the international organizations towards Afghanistan: UN, UNICEF; policies of neighbors and other states towards Afghanistan: Pakistan, Iran, India, USA, Russia, Turkey; gender differences; diseases like malaria; traumatic stress disorder. The following two categorizations can be given as examples for creating a future for Afghanistan. The first one is the studies on construction of modernization in Afghanistan, reconciliation in Afghanistan and constructing sovereignty in Afghanistan. The second one is migration: Afghans migrate to other countries in order to reach better life standards because of the ongoing wars and conflicts. In the year of 1990, the number of Afghan refugees or asylum seekers was 6.2 million. After the coup in 1992, this number dropped, but in 1996, once again it increased due to the Taliban which took the

power (Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü [NEE], 2017b). Still, Afghans migrate to other countries. Moreover, historically, Turkey has hosted Afghan asylum seekers and after 1990s, the number of Afghans in Turkey dramatically increased. In this context, migration of Afghans to Turkey was focused on the thesis rather than the other topics of categorization.

2.1.2.2. Turkey and Migration in the Literature

Turkish literature on migration was reviewed and explained in accordance with three main frames. The first one is Turkey as an emigration, immigration and transit country. The second one is conceptual framework and legal regulations of Turkey regarding migration. The last one is studies on migration, integration, and perception carried out in Turkey and Sivas related to Afghan asylum seekers. The most important parts of these studies were examined in the following parts.

a. Turkey as an Emigration, Immigration and Transit Country

Being an emigration, immigration and transit country, Turkey is a country that has experienced diverse forms of human mobility (Demirbaş & Bekaroğlu, 2013). As an *emigrant country*, Turkey has experienced labor emigration to developed countries like Germany, the Netherlands, and Australia, as well as the emigration of its highly-skilled population through what is termed as brain drain in the fields of science, law, finance, health, and technology (Sirkeci & Esipova, 2013). As an *immigrant country*, Turkey received people from the Balkan countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Romania, as well as from the Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq, Iran, and Syria. In addition, Turkey received Turkmens, Azerbaijanis, Meskhetian Turks from the Caucasians, and Crimean Turks, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kyrgyz, and Afghans from Central Asia (Yıldız, 2018). As a *transit country*, the geographical location of Turkey has a strategic importance, connecting Asia, the Middle East, and Europe to one another. Therefore, the Middle Eastern or Asian people perceive Turkey as a transit pass to Europe (Kolukırmık, 2014). This perception makes Turkey a country which hosts asylum seekers struggling to settle in Europe or other developed countries all around the world (Kirişçi, 2007).

According to statistical data of the DGMM (2019), there are 3,579,008 Syrians, 35,042 Afghans, 15,532 Iraqians, 3,558 Iranians and 2.285 people from other nationalities

living in Turkey. However, in Global Trends, a recent report by the UNHRC (2018), there are 3,622,400 Syrian refugees and 368,400 displaced people who applied for international protection living in Turkey. Of those people, 170,000 are Afghans, 142,000 are Iraqians, 39,000 are Iranians, 5,700 are Somolians, and 11,700 are from other ethnicities. Turkey hosts the largest number of displaced people, followed by Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.2 million), Sudan (1.1 million) and Germany (1.1 million).

b. Turkey and Migration: Conceptual Framework and Legal Regulations

The first document about refugees and asylum seekers of Turkey is the Settlement Law which was agreed on 14 June 1934. The context of this document was about compulsory settlement of Turkish lineages. Later, Turkey took part in the Geneva Convention in 1951, and on 31 January 1967, the Protocol on the Legal Status of Refugees was signed. Turkey put geographical reservation to this convention and declared that only people who come from Council of Europe member countries will be accepted as refugees. Nevertheless, following the 1980s, the increased number of irregular immigrants who do not come from the Council of Europe member countries brought a new law on the agenda in 1994: Settlement and Asylum Regulation (NEE, 2017a). According to the Article 3 of this regulation, an asylum seeker is defined as (T.C Resmi Gazete, 1994, p. 7):

An asylum seeker is a person who as a result of events occurring in their countries and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his citizenship and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

With this regulation, people who do not come from the Council of Europe member countries, if they have the conditions of refugees, are granted asylum seekers status, and until their resettlement to a third country, they are permitted to live in Turkey under temporary protection.

In the year of 2000, Turkey has applied policies in accordance with the candidacy to the European Union and tried to handle irregular migrants. Thus, Turkey's migration

policy, after the year of 2000, has been regulated in line with the EU, and international cooperation. In this regard, Turkey signed the Accession Partnership Documents in 2000, which also declared a National Program on irregular migration in 2001 according to the expectations of Turkey Reports Prepared by the European Commission. In addition, Turkey has made arrangements to protect border security, and to regulate illegal passage of irregular immigrants to the West through Turkey (Yıldız, 2018).

In 2013, Turkey put the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) into practice and founded the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) to conduct procedures and principles for foreigners. The Law includes regulations on foreigners in terms of visa control, entry into Turkey, exit from Turkey, residence permits, removal of foreigners, types of international protection, rights of stateless persons, integration policies, and the DGMM as a regulatory unit.

According to Article 61 of the LFIP (2013, p. 58), the concept of refugee refers to:

A person who as a result of events occurring in European countries and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his citizenship and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it, shall be granted refugee status upon completion of the refugee status determination process.

According to Article 62 of the LFIP (2013, p. 58), the concept of conditional refugee has an identical definition with refugee but two nuances. The first is that it refers to people that arrive in Turkey as a result of events occurring outside of Europe and the second is that they are allowed to settle in Turkey temporarily till they are resettled in a third country. Here, the concept of conditional refugee is defined as

a person who as a result of events occurring outside European countries and owing to wellfounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country

of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it, shall be granted conditional refugee status upon completion of the refugee status determination process. Conditional refugees shall be allowed to reside in Turkey temporarily until they are resettled to a third country.

According to Article 63 of the LFIP (2013, p. 59), the concept of subsidiary protection refers to

unwilling people to return their country of origin who are foreigner or stateless and could not be granted by the status of refugee or conditional refugee could stay in Turkey under the subsidiary protection, since if returned to the country of origin be sentenced to death, torture, or violence.

According to Article 91 of the LFIP (2013, p. 82), “temporary protection can be granted if people, forced to leave massively from their country of origin and cannot return there, need immediate protection.”

As it can be seen above, with LFIP, the scope of the definition of refugees is once again limited only to foreigners who come from Council of Europe member countries. With LFIP, a new concept, conditional refugee, was regulated for foreigners who are not from one of the Council of Europe member countries, and this status was accepted as the new form of asylum seeker status, defined in the 1994 Settlement and Asylum Regulation.

In this context, legal status of Afghans is not recognized as refugee due to Turkey’s geographical reservation which constitutes an impediment to supply this status to Afghans who are not from one of the members of the Council of Europe. On the other hand, Afghans’ legal status is not recognized as conditional refugees because of the process of status determination which is not completed yet. Due to the same reason, their legal status is not recognized as subsidiary protection either. Therefore, this study preferred to refer to Afghans as asylum seekers since their legal status has not been determined.

However, as they have an international protection status or application, Afghan asylum seekers have some rights until they are granted conditional refugee status or resettled in a third country (İçduygu & Aksel, 2012). For instance, they can benefit from the health services under the control of the Ministry of Health. They can be educated under the control of the Ministry of National Education. They can work under the control of the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Security (Kaya C., 2017). They can also benefit from social assistance through both governmental and nongovernmental organizations. In order to ensure effective communication, they can use interpreter services, as well (Asar, 2015).

c. The Studies on Migration, Integration and Perception in Turkey

There are many academic studies which can be categorized as studies that depend on explaining the process of integration, and studies that depend on perception of immigrants and Turkish citizens. These studies examine groups who migrated from the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Balkans, especially Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran. Although this thesis focuses primarily on Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey, due to the magnitude of the Syrian crisis and the very large number of Syrians in Turkey in a matter of a few years, the literature has been filled with studies on Syrians in recent years. Since this thesis also attempts to draw the Syrian asylum seekers in a comparative gaze, the next section firstly deals with the studies on Syrians in Turkey. Later on, studies on Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey and Sivas are handled.

c. 1. The Studies on Syrian Refugees in Turkey

As already mentioned, since 2011, because of their growing number in Turkey, Syrian refugees have been the primary focus of academic studies. For instance, some research centers in Turkey, such as MiReKoc and HÜGO, mostly have studied on Syrian refugees for the past decade. The scope of these studies differs in ways such as the fields of education, health, politics, economy, security, sociology, law, integration, and perception which identify the theoretical and conceptual framework for the issue. There are also several studies on Syrian refugees related to the process of migration, integration, and perception which are based on field work. These studies can be categorized as follows:

- The field works conducted on the integration processes of Syrian refugees such as difficulties faced by Syrian women, children, and students or all Syrian refugees living in Turkey from the perspective of Syrians or Turkish citizens.

- The studies which are about the impacts of media in shaping the perception of Turkish citizens regarding Syrian refugees.

Field works which reflect the perceptions of local people of Syrian refugees living in particular cities, generally the big cities like Istanbul, Ankara, and İzmir, or cities where Syrian refugees who stay intensely in like Gaziantep, Adana, Hatay, Osmaniye, Mersin, and Kilis were focused (Yaşar, 2014; Orhan & Senyücel Gündoğar, 2015; Tunç, 2015; Kaypak & Bimay, 2016; Aktaş & Gülçür, 2017; Ankaralı et al., 2017; Çömez Polat & Kaya, 2017; Taştan, Haklı, & Osmanoğlu, 2017; Aydın & Durgun, 2018; Bakiroğlu, Artar, & İzmir, 2018; Tümeğ, 2018; TÜRKSAM, 2018; Çalışkan, 2019; Ersoy & Ala, 2019; Harunoğulları & Agcadağ Çelik, 2019; Kemik, Gözübüyük, & Sever, 2019; Ünal & Doğan, 2020). However, recently, studies on the subject have been carried out in other cities like Giresun, Trabzon, Bayburt, Elazığ, and Konya. For instance, a study related to social integration of Syrian refugees were conducted in Konya from the perspective of Syrians, local administration, and related institutions (Alptekin, Akarçay Ulutaş, & Ustabaşı Gündüz, 2018; Duğan & Gürbüz, 2018). A study related to policies of local administrations for Syrian women was conducted in Bayburt and Giresun (Alacadağlı & Mamur Işıkcı, 2018). The studies related to social integration and acceptance of migrated students (Sezgin & Yolcu, 2016), and the problems Syrians face at schools were conducted in Elazığ (Gomleksiz & Aslan, 2018).

The studies about social integration of Syrian refugees show that local administrations try to contribute to the integration processes of Syrians through social activities and Turkish language courses. Although Syrians are socialized by those programs, they believed that they could not improve their neighbor relations due to the prejudices of local people (Duğan & Gürbüz, 2018). The policies regarding the problems faced by Syrian women are insufficient in the agenda of local administrations (Alacadağlı Mamur & Işıkcı, 2018). In addition, these studies also show that the legal status, shelter, education, employment, and communication of Syrians are required to be determined (Alptekin, Akarçay Ulutaş, & Ustabaşı Gündüz, 2018). Syrian students face problems in areas such as school rules and culture, instruction methods, language, courses, contexts,

and negative perceptions of people (Başar, Akan, & Çiftçi, 2018; Gomleksiz & Aslan, 2018). However, many Syrian refugees are eager to change the negative perception of local people who cite “be decent if you are a foreigner.” (Sezgin & Yolcu, 2016).

Syrian refugees are perceived as a problem in the social, cultural, educational, economic, political, and security-oriented fields (TÜRKSAM, 2018). For instance, some findings stress that Syrians are perceived as people who shrink the national economy, disturb the society, damage the national security, and threaten families as Syrian women being second wives (Erdoğan, 2017). In addition, the media is a crucial power in terms of shaping the citizens’ perception of Syrian refugees (Ünlüer, 2015). For instance, a study conducted in Kilis illustrates that the initially positive perception of the local people on Syrians’ migration turned into negative perception in time because of the effects of negative news about Syrians in the media (Cengiz, 2015).

c. 2. The Studies on Afghan Asylum Seekers in Turkey

Turkey is one of the attractive countries for Afghans to migrate. Especially after the Soviet occupation the number of Afghans increased in Turkey. Due to war, conflicts, diversities in ethnicities and religious beliefs, instabilities in economic and political structure in Afghanistan as well as the desire to live in better life standards and safety, Afghans migrate to Turkey. It should be noted that this thesis classifies studies on Afghans regarding migration and integration as follows: Afghans’ perception of Turkish people in the context of the problems experienced by Afghans during their integration processes, and Turkish people’s perception of Afghans’ integration processes. However, while some studies were found for the first category, no study was found for the second category.

According to the studies in the literature, it can be asserted that there is only one stable thing in Afghanistan which is immigration. The factors that motivated Afghans to migrate can be identified generally as a desire to reach freedom and to live in a safe country (Kuschminder & Koser, 2016). For instance, Geyik Yıldırım (2018) demonstrates in her research conducted in Kars that Soviet intervention, pressure of Taliban, and economic reasons forced Afghans to migrate from Afghanistan. Similar findings can be seen in the project by Afghans Solidarity Association (2016) conducted in Van, Kayseri, Mersin, Kırıkkale, Denizli, and Nevşehir. Also, Jarahzadeh (2013) introduced a study in Kayseri through the findings of an interview conducted with an Afghan asylum seeker.

This study shows the motivation of Afghans to migrate despite the risk of crossing borders illegally. However, the difficulties start with the migration process of Afghans due to the fact that they are irregular migrants (Kaytaz, 2016), and continue with the process of settlement.

In Turkey, the settlement process of Afghan asylum seekers begins with the application of international protection. After the application, they are provided with an identity card which shows their legal status. Without this card they are not allowed to access education, health, and social assistance. Then, they are transferred to one of the suitable satellite cities by the DGMM. However, even if they have the identity card and are placed in a satellite city, they have other troubles, as well (Doğan Y., 2019). For instance, Ünler (2015) argues that even though the Law advocates the harmonization process, Afghan asylum seekers still might suffer in their daily lives. Because of the economic insufficiency, more than one family, who have trouble paying their rent or bills, have to live in the same house. As they have trouble providing for their basic needs, they have to work illegally at low wages.

Due to the differences in language, systems of education, and inability to afford the school equipment, Afghan children face problems at schools (Kahraman, 2017). These problems faced by Afghan students can be identified as use of different techniques and rules of Turkish education system, problems with their schoolmates and unsupportive manners of their families (Doğan M., 2019).

Such problems may also cause Afghan asylum seekers to have psychological issues. For instance, Yıldız, Ünlü and Sezer (2014) introduced a study that presents eight cases, which took part in the media, about displaced people, and four of which are cases that were experienced by Afghan asylum seekers. These people either committed suicide or murdered their relatives because of having insufficient economic income, language problems, difficulties in benefiting from education or health services, lack of consultancy, and prolongation of legal status determination. In fact, the study introduced by Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (2017b) shows the societal and economic profile of asylum seekers living in satellite cities. This study demonstrates that as Afghan asylum seekers need psychological support more than the other asylum seeker groups, they consult with psychologists. It also shows that Afghan asylum seekers attempt to end their lives more than the others.

c. 3. The Studies on Afghan Asylum Seekers in Sivas

In the literature, Sivas has not been examined by researchers in terms of the local people's perception regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers yet, and there are only two studies about Afghans in Sivas. One of these studies concentrates on national values while the other on education. Kılıç and Demir (2017) introduced a qualitative study focusing on the 13 to 15-year-old students' perception of the national values of the Republic of Turkey. As a qualitative study, Hubing's thesis (2011), which obtained the data from interviews conducted with Afghans and some charity organizations in Sivas, illustrates the linguistic issues experienced by Afghans. As these studies are not related to local people's perception of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers, they will not be dwelled on in this thesis.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis deals with several concepts and phenomena through examining the socio-cultural, economic, political, and security-oriented perceptions of local people regarding Afghan asylum seekers' integration processes. As there are various types of migration and integration theories, there are also various approaches to concentrate on perceptions. The concepts such as media, politics, economy, psychology, sociology, law, security, environment and so forth are related and integrated to the thesis, as well. In fact, as a result of this complexity, the thesis cannot be explained by just one theory. Thus, the Grounded Theory was preferred to be used for seeking answers to the research questions as a theoretical background. Although it is an approach or design of qualitative research methods, in the thesis, it embraces the mixed types of methodology, because as Creswell states (2018), it is not only an approach but also a research strategy and methodology of data analysis to use for a comprehensive explanation for any social process.

2.2.1. Grounded Theory

The Grounded Theory (GT) was formulated by sociologists Barnet Glaser and Anselm Strauss. They introduced this theory in their book "Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research" in 1967 with the goal of explaining the social process or phenomena from the perspective of human beings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The main principles of the theory are to figure out new ways to discover the social world

and to make a research to broaden understanding of the phenomena (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006).

According to Creswell (2018), the GT can be considered as a methodology used to investigate concepts, theories, and suggestions from the data obtained instead of using other academic studies or theoretical frameworks when a comprehensive explanation is required in relation to social processes focused on. It pursues a descriptive system which focuses on perceptions and experiences of the participants, and concentrates on the relations between their perceptions and actions. Thus, it concentrates on fieldwork study which systematically gathers data from people. The data is collected through interviews, observations, and other sources with the aim of seeking how and why the phenomenon occurred (Bowen, 2006).

The data obtained from the field work is analyzed inductively. Data analysis starts with coding which can be defined as a way to divide the data and explain what data includes in certain categories. Since the information obtained is intense, it provides conceptual richness to the research. After the coding procedure, the literature is reviewed, and the phenomenon focused can deeply be explained or a theory can be revealed (Çelik & Ekşi, 2015; Ralph, Birks, & Chapman, 2015).

2.2.2. Justification for Adopting Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory concentrates on the definition of a social process, therefore, it always points out the interactions and the context occurred in the field. The credibility and reliability of the research occurs through justification of the data (McCann & Clar, 2003). In fact, this thesis depends on the field work carried out in accordance with its fundamental objective which is to grasp how local people in Sivas perceive the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers, and what their attitudes are towards Afghan asylum seekers at the micro level. Here, it should be noted that field work conducted with local people makes this thesis stronger, and the literature review supplies a comprehensive perspective to the issue.

The purpose of this thesis is not to prove or to refute a theory and nor does the GT (Glaser B. G., 2002). It tries to understand the perceptions of local people through field work and to figure out how local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers and what the

motivation of their attitudes towards Afghan asylum seekers is. In accordance with this aim, during the process of data collection and analysis, the steps below which are advocated by the GT were followed:

- Collection and analysis of data are conducted simultaneously through comparative analysis method,
- Analytic codes and categories are obtained from the data rather than from previously thought and developed hypotheses,
- Writing theoretical memos that define the relations between categories is used,
- Sampling is made to examine a comprehensive explanation for phenomenon rather than for the purpose of representing the universe,
- After analyzing the data, literature is reviewed.

By doing so, the researcher made sure to begin the thesis without prejudices or presuppositions, and followed an open-minded and flexible process. While analyzing the data, among several coding systems, open coding was also used as an initial step of the coding process as it allows the researcher to seek for interesting patterns and accept every piece of data so that the relevant data is not left out. In this process, data is investigated and encoded through comparative analysis to discover new facts, and identify the substantive codes growing from the data. As a second step, to filter the most credible parts of the data and reach the most saturated categories, selective coding was used in which comparative analysis and theoretical writing memos are continued to reflect the fundamental social concerns. As Glaser (1978) identifies, the most valid parts of the data are encoded and associated with the other categories. After the coding steps, five main categories emerged: socio-cultural, economic, political, and security-oriented perceptions, and existence of other displaced groups: Syrians. Based on these five categories, local people's perceptions regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers was tried to be revealed.

The GT supports that only interactions and dialogues find out the ground, because emotions and views are grounded in the meanings. Also, knowledge is not constant; it can change in time (Bulduklu, 2019). Therefore, the research questions of the thesis can be questioned as a further study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY OF THE THESIS

This chapter consists of four main parts. In the first part, justification of the study regarding the selection of Afghan asylum seekers and Sivas will be explained. In the second part, research methodology of the thesis will be illustrated, and the instruments of the data collection will be explained. Next, in the third part, ethical matters will be dealt with. In the final part, methods of data collection will be explained and discussed.

3.1. AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS IN SIVAS: JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This part of the chapter will explain why Afghan asylum seekers and Sivas were determined as a case study for this thesis. In this context, geographical location, historical background and internal dynamics of Afghanistan will be illustrated so as to understand the factors which motivate Afghans to flee from their country of origin. Also, location, density of population, current economic status of Sivas will be examined in the context of migration. In addition, a general framework about Afghan asylum seekers living in Turkey and Sivas will be illustrated.

3.1.1. Selection of Afghan Asylum Seekers

Without sufficient knowledge of the country's historical background and internal dynamics, it is not possible to understand the issue of human mobility that Afghanistan faces today (Ersoy, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to look briefly at the conflicts experienced by Afghanistan in the historical context, its internal dynamics such as ethnicity, cultural or political issues, and the migration movements of Afghans.

Afghanistan is located in Central Asia between China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, and Iran. This location makes Afghanistan a gateway between Asia and the countries of the Middle East and Southeast Asia (Mohammadi, 2014). Its historical background is full of external invasions and conflicts. For instance, in the 19th century, Afghanistan faced a rivalry called a great game between Russia and Britain. The

rivalry led to a series of ideological, political, economic, and military conflicts in the region. Following that, in the 20th century, Afghanistan was invaded by Soviet Russians (Şeyhanlioğlu, 2008). After that, Afghanistan was exposed to social conflicts, political chaos, and economic instabilities. In addition, in the 21st century, Afghanistan was invaded by the US military forces and NATO after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks (Han, 2011). As a result of these external interventions and conflicts, Afghans fled into other countries such as Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey (Alimia, 2014; Kahraman, 2017; Raof, 2017).

Internal dynamics of Afghanistan consist of ethnic divisions and a tribal structure. Afghanistan is a multiethnic country where the following ethnic groups live together: Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, Turks, Balochs, Brahuis, Pashais, Aymaqs, Nuristanis, and few others (Jamali, 2018). These groups speak many different languages and adhere to different sects. Among those ethnic groups, the largest and the most powerful group in Afghanistan is the Pashtuns, who speak Pashto and adhere generally to the Hanafi sect of Sunni Islam. The second largest group is the Tajiks, who speak Dari and adhere generally also to the Hanafi sect, although some adhere to the Shia or Ismaili sects. The third most-crowded ethnic group is the Hazaras, who speak Hazaragi and adhere to the Shiite Islam (Barfield, 2010). Among those ethnic groups, Hazaras are considered to have the lowest status, while the Pashtuns are considered to be the most respected group (Çınarlı, 2012). The Taliban, which was established by Pashtun students educated in Pakistan madrasahs, gained political power (Doğan Y., 2019) between the years of 1996 and 2001, and still dominate some parts of the country resorting to violence for achieving their political purposes (Motafaker, 2018).

Diversities in languages, ethnicities, and religious beliefs in Afghanistan have led ethnic groups to live in a tribal structure. Moreover, hostile attitudes of ethnic groups to each other have caused conflicts. Thus, this situation has always been an obstacle for establishing a stable political authority in Afghanistan, where the public experienced regime changes from dynasty to democracy, and witnessed how political legitimacy was obtained. Hence, ongoing changes in governments, the lack of authority, disruption of state functions, security concerns of the public, deepening of poverty, and spread of human rights violations caused Afghanistan to have political and economic instabilities

(Ersoy, 2015). That's why Afghanistan is one of the poorest states in the world (NEE, 2017a). All these factors have deprived Afghans of basic needs such as security, education, health, and job opportunities, and made Afghanistan a country where human mobility is the only stable thing.

According to the latest report by UNHCR (Global Trends, 2020), all around the world, 79.5 million people are forced to displace as a result of conflicts, oppressions, and violations of human rights. Among them, Afghans are the third most crowded group of displaced people, with 2.7 million, following Syrians (6.6 million) and Venezuelans (3.7 million).

In Turkey, on the other hand, according to the data of the DGMM (2020), Afghans are the most crowded group of displaced people after Syrians. While the exact number is not known, according to Afghan Refugees Solidarity Association, it was estimated in 2015 that there were around 40,000 Afghans living in the 62 satellite cities of Turkey. This estimated number rose to more than 150,000 in 2018 (Kayseri Meydan, 2018; Kayseri Olay, 2018; Refugee News Turkey, 2018). In 2019, it was estimated by the UNHCR that there were 172,000 Afghans living in Turkey (UNHCR Turkey Statistics, 2019). In terms of demographic features of Afghans, 57% of 170,000 Afghans were male, 15% of them were female, and the rest (28%) were children. Considering the ongoing conflicts and instabilities in Afghanistan, and the rising number of Afghan asylum seekers, which doubled twice in three years, for the end of 2020, this number could be estimated to be between 200,000 and 250,000.

However, despite the high number of Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey, there are insufficient academic studies on the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey. For this reason, this thesis aimed at studying on Afghan asylum seekers to contribute to filling of this gap in the literature.

3.1.2. Selection of Sivas

Sivas is nearly located in the center of Turkey. It is surrounded by Giresun, Ordu, and Tokat from the north, by Erzincan from the east, by Malatya from the southeast, by Kahramanmaraş and Kayseri from the south, and by Yozgat from the west. The very central location of Sivas connects Anatolia between north and south, and east and west.

Although Sivas is the second largest province of Turkey in terms of its territory, which is 2,768 km² (Koç H., 2010), it has a relatively small population, which is 638,956 and the largest district in terms of surface area is the central district where 348,683 people live (TÜİK, 2020). Compared to the other cities in Turkey, Sivas ranks 32nd in terms of population (Orta Anadolu Kalkınma Ajansı, 2016). In 2018, its population density was 23/km², however, in 2019, it shrank to 22/ km². One of the main reasons for this decline in population is emigration, as the local people regularly migrate to more developed cities, especially to İstanbul, to reach better life standards of employment, education, and so forth (Akbulut, 2009; Başel, 2009). That is because the economy of Sivas is based mostly on agriculture, and according to the ranking of the socio-economic development level among the cities of Turkey, Sivas ranks 53rd. But due to the low agricultural productivity, the agricultural products per rural population is below the country average. The manufacturing industry and the Gross Domestic Product, on the other hand, are below the country average as well (Dinçer, Özaslan, & Kavasoglu, 2003).

However, the rise in the number of asylum seekers, especially Afghans, who arrived in Turkey and demanded international protection, has made Sivas also an immigration city. The main reason for this immigration is the decision of the Turkish government to settle Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas as it is one of the 62 satellite cities in Turkey. Here, the concept of a satellite city needs a brief explanation.

Implementation of satellite cities is one of the policies of Turkey, carried out since 1994 with the Settlement and Asylum Regulation as an indispensable part of the asylum seeker issue. It refers to the regulation of the settlement processes of asylum seekers until the resettlement of these people to third countries. These cities are determined by the Ministry of Interior in accordance with specific criteria such as the demographic features of the cities and features of asylum seekers so as to protect the national security. These cities were determined generally around the Central Anatolia region in which asylum seekers are not difficult to control (Kahya, 2014). Due to its low population density despite its geographical size, it can be asserted that the settlement process of Afghan asylum seekers can be managed easily in Sivas.

The second reason for this immigration is the preference of Afghan asylum seekers to live in Sivas. Asylum seekers have a chance to ask for a satellite city to live in.

Due to the differences in economic, demographic and other features of these cities, some of them can become more popular than others. Based on the data gathered from the field, it can be asserted that Afghan asylum seekers prefer to live in Sivas because they believe that its living conditions are better and amount of the financial assistance is larger than other satellite cities. These factors make Sivas an attractive city for Afghan asylum seekers, and encourage them to live in this city. Although the DGMM does not share information about the number of Afghan asylum seekers who live in Sivas under international protection, based on the data gathered from the field, it can be said that their number is large enough to gain recognition. Also, based on a personal interview with a specialist who works for the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management (PDMM) in Sivas, it can be specified that in 2018, around 2,500 Afghan asylum seekers lived in the city. This number rose in 2019, and reached around 3,000. Considering this rise, there are estimate more than 3,500 Afghan asylum seekers currently living in Sivas.

Overall, Sivas satellite city was selected for this thesis due to two main reasons. First, although Sivas is a city of emigration, recently it has also become a city of immigration. This situation has brought an integration issue into the agenda which is worth investigating. Second one is that although there are studies related to Sivas in terms of economy, socio-cultural structure, urbanization, and so on, no study about Afghan asylum seekers' migration and integration processes to Sivas has been found. Hence, this study dealt with the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers to Sivas from the perspective of local people to contribute to filling the gap in the literature.

3.2. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The methodology of this study depends not only on a review of related academic and other secondary sources but also on primary data collection through surveys and in-depth interviews carried out with local people. Since the ultimate objective of this study is to create a comprehensive and reliable empirical data source on the issue of integration processes, a mixed research methodology was used. This method was described by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie as a third way of research method with a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The main aim of this methodology is to benefit from the syntheses of statistical data, experiences, and narratives to grasp the ultimate answer to the issue (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The reason for the selection of mixed type research methodology is to be able to understand the perceptions of local people deeply, strengthen the thesis findings, and produce recommendations. The motivation here is to reduce the disadvantages of each method and strengthen the thesis through benefiting from the advantages of each method.

As Creswell points out (2017, p. 5), the disadvantages of quantitative research methods can be asserted as follows: it mainly focuses on the issue from the perspective of the researcher. As it does not concentrate on understanding the human being, it presents limited knowledge about the relationships of the participants. On the other hand, the disadvantages of qualitative research methods can be explained as follows: it has restrictions of generalization, it is subjective, and it restricts the use of researchers' experiences. To reduce these disadvantages, the thesis concentrated on using the advantages of each method. Here, the advantages of quantitative methods are as follows: it can reach large masses; it can analyze the data effectively; it investigates the relations among the data sets; it examines the cause and effects; it can control the prejudices. On the other hand, the advantages of qualitative methods are as follows: it presents an in-depth view of interviewees and grasps their experiences; it focuses on the views and experiences of interviewees.

Hence, quantitative methods ensure a general perspective on an issue, while qualitative methods provide a deeper understanding, and using both of these methods strengthens the reliability and validity of the thesis.

3.2.1 Research Design

Among the research designs of mixed type, the convergence design was chosen because it refers to a collection of quantitative and qualitative data at the same time and the findings are then compared. In the thesis, data collected from the survey was demonstrated and analyzed in the chapter of general perceptions and experiences of the local people regarding Afghan asylum seekers. Also, data collected from the interviews was illustrated and analyzed in the chapter of a deeper understanding of the perceptions and their reasons. Finally, the data was discussed in the last chapter.

Validity of the design is based on legitimacy. In this context, parallel questions were asked to the field work participants. This data was obtained and analyzed separately.

The results of both quantitative and qualitative data were merged and compared as a discussion.

3.2.2. Survey as an Instrument of Quantitative Data Collection

A quantitative methodology is a systematic explorer of phenomenon including numerical data which requires to be analyzed by statistical techniques. One of the most used agents of qualitative methods is survey. Survey is a list of questions prepared according to a certain plan to understand the feelings, thoughts, and experiences of certain individuals or groups on a subject. It can be carried out via telephone, internet, e-mail, and face-to-face. Survey is conducted by taking a sample, and the results are generalized to the whole universe (Karasar, 2018).

In the thesis, in order to understand the local people's perceptions of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers, the survey was carried out in the Central District of Sivas on May 15-August 15, 2019. The participants of the survey were identified by convenience sampling which is one of the types of non-probability sampling. It ensures practical facilities to researchers during the collection of data. For instance, it is least time-consuming and expensive, but most importantly it facilitates to access the participants easily. Also, it ensures to study on a homogeneous population (Ackoff, 1953). As the focal point of this thesis is local people of Sivas, this sampling was preferred to be used.

Through this technique, 400 local people were reached and survey was conducted by the researcher face-to-face. This number of participants made the conducting of the survey feasible and helped indicate a large sample. Also, all efforts have been paid to make the sample as diverse as possible including the perception of different age groups who have different kinds of occupations. The results obtained from the sample are not generalized to the whole universe, it reflects the perception of 400 local people.

The survey is composed of two sections. The first one contains seven multiple choice questions that try to identify mainly three issues. The first issue is whether encountering with Afghan asylum seekers makes local people uncomfortable, and what kind of reasons affect this perception. The second issue is whether there are perceived problems arising from Afghan asylum seekers living in Sivas, and what causes lie behind

this. The third issue is whether Afghan asylum seekers are perceived to have harmed Sivas, and if so, in what ways they are seen to cause damage to Sivas.

The second one contains 11 questions that are answered with a 5-point Likert Scale, where 1 indicates ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 indicates ‘strongly agree’. These questions try to measure local people’s perceptions of integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in terms of the social, economic, and security dimensions through following issues: harmonization, economic assistance, crime rate, future of Afghan asylum seekers (see Appendix 3). All questions were formulated by benefiting from the Turkish literature in this context. Before starting the survey, participants provided information about their gender, age, and occupation.

As a method of data collection, survey supplied the following advantages to the thesis:

- It reached a large mass (400 people).
- As it did not require the signature or disclosing personal information, participants could answer the questions without hesitation.
- It allowed gathering information from and viewpoints of a wide variety of people through its diverse sample. The diversity within the sample extends to age groups, occupations, and sex of the respondents.

This numeric and general framework enabled the researcher to grasp the perceptions of local people.

3.2.3. Interview as an Instrument of Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research method can be defined as a research that is conducted for grasping the perceptions and events in a realistic environment by following a qualitative process. The process generally is carried out by interviews, observations and document analysis. Its aim is to reveal the perceptions of people through examining the phenomenon, and circumstances in accordance with the environment, process or perception (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 41). In this thesis, since the individuals included in the sample were investigated concerning what they think about the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers, more in-depth data on perceptions have been collected by interviews.

In this thesis, interview was chosen as an instrument of data collection because interviewees are expected to explain their perception of a particular phenomenon, and their answers are not restricted. Instead, as Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, flexible attitudes are followed, and detailed and in-depth data is collected for the relevant questions as much as possible. In order to reveal the perceptions of the local people regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers, semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out individually with 50 local people in their residences in Sivas between May 15-August 15, 2019, and each lasted approximately an hour. Similar to the survey participants, the interviewees were identified by a convenience sampling, and all questions were formulated by benefiting from the Turkish literature in this context.

During the interviews, 25 questions were asked to the participants within two parts. The first part of the interview is composed of three questions that reflect the socio-demographic features of the participants: age, sex, and occupation. The second part of the interview is composed of 15 open-ended questions and 7 descriptive questions within five themes: socio-cultural interactions of local people with Afghan asylum seekers, economic and political perceptions of local people, security-oriented concerns of local people, and existence of other displaced people: Syrians.

Socio-cultural interactions of local people with Afghan asylum seekers were tried to be measured through the following codes: friendship, marriage, education, and language. Economic perceptions of local people were tried to be measured through the following codes: economic appearance, financial aids, economic burden, and exploitation of local resources. The political perception of local people was tried to be measured through the following codes: policies of Turkish authorities, Turkish citizenship, and whether to use human-state centric or state centric approach to manage the issue of Afghan asylum seekers. The perceptions of local people on security was tired to be evaluated through the following codes: threats, problems, and living in safety. The existence of Syrians is the last theme as a factor to impact on local people's perceptions of Afghan asylum seekers' integration processes (see Appendix 4).

Throughout the field work, the interviews were not voice-recorded since the interviewees did not give their permission on that. Therefore, the conversations were

noted. After that, the data obtained from the interviews were transferred to Excel, and original copies were saved as hard copies.

As a method of collecting data, interviews supplied the following advantages to the thesis:

- It provided detailed information.
- It supplied additional questions to deepen the issue.
- It could be conducted even with illiterate people.

Overall, the interviews supplied a broad framework to grasp the perceptions of local people.

3.2.4. Review of Secondary Sources

The secondary sources were reviewed after the analysis of field work findings due to the theoretical background of the thesis. As secondary sources, research projects, academic papers, reports, and documents were reviewed. The secondary sources were demonstrated in two main categories: Afghans in the literature and Turkey in the literature. Studies on Afghan asylum seekers in the global literature and Turkish literature were reviewed, and the studies related to main themes of the thesis were illustrated in the literature review section of the analytical background and theoretical framework chapter. The literature of Turkey was reviewed regarding migration, integration, and perceptions. After Turkey's migration experiences and legal regulations were explained, the studies which concentrate on Afghan asylum seekers in Turkey and Sivas were reviewed. In addition, although this thesis primarily focuses on Afghan asylum seekers, so as to figure out the effects of Syrian refugees on local people's perceptions regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers, the studies related to Syrian refugees who live in Turkey and Sivas were reviewed, as well.

3.3. ETHICAL MATTERS

In the thesis, all questions of data instruments were approved by the ethical committee of the Social Sciences University of Ankara. In addition, the survey and the interviews were carried out in accordance with the highest ethical standards and rules in social sciences research to protect the respondents and obtain reliable data. Also, the data

was gathered within the time reported to the ethical committee. The survey and interviews were preferred to be conducted face-to-face in the residents or workplaces of the respondents. Before starting the survey and interviews, respondents were given detailed information about the purposes and methods of the study. Also, they were informed that they could quit the survey or interview whenever they wish. All participants and the interviewees signed the consent form to specify their voluntary participation in the thesis (see Appendix 1 and 2). In terms of confidentiality, the respondents were anonymized and for ethical purposes, they were identified as P1, P2, P3, and so on.

3.4. METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Survey questions were analyzed using a quantitative data analysis software, SPSS Statistics IBM 20. The data was calculated through descriptive statistics by frequencies and percentages. In addition, means and modes were calculated, and data was analyzed considering the mode and mean. To see and analyze the relationship between two different variables, cross tabulations were used. It was tested whether the perceptions of the local people depend on sex, age, or occupation by using the Pearson Chi Square Test and the Fisher's Exact Test. If p value is $p < 0.05$ in statistical evaluations, the result is statistically significant. Through this way, comparative and empirical data were obtained and presented in figures and tables.

As the data obtained from the interviews cannot be illustrated wholly, the data were evaluated by context analysis through creating themes and codes manually. First of all, open coding was conducted in order to investigate the perception of local people, and subsequently selective coding was conducted to determine the factors impacted on the perceptions of local people. In order to give a quantitative aspect to the analysis as well as qualitative analysis, the codes were frequency tested by SPSS Statistics IBM 20, and the most frequent answers were demonstrated to generalize the data to the sample. The data was presented in the section of interview findings. In addition, the sentences of the interviewees were frequently cited throughout the section.

CHAPTER 4: GENERAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE

In this section, local people's perception of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas will be illustrated and analyzed through data gathered from the survey.

4.1. SAMPLE OF THE SURVEY

The survey was conducted in Sivas with 400 local people of whom 39.5% (N=158) were female and 60.5% (N= 242) were male, and they were young people in general. In fact, more than half of the participants were aged between 18 and 29. As reaching the old people was quite difficult, their number in the sample was much lower (see Table 4.1).

Table 4. 1 Age Groups of the Survey Participants

Age Groups	N	%
18-29	216	54
30-39	111	27.8
40+	73	18.2
Total	400	100.0

The survey participants had different kinds of occupations, including artisans, workers, academics, as well as unemployed people and students. However, the students constitute the largest group within the sample (see Table 4.2).

Table 4. 2 Occupations of the Survey Participants

Occupations	N	%
Student	137	34.3
Worker	71	17.8
Private Sector Staff	61	15.3
Artisan	41	10.2
Academic	32	8
Accountant	13	3.2
Unemployed People	21	5.2
Engineer	15	3.8
Officer	9	2.2
Total	400	100.0

4.2. LOCAL PEOPLE’S PERCEPTION OF INTEGRATION PROCESSES OF AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS

In order to grasp the local people’s perception regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas, the survey participants were firstly asked whether they felt uncomfortable when they encountered Afghan asylum seekers in their daily lives. The aim of this question was to find a clue for the perceptions of local people. A vast majority responded to this question affirmatively suggesting that they felt uncomfortable when they encountered Afghan asylum seekers (see Figure 4.1).



Figure 4. 1 The Survey Participants’ Responses on the Question “Do You Feel Uncomfortable When You Encounter Afghan Asylum Seekers?”

The responses to the question are then further analyzed in terms of sex, age, and occupation as the perceptions may be affected by these factors. In terms of sex, it was appeared that 76.6% of female and 81.4% of male participants felt uncomfortable when encountered with Afghan asylum seekers. In terms of age, it was seen that all of the age groups among the survey participants were dissatisfied, but the people aged 40 and above appeared as the most dissatisfied group. According to the Fisher's Exact Test, there is a significant relationship between this question and age ($p < 0.05$), and the analysis of data shows that as the age of the participants got higher, their negative perceptions regarding Afghan asylum seekers increased. This relationship will be explained in the following chapters after the illustration of the in-depth interviews' findings.

In terms of occupation, all groups among the survey participants except academics felt uncomfortable when encountered with Afghan asylum seekers. Among them, workers appeared as the most dissatisfied group when encountered with Afghan asylum seekers, followed by the unemployed people. According to the Pearson Chi Square Test, there is also a significant relationship between this question and occupation ($p < 0.05$), and the analysis of data shows that the negative perceptions concerning Afghan asylum seekers increase as the income level of participants decrease. This relationship will also be explained in the following chapters after the illustration of the in-depth interviews' findings.

In order to clarify the reasons for feeling uncomfortable, the survey participants, who responded 'YES' to this question (79.5%), were also asked why they had such a feeling. Besides, if the survey participants wished, they were allowed to provide more than one answer to this question. All answers of the respondents were aggregated in Table 4.3. Among those, the most common answer appeared to be related to security-oriented concerns. In this context, it is seen that the survey participants were worried about the future of Sivas and Turkey. The second most frequently given response, on the other hand, was economic troubles. Here, it can be asserted that the survey participants were disturbed by the transfer of public resources to Afghan asylum seekers. They were also disturbed by Afghan asylum seekers' taking advantage of business opportunities. A closely following third reason was socio-cultural disharmony (see Table 4.3).

Table 4. 3 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Question "Why Do You Feel Uncomfortable When You Encounter Afghan Asylum Seekers?" (Multiple answers were allowed)

Reasons	N	%
I am worried about the future of Sivas and Turkey	99	20.3
I am disturbed by transfer of public resources to Afghan asylum seekers	92	18.9
I think Afghan asylum seekers are not integrated to the society	88	18.0
I'm worried about our security	60	12.3
I think Afghan asylum seekers damage the culture of Sivas	55	11.3
I think Afghan asylum seekers take advantage of business opportunities instead of us	48	9.8
Being unable to help Afghan asylum seekers makes me sad	46	9.4
TOTAL	488	100.0

According to the data gathered from the surveys, in terms of sex, it is seen that the majority of female participants felt uncomfortable when encountering Afghan asylum seekers, because they were worried about the future of Sivas and Turkey. Also, not being able to help Afghan asylum seekers made some female participants upset. Here, security-oriented concerns and conscientious discomfort appeared as two of the most frequent responses given by female participants. On the other hand, similar to the majority of female participants, the majority of male participants also felt uncomfortable when encountering Afghan asylum seekers because they were worried about the future of Sivas and Turkey. However, being disturbed by the transfer of public resources to the Afghan asylum seekers was the second most frequently given response among male participants. Here, security-oriented concerns and economic concerns appeared as two crucial reasons for male participants.

In terms of age, it is seen that reasons for the participants who are aged between 18 and 29 of feeling uncomfortable when encountering Afghan asylum seekers were related to anxiety about the future of Sivas and Turkey, and the perception that Afghan asylum seekers are not integrated into the society. The reason for the participants who are aged between 30 and above of feeling uncomfortable regarding Afghan asylum seekers is related to the economy: the transfer of public resources to Afghan asylum seekers.

In terms of occupation, among the survey participants, it is seen that worrying about the future of Sivas and Turkey was the most frequently given response by all

academics. Being disturbed by transfer of public resources to Afghan asylum seekers, and damaging the culture of Sivas were most frequently given two responses by workers. Worrying about the future of Sivas and Turkey, and being disturbed by transfer of public resources to Afghan asylum seekers were most frequently given answers by artisans. The response that Afghan asylum seekers are not integrated into the society was given most frequently by officers, accountants, and engineers. The response that Afghan asylum seekers take advantage of business opportunities instead of themselves was most frequently given by students, private sector staff, and unemployed people.

To continue, the respondents were asked whether they thought there was a problem experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas. Here, the majority of the participants responded to this question affirmatively (see Figure 4.2)

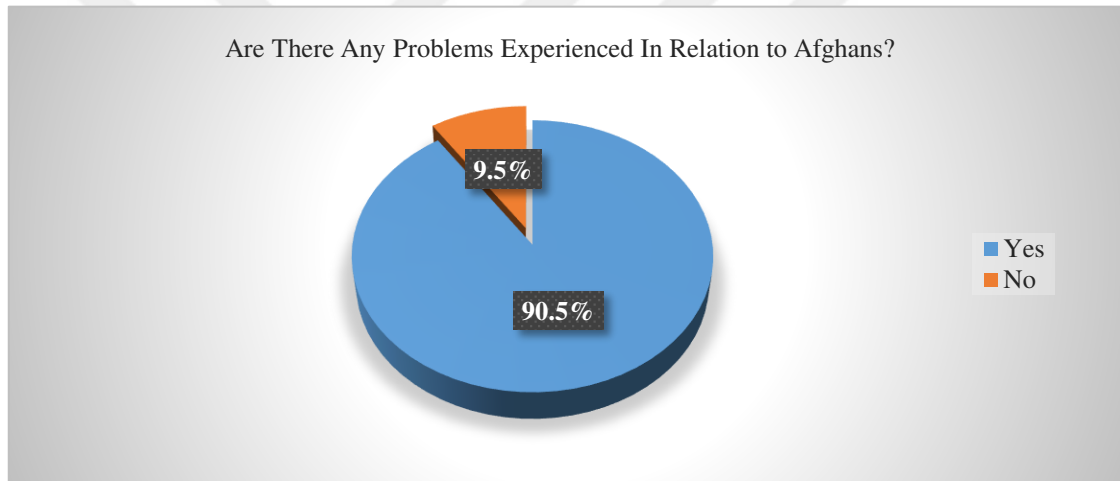


Figure 4. 2 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Question "Are There Any Problems Experienced in Relation to Afghan Asylum Seekers in Sivas?"

To be precise, in terms of sex, 91.8% of female and 89.7% of male participants considered that there was a problem experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers. In terms of age, among the participants, it was appeared that the all age groups shared the same perception: that there was a problem experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers. However, the strongest perception belonged to the participants who are aged 40 and over. In terms of occupation, all groups agreed that there was a problem experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers. Here, the strongest perception belonged to workers,

and unemployed people followed them. However, academics were seen as a less affirmative group.

To clarify the issue, respondents were asked what the most important reason related to Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas was. Here, it should be noted that the data demonstrated in the Figure 4.3 was gathered from the participants who suggested that there was a problem stemming from Afghan asylum seekers in the previous question. Therefore, this question was asked only to 362 participants in the sample. According to the responses, the most important problem appeared as the failure of political management (see Figure 4.3).

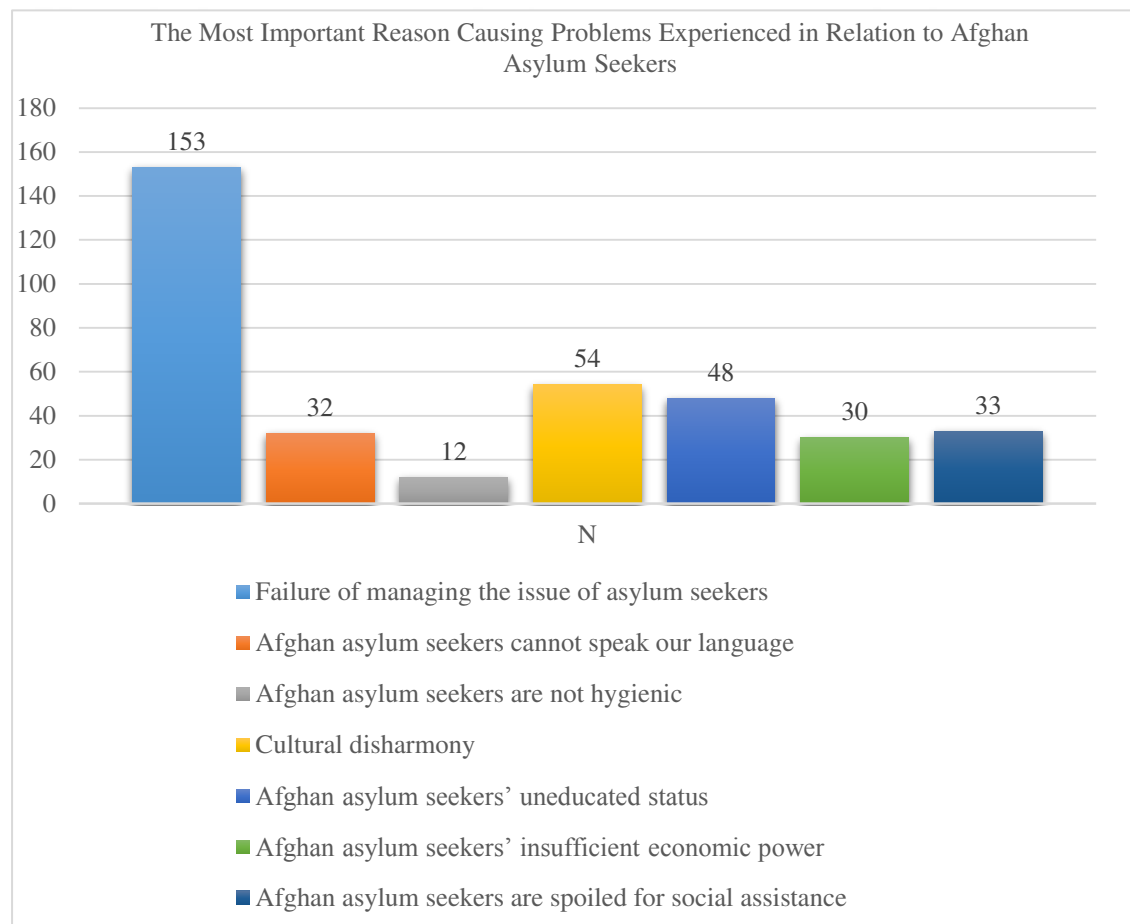


Figure 4. 3 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Question "What is the Most Important Reason That Causes the Problems Experienced in Relation to Afghan Asylum Seekers in Sivas?"

Subsequently, the same 362 respondents were asked to list the other important reasons causing the problems experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas.

They were given the chance to specify multiple answers. As it is seen in Table 4.4, only 99 participants among the 362 participants provided additional answers. According to the responses, cultural disharmony was the most frequently given answer. While the frequencies of the other responses were very close to each other, the second most frequently responded issue was language (see Table 4.4). In terms of demographic features of the participants, these two issues appeared mostly by all the groups: cultural disharmony, and language.

Table 4. 4 The List of the Other Important Reasons Causing the Problems Experienced in Relation to Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas

Reasons	N	%
Cultural disharmony	32	32.3
Afghan asylum seekers cannot speak our language	18	18.2
Afghan asylum seekers are spoiled for social assistance	16	16.2
Afghan asylum seekers' uneducated status	12	12.2
Afghan asylum seekers' insufficient economic power	10	10.1
Afghan asylum seekers are not hygienic	9	9
Other reasons	2	2
TOTAL	99	100.0

Subsequently, respondents were asked whether Afghan asylum seekers caused any harm to Sivas or not. More than 77% of the participants stressed that Afghan asylum seekers harmed Sivas (see Figure 4.4).

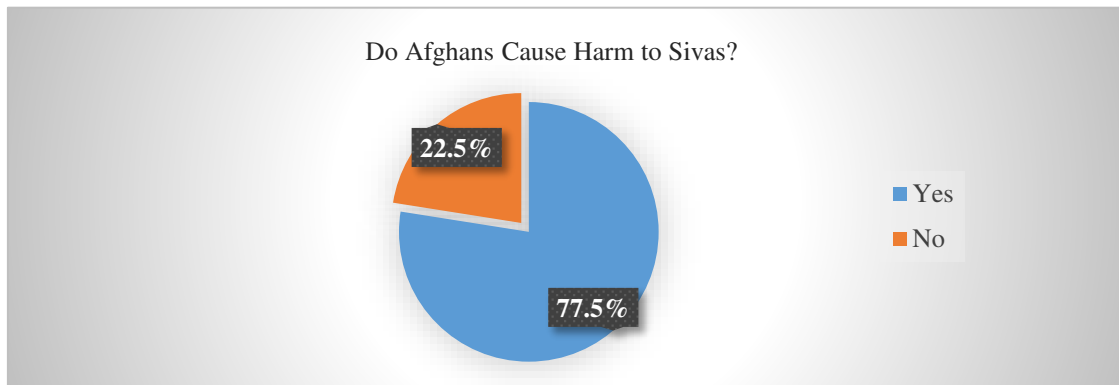


Figure 4. 4 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Question "Do Afghan Asylum Seekers Cause Harm to Sivas?"

According to the data gathered from the surveys, in terms of sex, it is seen that 75.3% of female and 78.9% of male participants perceived Afghan asylum seekers as people who caused harm to Sivas. In terms of age, according to the Pearson Chi Square Test, there is a significant relationship between this finding and age ($p < 0.05$). It can be seen that all age groups have a perception that Afghan asylum seekers cause harm to Sivas. In addition, the analysis of data shows that as the age gets higher, this perception gets stronger. This relationship will be explained in the following chapters after the illustration of the in-depth interviews' findings. In terms of occupation, it is seen that all groups had the same perception that Afghan asylum seekers caused harm to Sivas. However, the strongest perception belonged to workers, while the weakest perception belonged to academics.

To make the issue clearer, the 310 respondents who said that they think Afghan asylum seekers harmed Sivas were asked how Afghan asylum seekers caused harm to the city. Once again, they were allowed to provide multiple responses, if they wished. Of all 498 answers, the most common response among local people was that Afghan asylum seekers harmed the social equilibrium. This answer was given by 36.8% of the respondents. The second most frequent response was that Afghan asylum seekers harmed the national security and public order. Once again, the participants highlighted both the security-oriented and socio-economic concerns on the issue of Afghan asylum seekers (see Figure 4.5).

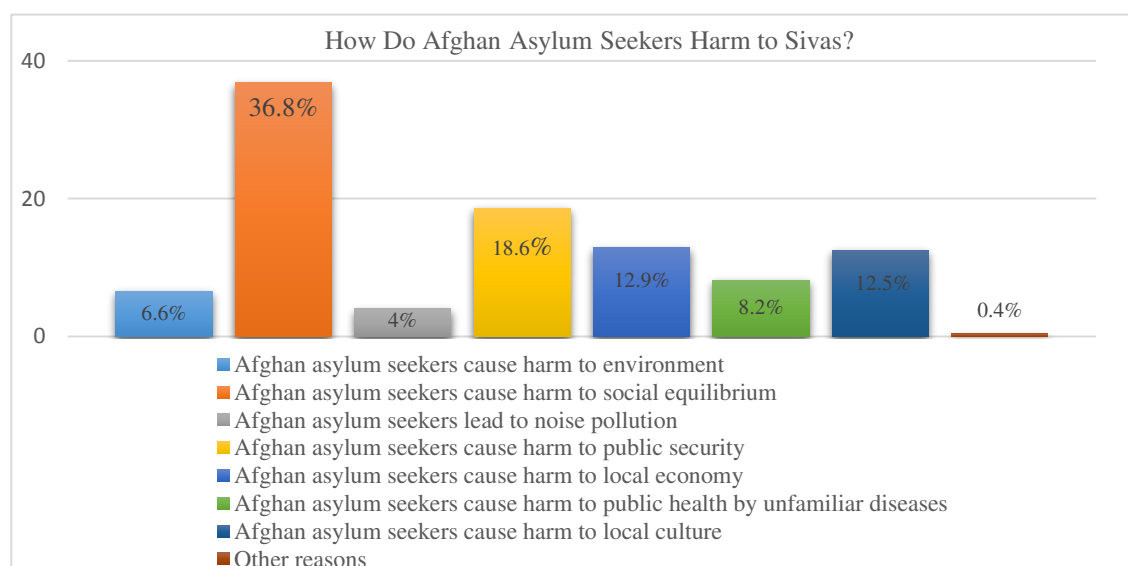


Figure 4. 5 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Question "How Do Afghan Asylum Seekers Harm to Sivas?" (Multiple answers were allowed)

In terms of demographic fetures of the survey participants, it was found all of the groups had the similar perception that Afghan asylum seekers cause harm to the social equilibrium among the society and public security in Sivas. However, workers, students and unemployed people had the strongest perception. According to the Pearson Chi Square Test, there is a significant relation between this perception and occupation ($p<0.05$), and the analysis of data shows that as the income level of the field work participants decreases, negative perceptions regarding Afghan asylum seekers increase. This relationship will be explained in the following chapters after the illustration of the in-depth interviews' findings.

4.2.1. Socio-Cultural Perception of Local People

To determine the socio-cultural perceptions of the local people, their interactions with Afghan asylum seekers were investigated through three questions. Firstly, the survey participants were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that “I am pleased to live with Afghan asylum seekers” on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” Here, the mean shows that although responses of the participants were between “disagree” and “neither agree nor disagree,” the average was close to “disagree.” Besides, the most frequently given answer was “totally disagree,” and the least frequently given response was “totally agree” (see Figure 4.6). It means that the majority of the survey participants are not pleased to live with Afghan asylum seekers.

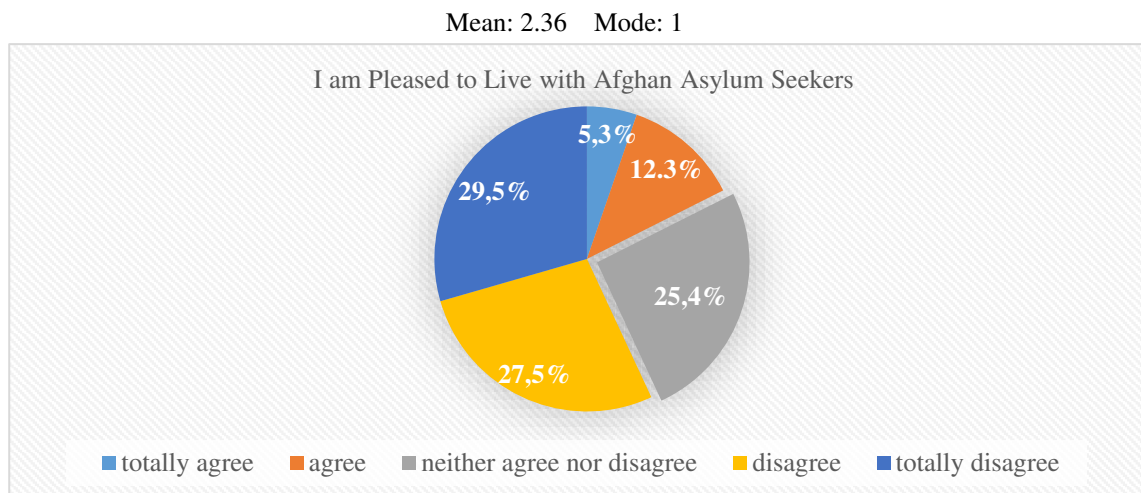


Figure 4. 6 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Statement “I am Pleased to Live with Afghan Asylum Seekers”

The responses to the question are then further analyzed in terms of the participants' demographic features. In terms of sex, it is seen that 58.3% of male and 55.1% of female participants were dissatisfied to live with Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas. In terms of age, it was found that all the groups were dissatisfied to live with Afghan asylum seekers, but participants aged 30 and 39 appeared as the most dissatisfied group to live with Afghan asylum seekers. In terms of occupation, it is seen that all groups, except academics and engineers, were dissatisfied to live with Afghan asylum seekers. Considering the cumulative percentages of "totally disagree" and "disagree," it is seen that workers were the most unpleasant people to live with them. The artisans appeared to be the second most unpleasant group while officers appeared to be the third.

Secondly, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that "Afghan asylum seekers live in harmony with local people of Sivas," on a scale ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree." Here, the mean shows that although the responses of participants were between "disagree" and "neither agree nor disagree," it was still closer to "disagree." The most frequently given response to this question was "disagree," and the least frequently given answer was "totally agree." Here, the opinions of the respondents indicate that Afghan asylum seekers do not live in harmony with the local society (see Figure 4.7).

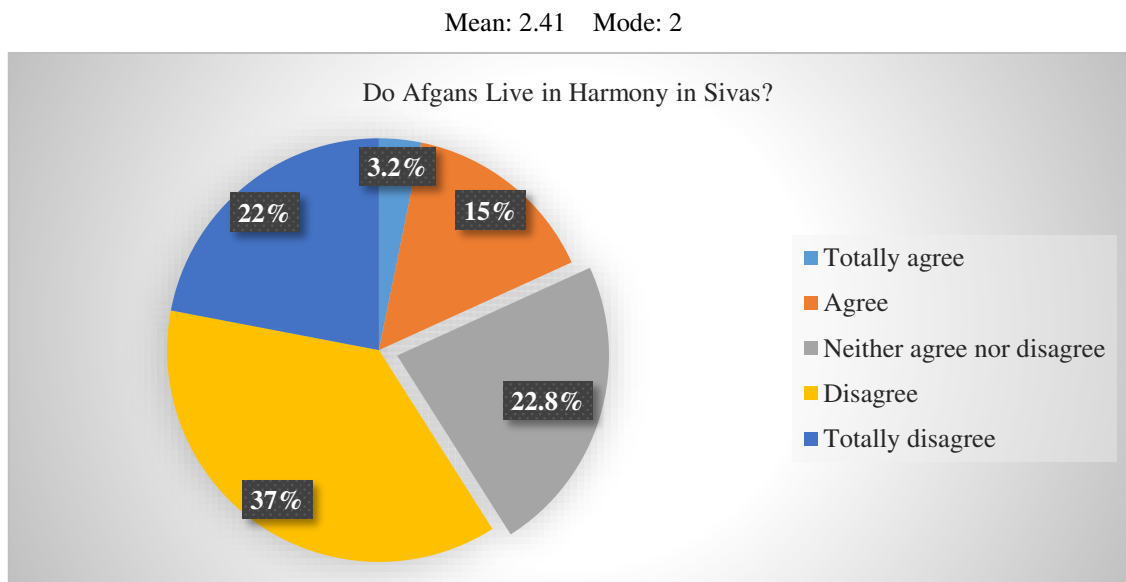


Figure 4. 7 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Statement "Afghan Asylum Seekers Live in Harmony with Local People in Sivas"

To be precise, in terms of sex, it is seen that 62.4% of male and 53.8% of female participants had a perception that Afghan asylum seekers did not live in harmony with the local society. In terms of age, it was found that all age groups had the same perception that Afghan asylum seekers did not live in harmony with the society. In terms of occupation, all the groups, except academics, had a perception that Afghan asylum seekers lived in disharmony with the society. However, workers (81.7%) appeared to have the strongest perception.

Finally, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement “I would be glad if I engaged in social activities with Afghan asylum seekers”, on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” Here, the mean shows that although the responses of the participants were between “disagree” and “neither agree nor disagree,” the rate was closer to “neither agree nor disagree.” However, cumulative percentages of the answers show that local people would not have been happy if they had engaged in social activities with the Afghan asylum seekers (see Figure 4.8).

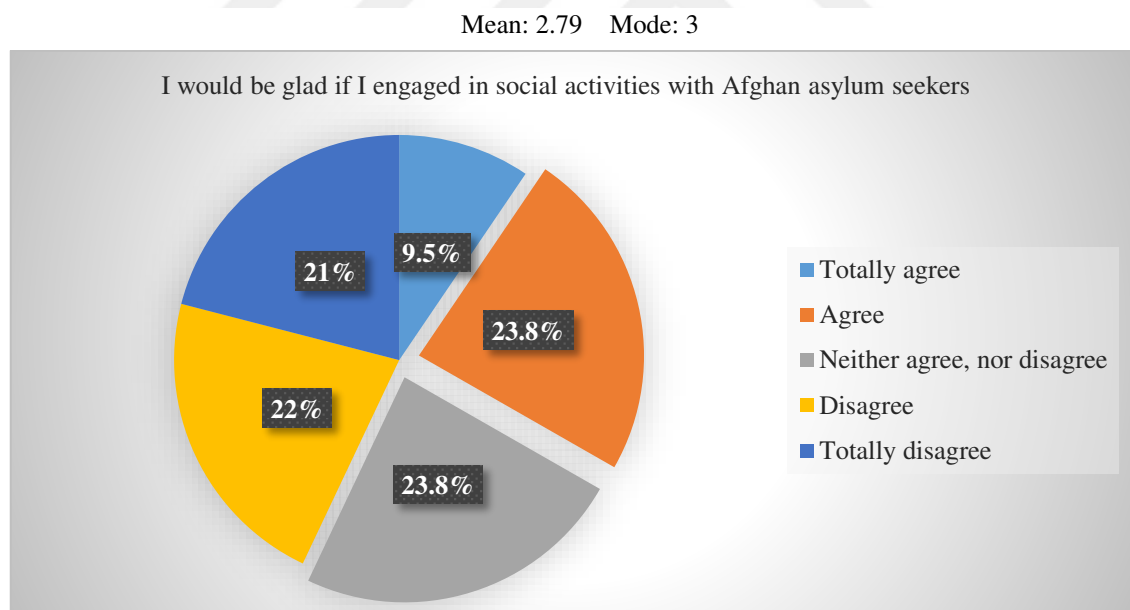


Figure 4. 8 The Survey Participants’ Responses on the Statement “I Would Be Glad If I Engaged in Social Activities with Afghan Asylum Seekers”

To be precise, 45.1% of male and 39.9% of female participants would not have been happy to be engaged in social activities with Afghan asylum seekers. In terms of age, none of the age groups preferred to engage in social activities with Afghan asylum

seekers. However, the participants aged 30 and 39 had the strongest perception to reject social relations. In terms of occupation, it is seen that the workers and students appeared as having the strongest negative perception to engage in social activities with Afghan asylum seekers while engineers, accountants, and academics appeared having the strongest positive perception. According to the Fisher's Exact Test, there is a significant relationship between occupation and this question ($p < 0.05$), and the analysis of data shows that as the level of income or level of education increases, the negative perceptions of the field work participants increase. This relationship will be explained in the following chapters after the illustration of the in-depth interviews' findings.

4.2.2. Economic Perception of Local People

To comprehend the economic perceptions of the local people, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that "Afghan asylum seekers are in an economically more difficult situation than the local people in need", on a scale ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree." Here, the mean shows that although the responses of participants were between "disagree" and "neither agree nor disagree," the rate is closer to "neither agree nor disagree." However, the most frequently given answer was "disagree," and the least frequently given answer was "totally agree." In accordance with the cumulative percentages of "totally disagree" and "disagree," the opinion of the survey respondents indicated that Afghan asylum seekers are not perceived as people who are in a more difficult situation than the local people in need (see Figure 4.9).

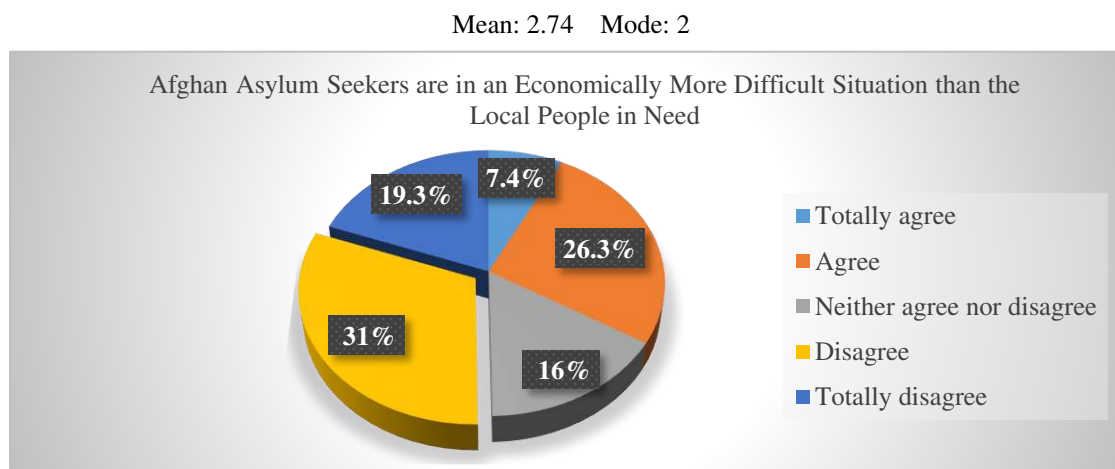


Figure 4. 9 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Statement "Afghan Asylum Seekers are in an Economically More Difficult Situation than the Local People in Need"

To be precise, among the survey participants, by sex, 59.5% of female and 44.2% of male participants had a perception that Afghan asylum seekers are not in an economically more difficult situation than local people in need. Considering the age groups, 18-29 and 40 and above are the ones with the perception that Afghan asylum seekers are not in an economically more difficult situation than the local people in need while 30-39 thought the opposite. By occupation, only accountants had a perception that Afghan asylum seekers have more economic troubles than local people. Other groups thought the opposite.

However, when the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that “I would be glad if I helped Afghan asylum seekers financially,” on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree,” the mean shows that the responses of participants are between “neither agree nor disagree” and “agree.” The most frequently given answer was “agree,” and the least frequently given answer in total was “disagree.” Besides, although the rate is closer to “neither agree nor disagree” than “agree,” cumulative percentages of “agree” and “totally agree” are more than the others. Surprisingly, the opinion of the survey respondents showed that they would be glad to help them. In fact, it was unexpected due to previously given negative responses on the issue of economic concerns. Nevertheless, a slightly less than a quarter of the participants responded “neither agree nor disagree” to this question (see Figure 4.10).

Mean: 3.24 Mode: 4

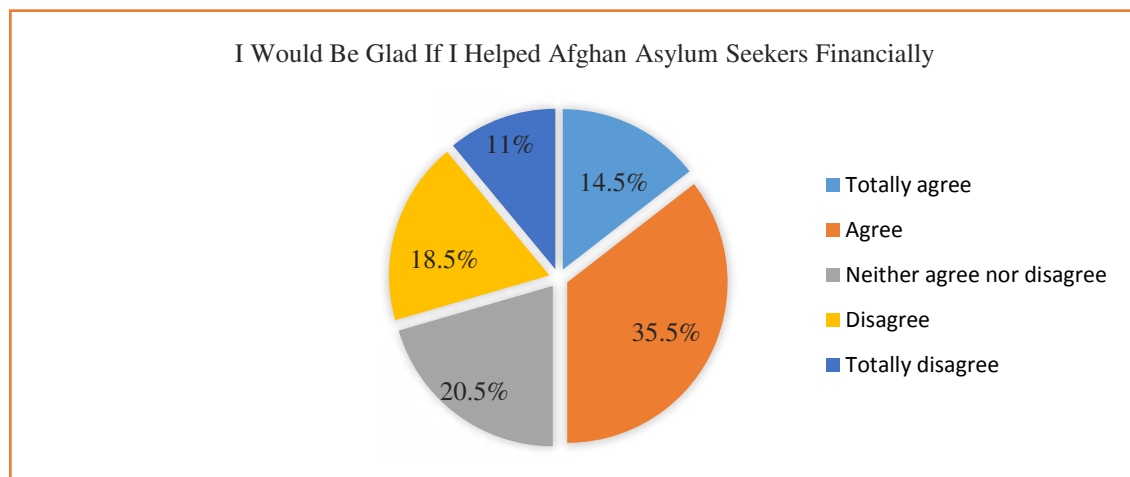


Figure 4. 10 The Survey Participants’ Responses on the Statement “I would be glad if I helped Afghan asylum seekers financially”

To be precise, 51.2% of female and 49.2% of male survey participants would be glad to help Afghan asylum seekers. In terms of age, it is seen that all the groups were eager to help Afghan asylum seekers, but the participants who are 18 and 29 had a positive perception more than the other age groups. In terms of occupation, it is seen that academics, accountants, engineers, officers, students, private sector staff and artisans had a positive perception regarding helping Afghan asylum seekers. However, workers, and unemployed people had a negative perception of helping them. According to the Fisher's Exact Test, there is a significant relation between occupation and these questions ($p < 0.05$), and this relationship will be explained in the following chapters after the illustration of the in-depth interviews' findings.

4.2.3. Political Perception of Local People

To determine the political perception of the local people, the survey participants were asked three questions in order to evaluate whether local people supported the governmental policies towards Afghan asylum seekers. Firstly, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement "Turkish government should provide financial assistance to Afghan asylum seekers in order to satisfy their basic needs," on a scale ranging from "totally disagree" to "totally agree." Here, the mean shows that although the responses of participants were between "neither agree nor disagree" and "agree," the rate is closer to "neither agree nor disagree." However, the most frequently given answer was "agree" and the least frequent response was "neither agree nor disagree." However, according to cumulative responses of "agree" and "totally agree," the opinion of the survey participants reflects the perception that the government should assist the Afghan asylum seekers (see Figure 4.11).

Mean: 3.03 Mode: 4

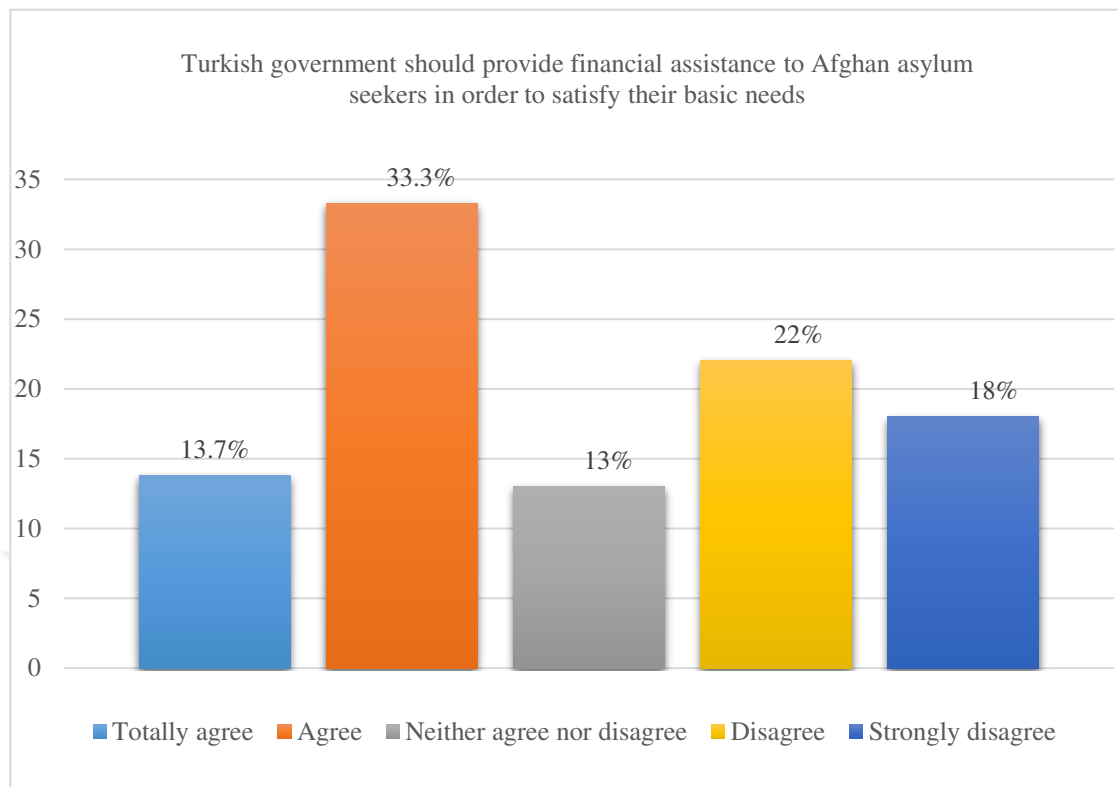


Figure 4. 11 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Statement "Turkish government should provide financial assistance to Afghan asylum seekers in order to satisfy their basic needs"

To be precise, 47.5% of female and 46.6% of male participants had a perception that Turkish government should provide financial assistance to Afghan asylum seekers in order to satisfy their basic needs. In terms of age, the participants aged between 18 and 29 had a positive perception while those aged between 30 and older had a negative perception regarding financial aid. In terms of occupation, only workers, unemployed people, officer and private sector staff had refusal perception. Engineers had the strongest perception that Afghan asylum seekers should be financially assisted by the Turkish government, whereas the workers have the strongest perception that the Turkish government should not support Afghan asylum seekers financially. According to the Fisher's Exact Test, there is a significant relation between occupation and this question ($p < 0.05$). Here, it can be asserted that as the economic situation of the field work participants improves, the idea of helping Afghan asylum seekers gets stronger. However, this relationship will be explained in the following chapters after the illustration of the in-depth interviews' findings.

Secondly, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement “international institutions and organizations should provide socio-economic assistance to Afghan asylum seekers in order to satisfy their basic needs,” on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” Here, the mean shows that the responses of participants were between “neither agree nor disagree” and “agree” but the rate was closer to “agree.” However, the most frequently given answer was “totally agree,” and the least frequently given answer was “neither agree nor disagree.” The opinions of the survey participants reflect that the international institutions and organizations should help the Afghan asylum seekers (see Figure 4.12). This may be because the survey participants would prefer to transfer foreign financial resources rather than transferring local resources to them.

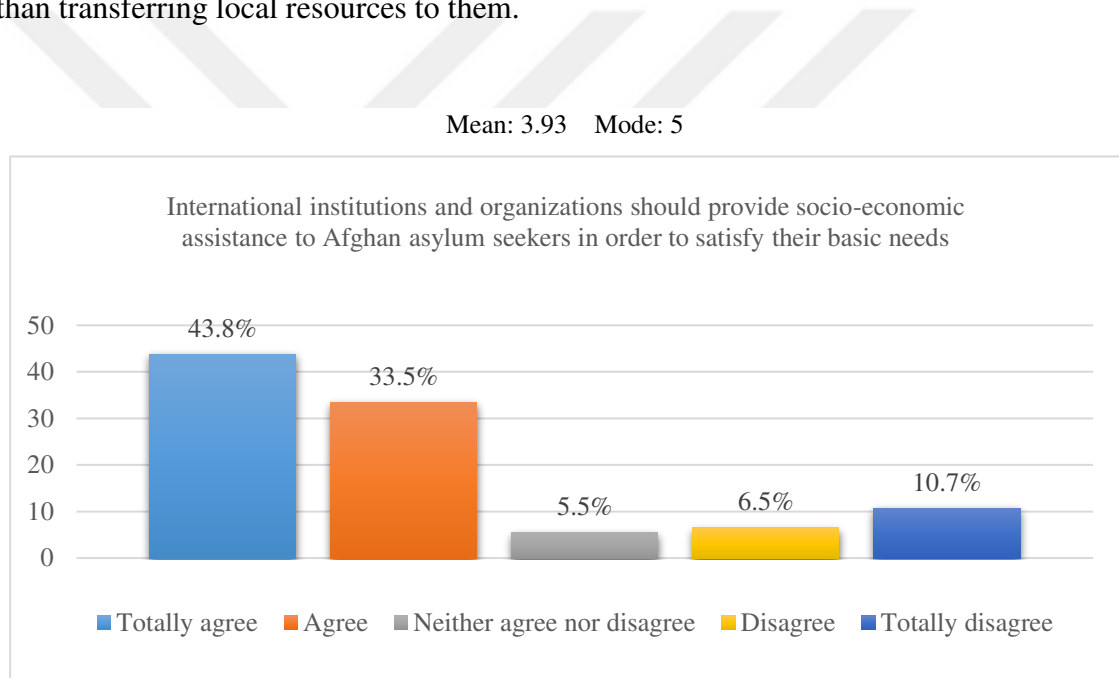


Figure 4. 12 The Survey Participants’ Responses on the Statement “international institutions and organizations should provide socio-economic assistance to Afghan asylum seekers in order to satisfy their basic needs”

To be precise, 70.9% of female and 81.4% of male participants had the perception that international institutions and organizations should provide socio-financial aids to the Afghan asylum seekers. In terms of age, all the groups had a perception that international institutions and organizations should provide socio-economic assistance to Afghan asylum seekers. In terms of occupation, it is seen that all groups supported this view. According to percentages, occupations can be sorted from the highest percentage to

lowest as follows: academics, engineers, students, officers, private sector staff, accountants, workers, artisans, and unemployed people support that international institutions and organizations should assist to Afghan asylum seekers.

Subsequently, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement “Afghan asylum seekers should be allowed to work legally in Sivas” on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” Here, the mean shows that although the responses of participants are between “disagree” and “neither agree nor disagree,” the rate is slightly closer to “neither agree nor disagree.” However, the most frequently given answer was “disagree” while the least frequently given answer was “totally agree.” Furthermore, the opinion of the survey participants indicated that they should not be allowed to work legally in Sivas (see Figure 4.13).

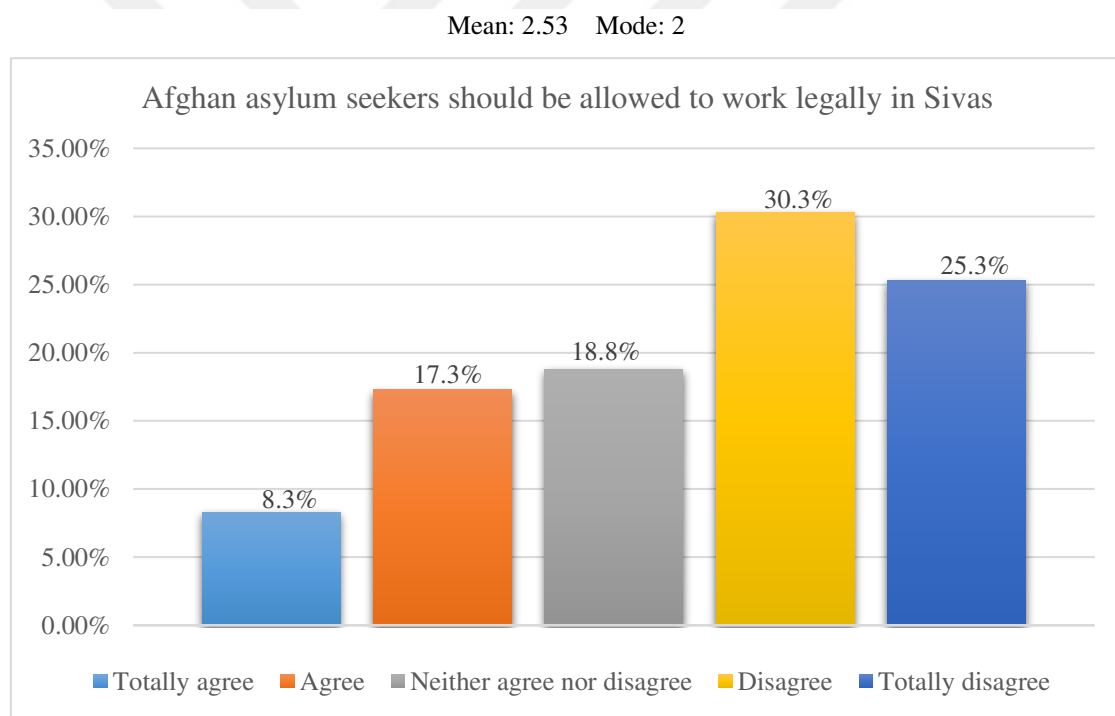


Figure 4. 13 The Survey Participants’ Responses on the Statement “Afghan Asylum Seekers Should Be Allowed to Work Legally in Sivas”

To be precise, 51.9% of female and 57.9% of male participants were against giving permission to Afghan asylum seekers to work legally. In terms of age, all groups have a perception that Afghan asylum seekers should not be allowed to work legally in Sivas. According to the Pearson Chi-Square Test, there is a significant relation between the age and this question ($p < 0.05$). Here, it is seen that younger people and middle-aged

people have the strongest perceptions. This relationship will be explained in the following chapters after the illustration of the in-depth interviews' findings. In terms of occupation, it is seen that all occupation groups were against the idea of giving permission to Afghan asylum seekers to work legally. However, workers and artisans had the strongest perception. Considering the Fisher's Exact Test, there is a significant relation between occupation and this question. This relationship will be also explained in the following chapters.

4.2.4. Security-Oriented Perception of Local People

To determine the security-oriented perceptions of the local people regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers, the survey participants were asked three questions. Firstly, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that “the increase in the number of Afghan asylum seekers in my neighborhood increased the crime rate,” on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” Here, the mean shows that although the responses of participants are between “disagree” and “neither agree nor disagree,” the rate is closer to “neither agree nor disagree.” In addition, the most frequently given answer was “neither agree nor disagree” while the least given answer was “totally agree” (see Figure 4.14).

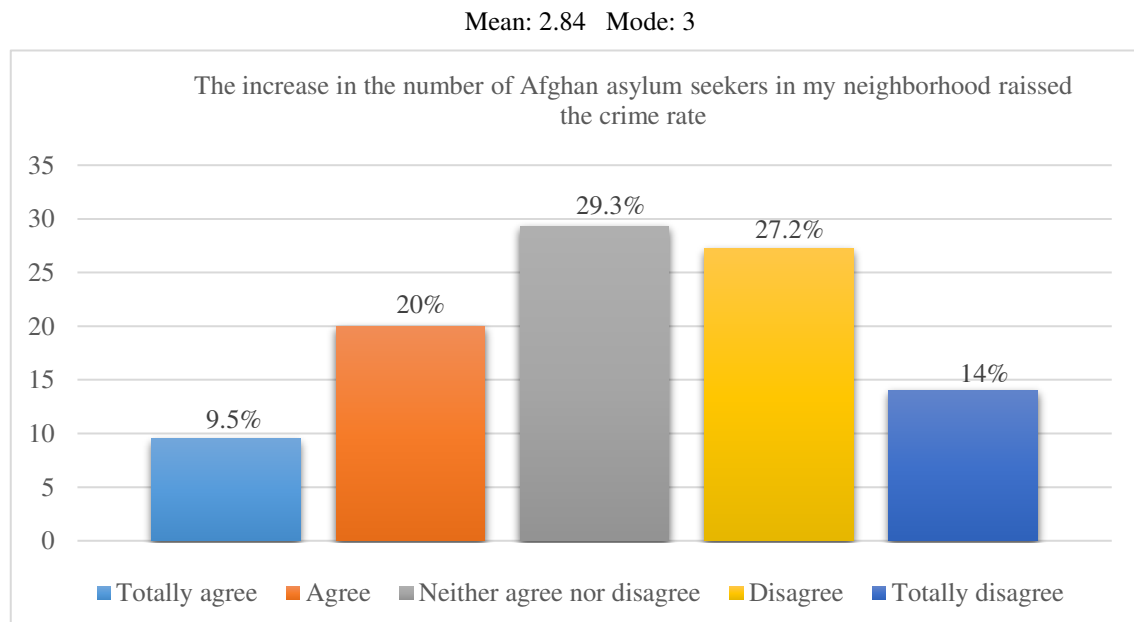


Figure 4. 14 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Statement “The Increase in the Number of Afghan Asylum Seekers in My Neighborhood Increased the Crime Rate”

To be precise, 36.7% of female and 44.2% of male participants are against the statement that the increase in the number of Afghan asylum seekers in their neighborhood increased the crime rates. In terms of age, it is seen that all age groups were against this statement. In terms of occupation, while officers, academics, workers, private sector staff, and students did not support this statement, unemployed people and artisans support it.

Secondly, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement “Afghan asylum seekers disrupt the Turkish identity through marriages” on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” Here, the mean shows that although the responses of participants are between “neither agree nor disagree” and “agree,” the rate is closer to “agree.” Furthermore, the most frequently given answer was “agree” while the least frequently given answer was “neither agree nor disagree.” More than half of the participants stated that Afghan asylum seekers disrupt the Turkish identity (see Figure 4.15).

Mean: 3.24 Mode: 4

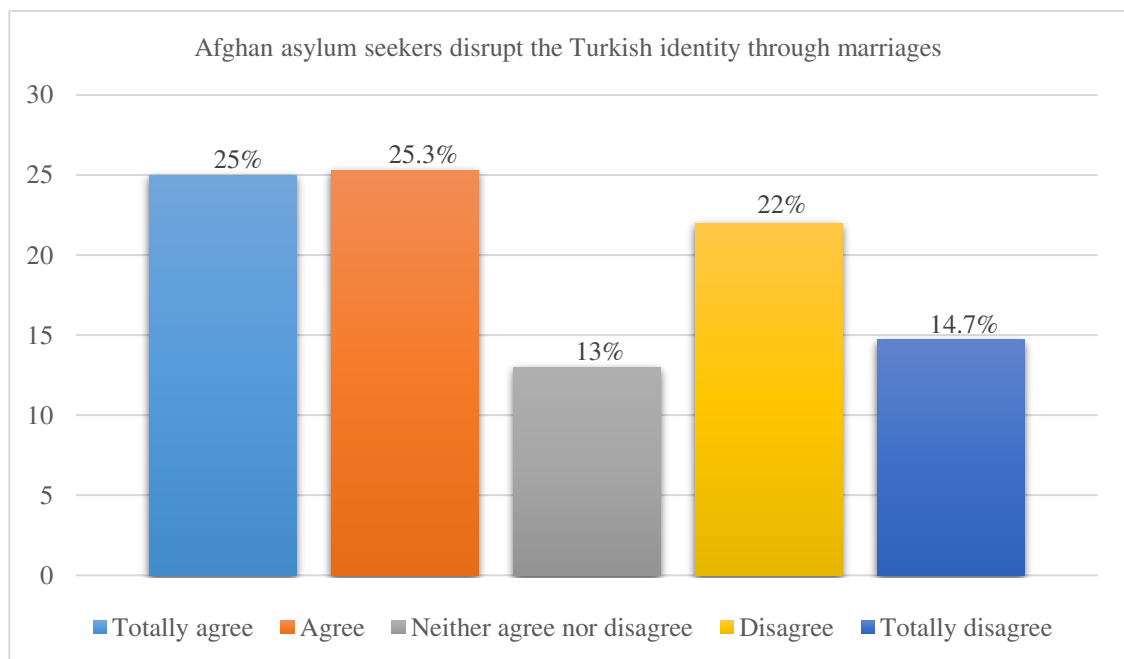


Figure 4. 15 The Survey Participants’ Responses on the Statement “Afghan Asylum Seekers Disrupt the Turkish identity through Marriages”

To be precise, 51.9% of female and 46.4% of male participants supported the statement that Afghan asylum seekers disrupt the Turkish identity through marriages. In terms of age, while the participants who are aged between 18 and 29 perceived Afghan

asylum seekers as a cause of disruption of the Turkish identity, people aged between 30 and older have a counter perception that Afghan asylum seekers do not disrupt the Turkish identity. In terms of occupation, it is seen that workers, artisans, officers, unemployed people, students, and academics perceived Afghan asylum seekers as a threat for their identity while engineers, accountants, and private sector staff were against this perception.

Subsequently, the participants were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement “Afghan asylum seekers should only live in camps without joining the local people” on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” In fact, this question aimed at comparing Afghan asylum seekers with Syrian refugees who are not welcomed in Turkey anymore (Unutulmaz, Sirkeci, & Eroğlu Utku, 2017). Here, although the mean shows that the answers of participants are between “disagree” and “neither agree nor disagree,” the rate is closer to “neither agree nor disagree.” However, the most frequently given answer was “disagree.” More than half cited that Afghan asylum seekers should not only live in camps. This finding is unexpected in two respects. First, it was predicted that, similarly to Syrians, Afghan asylum seekers would not be welcomed in Turkey either since both groups represent different kinds of ethnicities, culture, customs, lifestyles, and world views. However, in contrast to this prejudice, participants stated that Afghan asylum seekers should live in public areas with local people. The second one is previously given responses of the participants which demonstrated that Afghan asylum seekers are not perceived well. However, this perception did not matter to live together (see Figure 4.16). In this context, this finding seems peculiar to this context, but the required explanation will be given in the last chapter of the thesis.

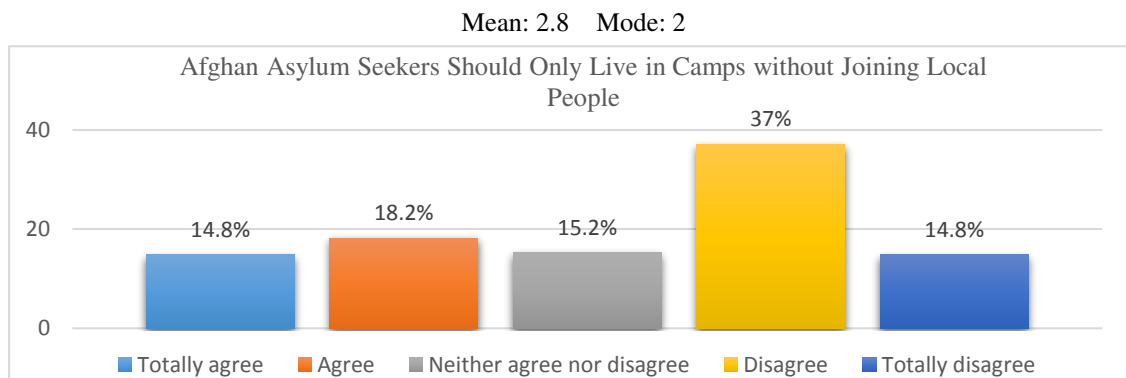


Figure 4. 16 The Survey Participants' Responses on the Statement “Afghan Asylum Seekers Should Only Live in Camps without Joining with the Local People”

To be precise, 52.6% of female and 51.2% of male participants are against the statement that Afghan asylum seekers should live in only camps. In terms of age, all groups were against this statement. In terms of occupation, only artisans supported this view. Considering the Pearson Chi-Square Test, there is a significant relation between occupation and this question ($p < 0.05$), and this relationship will be explained in the following chapters.

4.2.5. Future of Afghan Asylum Seekers

To make clear the opinion of the local people on the future of Afghan asylum seekers, the respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that “Afghan asylum seekers should return to their country of origin,” on a scale ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree.” Here, the mean shows that although the responses of participants are between “agree” and “totally agree,” the rate is closer to “agree.” The most frequently given answer was “totally agree,” and the least frequently given answer was “totally disagree.” The majority of the local people asserted that Afghan asylum seekers should return to their country of origin (see Figure 4.17).

Mean: 4.05 Mode: 5

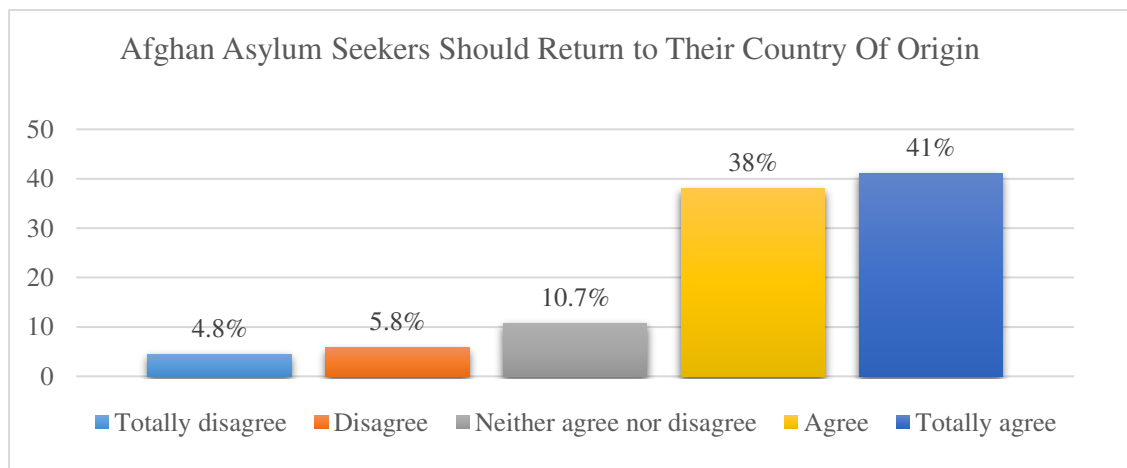


Figure 4. 17 The Survey Participants’ Responses on the Statement “Afghan Asylum Seekers Should Return to Their Country of Origin”

In terms of demographic features of the participants, it can be seen that all the groups supported this statement with high percentages.

In sum, all over these views, the following statements are agreed by most of the survey participants:

- There are problems experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers (90.5%)
- I feel disturbed when I encounter with Afghan asylum seekers (79.5%)
- Afghan asylum seekers should return to Afghanistan (79%)
- Afghan asylum seekers harm Sivas (77.5%)
- Afghan asylum seekers should be provided financial aids by international institutions and organizations (77.3%)
- Afghan asylum seekers do not live in harmony with the local people (59%)
- I am not pleased to live with Afghan asylum seekers (57%)

All these statements show that socio-cultural, economic, political and security-oriented factors have impacts on local people's perception of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers. It is seen that Afghan asylum seekers are not accepted in the society by the majority of the survey participants.

CHAPTER 5: A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PERCEPTIONS

5.1. SAMPLE OF THE INTERVIEW

As this thesis tries to investigate, learn, and reveal the local people's perceptions of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas, in order to have a further understanding of this process, in-depth interviews were conducted. For the interviews, the sample was determined in accordance with convenience sampling.

Within the scope of the field work, the interview was carried out with 50 local people of whom 18 were female and 32 were male. The sample reflects generally the young people, since 19 of the interviewees are aged between 20 and 29; 10 of them are aged between 30 and 39; 12 of them between 40 and 49; 9 of them between 50 and above. The numbers of the interviewees according to their occupation are as follows: 18 artisans, 4 students, 4 workers, 10 officers, 7 academics, 7 unemployed people.

5.2. LOCAL PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF THE INTEGRATION PROCESSES OF AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS

Within the scope of in-depth interviews, the perception of local people was endeavored to be evaluated in terms of five themes: socio-cultural perception, economic perception, political perception, security-oriented perception, and their perception regarding Syrians. The analysis of these categories was illustrated by codes and quotations from local people's expressions (see Figure 5.1).

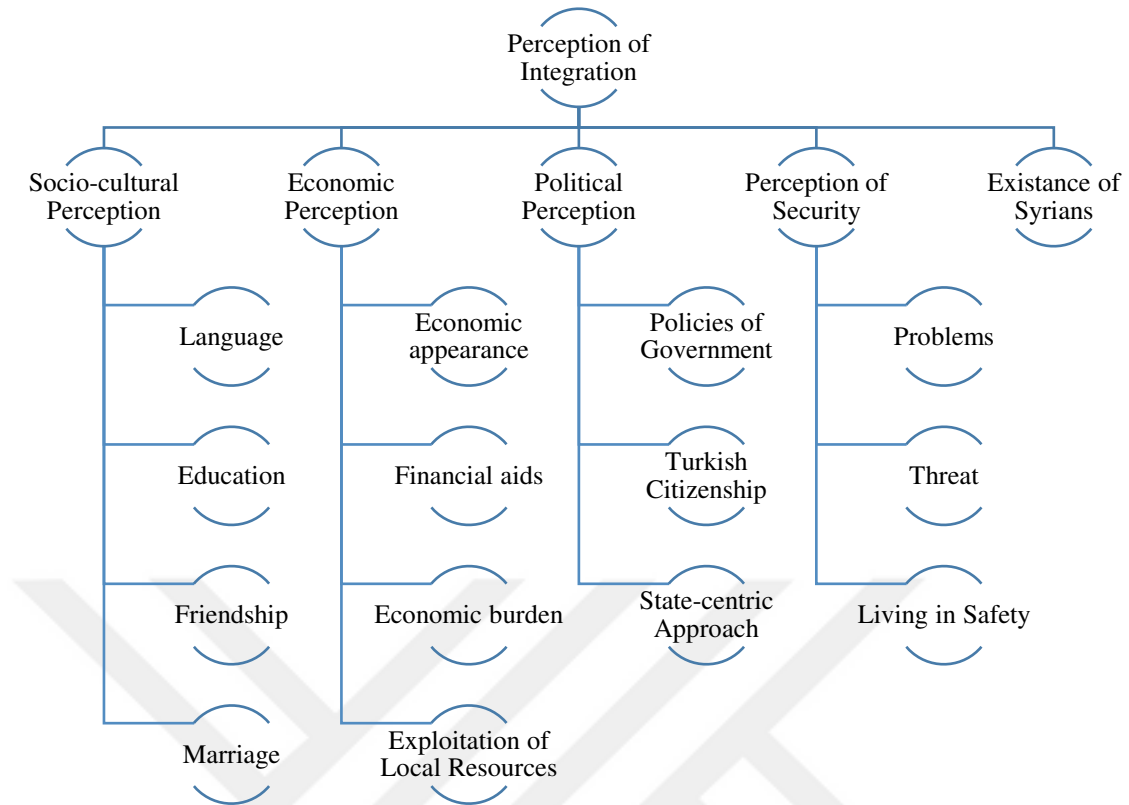


Figure 5. 1 The Scheme of Categorizes and Codes from the Interview

5.2.1. Language, Education, Friendship and Marriage

Encountering foreigners, even for a glance, gives an impression about them. This impression leads people to consider how to treat them. In this process, people try to understand the age, language, religion, identity, educational level, and personality of foreigners. Also, people try to understand their intentions towards them. If they believe that these traits are coherent with their characteristics, judgments or intelligence, they can perceive these people as harmless (Akyıldız, 1988). Otherwise, they can perceive them as a threat. As it is stated by Eraslan (2016), immigrants bring their culture, traditions, and values to the country of immigration although they leave their country of origin and memories behind. Differences in language, culture, and lifestyle partly form the local people's attitudes towards and perceptions of asylum seekers (Orhan & Senyücel 2015; Kaypak & Bimay, 2016; Özdemir, 2017). From this point of view, the local people's perceptions of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers were evaluated. As Afghan asylum seekers have a different language, culture and lifestyle, the following

points are focused on: the feeling of local people when they encounter Afghan asylum seekers, and the social interactions of the local people with the Afghan asylum seekers regarding friendship, getting education together, and marriage.

According to the data collected from the interviewees, many interviewees encounter at least one Afghan asylum seeker every day in their neighborhood or the city center. Most of them “got used to seeing Afghan asylum seekers” and they do not feel uncomfortable when encountering Afghan asylum seekers due to “their good manners,” “having a kinship” and “comparison of Afghan asylum seekers with Syrian refugees.” Among the reasons given by the interviewees, the statement that “Afghan asylum seekers do not disturb the society” appeared as the most frequent one:

“I sometimes encounter Afghans who try to sell something. They do not insist on selling. I think they are afraid of being misunderstood. They try to exist and be isolated simultaneously. As they do not disturb the society, I do not feel uncomfortable when I encounter them.” (P47, Personal interview: June 2019).

“Afghans are good and hardworking people. I feel comfortable when I encounter these miserable people. But, I do feel uncomfortable when I encounter Syrians. I hate them all.” (P5, Personal interview: August 2019).

“We have a kinship. I perceive them as guests. It is not possible to be disturbed by Afghans. I love them.” (P48, Personal interview: August 2019).

As it can be seen from the examples above, the statement that “Afghans try to exist and be isolated simultaneously” is an interesting point. Here, it is understood that Afghan asylum seekers are perceived by some of the interviewees as people trying to survive in their new environment in peace and to keep themselves away from the social mess. In addition, perception of Afghan asylum seekers as being miserable makes some interviewees uncomfortable. For instance, one of them claimed that “I feel terrible when I encounter Afghan asylum seekers. That’s because they are miserable, and I cannot help them.” (P5, Personal interview: August 2019). Moreover, the statement that “I feel comfortable when I encounter these miserable people. But, I do feel uncomfortable when I encounter Syrians” is an important point. The reason is that although the interviewees were not asked about comparison of the Syrians and the Afghans, some expressions

appeared in accordance with this comparison. Here, it can be seen that the perception of Afghan asylum seekers has changed with the large number of Syrian refugees coming to the country, and the anti-Syrian perception has led to a positive perception on the Afghan asylum seekers who are displaced people as well. This statement supports one of the research questions of the thesis: “did the arrival of Syrians in Sivas change the local people’s perceptions regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers.” Also, it methodologically supports why Syrians were included in the analytical background of the thesis and addressed in the section of comparison between the Afghans and the Syrians. It is also the reason why there is a contradiction between survey results and interviews regarding the perceptions of the local people on encountering Afghan asylum seekers, which will be further explained in Chapter VI.

When this finding, namely feeling of comfortable when encountering Afghan asylum seekers, was analyzed according to demographic features of the interviewees, workers appeared as having a stronger perception that they feel comfortable when encountering the Afghans. In fact, considering the survey findings which shows that the workers are the most dissatisfied group regarding Afghan asylum seekers, appearance of workers as having a positive perception in terms of encountering Afghan asylum seekers in the interview findings is surprising. However, they expressed this situation by pointing out the perceptions of “guest,” “harmless feature of Afghan asylum seekers,” and “right to live in good conditions.” These points play important roles in determining the workers’ feelings of when they encounter Afghan asylum seekers.

On the other hand, these encounters could sometimes lead to feeling of uncomfortable. Many of the interviewees, who feel uncomfortable, described Afghan asylum seekers as “creepy” because of their “strange language,” “their habit of “walking along the street in crowded groups,” and their “bad smell”:

“Afghan asylum seekers smell bad. They are not clean. They are spoiled due to our kind attitudes. I do not like them.” (P22, Personal interview: June 2019).

“We do not get along. We do not speak the same language. They are shameless. They always walk along the streets in crowded groups to disturb us.” (P49, Personal interview: June 2019).

There are also some interviewees who argue that Afghan asylum seekers cause negative economic and social impacts for the city and the country. Among their statements, the most frequently given response appeared to be “they damage the national economy,” while the second most frequently given response was “they disturb the society.”

“I would have preferred that the Turkish government had not accepted these people. They will be an economic and social problem for us.” (P41 and P34, Personal interviews: June 2019).

“Before they arrived in Sivas, our citizens could work at the jobs. However, right now, they work at our businesses. They took our jobs from us.” (P9, Personal interview: July 2019).

“We do not know their language, so we do not understand each other. They are also shameless.” (P49, Personal interview: June 2019).

As it can be seen from the responses above, the ideas whether “Afghan asylum seekers disturb the society” or “Afghan asylum seekers do not disturb the society” can be referred to as the determinants of feeling uncomfortable or comfortable. In other words, it can be asserted that whether one feels comfortable or uncomfortable is based on one’s own perception of Afghan asylum seekers’ manners and attitudes.

Based on the analysis of data collected from the interviews, students appeared as the most dissatisfied groups for encountering Afghan asylum seekers due to the fact that they have security-oriented concerns regarding economy, society, and future. They seem that they are afraid of shrinking business opportunities and cultural disharmony, also they are reluctant to communicate with Afghan asylum seekers due to language barrier.

To continue, this negative perception may lead to prejudices such as “distrust” and therefore, many of the interviewees hesitate to be friends with the Afghan asylum seekers. In this context, one of the interviewees said:

“I will never and ever want to be friends with an Afghan asylum seeker because of three factors. The first one is cultural differences. They may demolish my own culture. The second one is educational differences. They have low education. The

last but the most important one is that Afghans did not die for their country.” (P36, Personal interview, July 2019).

When this finding is analyzed regarding demographic features of the interviewees, it can be seen that women seem to be slightly more hesitant than men in terms of becoming friends with Afghan asylum seekers. In terms of age, people who are aged 50 and above; and in terms of occupation, students and artisans appeared to be the most hesitant when it comes to becoming friends with the Afghan asylum seekers. Here, female interviewees seem that they have security-oriented concerns due to not knowing the Afghan asylum seekers well, as well as language barrier and cultural differentiation. Language barrier is also mentioned by the students. Interviewees aged 50 and above seem that they are afraid of cultural degeneration. Most artisans are afraid that this friendship may extend the stay of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas. Also, they have security-related concerns. It should be noted that the belief that Afghan asylum seekers migrated to Turkey instead of defending their country raised the anxieties of the interviewees against them.

However, despite negative perceptions, Afghan asylum seekers can be preferred to be friends with by the majority of the interviewees. Here, the following factors appear to motivate the local people: “common religion,” “cosmopolitanism,” and “humanism.” In fact, most of the local people share the same religion with the Afghan asylum seekers (Islam) and some of them have a desire to learn about different cultures and customs in order to live in a cosmopolitan city. In addition, many local people are against discrimination of people because of their religions, ethnicities or languages. They not only prefer to become friends with them but encourage their relatives to become friends with Afghan asylum seekers as well:

“I am pleased to be a friend of Afghan asylum seekers. I support cultural interactions. If you know one language you are one person; but if you know two languages, you are two persons.” (P27, Personal interview, July 2019).

“I want to be friends with Afghan asylum seekers. The reason is that I want to introduce Sivas and help them live here peacefully. This makes integration easier.” (P29, Personal interview, July 2019).

“My relatives can be friends with Afghan asylum seekers because they are honest. Honest people do not hurt anybody. If Afghans become friends with my relatives, it means that they try to live in a peaceful environment. Therefore, we should not exclude these people. Instead, we should help them to live in harmony with us.” (P3, Personal interview: July 2019).

According to data obtained from the interviews, it can be seen that some of the interviewees already have an Afghan friend and they define Afghan asylum seekers as friendly and good people. Many of them are enthusiastic to learn about a different culture, and try to make the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers easier.

In relation to the issue of education, majority of the interviewees perceive the Afghan children as pure and harmless and they support the right of education of Afghan children. Many of them also consider that Afghan children are agents of integration since children are able to learn Turkish language and culture quickly and transfer their knowledge and experiences to their family members:

“Afghans need to have a right to be educated the same way as our children. This right must be supported and protected, because the right of education is universal. If these children are given an opportunity to become engineers, they can be engineers which would be great for our country because they will eventually work for us. Besides, the future is our children’s. Thus, they should live together. If every nations’ children love each other, the world will turn into a peaceful place. I think, if these generations live together as friends, conflicts among states will disappear.” (P2, Personal interview, June 2019).

The positive perception of the interviewees on being educated with Afghan asylum seekers is not peculiar to this context. There are various studies found this perception regarding asylum seekers and refugees, as well. For instance, it can be seen in the study conducted in Aydın by Saçan, Cizdan, & Tabak (2017, pp. 32-33) that many Turkish people claimed that “Syrian children are innocent, and they deserve to live in better conditions.” In addition, it can be seen in the study conducted in Bolu by Güney and Konak (2016), many Turkish people support Syrian and Iraqi children to be

educated with Turkish children. Considering these findings, it can be asserted that Turkish people support the education of children no matter what ethnicity they have.

In the thesis, these expressions may indicate that most of the interviewees support socio-cultural integration of Afghan asylum seekers. That is because, they see education as a tool of integration. However, some of them are still concerned about cultural differences that could affect their children negatively. For instance, P11 stated: “I do not think that my children and Afghan children get along well. They do not have any common ties. Besides, Afghans bear some diseases which we are not familiar with.” (P11, Personal interview, July 2019). Some of them, on the other hand, are afraid of being degenerated culturally.

In relation to the issue of marriage, there are mixed responses collected during the fieldwork. Although most of the interviewees seem to believe that marriage is predetermined by one’s destiny due to their religious doctrine, many still consider that marriage with an Afghan asylum seeker a threat to the Turkish identity and culture. As it is stated by Eraslan (2016), marriage is one of the obvious factors in which differences between groups are invisible since couples share their cultural and religious motifs with each other. Therefore, a vast majority of the interviewees in Sivas hesitate to compromise their cultural values and religious beliefs because they consider that marriage cannot eliminate the differences in ethnicities and religions. In addition, many of them consider that speaking in different language does not make statements understandable:

“Yes, they are honest, but I do not prefer to marry. I must protect my ethnicity. Turkish race must be kept pure.” (P11, Personal interview: July 2019).

“I know people who marry Afghans. It is a destiny, so it is not ethical to make certain statements. However, I have never thought of marrying an Afghan. Also, I do not encourage my children to marry them either.” (P2, Personal interview: June 2019).

“There will be a cultural degeneration and disruption in religion. I do not think that differences make us happy. However, if marriage is going to make Afghans one of us, we can get married.” (P45, Personal interview: June 2019).

“I prefer to marry a person who is coherent with my customs and traditions. Afghans are very different regarding their customs, traditions, and cuisine. They also smell bad. I cannot go to their homes which are unclean and smell horrible.” (P43, Personal interview: June 2019).

“Why would I marry an Afghan? It is ridiculous. Do we speak the same language? No! How can we understand each other? Are they integrated into society? No! We don’t get along.” (P46 and P33, Personal interviews: July 2019 and P38, Personal interview: August 2019).

In addition, many interviewees are against marriage with Afghan asylum seekers due to the economic reasons, and negative experiences of others:

“It is unacceptable. Marriage with an Afghan asylum seeker means marriage with 50 Afghans. I definitely do not accept to feed all the Afghans.” (P6, Personal interview: June 2019).

“I certainly reject marrying Afghan asylum seekers. The reason is that recently, one of my friends married an Afghan asylum seeker and the bride stole jewelry from the wedding and fled. My friend is in debt. He is waiting for his 100.000 Turkish Liras (TL).” (P50, Personal interview: July 2019).

Moreover, perception of “beauty” plays an important role for the decision of male interviewees. A majority of them appear to believe that Afghan women are unattractive. For that reason, Afghan women are not considered as suitable and ideal brides by most of them: “I do not prefer to marry an Afghan woman, because they are ugly.” (P7 and P9, Personal interviews: July 2019).

Overall, it can be asserted that the local people are unlikely to be any closer to the Afghan asylum seekers than a friend or a schoolmate, even though they seem to support socio-cultural integration. In fact, it can be seen in the literature that Turkish citizens are unlikely to be any closer to the Syrian refugees than a schoolmate or business cooperation (Erdoğan, 2017). In the thesis, this finding can be seen regarding the Afghan asylum seekers, and revealed that the majority of the interviewees support one-way integration.

5.2.2. Economic Burden and Exploitation of Economic Resources

Economic perception has a dimension that affects social interactions. Afghan asylum seekers, who left their economic resources behind and started to live in Sivas, do not have a regular income. Therefore, in Turkey and Sivas, the state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations help Afghan asylum seekers financially and socially. For instance, the government supplies humanitarian aids to them through the Ministry of Family Labor and Social Services (MFLSS), Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (SASF), Social Services Center (SSC), the Municipality, and the Governorship. For instance, MFLSS (2019) provides kind-in aids and financial aids such as conditional education program, conditional health program, and social adjustment program for foreigners within a partnership of the EU and UNICEF. In addition to these programs, the ministry also supplies both coal aids and clothing. SSC provides psychological assistance, financial aid to the families with children, care houses for children and women, and special care centers for the disabled and people in need.

In addition to the governmental aids, in Sivas, associations and foundations such as Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), Life Tree Association (LTA) and Friendly Association (FA), provides humanitarian aids for Afghan asylum seekers. For instance, LTA (2019) indiscriminately supplies bread and clothes to them. FA (2019) provides them with social activities like picnics and guides them to find homes and furniture. The TRC (2019) provides shelters, nourishments, health services, and education through the “Red Crescent Card” which is distributed to the people to supply for in-kind aid and financial aid, psychological and skill developments programs under the name of “child protection” which includes the children whose ages are between 4 and 18, language courses for adults, and also advocacy activities towards people who live outside the camps.

International organizations and foundations also provide aid to those people. For instance, the EU generally transfers funds to Turkey under the name of the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) in order to provide firewood and family allowance (European Commission, 2019). Moreover, Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers & Migrants (ASAM) which is an independent organization funded by the EU as a project, provides counselling services in law, health and psychology, and language courses to asylum seekers and refugees (ASAM, 2020).

In relation to financial aid, local people expect that the government transfers taxes, collected for the state revenue from the public as a compulsory contribution, efficiently and effectively (Demir, 2009). Therefore, distribution of financial aids through state revenue may affect the economic perception of local people who might perceive that they pay taxes to aid the refugees or asylum seekers. Also, they could consider that those people exploit their financial resources. Here, taxes and the labor force might be factors that can play an important role in forming local people's perceptions. The appearance of Afghan asylum seekers and their utilization of job opportunities may also play a role in forming the perceptions of the local people.

Thus, the local people's perceptions of integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers from the economic perspective tried to be evaluated by focusing on the following points: economic appearance of Afghan asylum seekers, transferring the financial aids to Afghan asylum seekers, Afghan asylum seekers' being a cheap labor force, and exploitation of the local economic resources by them.

In Sivas, according to the data obtained from the interviews, the majority of the interviewees perceive Afghan asylum seekers as poor considering their appearances. Here, two factors that the interviewees uttered appear to be important in forming their perceptions. The first one is that Afghan asylum seekers are not supplied enough aids, and the second one is that they are not allowed to work legally:

"I do not believe that Afghan asylum seekers are provided with financial aids. Their appearance, clothes and legal status support my view. They seem poor." (P17 and P37, Personal interviews: June 2019).

"I did not see any aids that are provided for Afghan asylum seekers other than the aids from the municipality. They live in an apartment with 14 people." (P28, Personal interview: June 2019).

"Afghan asylum seekers are jobless, poor, and are in need. They survive." (P27, Personal interview: July 2019).

However, some of the interviewees, although they represent the minority, perceive Afghan asylum seekers as having middle income: "Afghan asylum seekers are

middling. I have never seen an Afghan asylum seeker who begs. They work to earn money for their basic needs. They are fond of their personal care. They do not demand anything from you. They are happy and they always smile.” (P42, Personal interview: July 2019).

To specify, although many interviewees stated that Afghan asylum seekers are provided with inadequate aids, they are still dissatisfied about the transfer of aids to Afghan asylum seekers. There are two fundamental reasons behind this dissatisfaction. The first one is the perception that Afghan asylum seekers “work illegally at low wages.” As it can be understood from the statements of the interviewees, working as a cheap labor force is perceived as a factor that causes a decrease in the job opportunities in Sivas. This causes unemployment in the local people who are in need. Therefore, they think that if Afghan asylum seekers’ working as a cheap labor force cannot be prevented, the financial aids should be provided to them. They believe that prioritizing the local community is a necessity. Otherwise, “social equilibrium would be demolished.” The second one is that financial aids provided to Afghan asylum seekers are perceived as “economic exploitation,” and this indicates that Afghan asylum seekers are perceived as exploiters by many interviewees:

“I am very dissatisfied about the aids provided to Afghan asylum seekers. At first, the level of our citizens’ socio-economic status must be improved. Otherwise, it will be unfair.” (P5, Personal interview: August 2019).

“The assistance is provided to Afghans more than our citizens. They benefit from the education, health, consumption due to financial aids provided to them. They exploit our resources.” (P15, and P21 Personal interviews: August 2019).

“Of course, I am disturbed by aids provided to Afghan asylum seekers. I am divorced. As I did not work, I applied to SASF to ask for help to get a job opportunity. Two years have passed, but no one cares about me. However, before Afghan asylum seekers arrived in Sivas, their houses were rented and furnished. Their kitchens were full of food. Why? Who are these people? As a citizen, I fulfill my responsibilities to the state. I pay all my taxes. I should be given priority. But they are benefitted from my taxes. I do not pay my taxes regularly so the government financially supports them.” (P46, Personal interview: July 2019).

Factors such as dissatisfaction about distribution of taxes and financial aids, having concerns about the social equilibrium, perception of economic exploitation and demand for prioritizing the local people, are not peculiar to this context. In fact, there are many studies that found a similar perception for displaced people (Siverekli & Ertuğrul, 2016; Budak et al., 2017; Saçan, Cizdan & Tabak, 2017; Sönmez & Adıgüzel, 2017; Taştan, Haklı & Osmanoğlu 2017; Harunoğulları et al, 2018; Kemik, Gözübüyük, & Sever, 2019; Manap Kırmızıgül 2019). In those studies, the perception that “*it is necessary to prioritize the Turkish people's own interest*” appeared to be the most common perception because the majority of local people think that displaced people are provided with more financial aids than local people in need.

Another dissatisfaction of the interviewees regarding Afghan asylum seekers is that some of them do not want to work with the Afghans in the same environment. The main reason asserted by the interviewees is that they have difficulties in communicating with local people because some of them either do not speak Turkish or speak it in limited words. Besides, there is not an interpreter in every workplace. At that point, language barrier creates the perception that a qualified communication cannot be established between the local people and Afghan asylum seekers at the same workplace:

“I have a restaurant where I do not prefer to employ Afghan asylum seekers because of cultural diversities. I think diversities in language and culture cause Afghan asylum seekers to be unable to adapt to a business schedule and communicate with the customers.” (P32, Personal interview: July 2019).

“They work as a cheap labor force. So, they damage the national economy and they decrease the local employment.” (P4, Personal interview: June 2019).

“I will feel uncomfortable if I work with an Afghan asylum seeker at the same workplace. They decrease the job opportunities. It is a necessity to prioritize our own citizens. There are a lot of unemployed Turkish young people. If there is a job opportunity, my own citizens must be employed. The government neglects the rights of Turkish citizens in order to protect them from being oppressed. Our people must live in prosperity.” (P2, Personal interview: June 2019).

Among the interviewees, by sex, men; by age, people aged between 20 and 29, in other words, younger people; and by occupation, students have a stronger dissatisfaction. The common dissatisfaction among these groups is based on economic concerns. These groups strongly support that “the interests of local people should come first because Afghan asylum seekers increase the unemployment rate through working as a cheap labor force.” On the other hand, the majority of the local people accept to work with Afghan asylum seekers in order to eliminate the ethnic discrimination, to provide a chance for them to reach job opportunities, and to help their survival.

Overall, it can be understood that Afghan asylum seekers are partly integrated into the economy, but this integration makes a vast majority of the interviewees stressful.

5.2.3. Policies of Turkish Government, State-Centric Approach

The Turkish government generally pursues an inclusive manner and an open-door policy towards immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees (Demirhan & Aslan, 2015). At that point, local people’s perceptions of this policy is worth discussing. In this context, the following basic points were questioned: policies of the government; precautions taken by the authorities, giving a privileged status to Afghan asylum seekers, stopping the acceptance of Afghan asylum seekers to the city and the country; granting Turkish citizenship to Afghan asylum seekers; and using a correct approach to manage this issue.

Regarding policies of the government, in Sivas, many interviewees believe that authorities do not apply policies to take precautions about Afghan asylum seekers. They perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who live in terrible conditions. Also, many of them believe that Afghan asylum seekers do not have a privileged status. They perceive Syrian refugees as people who are granted with a privileged status, instead of Afghan asylum seekers. Therefore, they blame the authorities for their lack of effort to improve Afghans’ living conditions:

“Turkish authorities supply financial aid to Afghan asylum seekers but they do not attempt to integrate them into the society.” (P20, Personal interview: July 2019).

“They have old and worn outfits and their houses are not suitable for human living conditions. We accept Afghans to our country but we do not supply enough aid to

them. We do not focus on their problems related to health, economic welfare and integration. I do not think that they feel safe. We help them to some extent but then we tell them that they should not expect more from us.” (P41, Personal interview: August 2019).

On the other hand, some interviewees, especially academics think that authorities not only ensure a safe environment for Afghan asylum seekers but also supply free health insurance², education opportunities and in-kind aids for them. For instance, one of the interviewees asserted that “Turkish government helps Afghan asylum seekers by supplying food, shelter, clothing, courses, cleaning equipment and interpreter support.” (P 48, Personal interview: August 2019).

To continue, the majority of the interviewees do not support the settlement of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas. Here, “huge number of Afghan asylum seekers,” “insufficient economic resources of Sivas,” “possibility of cultural destruction,” and “manipulation of local people’s feelings” appeared as the fundamental factors which affect the perception of the interviewees:

“We have no economic welfare to feed Afghan asylum seekers.” (P9, and P14 Personal interview: July 2019).

“The number of Afghan asylum seekers is enough for the socio-economic capacity of Sivas. The more Afghan asylum seekers settle in Sivas, the more problems we face.” (P23, Personal interview: June 2019).

“The city cannot host more asylum seekers. They cause us to shrink our habitat. I saw graffiti which said, ‘In the past, I saw the girl I loved everywhere that I looked, now I see Afghans.’ They also cause economic trouble. They work as a cheap labor force.” (P44, Personal interview: August 2019).

However, some of them, especially academics, emphasized “the helpful personality of Turks,” “religious responsibilities,” “cultural interaction,” and “unsafe

² When this thesis was conducted in Sivas, Turkish government provided free health insurance to Afghan asylum seekers for treatment in hospitals. However, this practice was removed with the governmental arrangement. Currently, Afghan asylum seekers benefit only from the emergency services of hospitals.

conditions of Afghanistan.” Also, they support Afghan asylum seekers’ settlement to Sivas. For instance, one of the interviewees claimed:

“I became friends with Afghan asylum seekers, so I know their problems. They are traumatized people. We should help them. This is our religious duty. Our religion comments that if one sleeps full when the neighbor is hungry, he or she is not one of us.” (P39, Personal interview: August 2019).

Nevertheless, a vast majority of the interviewees perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who should return to their country of origin. The reasons depend mostly on a demand for living in a homogeneous city and increasing job opportunities:

“Afghan asylum seekers should return to Afghanistan for two reasons. First, they work as a cheap labor force. If they return, our people can reach job opportunities. Second, I want to live with my own people. Afghans cause to harm our homogeneity.” (P40, Personal interview: August 2019).

“Why don’t we leave our country? They should not have left their country. Now, they should return to and struggle for Afghanistan. They should re-create their country. They should be citizens of their own country.” (P5, Personal interview; August 2019).

The reasons for this perception also depend on empathy. Many interviewees point out the interests of Afghan asylum seekers regarding their return with the empathetic attitudes by following sentences:

“Afghans do not live in good conditions in Sivas and they want to return to their country of origin. Their return will be the best for them.” (P14, Personal interview: July 2019).

“They should return to Afghanistan when the conflicts come to an end. They will be happier at home. I think they also want to return to Afghanistan. Everyone misses to live in their countries of origin.” (P18, Personal interview: July 2019).

Next, it was intended to grasp the perceptions of local people on political rights regarding Afghan asylum seekers. That is because, although Afghan asylum seekers have

socio-economic rights such as the right to education, right to housing, right to social security and right to work if the employer pursues legal procedure, they have no political rights. Political rights allow citizens to participate in administration of governments through voting in elections, joining political parties and participating in political events (Aydoğdu, 2017). In other words, only the citizens can enjoy the political rights. At that point, citizenship, which is a concept which traditionally refers to the belonging of a person to a certain state, plays an important role. It creates a bond between the people and the state by establishing a public relation, and provides people with the access to political activities (Jafari & Batebi, 2015; Özkan, 2019). In Turkey, according to the Article 66 of Turkish Constitution “everyone bound to the Turkish State through the bond of citizenship is a Turk” and “the child of a Turkish father or a Turkish mother is a Turk” (T.C Anayasa Mahkemesi, 2020). Also, according to the Article 11 of Turkish Citizenship Law, foreigners can be granted Turkish citizenship if they fulfill the following governmental requirements: being mature and have power of discernment according to his or her own national legal system, or, if the person is stateless, according to the Turkish law; residing in Turkey for five years continuously before her or his date of application; having an intention to settle in Turkey which is proved; not having any diseases which can be a threat for public health; having ethical morals; speaking Turkish in an adequate level; having an income to meet her or his basic needs in Turkey; being harmless in terms of national security and public order. In addition, according to the Article 16 of the same Law, it is stated that foreigners can obtain citizenship through marriage should they fulfill the requirements such as being married for at least three years, living together as a family and so forth (Türk Vatandaşlığı Kanunu, 2009). In terms of the legal status of Afghan asylum seekers, it is seen that they live under international protection and they stay in Sivas and Turkey until their status is determined. In other words, their stay is temporary. Thanks to the identity document for the international protection applicant, which substitutes a residence permit, they can reside in Turkey and can benefit from education as well as socio-economic aids. However, it should be noted that this document is not included in any types of residence certificates listed by DGMM (2020). Hence, according to the Regulation on the Implementation of Turkish Citizenship Law, the citizenship application of asylum seekers without a legal residence certificate is not accepted (Türk Vatandaşlığı Kanununun Uygulanmasına İlişkin Yönetmeliği, 2010).

Despite the legal status of Afghan asylum seekers, which prevents them from obtaining Turkish citizenship, the belief that Afghan asylum seekers might become Turkish citizens if they fulfill the requirements might cause the local people to have a negative perception towards the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers. Also, the possibility of being granted citizenship through marriages may negatively affect the perceptions of local people, as well. At that point, the perception of local people was questioned whether they support Afghan asylum seekers to be granted Turkish citizenship or not.

It should be highlighted that the majority of the interviewees do not support granting Turkish citizenship to Afghan asylum seekers. Based on the data obtained from the field work, three main factors appeared. The first factor is related to nationalistic belief:

“It is necessary to prioritize the Turkish people's own interest. People who escape from the war in their own country, would escape from here in the case of a war. Let the elderly, children and women come to our country, but the young men should defend their homeland. That is what we know. For example, Turkish soldiers fought for the Syrians, instead of Syrians. Actually, Syrians should be doing something for their country instead of being here in Turkey.” (P2, Personal interview: June 2019).

“Definitely I do not support. I do not think that they bear our national beliefs inside. Anybody who did not struggle for their country cannot be allowed to be our citizen.” (P49, Personal interview: June 2019; P33, Personal interview: July 2019).

“They did not go outside to protest the attempt of the 15 July coup. Instead, they stayed in their houses. May these people be a citizen of Turkey? I do not think so.” (P50, Personal interview: July 2019).

The second factor is related to economy:

“I do not support granting Turkish citizenship to Afghan asylum seekers because I believe they will be an economic burden to our national budget. In addition, I think they cause social disorder in Sivas.” (P5, Personal interview: August 2019).

The last factor is dependent on the perception that “if the Turkish government grants the Afghan asylum seekers citizenship, it will do so in order to obtain political rent” (P47, Personal interview: June 2019). Here, it can be understood that some of the interviewees have a concern that Afghan asylum seekers may be used by the government. They believe that if the government grants Turkish citizenship to Afghan asylum seekers, they will vote for the sake of the government in return. Therefore, they do not advocate granting Turkish citizenship to Afghan asylum seekers with reference to the following issues:

- concerns that if Afghan asylum seekers are granted Turkish citizenship, they would disrupt the demographic and cultural structure of the society, and destroy the national economy due to their high number
- concerns that if they were granted Turkish citizenship, they will harm national security because of the perception that they did not struggle for their country until the end of the conflicts
- concerns that if they are granted Turkish citizenship they would gain the right to rule us and harm our national sovereignty because of the perception that they have different ethnicities

Here, it should be emphasized that the majority of the interviewees advocate the state-centric approach to handle the asylum seekers. They suggest this approach as an accepted state policy in accordance with the belief that “the integrity of the state comes first.”

“I definitely support a state-centric approach. Afghan asylum seekers’ living conditions are different. We are not familiar with their culture. I do not know their language or religion. Who are these people? Also, they live for free. First, they migrated here, and later they will want to acquire political rights. They will want to govern us. This is unacceptable. How happy is the one who says I am a Turk!” (P24, Personal interview: August 2019).

“The integrity of the state comes first. So, all political decisions that affect the future of the state and citizens should be made for protecting the security of the state by protecting the rights of the citizens. Since it is an enigma for us whether these stranger people are agents, prisoners, insane, or diseased, the increasing number of them threatens our internal and external security. For instance, they can form a group among themselves and become a threat for us. We should not apply the policies that can jeopardize our national security. I do not think these people will defend our country if we need, because they did not defend Afghanistan. At that point, humanitarian aid is likely to return to us later as terrorism. Therefore, I prefer to have reliable people in my country.” (P30, Personal interview: June 2019).

The interviewees who support the *human-centric approach*, on the other hand, emphasized the values of human rights:

“Migration is an issue of humanity. Not only Turkey but also all Muslim countries need to spend an effort to find a solution to this human tragedy. Since we are Muslims, we must help the people in need. These people are forced to leave their country, because in Afghanistan, there is a war. Thus, people are forced to come to Turkey to save their lives and build a future for their children. Therefore, we should adopt them and apply integration policies. For instance, if they do not know Turkish language, we should open language courses to help them as a public.” (P48, Personal interview: August 2019).

“These people migrate to Turkey because they are forced by the conditions in Afghanistan. They escaped the violence, conflicts, and war. All of them have families, and they think about the futures of their children. In Afghanistan, there is no future. They try to stay alive in Sivas. They work in jobs that our citizens do not prefer to work so that they can provide for their families. In Afghanistan, there is a possibility of not being able to come home once gone, but there is hope for them in Sivas. Hope of survival. Hope of providing a future for their children.” (P26, Personal interview: June 2019).

Overall, in Sivas, it can be understood that political integration is mainly understood as being ruled by Afghans. Therefore, majority of them are against political integration, and they advocate national sovereignty. They are opposed to seeing anyone in the administration who is out of Turkish identity. They fear possible disintegration of Turkish territories. They also have fears of degeneration of culture. In addition, they fear the possibility that Afghan asylum seekers become terrorists. At that point, the majority of local people suggest the state-centric approach in managing the asylum seekers issue to protect their own interests. According to Birdiřli (2011), the threat perceptions depend on one's own beliefs on what values need protection. At that point, the field work shows that national identity and unity are perceived as two of the most important values that need protection. That is why majority of the interviewees perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat, and suggest a state-centric approach to manage the issue.

5.2.4. Security

Security is a complex phenomenon which is generally defined as living in safety without being harmed by any factors (Kaypak, 2016), although there is no accepted focus in terms of individual, national, or international levels. Historically, it is defined in the global literature from a militaristic perspective in terms of survival of the state (Baylis, 2008). However, with globalization, this concept was broadened by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde (1998) as a new concept of "securitization", and they added the environmental, economic, political, and social security to the militaristic security. In Turkey, on the other hand, security has been examined on a large scale in both Turkish legislation and academic studies. As it is stated by Aydın and Ereker (2014), security is perceived in Turkey as a protection from threats to sustain the existence of the society, protect the territorial integrity, and maintain the national identity. As it can be understood from the definition, this concept emerged in relation to national defense and security.

National security, on the other hand, was introduced in 1961 with the establishment of National Security Council (NSC) and it was defined in the Article 3 of the Regulation on General Secretariat of the NSC (Urhan & Çelik, 2010) as:

...to be able to withstand all kinds of attacks, defeatist attempts, natural disasters and big fires, both externally and internally. It is the full use of all national powers,

efforts and activities to protect and maintain the state authority and to prevail in a war.

Similar to global literature, the definition of security underwent some changes in Turkey as well. As it can be seen in the Article 2(a) of NSC and NSC Council General Secretariat Law (1983) security was redefined as:

The protection of the constitutional order of the state, its national existence, integrity, all interests including political, social, cultural, and economic, and moral law in the international arena against all kinds of external and internal threats³.

Here, considering the review of global literature, displaced people may be perceived as a threat to the national security of Turkey and Sivas. For instance, from the beginning of the 20th century, in Europe, international migration started to be perceived as a threat to socio-cultural, economic, and political structures of nation states (Kaya A., 2016). After the recession caused by the 1970 Opec Petroleum Crisis, immigrants started to be perceived as people who cause unemployment, and Europeans developed a fear that they would lose their jobs to the displaced people, who were hired as guest migrant workers to revive the European economy, and that they would not return to their countries of origin (Koçak & Gündüz, 2017). Also, they were perceived as criminal groups (Emmers, 2013). This perception became even stronger in the 21st century due to the September 11 attacks, as well as attacks on Madrid, London, Brussels, Paris (Zenginoğlu, 2019).

The September 11 attacks are so crucial in terms of terrorism that it appeared as the the biggest security problem at the global level and changed the perception of security (Buzan, 2008). With this transformation, displaced people started to be perceived as a threat for national security. The attacks on Madrid, London, Brussels, and other capital cities of the European countries made this perception stronger as the actors of these attacks were immigrants. Here, racism, xenophobia, nationalism, and economic concerns also played important roles. For instance, in London, the anti-immigrant policies are

³ This law was changed in 2003 with the Cabinet Decision and was published in the Legal Gazette in 2004 without any changes to the definition in the Article 2(a). Therefore, the definition of national security in the article is still valid.

based on racism, because the displaced people are perceived as different in terms of their ethnicities, religious beliefs, languages, levels of education, and so on. These differences make the integration of these displaced people to society more difficult. In addition, the reason for unemployment is perceived to be caused by immigrants. They believe that if immigrants have more, local people will have less. Another example is that the Spanish people perceive Muslim immigrants coming from North Africa as people with terrorist connections and therefore, security policies are applied against those immigrants (Kesici, 2016).

Although there is no common security policy of the EU to protect from the displaced people, generally, the European states apply policies to protect their public orders and domestic stabilities from the threats caused by these people. As it is seen in the report by Commission of the European Communities (2005), the influx of immigrants is presumed to be continued and the European countries need a common policy to build a collective security from this influx which causes criminal activities and other problems. In other words, with this report, EU countries were called for creating common security policies against irregular immigrants, and applying effective return policies. Also, it called for these countries to fight human trafficking which is another problem related to irregular migration. Here, according to Huysmans (2000), the following factors appeared as the reasons of this protection: cultural security in relation to demand for protection of European identity and living in culturally homogeneous society; prevention from security related problems such as crime, riots, terrorism and drug trafficking; protecting the economy from the immigrants who are illegal, cheaper and more flexible labor force. In terms of economic problems, as it is stated by Yardim (2017), the immigrants are also perceived as an issue because their fertility rates are relatively more than the Europeans and this situation causes a rise in unemployment rates.

Here, it can be seen that as displaced people are perceived negatively, they are not welcomed by all European countries and cities. In this context, the thesis investigated how local people of Sivas perceive Afghan asylum seekers in the context of national security. At that point, the interviewees were asked whether they experienced any personal problems with the Afghan asylum seekers, whether their relatives experienced

any problems with them, and whether they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat in any way.

The data obtained from the interviews show that the majority of the interviewees did not experience any problems with Afghan asylum seekers themselves. Although it represents the minority, two artisans and an officer experienced personal problems with Afghan asylum seekers:

“I had to fight an Afghan asylum seeker who spit in front of my store. In addition to disturbing our ladies, bikers, and skaters, in particular, it disturbs us, the artisans.” (P22, Personal interview: June 2019).

“They verbally abused our neighbors’ daughters. Therefore, we fought them. In addition, Afghan children stole our shoes, and bicycles.” (P44, Personal interview: August 2019).

“There is only one problem: “communication.” We do not speak a common language. It makes communication harder, and this situation leads to disagreements.” (P41, Personal interview: June 2019).

Although it might seem as though the interviewees consider Afghan asylum seekers harmless as the majority of them did not have any unpleasant experiences themselves, when they were asked about the experiences of their relatives, some of them stated problems related to social order:

“There are some Afghan asylum seekers who reside in one of my relative's apartments. Since Afghans spend time with their guests until late at night, the residents of the apartment complain about the noise. As Afghans and Turks do not speak the same language, they cannot communicate. This leads to misunderstandings and quarrels.” (P46, Personal interview: July 2019).

“I have witnessed some problems. They sell Qur’an, but if local people reject purchasing, they call their group members and try to sell them by frightening them. They become gangs.” (P10, Personal interview: August 2019).

“I do not know the reasons, but they always fight local people.” (P1, Personal interview: June 2019).

“They stole goods from one of the stores in Wholesalers’ Bazaar.” (P25, Personal interview: June 2019).

“Last winter, they stole the garage door which belonged to one of my friends. It was made of wood. I think they stole it to burn in the stove.” (P40, Personal interview: August 2019).

These findings are not peculiar to this context. In fact, there are various types of studies that have found a similar perception of threat to security regarding displaced people. For instance, a report conducted in Van, Kayseri, Erzurum, Gaziantep, İzmir, Kırklareli, and Ankara (ASAM, 2011) shows that local people have experienced some problems related to displaced people with reference to various issues such as fight, theft, fraud, fire, unethical way of living, and so on. In Van, for example, some local people stated that Afghan asylum seekers sell heroin, and fight each other while some others expressed Iraqi fraud Turkish children. In Kayseri, some local people pointed out “unethical ways of living” of the displaced people such as homosexuality, prostitution, and not paying their rents. In Erzurum, some local people perceive these people as rebellious. In Gaziantep, some local people think that the displaced people harm local customs and traditions. In Kırklareli, some local people asserted that Pakistani and Arab asylum seekers stole their products, and they destroyed the marriages. Another example is the study conducted by Ersoy and Ala (2019) in Osmaniye, which shows that some local people perceive the displaced people as a threat for security and social order due to their “intention to commit crimes.” In Sivas, many of these expressions can be observed regarding Afghan asylum seekers. However, expressions related to homosexuality and rebelliousness were not mentioned by the interviewees.

Although the number of interviewees who either experienced or witnessed issues related to security with Afghan asylum seekers is relatively low, when they were asked whether they perceived Afghan asylum seekers as a threat, the majority of the local people responded that they perceived Afghan asylum seekers as a threat in several ways. For

instance, many local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat to national economy:

“They harm our economy. They work as a cheap labor force and they cause the job opportunities to decrease.” (P31, Personal Interview: June 2019).

“They cause economic problems. They are an economic burden and they are parasitic. I am against the idea of having a large number of asylum seekers in the city. I believe that improving the quality of our own citizens’ life must be prioritized.” (P13, Personal Interview: June 2019, and P11, Personal Interview: July 2019).

“I think they cause problems in terms of job opportunities because they work as a cheap labor force Afghans work for 30 TL while our citizens work for 50 TL. This situation increases unemployment.” (P3, Personal Interview: July 2019, and P4, Personal Interview: June 2019).

Some other interviewees seem that they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat to public and national security regarding social order, and national unity and sovereignty:

“They are in economic troubles that cause security-oriented problems. They can do anything to feed themselves such as theft, pickpocketing, robbery. All of these crimes affect the society as a whole.” (P34, Personal interview: August 2019).

“They are a problem in terms of public security. We do not know who they are and what they are capable of doing. They might be a threat in the future.” (P12, Personal Interview: August 2019 and P8, Personal Interview: July 2019, and P34, Personal Interview: August 2019).

“They are a threat for our national security. They cause disruption in public services. They expect everything from the government. They know only two Turkish words: social assistance. They also exploit our emotions.” (P49, Personal Interview: June 2019; P15, Personal Interview: August 2019)

“I think they cause problems in terms of security. They are the minority now but, in the future, when their number is high enough, I believe that they will ask for privileges such as autonomy. I think that they are a threat for our national security and unity.” (P5, Personal Interview: August 2019).

Some interviewees seem that they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat for cultural security:

“We do not know these people. We are not familiar with their culture or habits. Who are these people? I think they have the potential to change our cultural unity.” (P12, Personal interview: August 2019).

“I think they are a threat for our cultural security. I expect bad habits from these people who escaped from their countries instead of fighting. Besides, their cultural and educational level are pretty different from us. These differences bear problems.” (P36, Personal Interview: July 2019).

“Their lifestyles are pretty different from ours. Even their perception of honor is different than ours. Due to their irregular lifestyle, they represent bad examples to our children. For example, they are out until late hours. My children want to go out because of them.” (P46, Personal Interview: July 2019; P50, Personal Interview: July 2019)

“I do not think that these people live in harmony with us socio-culturally. We are different from each other regarding the way of living, consumption, perspectives. I do not think these people will be homogenous. It is hard for them because of their own cultural habits and traditions.” (P47, Personal Interview: June 2019)

As the interviewees are not familiar with Afghan asylum seekers regarding their customs, traditions, cultures, and lifestyles, some of them perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat for their cultural unity. In fact, this finding corresponds to the Turkish literature regarding the perception of cultural degeneration, and as a consequence of this fear, exclusion of asylum seekers. While this exclusion sometimes appears on a psychological level, it can be turned into a physical level. For instance, Kahya (2014) studied this exclusion by examining Van province in Turkey. In this study, as an example

to the perception that displaced people cause harm to the social order, a case about some of the local people's fight with Iranian and Afghan asylum seekers was discussed (Kahya, 2014). Based on the data collected from the interviews it can be seen that in Sivas, similar problems arose and some local people fought with Afghan asylum seekers, as well.

In addition to these perceptions, some of the interviewees seem that they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat for health:

“I think Afghan asylum seekers are a threat for our national health and security. They work as a cheap labor force. This situation might be a potential threat for us since these people might do anything to fulfill their needs. Also, newcomers bring viruses that we are not familiar with. They may be dangerous; we do not know who they are. They might be insane or criminals. In addition, they do not obey the rules. They might want to create a new country for themselves in our lands.” (P16, Personal interview: July 2019).

Among the interviewees, the strongest perception that Afghan asylum seekers are a threat belongs to workers; female interviewees; and people who are aged 40 and above. Here, the following code appeared as the most frequently given response by the interviewees: “They are a threat to our security, because their younger people have aggressive manners and they steal.” On the other hand, unemployment, disharmony and exploitation of emotions appeared as other frequently mentioned traits related to Afghan asylum seekers. At that point, it can be asserted that the interviewees do not feel safe sharing their city with Afghan asylum seekers. On one hand, the majority of female interviewees perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who not only cause a feeling of insecurity but also cause cultural disharmony. On the other hand, the majority of older interviewees perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who disturb the society. Also, the majority of workers have the same perception, and they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who shrink job opportunities.

5.2.5. Syrians as a Factor Affecting the Perception of Afghan Asylum Seekers

Since the civil war broke out in Syria, many Syrians have been given shelter in Turkey and Sivas. At first, they were accepted as guests in line with the government's

open-door policy. However, as their duration of stay extended, the local people started to form the idea that Syrians would never return to their country. In other words, Syrians started to be perceived as permanent residents of Turkey. Besides, in time, their numbers have gradually increased as well (Çiftçi, 2018). Since 2014, Syrians have been given a legal status in Turkey and become people under temporary protection with the Directive on Temporary Protection. They have been provided with economic, cultural, and psychological support by both Turkish and international authorities. Afghans, on the other hand, have a different status. They have been given shelter in Turkey and some of them have settled in Sivas but they are allowed to stay in Turkey only until their legal status is determined by the government. In other words, they are expected to stay in Sivas for a limited time. At the end of this time, they will either be granted international protection or will be sent either to Afghanistan or a third country (Law on Foreigners and International Protection, 2013). During their stay, Afghan asylum seekers have also been provided with economic, cultural, and psychological support by both Turkish and international authorities, similar to Syrians.

It would be interesting to compare Afghan asylum seekers and Syrians from the perspective of local people as they are two of the most crowded groups of the displaced people settled in Turkey. However, the main objective of the thesis is not to discuss Syrians in detail but to understand whether the relatively newcomer Syrians affected the local people's perceptions of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers. While comparing these two groups, the literature in this field was utilized and academic studies were referred to as much as possible.

In this regard, at a most general level, the participants were asked which of these groups disturbed them the most: Syrian refugees or Afghan asylum seekers and why. None of the interviewees answered this question directly as Afghan asylum seekers, and it was found that the majority of the interviewees were disturbed only by the Syrians.

The most common responses for the question why they were disturbed by the Syrians were encoded as follows: "being an economic burden," "having unethical way of living such as prostitution and begging," "being psychopaths," "having no effort to reconstruct their country of origin," "living disharmoniously," "exploitation of emotions," "negative news on the media," and "being a potential threat."

“The numbers of Afghan asylum seekers are relatively lower than Syrians. In addition, they have a positive contribution to the national economy. We pay a Turkish shepherd 5,000 Turkish Liras per month in contrast to Afghan shepherds, to whom we pay 2,000 Turkish Liras per month. They revive the national economy. Therefore, Afghans do not disturb me.” (P33, Personal interview: July 2019).

“I am definitely disturbed by the Syrians. Instead of working, they are always begging. They are a burden to our economy. They exploit our local resources. In addition, on the media there is always negative news about Syrians, but Afghans contribute to our economy. They always work, even illegally. In addition, we have never seen any negative news about Afghans in the media.” (P2 and P34 Personal interviews: June 2019).

“Syrians are a burden to our national economy. They are used to always being fed by others. They do not pay for electricity or water. They are provided with everything they need by others. They are disrespectful and ugly people. In contrast, Afghans work in very difficult conditions, and they are similar to us in many ways.” (P31, Personal interview: June 2019).

“Syrian refugees are always begging. They are not honest. They exploit our emotions and religious beliefs.” (P38, Personal interview: August 2019).

These statements are not surprising because there are also similar findings in the various studies (Aktaş, & Gülçür, 2017; Budak et al, 2017; Koyuncu, 2018). For instance, in the study Syrian Barometer (SB)-2017, it can be seen that the Turkish people perceive Syrians as a threat to the national economy pointing out the perceptions of economic burden, and begging of Syrians (Erdoğan, 2017). In the study by Karataş (2015), the effects of the media on the issue can be seen. Its findings were obtained by reviewing the news on Syrians and it reflects that the media has such discourses as “fights between artisans and Syrians,” “crime types like prostitution, theft, extortion, begging,” “social discord,” “cultural differences,” “request to send Syrians.” Also, it illustrates a case that occurred in Gaziantep: “A Syrian refugee murdered the landlord.” In the study of Göktuna Yaylacı (2017), the effects of the media were explained concentrating on Syrians

and other displaced people like Iraqis, Iranians, and Africans. In this study, negative discourses of the media were illustrated by referring to “granting displaced people a privileged status,” “causing trouble,” and “political issues.” Moreover, this study demonstrates a case which occurred in Eskişehir: “Two African-oriented women who engaged in prostitution have syphilis.” Another illustrated case is “Welcome to Iraqi table: Iraqis opened a restaurant, and local people are shocked.”

These discourses of the media and such cases might strengthen the concerns of local people in Sivas. The effects of media are also seen in the study by Alp (2018) which shows that one of the local newspapers in Sivas published an article in which all Syrian refugees were accused of begging. Such news might be the reason why local people have negative attitudes towards the Syrians but not towards the Afghans. All these findings match up with and confirm this thesis’ findings.

In addition to economic perceptions and the role of media, some interviewees emphasized the differences in lifestyles between Afghans and Syrians:

“Syrian refugees have all kinds of evil. I am an officer in prison. The majority of the foreigners in jail are Syrians. They commit crimes such as stealing, drug trafficking, and sexual harassment. In contrast, the number of Afghans in jails is quite few. As they are more qualified than Syrians, they are more acceptable. (P19, Personal interview: June 2019).

“I was harassed by a Syrian. I noticed that I was being followed by them quite late. When I did, I started to scream and his friends surrounded me. Thanks to the local people, I was able to escape. Therefore, I hate them all, and I do not want to see them here.” (P13, Personal interview: June 2019).

“In comparison, Afghans are more friendly, polite and educated than Syrians. Due to the ongoing war, Syrians have psychological disorders. Thus, their attitudes are very disturbing. In addition, they are the lowest in the social stratum. They must be controlled in a planned way.” (P49, Personal interview: June 2019).

“I go mad when I see Syrians because of their lifestyles and because they disturb our people, they have low levels of morality, they steal and beg. Moreover, their

young men enjoy in Sivas while we fight for them in Syria. They molest our daughters. No, I cannot stand them.” (P35 and P39, Personal interview: August 2019).

“Syrians prefer to live in Sivas rather than struggle until the end of conflicts in Syria. They do not fight for Syrian independence, instead, they have picnic in Paşabahçe. As we are patriots, this indifference makes us uncomfortable.” (P7 and P8 Personal interviews: July 2019).

It can be seen that some of the interviewees pointed out their experiences and perception of Syrians’ features as a determinant factor in comparing the Afghans with the Syrians regarding security. It can also be seen that some of the interviewees mentioned their nationalistic beliefs. In fact, such kinds of opinions were also revealed in a variety of studies. For instance, the study by Sönmez and Adıgüzel (2017), one of the studies conducted in Gaziantep, demonstrates that Turkish people perceive Syrians as dangerous people who cause security-related problems through violence, theft, and smuggling. Another example is the study by Kaypak (2016), which shows that Syrians have led to overpopulation in Hatay. It is stated that the high population of Syrians has led to anxieties regarding security and crime such as human trafficking, prostitution, violence, and terrorism. All these findings match up with the interviewees’ perception in Sivas.

In addition to these perceptions, some of the interviewees compared the Afghans with the Syrians from the perspective of integration:

“Syrians are not integrated into local people in terms of daily habits and cultural activities. They exploit not only our environment but also our emotions. On the other hand, Afghans have already adapted to the city life and they work even illegally. They can interact with us by speaking Turkish.” (P28, Personal interview: June 2019).

It is seen that the perception of integration plays a key role in forming the local people’s perceptions regarding Afghan asylum seekers. As it can be understood from the interviews, the majority of interviewees believe that Afghan asylum seekers can integrate into the society but Syrians cannot. Similarly, SB-2017 claims that the majority of Turkish people do not think that they share cultural similarities with Syrians, and that

Syrians are a threat to the morality of the society through acts such as prostitution. Therefore, many people believe they cannot live in peace with the Syrians. The statements above show that Sivas is no exception. Last but not least, the perception of potential threat was highlighted by some interviewees:

“I am afraid of Syrian refugees, because I perceive them as a potential threat to our national sovereignty. I consider that they will invade some of our territories. I have some relatives who live in Hatay and Gaziantep. Their expressions about Syrians enhance my fear every single day.” (P47, Personal interview: June 2019).

Although the field work of the thesis shows that the majority of the interviewees are disturbed only by Syrians, some of them are disturbed by both the Syrians and the Afghans. According to their responses, the following codes are formed: “They have aggressive attitudes towards us,” “They are uneducated,” “We don’t know what kind of diseases they carry,” “Sivas is full of asylum seekers, I do not want to see anyone who has a different ethnicity.”

On the other hand, only four of the interviewees are not disturbed by either the Syrians or the Afghans. However, even for them, there is a condition; so long as they are harmless to us and our country, there is no problem.

It should be noted that it is seen from the data collected by the interviewees that the negative perceptions of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers turned into positive when Syrian refugees were mentioned. When the interviews were conducted, interviewees showed their anger towards Syrians and they stressed: “This thesis should have been only about Syrians so as to send them back.” Regarding their statements, it can be asserted that the majority of the interviewees’ perception regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers is formed by not only features of Afghan asylum seekers but also attitudes of Syrians. The majority of the interviewees were totally unable to tolerate Syrians. Specifically, the fact that Syrian refugees beg for money while Afghan asylum seekers earn money is the most significant factor affecting the perception of local people.

In sum, from the interview findings, it is seen that the followings appeared as the most frequently given statements by the interviewees:

- I did not experience any personal problem with Afghan asylum seekers
- Afghan asylum seekers do not exploit the economic resources of Sivas because Sivas has no economic resources to exploit.
- It is okay for me if my children get education with Afghan asylum seekers at the same school
- I would not prefer marrying to an Afghan asylum seeker
- I am against Afghan asylum seekers to be granted Turkish citizenship
- I am more disturbed by Syrian refugees than Afghan asylum seekers
- Turkey should stop sending Afghan asylum seekers to Sivas
- Afghan asylum seekers should return to Afghanistan

Here, it should be clear that although interviewees did not experience any personal problems with Afghan asylum seekers, they still have concerns related to Afghan asylum seekers due to the experiences of their relatives, and the perception of potential threat. Also, although their perception regarding Afghan asylum seekers turn into positive when the Syrians were mentioned, they are still against Afghan asylum seekers to be settled in Sivas and they want Afghan asylum seekers to return to Afghanistan. Here, it can be asserted that Afghan asylum seekers are not welcomed by the majority of the interviewees.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this section, first of all, it will be discussed that the theoretical explanations of statistically significant relationships between the groups and the questions. After that following questions will be discussed considering the analysis of survey and interviews findings:

- What can be seen in Sivas about Afghan asylum seekers from the perception of local people?
- How has the arrival of Syrian refugees impacted the perception of Afghan asylum seekers?
- What are the contradictions in the survey and interviews findings?

Finally, the contributions of the thesis to the literature will be illustrated, and concluding remarks as well as recommendations will be provided.

6.1. EXPLANATION OF THE STATISTICAL TESTS WITHIN THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Within the scope of this thesis, it was tried to understand the perceptions of the local people regarding Afghan asylum seekers. In this context, data was gathered from the field by benefitting from the mixed type of research methodology and found that according to the statistical tests, the survey findings show that differences in perceptions between age groups and the occupation is mostly significantly different. These differences were interpreted by benefitting from the Grounded Theory.

The first example of these differences is derived from the majority of the survey participants who feel uncomfortable when encountering Afghan asylum seekers. According to the Fisher's Exact Test, there is a significant relationship between age and this feeling. The analysis of data shows that as the age of the participants got higher, their negative perceptions regarding Afghan asylum seekers increased. According to the Pearson Chi Square Test, on the other hand, there is a significant relationship between this feeling and occupation ($p < 0.05$). The analysis of data shows that as the income level

of participants decrease, negative perceptions concerning Afghan asylum seekers increase. These findings gathered from the survey were further analyzed through the interviews and literature as a suggestion of the GT.

First of all, it is needed to analyze the reasons of the field work participants' uncomfortable feelings. Data obtained from the survey demonstrate the reasons why majority of the survey participants felt uncomfortable in relation to security-oriented, economic and socio-cultural concerns. Also, data obtained from the interviews supplied detailed information on these concerns. For instance, some interviewees expressed negative economic and social impacts for the city and the country such as damaging the national economy, and disturbing the society in terms of security, while some cited that they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as "creepy" because of their "strange language," "their habit of walking on the street in crowded groups," and their "bad smell."

Moreover, based on the literature, it can be seen that feeling of uncomfortable is not peculiar to this context. There are various studies which have found similar perception in relation to security-oriented, economic, and socio-cultural concerns (Yaşar, 2014; Tunç, 2015; Sandal, Hançerkıran, & Tıraş, 2016; Topkaya & Akdağ, 2016; Özdemir, 2017; Paksoy & Şentöregil, 2018). For instance, regarding security-oriented perception it was found that Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan asylum seekers/refugees are mostly perceived as perpetrators of criminal activities such as theft, extortion, batter, wound, kidnap, smuggling, terror, molestation, rape, murder and drug trade (ASAM, 2011; Akgül, Kaptı, & Demir, 2015; Güney & Konak, 2016; Kahraman & Kahya Nizam, 2016; Budak et al., 2017; Saçan, Cizdan, & Tabak, 2017; Seçkin & Seki, 2017; Ekici, 2019). Regarding economic concerns, it was found that hosting a huge number of Syrian refugees harm the national economy due to financial assistance provided to them and decreasing income. In addition, many of them have an anxiety that Syrians and other displaced people would take their jobs and they would become jobless (Cengiz, 2015; Navruz, 2015; Erdoğan, 2017; Eşigül et al., 2017). Regarding socio-cultural concerns, it was found that African-oriented and Syrian asylum seekers/refugees are perceived as a threat for society regarding cultural harmony as they are strangers and have different kinds of ethnicities, languages, customs and traditions. These people are also perceived as a threat to the society regarding the social structure. For instance, Syrian women are perceived as a

threat for their marriage because of their potential of being second wives, causing divorces, or prostitution (Kahya, 2014; Kartal & Başçı, 2014; Akkoyunlu Ertan & Ertan, 2017; Kaya M., 2017; Küçükşen, 2017; Ünal & Doğan, 2020). It should be emphasized that within the scope of this thesis, some of these factors have a role in explaining these findings in Sivas regarding Afghan asylum seekers. However, expressions which are “creepy” and “bad smell” regarding Afghan asylum seekers were not found in the literature. Therefore, thanks to the GT that it can be revealed that perception of “creepy” and “bad smell” are peculiar to this context.

Secondly, it is needed to be explain the relationship between this negative feeling and age. In fact, based on the literature, this relationship is not peculiar to this context. There are many studies that found a similar relationship (Ankaralı et al., 2017; Erdoğan, 2017; Ersoy Quadir & Kabaklı Çimen, 2018; Özyürek, Kapçı, & Yılandı, 2019). While these studies usually explain this finding with reference to various issues such as the general difference in ideological orientations between different generations and age groups, the higher level of optimism among the younger people, and rising conservatism among the older, this thesis revealed that increasing conservatism among the older and expectations of age groups play important roles in explaining this finding.

Thirdly, it is needed to be explain the relationship between this negative feeling and negative perceptions concerning Afghan asylum seekers which increase as the income level of participants decrease. Based on the data gathered from the interviews, workers and unemployed people are the groups who are directly affected by the economic consequences of Afghan asylum seekers’ settlement in their cities. Workers seem to feel that their jobs are under attack by Afghan asylum seekers who have a potential threat to gain their jobs by working as a cheap labor force. Unemployed people perceive Afghan asylum seekers who had gained business opportunities and got positions which should have belonged to them. Also, socio-economic assistance provided to Afghan asylum seekers may make these groups uncomfortable. They might think the transfer of socio-economic aids to Afghan asylum seekers is unfair, because if the Afghans were not settled to Sivas, the assistance would have been supplied to them. On the other hand, accountants and engineers are two groups who felt less uncomfortable when encountering Afghan asylum seekers. As they did not need socio-economic assistance, the aids supplied to

Afghan asylum seekers do not made them uncomfortable. Therefore, it can be argued that a high level of income might result in less discomfort. However, this finding is not peculiar to this context. In fact, many studies conducted in several cities of Turkey found a similar relationship among people especially people who have a low level of income (Boyraz, 2015; Orhan & Senyücel Gündoğar, 2015; Budak et al., 2017; Taştan, Haklı & Osmanoğlu 2017; Bakiroğlu, Artar and İzmir, 2018; TÜRKSAM, 2018; Çalışkan, 2019). Similar to the field work findings, these studies also explain this finding with reference to the issues such as prejudices, working as a cheap labor force, increasing unemployment rate, unfair competition, no contribution to increasing income, and exploitation of economic resources.

The second example of these differences is derived from the majority of the survey participants who have a perception that Afghan asylum seekers cause harm to Sivas. According to the Pearson Chi Square Test, there is a significant relationship between this finding and age ($p < 0.05$). The analysis of data shows that as the age gets higher, this perception gets stronger. According to the Pearson Chi Square Test, there is also a significant relation between this perception and occupation ($p < 0.05$). The analysis of data shows that as the income level of the fieldwork participants' decreases, negative perceptions regarding Afghan asylum seekers increase.

Firstly, it is needed to be explain the relationship between this negative perception and age. In fact, based on the analysis of the data gathered from the interviews, it can be asserted that in Sivas, the older people are more concerned with threats regarding Afghan asylum seekers. However, similar to the relationship between age and the feeling of uncomfortable, this relationship is not peculiar to this context, either. There are many studies (Erdoğan, 2017; Ersoy Quadir & Kabaklı Çimen, 2018) that found a similar relationship, as well.

Secondly, it is needed to be explain the relationship between this negative perception and occupation. In fact, based on the analysis of the data gathered from the interviews it can be seen that Afghan asylum seekers are perceived as people who caused harm to social equilibrium, which is basically related to the economy, mostly by the unemployed people, students, workers and artisans. To illustrate:

- Socio-financial aids provided for Afghan asylum seekers are perceived as unfair by unemployed people. Here, this perception appears: if Afghan asylum seekers did not live in Sivas, unemployed people would have more aid from the governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- Working as a cheap labor force of Afghan asylum seekers is perceived as a cause of decreasing business opportunities by students. Here, this perception appears: if Afghan asylum seekers did not work as a cheap labor force, students would benefit from the business opportunities.
- Working as a cheap labor force of Afghan asylum seekers is also perceived as an unfair competition by workers and private sector staff. Here, these two perceptions appear: Afghan asylum seekers will take the jobs from local people, and they will increase the unemployment rate.
- The fear of artisans that Afghan asylum seekers will open stores and compete with local people creates a perception that Afghan asylum seekers would decrease the income of artisans.

Based on the literature, this finding is not peculiar to Sivas or Afghan asylum seekers. In fact, many studies conducted in several parts of Turkey found similar perceptions, as well. In addition to the factors listed above, this perception is also explained in other studies in relation to illegal employment, decreasing wage of workers, establishing an illegal business and causing tax loss, increasing of house rent, inflation and so on (Orhan & Senyücel Gündoğar, 2015; Budak et al., 2017; Salur & Erdoğan, 2017; Bakiroğlu, Artar and İzmir, 2018; Kutlu, 2019; Şen, & Şimşek, 2019).

The third example of these differences is derived from the majority of the survey participants who have a perception that Afghan asylum seekers should be financially assisted by both personally and governmentally. According to the Pearson Chi Square Test, there is a significant relation between these two perceptions and occupation ($p < 0.05$). The analysis of data shows that as the economic situation and education level of the field work participants improves, the idea of helping Afghan asylum seekers gets stronger. Here, accountants and engineers, had a positive perception regarding helping Afghan asylum seekers. However, workers, and unemployed people had a negative perception of helping them.

Here, it is needed to be explain the relationship between this positive perception and occupation. In fact, based on the analysis of the data gathered from the interviews, it can be asserted that in Sivas, while workers and unemployed people appeared as having the strongest negative perception of helping Afghan asylum seekers due to economic reasons as it mentioned above, academics, accountants and engineers appeared as having the strongest positive perception regarding helping Afghan asylum seekers. While workers and unemployed people pointed out that prioritizing the local community is a necessity, the others pointed out the poor appearances of Afghan asylum seekers, insufficient aids supplied to them, their work illegally at low wages. Also, some of them seem feel terrible if they could not help Afghan asylum seekers. In addition, academics perceive Afghan asylum seekers having right to live in good conditions. They point out the local people's helpful features and advocate the financial assistance to be provided for Afghan asylum seekers. Accountants and engineers, on the other hand, have little exposure to Afghan asylum seekers because of their business areas. They cannot perceive Afghan asylum seekers as competitors like workers, or as people shrinking their job opportunities as their occupations require a certain level of education and are obtained after certain exams.

However, the relationship between these perceptions and occupations is not peculiar to this context as there are many studies that have found similar findings regarding the other displaced people. For instance, in the report of ASAM (2011) it is seen that the majority of the participants said they would be glad to support the governmental institutions that provide financial aid to displaced people both materially and spiritually. In addition, it can be seen in the study of Harunoğulları and Agcadağ Çelik (2019) that the majority of local people had already aided displaced people. Here, the reasons are explained referring to various attributions regarding displaced people such as guests, miserable, poor, victims of war and regarding local people such as benevolence to human tragedies. These expressions were also seen from the analysis of the interviewees.

Subsequent example is derived from the majority of the survey participants who have a perception that Afghan asylum seekers should not be allowed to work legally in Sivas. According to the Pearson Chi-Square Test, there is a significant relation between

the age and this question ($p < 0.05$). Based on the data analysis, it is seen that younger people and middle-aged people have the strongest perceptions. In terms of occupation, considering the Fisher's Exact Test, there is a significant relation between occupation and this question. Based on the data analysis, it can be argued that as the amount of income decreases, the perception that Afghan asylum seekers should not be allowed to work legally gets stronger.

Firstly, it is needed to be explain that this perception is not peculiar to this context since there are many studies that found a similar relationship. For instance, Harunoğulları and Agcadağ Çelik (2019) explain this finding with reference to various issues such as cheap labor force, rivalry between local people and asylum seekers, and increasing unemployment rate. As it can be seen in the study of Cengiz (2015), displaced people working as a cheap labour force are attractive to local artisans in Kilis. By employing them instead of the local people, the artisans could cut down on the payments made to the workers but it causes a rise in the unemployment rates. Moreover, as it can be seen in the report by Orhan (2014), working as a cheap labor force increases the unemployment in the cities of Hatay, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa. That is because, as Esses et al. (1998) asserts, local people perceive displaced people as a cause of decreasing national resources and they desire to eliminate this competition. Many of these perceptions can be observed for Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas. For this reason, they are against the idea that Afghan asylum seekers should be allowed to work legally.

Secondly, it is needed to be explain the relationship between this perception and age. Based on the field work, it is seen that this finding is not peculiar to Sivas and Afghan asylum seekers because various studies also found this relation, and explained it addressing several issues such as economic concerns like fear of unemployment, fear of increasing unemployment rate, fear of unfair competition, fear of shrinking business opportunities and fear of the possibility that displaced people would be free of taxes; social concerns like fear of demolishing social equilibrium; and concerns about future (Erdoğan, 2017; TÜRSAM, 2018 Şen & Şimsek, 2019). Many of these issues can be observed in Sivas regarding Afghan asylum seekers. In fact, these age groups are active in business and their socio-economic concerns may lead them to perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a rival who would shrink the opportunities in the labor market. Due to the

inadequate economic resources in Sivas, local people may also feel pessimistic about their future. Therefore, these people are strongly against legal permission given to Afghan asylum seekers for working.

Thirdly, it is needed to be explain the relationship between this perception and occupation. Based on the field work, it is seen that all occupation groups were against the idea of giving permission to Afghan asylum seekers to work legally but workers and artisans had the strongest perception. This relationship, namely as the amount of income decreases, the perception that Afghan asylum seekers should not be allowed to work legally gets stronger, is not peculiar to Sivas. It was also found in many other studies with reference to Syrian refugees (Erdoğan, 2017; Taş & Tekkanat, 2018). In Sivas, this perception can be seen for Afghan asylum seekers. The main reason behind this perception can be derived from the anxiety of losing their jobs to displaced people. The reason for artisans to have a negative perception regarding Afghan asylum seekers' working legally might be derived from the anxiety of decreasing their income. In fact, though Afghan asylum seekers currently have no right to open their own stores or work legally in Sivas, local artisans might have this anxiety in case Afghan asylum seekers have this right in the future.

The final example is derived from the perception of many survey participants that Afghan asylum seekers do not live in only camps without joining the society. Considering the Pearson Chi-Square Test, there is a significant relation between occupation and this question ($p < 0.05$), and only artisans are against this view. Based on the data collected from the field work, it can be seen that the previously mentioned concerns of artisans, namely the fear of unfair competition and fear of decreasing level of income, triggered to the artisans to have this perception. This finding might be peculiar to this context, because there is no study found which try to find an answer to this question regarding Afghan asylum seekers. In fact, this question was asked to the participants within the scope of the thesis because it was intended to compare the perceptions of the local people regarding the Afghans and the Syrians. After the field work findings and review of the literature, it was found that, Afghan asylum seekers are welcomed in Turkey unlike Syrian refugees although both groups represent different kinds of ethnicities, culture, lifestyles and world views. In fact, SB-2017 shows that many Turkish people think that Syrian refugees should

live only in secure zone or camps while majority of the participants in Sivas do not support this view regarding Afghan asylum seekers. However, majority of them support that Syrians should live only in camps or return back.

6.2. A GENERAL SUMMARY ON AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS IN SIVAS

In this thesis, it can be seen that local people have socio-cultural, economic, political and security-oriented concerns regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers. In relation to the socio-cultural concerns, language barrier, level of education, cultural differences, friendship, and marriage appeared as determining factors of the integration processes although many local people support engaging in social relations with Afghan asylum seekers. Due to the language barrier, local people cannot communicate directly with Afghan asylum seekers. This leads to unqualified relationships between local people and Afghan asylum seekers. Though some local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers as relatives because of historical background, the majority of local people do not accept Afghan asylum seekers as one of them. Level of education, on the other hand, is also a determining factor that shapes the perception of the integration processes. Local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who have low levels of education, and therefore, they look down on Afghan asylum seekers to communicate. In addition, the reluctance of many local people to learn different cultures closes the gate of communication or social relations. The differences in language, culture and level of education are perceived by the majority of local people as problems that cause cultural disharmony.

In fact, Afghan asylum seekers can integrate into society by taking advantage of education and language courses applied to them. Almost none of the field work participants are against the education of Afghan children. On the contrary, they support that education would be a tool of integration as a result of the transfer of Turkish language and values from Afghan children to their parents. Based on the data gather from the field, Afghan children can learn Turkish language quickly. The language courses, on the other hand, can be benefitted from all Afghan asylum seekers. However, it is observed that there are two barriers to benefiting from this training. One of them is the fact that the duration of Afghan asylum seekers' stay in Sivas is ambiguous. Therefore, Afghan

asylum seekers who desire to be settled to a third country, may not be eager to participate in the courses. Another one is the perception of temporariness. Most local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who stay temporarily in Sivas. In other words, Afghan asylum seekers will return to Afghanistan when the time comes. Therefore, they might not act inclusively towards Afghan asylum seekers. However, there are some local people who support the integration of Afghan asylum seekers to the society. They are eager to be a friend of Afghan asylum seekers so as to teach their language and traditions to them. However, what they support is a one-way integration. When it comes to trying to adopt Afghan asylum seekers' language and culture, local people are unsupportive as the majority of them believe that it would disrupt their own language and culture. They believe that the Turkish identity is very important and they are against being integrated with Afghan asylum seekers in ways such as marriage which would result in degeneration in the future generations. They believe that minorities should adapt themselves to the culture and traditions of the majority.

In relation to economic concerns, exploitation of local economic resources and economic burden appeared as a determining factor for economic perception of local people. On one hand, local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat to the national economy, and on the other hand, they feel sad when they see their misery. This finding is both seen in the survey and interviews. The transfer of financial aid to Afghan asylum seekers is perceived as the exploitation of the local economy. One of the reasons for this perception is that local people perceive Afghan asylum seekers as no poorer than the local people in need. Also, Afghan asylum seekers' working as a cheap labor force makes local people think that they seize job opportunities and cause the local people to become unemployed or poor. They claim that providing financial aid to Afghan asylum seekers instead of local people might cause social inequalities among people. Therefore, they are against giving legal work permits to Afghan asylum seekers. They do not want to share the job opportunities that are scarce, and they have fears that their existing jobs will be lost to Afghan asylum seekers. Considering these findings, it can be argued that Afghan asylum seekers are partly integrated into the business, and based on the data gathered from the field, this integration makes local people stressful. Here, it should be noted that there is a potential threat: if the economic balance gets worse, the local people can rise or protest against the Afghan asylum seekers. However, if the economic

conditions of the local people are well enough, they might accept Afghan asylum seekers to their society.

In relation to political concerns, governmental policies, citizenship, and state-centric approach to solve the asylum seeker issue appeared as determining factors. It was seen from the field work that the biggest problem caused in relation to Afghan asylum seekers is the mismanagement of the issues regarding displaced people. The findings of the interviews revealed that local people did not advocate the receiving of Afghan asylum seekers into Turkey but they believe that if the governmental authorities receive these people, they should provide socio-economic assistance to them. However, they are worried about their national security and future because of the insufficient aids supplied to Afghan asylum seekers. Moreover, the inadequate economic power of Afghan asylum seekers causes public concern. They perceive Afghan asylum seekers as potential criminals even though Afghan asylum seekers are perceived as good, hardworking, honest, friendly, and miserable by the majority. They are also afraid of the possibility that Afghan asylum seekers become citizens who would have a voice in determining the future of the country, which would damage their national sovereignty.

In relation to security-oriented concerns, it is seen that the majority of local people did not experience any problems with Afghan asylum seekers, and they believe that Afghan asylum seekers do not increase the crime rate in their city. However, the past experiences of their relatives have a big impact on the formation of the perception that Afghan asylum seekers might be a potential threat. They are also worried about their health. They are not sure if Afghan asylum seekers have had a disease before immigration or during immigration processes. Therefore, they do not want the government to settle Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas. The following factors also influence this demand: huge number of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas, insufficient economic resources of Sivas, cultural differences, and manipulation of local people's feelings by Afghan asylum seekers. That is because local people think that Afghan asylum seekers manipulate local people to receive more financial and social aids.

In relation to occupation, it is seen from the field work that workers, students, and unemployed people are the most dissatisfied groups while academics are the least dissatisfied group. The reasons for dissatisfaction of workers are related to the economy,

security, and integration. It is seen from the field work that workers perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat to national economy who damage the social equilibrium. In general, they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as dangerous and aggressive people who steal from them. Also, they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who do not live in harmony with socio-cultural life. They are disturbed by the transfer of local resources to Afghan asylums seekers. The reasons for dissatisfaction of students are also related to the economy, security, and integration. In general, students perceive Afghan asylum seekers as exploiters, potential threat to security, and people who damage cultural harmony. They are afraid of shrinking in business opportunities. Also, most of them prefer to isolate Afghan asylum seekers due to language barrier. The reasons for dissatisfaction of unemployed people appeared as a perception that Afghan asylum seekers benefit from job opportunities instead of them. Also, they feel that they are being treated unfairly as socio-economic aids are supplied to Afghan asylum seekers but not for them. Academics, on the other hand, feel less uncomfortable as they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as harmless, miserable, and people who have the right to live in good conditions. They strongly assert that Afghan asylum seekers have the right to live in good conditions. Also, they point out the local people's helpful features. Here, it can be stated that academics advocate to provide assistance for Afghan asylum seekers.

In terms of the future of Afghan asylum seekers, it is seen that almost all local people want Afghan asylum seekers to return to their country of origin. There are three reasons for that. The first one is that the vast majority of local people do not want foreigners in their cities except brain drain and tourists. They would like to live with people who are hardworking, productive and who do not threaten the security of Sivas. They desire to live more homogeneously rather than living with strangers. They want to regain the recognition they used to. They want to return to the times when they walked along the streets and encountered familiar people who greeted each other. They want to live feeling safer in their "small and beautiful city." They do not feel safe while living with Afghan asylum seekers who are "unknown" to them. Because of the desires of protecting national sovereignty and unity, many local people support the state-centric approach to manage the issue. The second one is derived from the view that "people are happy only if they live in their home." The third reason is based on the view that "Afghan asylum seekers want to go back, as well." "The return of Afghan asylum seekers will be

better for both our and their sake.” In fact, they pray for the conditions to get better in Afghanistan so that the Afghan asylum seekers can return to their homes.

There is an interesting finding that local people want to assist Afghan asylum seekers socially and financially, but they do not want Afghan asylum seekers to enjoy it. On the one hand, they want to punish Afghan asylum seekers because Afghan asylum seekers have fled to Turkey rather than defending their country, and on the other hand, they want to help Afghan asylum seekers so as to rescue them from their miserable status. As it can be seen clearly, most people are in a dilemma. They feel sad for Afghan asylum seekers’ stateless status but they have security-oriented concerns. They have a perception that Afghan asylum seekers will not defend Turkish interests in case of a necessity. They argue that “a person who does not protect the interests of his own country would not protect the interests of someone else's country either.” The reason for this perception is shaped by the observations of local people on 15th of July. They claim that while protesting the coup attempt on streets, they did not see any Afghan asylum seekers around. In addition, some local people demand to live with different ethnicities who come from more developed countries. Here, the reason is that the local people believe that only the people from more developed countries help them to develop their social skills. They perceive Afghan asylum seekers as under their socio-economic and educational level, and therefore, they want Afghan asylum seekers to adopt Turkish values instead of mutual interactions.

In fact, the local people’s concerns of integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers is similar to European countries which apply policies to protect their national unity and culture from the immigrants who are seen as a threat. However, the negative perception of local people that the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers is a threat to national security, politics, economy, culture, and future, changed when they were compared with Syrians.

6.3. ARRIVAL OF SYRIAN REFUGEES

Afghan asylum seekers and Syrian refugees living in Sivas bear some similarities. For instance, both groups are victims who had to flee their countries due to conflicts, and they have similar problematic areas in terms of integration (Erdoğan & Gönülağan, 2018).

Although there are people who are disturbed by each group, the majority of local people perceive Syrian refugees as more securitized than Afghan asylum seekers. During the interviews, the interviewees started to get angry and their tone of voice changed immediately when the Afghans are compared with the Syrians. They welcome Afghan asylum seekers more positively than Syrian refugees. They say “we have a kinship.” However, the emphasis on having a kinship was not expressed by many local people before the Syrians were mentioned. Also, local people stated that the Syrians were burdened to the national economy because of working as a cheap labor force and being exempt from tax, and that they caused the national economy to shrink. The argument of economic burden to the national economy was also expressed for Afghan asylum seekers. However, when Syrians were mentioned, the negative argument suddenly turned into positive. They claimed that Afghan asylum seekers’ working at lower wages was a contribution to the economy. The reasons for this turn can be derived from the following factors: The differences in legal status, the differences in living conditions regarding being under control, and the role of media.

The differences in legal status of each group is a factor in forming the perceptions of local people. To illustrate, Afghan asylum seekers are people who applied for international protection and are allowed to stay in Sivas temporarily and will be sent to Afghanistan or safe third countries when their legal status is determined. On the contrary, Syrians benefit from the temporary protection as a legal status. Therefore, their stay in Sivas is not temporary. Instead, they can stay in Sivas forever unless there is a change in their legal status in the future. Here, it can be asserted that one of the reasons why local people are more securitized towards the Syrians is because they are perceived as permanent while the Afghan asylum seekers are perceived as temporary.

Another factor is that Afghan asylum seekers are sent to satellite cities by state authorities. They live under governmental control. Syrian refugees, on the other hand, are scattered across the country because of their crowded population. They do not live under strict control like Afghan asylum seekers. This situation can be considered as a factor which impacts the perceptions of local people on Afghan asylum seekers’ integration processes positively.

Subsequent factor is the role of the media. On both media and social media, the negative discourse about Syrians can be observed. Considering the power of the media in shaping the perceptions of people, it is not surprising to see that most of the local people have a negative perception of Syrians. Afghan asylum seekers, on the other hand, do not appear in such negative discourses, which may be another reason why they are perceived more positively than Syrians.

In short, Syrians are perceived as a more securitized group and Afghan asylum seekers are perceived as a-securitized group when compared to Syrians. Therefore, as the more securitized group affects the perception of the other group, the perception of the Syrians turned the local people's negative perception of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers into positive.

6.4. CONTRADICTIONS

This section is very important as it compares the findings gathered from the mixed type of methodology. It questions whether findings obtained from qualitative methods can explain and verify the findings obtained from quantitative research methods. Here, associative and explanatory functions of this method appear. It also questions how findings obtained from qualitative methods deeply explain the findings gathered from quantitative methods, and how findings obtained from qualitative methods can be generalized to the quantitative method. Here, an exploratory function of the method appears (Creswell, 2017). Through this comparison, similarities and contradictions were illustrated to make a valid analysis.

From the field work, a general perception can be reached although there are few contradictions among the survey and interview findings. The first contradiction between these findings comes from the feeling of comfort when encountering Afghan asylum seekers. Survey findings illustrate that the majority of local people are disturbed by encountering Afghan asylum seekers. In contrast, interview findings show that only a minority of the interviewees report being uncomfortable by Afghan asylum seekers. Here, it should be noted that survey findings show that workers are the most dissatisfied groups when encountering Afghan asylum seekers due to disturbance created by the transfer of public resources to Afghan asylum seekers, and the damage Afghan asylum seekers

caused to the social equilibrium and cultural harmony. However, they appeared as a less dissatisfied group in the findings of interviewees while students appeared as the most uncomfortable group to encounter Afghan asylum seekers. Students in general perceive Afghan asylum seekers as exploiters, potential threat to security, and people who damage cultural harmony. When they were asked directly whether they feel uncomfortable to encounter Afghan asylum seekers, their response was affirmative. They asserted that they feel uncomfortable because they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who are aggressive, live in disharmony with society, harm social order and economy, and speak in different languages which makes the communication more difficult. They also argued that Afghan asylum seekers are granted privileged status and they are provided financial aid more than local people in need. Here, they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as an exploiter, because inadequate economic resources of society are transferred to them. They are strongly against this situation and they assert that giving priority to the local community is a necessity, otherwise, social equilibrium will be demolished. They demand that Afghan asylum seekers should not be settled in Sivas, because their number is so crowded that it would harm socio-economic life regarding increasing unemployment rates, being a cheap labor force and shrinking the living area. Therefore, they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people who must return to Afghanistan.

In the case of workers, it is seen that when the interviewees were directly asked whether they felt uncomfortable when encountering Afghan asylum seekers, their response was negative. They asserted that they felt comfortable because Afghan asylum seekers were human beings like us, they were hardworking and harmless. However, their answers to the following questions show that workers are not comfortable with neither encountering nor living with Afghan asylum seekers. They perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat to the economy and security. They blame Afghan asylum seekers for raising the unemployment rates, exploiting economic resources, and committing crimes like stealing. They demand from the government that Afghan asylum seekers are not settled in Sivas anymore because they do not want to live with Afghan asylum seekers due to shrinking living space and insufficient economic resources. They also demand that Afghan asylum seekers return to Afghanistan in order for local people to live in Sivas homogeneously. Here, it can be asserted that although workers seem to have a positive perception to feel comfortable regarding Afghan asylum seekers, they have negative

perceptions to live with them. These perceptions are derived from the other questions of the in-depth interviews.

In fact, the sample of survey and interviewees were determined as possible as similar. Each sample was represented by younger people most; men are crowded than women; and occupations are very close. Therefore, the possibility of sex, occupations or age groups' effect the results in a different way is quite low. However, there are many other factors that can be identified as reasons for this contradiction. The first one can be based on the participants' educational level or philosophy of life. As many short questions were answered in the survey quickly and the written options were chosen by the participants, this effect may not have appeared much, but it may have appeared during in-depth interviews.

The second one can be based on a social desirability bias, which refers to responding to questions in a more socially acceptable manner rather than reflecting the true thoughts in socially sensitive subjects (Grimm, 2010). Here, the interviewees may have answered the questions in a way that may be considered to be more humanistic and socially acceptable.

The third one can be based on differences in the number of survey participants and interviewees. For instance, among the survey participants there are 71 workers while among the interviewees there are only four workers. The survey reaches considerably more people than interviews. These groups might be more moderate-thinking than survey participants. The second one may be that these people hesitate to speak negatively during the interview and not express their thoughts openly. The survey participants, on the other hand, can write their view without hesitation because their personal information is not included in the survey.

On the other hand, this contradiction also may have appeared as a result of comparison between the Afghans and the Syrians, because during the interviews, almost all of the interviewees responded the questions by comparing Afghan asylum seekers to Syrian refugees. Majority of the interviewees perceived Syrians as a more securitized group among the displaced people. This perception led them to answer the questions considering Afghan asylum seekers who are more harmless than Syrians.

The second contradiction is related to friendship. Survey findings illustrate that the majority of the participants do not prefer to engage in social activities with Afghan asylum seekers due to the fact that they are dissatisfied to live with Afghan asylum seekers who do not live in harmony with the society. However, the interview findings demonstrate that the majority of interviewees are eager to be friends with Afghan asylum seekers and they also claim that they encourage their relatives to be friends with them as well. As it was argued above, the reason for this contradiction could be derived from the profile of participants. The interviewees might be more humanist, conscientious, or maybe they answered the questions that they thought to be more humanist. The reasons behind this attitude of local people might be having a common religion, supporting cosmopolitanism and humanism, characteristics of Afghan asylum seekers such as being good and honest, and helping Afghan asylum seekers to integrate into society. The incongruity between survey and interview findings can be also explained by the fear of being perceived as rude or cruel to share negative views. On the other hand, comparison of the Afghans with the Syrians once again plays an important role here. Therefore, the interview results regarding this question showed a more positive perception than the survey although negative perceptions of local people of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers could still be seen.

The third contradiction is related to the employment of Afghan asylum seekers. In this framework, while survey findings show that the majority of local people are against allowing Afghan asylum seekers to work legally, interview findings demonstrate that working with Afghan asylum seekers at the same workplace can be acceptable by the majority of local people. It should be noted that, although these two questions seem the same, they are different from each other as the first one refers to the allowance of legal working at macro level and the second one refers to feeling of comfort at a micro level. Here, it can be seen that the majority of local people are against the idea that Afghan asylum seekers are allowed to work legally because this right might result in economic issues such as increasing unemployment rates and decreasing profits. In fact, these results bring macro level issues, in other words, these results concern all people. However, local people can accept to work with Afghan asylum seekers to help their survival and to provide a chance for them to reach job opportunities if they are qualified. Here, the desire to improve the quality of businesses also plays an important role. In addition, acceptance

of working with Afghan asylum seekers can be a result of more liberal, libertarian, and humanist views.

6.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Considering the academic studies, it can be asserted that the rising number of Syrian refugees in Turkey led to the emergence of a new concept: the other displaced groups. This is an indicator that studies on displaced people are categorized as Syrians and others. This categorization, while highlighting Syrians, makes other groups invisible. Afghans take part in the “others” category.

Also, these studies mainly concentrate on the problematic areas derived from the cities where Syrians mostly live, and they recommend solving the problems. However, other cities such as Sivas in which Syrians, Afghans, and other displaced people live are not preferred to investigate. That is why there is a gap in the literature on the subject of Afghan asylum seekers’ integration processes into Sivas. At that point, the thesis examined this subject while conducting a field work, and illustrated the perception of local people of Afghan asylum seekers’ integration processes. It questioned the factors that affected the perception of local people. It found socio-cultural, economic, political, and security-oriented factors as determinant to shape local people’s perceptions. It also figured out the dramatic finding that Syrian refugees are also a factor which affects the local people’s perception of Afghan asylum seekers’ integration into society. With this finding, it revealed the local people’s perception of Syrian refugees to an extent, which has not been investigated in Sivas yet.

The importance of this thesis, therefore, depends on the attempt to investigate the perceptions of local people, to determine the factors affecting the perceptions, and to recommend solutions for the problems. The second importance of this is derived from its methodology and theoretical framework. Its methodology supplies a comprehensive understanding on the issue, while its theoretical framework supplies to analyze and interpret the data collected from the field. Nevertheless, the findings obtained from the thesis has restrictions: it reflects only the perception of the field work participants in the Central District of Sivas, and does not claim to reflect the views and perceptions of all local people in Sivas. Therefore, it supplies a way to further studies.

As the thesis explained, Afghan asylum seekers live in Sivas until their legal status is determined, in other words, they live in Sivas temporarily. During this process, they need to interact with local people. In this context, the thesis investigated the local people's perception of Afghan asylum seekers' integration processes. By using the GT, it was revealed that the field work findings corresponded to the definition that integration is the process of becoming an accepted part of society (Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx, 2016, p. 14). This definition shows that the local people can accept displaced people into their society, if they perceive these people as one of them. To determine the local people's perception regarding the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers, first of all it was needed to illustrate the perception of Afghan asylum seekers. While some of the field work participants define Afghan asylum seekers as miserable, honest and good people, some of them define Afghan asylum seekers as pretty different from themselves, strangers, economic burden, and a potential threat to national security, identity, sovereignty, unity, culture, and economy. Additionally, some of them perceive the Afghan asylum seekers as creepy and people having bad smell. Here, it should be emphasized that thanks to the GT, this thesis was able to reveal that the finding that the perceptions of “creepy” and “bad smell” were peculiar to this context, because in the literature such kinds of expressions were not found. However, it should be noted that when they compare the Afghans with the Syrians, these negative concepts turn into positive, and the Afghan asylum seekers are perceived as relatives, people who contribute to the economy, and people who are harmless. In fact, thanks to the GT, this thesis was able to reveal that this finding is also peculiar to this context because there is no study found asking this comparison. On the other hand, it can be asserted that many of the field work participants have not intend to build close relationship with Afghan asylum seekers, even though they support to be educated together, to work together and to be friends. Differences in language, culture, and lifestyles resulted in the emergence of the concept of “othering,” although they did not totally exclude Afghan asylum seekers from the society. To illustrate, the othering is apparently seen from the survey findings which pointed out the statement that Afghan asylum seekers cause disruption of the Turkish identity through marriages with 50.3%. From the interview findings, it is seen that majority of the interviewees are against marriage with Afghan asylum seekers. The reason for this perception is dependent on the participants' support of “one-way integration”

instead of mutual integration. They want Afghan asylum seekers to integrate into the society through learning Turkish language, culture and religious values, adopting themselves to living conditions of local people, and keeping away from the scarce job opportunities. These are important factors for being able to live in a peaceful environment. Here, thanks to the GT, this thesis was able to reveal that this finding is also peculiar to this context: the fact that, in Sivas, a vast majority of the field work participants perceive integration is a phenomenon which would be accomplished by adopting Afghan asylum seekers into the society. Also, dramatically, local people do not want Afghan asylum seekers to enjoy life while they integrate. That is because local people want Afghan asylum seekers to be punished due to the fact that they prefer to flee from their country instead of defending it.

The number of people who claim that the main issue related to Afghan asylum seekers is the failure of political management is quite high. There were people accusing the Turkish government of not taking adequate precautions on the issue of Afghan asylum seekers. However, the interesting thing is that policies applied by the government such as the right to work legally, right to education, financial aids, non-citizenship are supported by local people. At that point, it was wondered which policies are perceived as failure of management, and the answer was obtained from the interviews. According to the interviews, the field work participants think that neither Afghan asylum seekers nor other displaced people should have been received by Turkey. They argue that this decision is a determinant factor of failure of management. They support the political implementation towards Afghan asylum seekers because they think that after receiving, social and financial aids should be provided to Afghan asylum seekers. Otherwise, Afghan asylum seekers may become a threat for their national security.

Based on the findings derived from the field work, it can be asserted that there is a possibility regarding integration. Thanks to the GT, this thesis was able to reveal that the field work participants might support socio-cultural integration and economic integration, but they cannot support political integration. 74% of the local people prove it by stating that Afghan asylum seekers should not be granted Turkish citizenship. Political integration is understood as being ruled by Afghan asylum seekers because they believe that when these people are granted Turkish citizenship, they will obtain political rights

like voting for the elections and establishing a party. These rights are perceived as a threat for national sovereignty and unity by local people. In order to protect their national sovereignty, they are against political integration. In fact, they seem to support socio-cultural integration by education and friendship, but the reason behind this support seems to be to transfer Turkish language and culture to Afghan asylum seekers. Here, it should be highlighted that the socio-cultural integration needs to be one-directional because the participants refuse to marry Afghan asylum seekers, and they have a desire to protect their national identity, culture, and traditional values.

In the thesis, the GT supplies an explanation to the reason why local people support one-way integration. The first reason is that the participants are not welcome to interact with people from undeveloped countries. They know that Afghan asylum seekers are not considered as part of a brain drain who contribute to development of Sivas or Turkey. The second reason is that they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as people whose stay in Sivas is temporary. Therefore, they want Afghan asylum seekers to adopt their cultural norms and values during their stay to live in peace. However, it needs to be questioned whether the local people would be able to perceive Afghan asylum seekers as one of them if they adopted Turkish cultural norms and values. There are several people who strictly adhere to their national values, and specify that they do not want to live with people from other ethnicities. Will being able to speak Turkish or having a PhD degree be enough for the Afghan asylum seekers to be perceived as integrated?

In the thesis, by using the GT, it was revealed that the majority of the field work participants are more disturbed by Syrians, and their perception of Syrian refugees has an impact on the perceptions of Afghan asylum seekers' integration processes. In fact, the negative rhetorics specified for Afghan asylum seekers such as "they disturb society", "they do not know Turkish language", "they work as a cheap labor force", "they take our jobs from us", and "they live in disharmony" turn into positive ones when they are compared with Syrians. Due to the fact that Syrians are perceived as a more securitized group, when Afghan asylum seekers are compared with Syrians, the following rhetorics are specified for them: "they do not disturb society," "they are our relatives," "they have a contribution to our economy," "they live in harmony with us," and most importantly, "they do not beg like Syrians." Here, it is seen that working as a cheap labor force is

perceived as bad, begging is perceived as worse regarding economic burden. This situation leads to the perception that Afghan asylum seekers are better than Syrians. Here, it should be noted that more than half of the survey participants cited that Afghan asylum seekers should not only live in camps. This finding might be peculiar to this context in two respects. First, within the scope of the thesis, the field work shows that similarly to Syrian refugees, Afghan asylum seekers would not be welcomed in Turkey, participants said that Afghan asylum seekers should live in public areas with local people while they support the Syrians either to live in camps or return to their country of origin.

It was also revealed that workers and students are the two groups that are most negatively affected by Afghan asylum seekers. The first reason can be derived from the perception of rivalry. In fact, workers work daily, seasonal or permanent with low wages. This situation makes workers perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat to their economy, because they think that “Afghan asylum seekers have a possibility to take their jobs.” The second reason is based on the fear of losing socio-economic aids provided by official institutions or non-governmental organizations. The last reason is also related to aids. Workers think that aids provided to Afghan asylum seekers would be given to them if Afghan asylum seekers were not settled in Sivas. These economic concerns cause workers to feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, language barrier, economic damage and cultural disharmony appeared as the factors which affected students to perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a problem. Due to attendance of similar courses at universities, perception of language barrier and cultural disharmony might be derived from their observations. However, it should be emphasized that the fear of being unemployed is also perceived as a damage to the economy. Unemployed people are also seen as a negatively affected group, and they share the same concerns with workers. They characterize Afghan asylum seekers’ employment as an injustice. They think that if there is a job opportunity, unemployed local people should benefit from it first. Artisans appeared as the subsequently most disturbed group of people by Afghan asylum seekers due to the perception of rivalry, feeling insecure and language barrier. They have an anxiety that if Afghan asylum seekers are allowed to work legally, they will open stores and sell the products cheaper. This rivalry may be resulted in decreasing income of artisans. Also, they feel insecure because they perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a threat for social

order. In fact, Afghan asylum seekers' walking on the streets in crowded groups increases their dissatisfaction.

Academics, accountants, and engineers represent the less disturbed three groups. Academics assert that Afghan asylum seekers have the right to live in good conditions. Also, they point out the local people's helpful features. Here, it may be asserted that academics approach this situation from an educator's perspective. They believe in the right to education. Accountants and engineers, on the other hand, have little, if any exposure to Afghan asylum seekers because of their business areas and the apartments they live in. They cannot perceive Afghan asylum seekers as competitors like workers, or as people who are shrinking their job opportunities as their occupations require a certain level of education and are obtained after certain exams. They do not see any possibilities that Afghan asylum seekers can reach these jobs. Moreover, due to the fact that they earn more money, they live in rich neighborhoods where Afghan asylum seekers cannot afford to live. These reasons may explain why these groups are less disturbed by Afghan asylum seekers.

In addition, it was revealed that 68% of the survey participants want the governmental authorities to stop settlement of Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas due to "their crowded population," "Sivas' insufficient economic resources," and "demand for living in a homogenized environment." In addition, 68% of the survey participants want Afghan asylum seekers to return to Afghanistan. These two desires show that asylum seekers are not welcomed by the field work participants who feel insecure, concerned, and perturbed because of Afghan asylum seekers and they perceive them as a potential threat to national identity, security, unity, sovereignty, economy, health, and culture. For instance, one of the interviewees said:

"I think Afghan asylum seekers are a threat for our national economy, health and security. They work as a cheap labor force. This situation might be a potential threat for us since these people might do anything to fulfill their needs. Also, newcomers bring viruses that we are not familiar with. They may be dangerous; we do not know who they are. They might be insane or criminals. In addition, they do not obey the rules. They might want to create a new country for themselves in our lands." (P16, Personal interview: July 2019).

The negative experiences of the field work participants' relatives make this perception stronger, and cause local people to perceive Afghan asylum seekers as untrustworthy people. Moreover, as it is understood from the data obtained from the interviews, these apprehensions occasionally turn into reactions such as fight. *"They verbally abused our neighbors' daughters. Therefore, we fought them. In addition, Afghan children stole our shoes and bicycles."* (P44, Personal interview: August 2019). However, a vast majority of the participants do not think that Afghan asylum seekers increased the crime rate in their neighborhoods. In fact, this finding might be peculiar to Sivas and Afghan asylum seekers because generally it can be seen in the literature that many Turkish people think that displaced people cause increased crime rates (Memiş, 2015; Taştan, Haklı, & Osmanoğlu, 2017; Karasu, 2018; Kızmaz, 2018). Also, several studies show that the majority of them perceive displaced people as a potential threat to increase crime rates (ASAM, 2011; Orhan, 2014; Ünal, 2014; Khalaf & Ilgar, 2017). However, Afghan asylum seekers are not perceived as people who increased the crime rate in Sivas.

In sum, national values, cultural norms, economic concerns, feeling insecure, and Syrian refugees are determining factors of the local people's perceptions of the integration processes of Afghan asylum seekers. Once again, the concerns of local people are as follows: fear of cultural degeneration, losing jobs, disruption of Turkish identity, Afghan asylum seekers' taking part in politics, and economic damage caused by Afghan asylum seekers. All these factors can be seen in the studies prior to this thesis as well. However, it needs to be highlighted that the most interesting finding of the thesis is the issue of unemployment which demonstrated itself in the circle of migration, integration, and perceptions. It is a major problem in Sivas due to the limited job opportunities. In fact, if policies are made in order to eliminate the unemployment issue, Afghan asylum seekers might be welcomed by the local people. Unless precautions are taken by the authorities, the economic concerns may grow.

6.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Turkey has been hosting displaced people who suffered from conflicts in their countries of origin. The position of Turkey is not only related to hosting these people but also related to being a transit country. As the conflicts are ongoing around the world, the

international migration continues, and Turkey is affected by this human mobility (TÜRKSAM, 2018). Sivas is also affected by this mobility, as well. Therefore, it would be recommended that academic studies concentrating on migration, integration, and perception would be in the best interest of the policy makers as well as those migrants and refugees if academic studies could provide recommendations based on primary data.

In fact, the government has comprehended the importance of the issue of harmonization and started to give importance to this area. For instance, the LFIP advocates the harmonization process of displaced people in order to prepare them for their stay in Turkey and also their resettlement in a third country. However, as a case study, Sivas has demonstrated that this comprehension has not corresponded to the perception of the field work participations yet. The majority of the field work participants have negative perceptions and think that Afghan asylum seekers do not live in harmony with the society. There are some factors causing negative perceptions that are related to misinformation or lack of information among the public. The first factor is related to the aids. Majority of the field work participants do not know what the sources of financial aids are provided for the Afghan asylum seekers; which authorities supply financial aids; what the amount of these aids is; how often these aids are supplied; whether all Afghan asylum seekers benefit from these aids without any conditions, and so on. Majority of them think that the Turkish government provides financial aid to Afghan asylum seekers only from the state revenue. The second factor is related to working issues. Majority of local people think that Afghan asylum seekers cause a rise in the unemployment rate although they have no statistical data regarding the unemployment rate. When they see that Afghan asylum seekers work, they think that Afghan asylum seekers benefit from the business opportunities instead of local people. The third factor is related to crime. Many participants perceive Afghan asylum seekers as a potential threat who may commit crimes, although they do not perceive them as people who increased the crime rate. However, their perception depends on their prejudices rather than scientific data. Following factor is related to the Afghan asylum seekers' duration of stay. Majority of the participants have a perception that Afghan asylum seekers will stay in Sivas permanently, although their stay in Sivas is until their status is determined.

Such negative perceptions, in turn, not only impact the Afghan asylum seekers and their integration process negatively; but also, it complicates the policy-making context by politicizing the issue. Therefore, it would be recommended for the policy makers and public relations approach by informing the society through various channels concerning the policies towards the asylum seekers. In fact, unless policy makers and public relations inform the society, they may be exposed to misinformation and provocative information through social media. Here, it is assumed that having access to reliable information, which depends on the official institutions, may reduce these concerns of local people. When local people know the legal status and rights, and the institutions providing socio-economic assistance to Afghan asylum seekers, their perception might change in a positive way.

Therefore, it would be recommended that in order to achieve a successful integration, the society needs to be involved in these processes so that their perceptions can turn into positive. Here, as Ager and Strang (2008) stressed, connecting groups socially to each other, and diminishing structural barriers in terms of language and culture are ways of achieving successful integration. So as to achieve interactions between local people of Sivas and Afghan asylum seekers, ensure an empathetic environment, and turn the perceptions to positive, following kinds of activities may be organized: touristic and cultural city tours, culinary, music and movie festivals regarding Afghans and Turks, cultural activities that are related to the culture of Sivas and Afghanistan, and so on. During these activities, local people and Afghan asylum seekers can interact with each other and get to know their cultures, history and lifestyles. To eliminate prejudices and misinformation and connect the groups with each other, these activities may play crucial roles. Through these ways, local people may have a chance to know Afghan asylum seekers and Afghan asylum seekers may have a chance to know the local people in Sivas.

So as to diminish the language barrier, in Sivas, there are language courses provided to Afghan asylum seekers and other displaced people. However, based on the data gathered from the field, it can be asserted that there are some limitations such as the number of participants to open courses. Also, not all Afghan asylum seekers are aware of these courses. Therefore, it would be recommended that the PDMM in Sivas, the

municipality, the governorship and NGOs pursue an awareness policy towards Afghan asylum seekers to encourage them to participate in these courses.

In addition, by using the GT it was revealed that the difference in perceptions between age groups and occupation is significantly different. As the age gets older, the negative perceptions regarding Afghan asylum seekers, dissatisfaction about living with them, and the idea that they are not integrated into the society rises. Especially, people aged 40 and above are afraid of being culturally degenerated if they continue to live with Afghan asylum seekers. Also, as the incomes of the local people drop, these negative perceptions increase, as well. Here, workers, students, and unemployed people appeared as the most dissatisfied groups to live with Afghan asylum seekers. Working as a cheap labor force, unfair competition, fear of increasing unemployment rates, and fear of losing jobs to Afghan asylum seekers play crucial roles in determining these perceptions. Here, it would be recommended that in addition to the activities above, authorities can apply awareness policy towards these groups so as to reduce their negative perceptions and turn these perceptions to positive.

It should be emphasized that although these occupation groups, namely workers, students and unemployed people, are against Afghan asylum seekers to work in their cities, what they are against the most is Afghan asylum seekers' working as a cheap labor force and creating an unfair competition, which they believe would increase the unemployment rates. Therefore, it would be recommended that Afghan asylum seekers are allowed to work legally, which would prevent them from working as a cheap labor force and eliminate the unfair competition. This situation is also important to prevent potential threats regarding Afghan asylum seekers, as one of the most important factors for integration of Afghan asylum seekers to the society is to have a job. In order to fix the negative perceptions of the local people, these groups should be assured about their jobs that they will not be taken by Afghan asylum seekers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONCENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

Integration Process of Afghan Asylum Seekers in to Sivas (IPAAS)

IPAAS is an MA Thesis conducted by a master student from the Social Sciences University of Ankara. The thesis aims at measuring the perception of local people towards the IPAAS.

Its methodology includes analytical review of academic secondary sources on migration and statistical data analysis. It also includes primary data collection including quantitative questionnaires and detailed interviews with local people in Sivas.

The ultimate objective of IPAAS is to create a comprehensive and reliable empirical data source on the perception of local people on asylum seekers and also provide a unique study to the literature.

In this context, I would like to invite you to take part in an interview. It will take nearly half an hour and it is pretty confidential in terms of not including your name or signature. In order to obey the academic confidentiality, your interview will be categorized as Participant 1-2-3. Besides, your words will not be recorded if you hesitate. Only key points will be written down. Nevertheless, your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw during the interview if you so wish that I will destroy the data provided.

Your participation will be highly valuable for the thesis.

For further information contact: Research Assistant M. Derya CANPOLAT
(mderya.canpolat@gmail.com)

If you do wish to take part, please complete the attached consent form.

Thank you for your valuable contribution!

CONSENT FORM

MA THESIS

Integration Process of Afghan Asylum Seekers in to Sivas (IPAAS)

IPAAS is a MA Thesis is conducted by a master student from the Social Sciences University of Ankara. The thesis aims at measuring the perception of local people towards the IPAAS.

I have been invited to participate in the above-mentioned MA Thesis. I have also read the information letter. I understand that participation in the study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time. I also understand that information will be treated in confidence. Therefore, I give consent to participate in this study.

Place and Date

APPENDIX 2: CONCENT FORM FOR SURVEY

Integration Process of Afghan Asylum Seekers in to Sivas (IPAAS)

IPAAS is a MA Thesis is conducted by a master student from the Social Sciences University of Ankara. The thesis aims at measuring the perception of local people towards the IPAAS.

Its methodology includes analytical review of academic secondary sources on migration and statistical data analysis. It also includes primary data collection including quantitative questionnaires and detailed interviews with local people in Sivas.

The ultimate objective of IPAAS is to create a comprehensive and reliable empirical data source on the perception of local people on asylum seekers and also provide a unique study to the literature.

In this context, I would like to invite you to take part in survey. It will take almost 15 minutes and it is pretty confidential in terms of not including your name or signature. In order to obey the academic confidentiality your interview will be categorized as Participant 1-2-3. Nevertheless, your participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw during the survey if you so wish that I will destroy the data provided.

Your participation will be highly valuable for the thesis.

For further information contact: Research Assistant M. Derya CANPOLAT
(mderya.canpolat@gmail.com)

If you do wish to take part, please complete the attached consent form.

Thank you for your valuable contribution!

CONSENT FORM

MA THESIS

Integration Process of Afghan Asylum Seekers in to Sivas (IPAAS)

IPAAS is a MA Thesis is conducted by a master student from the Social Sciences University of Ankara. The thesis aims at measuring the perception of local people towards the IPAAS.

I have been invited to participate in the above-mentioned MA Thesis. I have also read the information letter. I understand that participation in the study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time. I also understand that information will be treated in confidence. Therefore, I give consent to participate in this study.

Place and Date

APPENDIX 3: SURVEY

The survey composes of two sections. In the first one, there are multiple choices questions. In the second one, there are questions that is required to be numbered from 1 to 5.

Before begining the survey, please specify your sex, age and occupation.

Sex	
Age	
Occupation	

SECTION ONE

Dear participants, please tick off the choices close to you from the questions below.

1. Do you feel uncomfortable when you encounter Afghan asylum seekers in yor daily lives?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. If so, why do you feel uncomfortable when you encounter Afghan asylum seekers?
 - a. I am worried about the future of Sivas and Turkey
 - b. I am disturbed by transfer of public resources to Afghan asylum seekers
 - c. I think Afghan asylum seekers are not integrated to the society
 - d. I'm worried about our security
 - e. I think Afghan asylum seekers damage the culture of Sivas
 - f. I think Afghan asylum seekers take advantage of business opportunities instead of us
 - g. Being unable to help Afghan asylum seekers makes me sad
 - h. Other_____

3. Are there any problems experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. What is the most important reason is to cause the problems experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas?
- a. Failure of managing the asylum seeker issue
 - b. Cultural disharmony
 - c. Afghan asylum seekers' uneducated status
 - d. Afghan asylum seekers are spoiled for social assistance
 - e. Afghan asylum seekers don't know the language
 - f. Afghan asylum seekers' insufficient economic power
 - g. Afghan asylum seekers are not hygienic
 - h. Other_____
5. What is the other important reason is to cause the problems experienced in relation to Afghan asylum seekers in Sivas?
- a. Failure of managing the asylum seeker issue
 - b. Cultural disharmony
 - c. Afghan asylum seekers' uneducated status
 - d. Afghan asylum seekers are spoiled for social assistance
 - e. Afghan asylum seekers don't know the language
 - f. Afghan asylum seekers' insufficient economic power
 - g. Afghan asylum seekers are not hygienic
 - h. Other_____
6. Do Afghan asylum seekers cause harm to Sivas?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
7. If so, how Afghan asylum seekers do harm to Sivas?
- a. Afghan asylum seekers harm social equilibrium
 - b. Afghan asylum seekers harm public security
 - c. Afghan asylum seekers harm local economy
 - d. Afghan asylum seekers harm local culture
 - e. Afghan asylum seekers harm public health by unfamiliar diseases
 - f. Afghan asylum seekers harm environment
 - g. Afghan asylum seekers lead to noise pollution
 - h. Other_____

SECTION TWO

Dear participants, please report to what extent you agree with the statements below in a scale from 1 to 5.

1- Totally Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neither Agree nor Disagree (NAND), 4- Agree, 5- Totally Agree

Statements	1- Totally Disagree	2- Disagree	3- NAND	4- Agree	5- Totally Agree
1- I am pleased to live with Afghan asylum seekers.					
2- Afghan asylum seekers live in harmony with the local people of Sivas.					
3- I would be glad if I engaged in social activities with Afghan asylum seekers					
4- Afghan asylum seekers are in an economically more difficult situation than the local people in need					
5- I would be glad if I helped Afghan asylum seekers financially					
6- Turkish government should provide financial assistance to Afghan asylum seekers in order to satisfy their basic needs					
7- International institutions and organizations should provide socio-economic assistance to Afghan asylum seekers in order to satisfy their basic needs					
8- Afghan asylum seekers should be allowed to work legally in Sivas					
9- The increase in the number of Afghan asylum seekers in my neighborhood increased the crime rate					
10- Afghan asylum seekers disrupt the Turkish identity through marriages					
11- Afghan asylum seekers should only live in camps without joining the local people					
12- Afghan asylum seekers should return to their country of origin					

The survey has finished.
Thank you for your valuable contribution!

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you encounter Afghan asylum seekers in your daily life?
2. Does it bother you to encounter Afghan asylum seekers? Please explain your reasons.
3. Would you like to be friends with Afghan asylum seekers? Please explain your reasons.
4. Would you like to encourage your relatives to be friends with Afghan asylum seekers? Please explain your reasons.
5. Does it bother you to know that your children are educated with Afghan asylum seeker at the same school? Please explain your reasons.
6. What do you think about marriage with an Afghan asylum seeker? Would you prefer to marry an Afghan asylum seeker? Would you allow your children to marry an Afghan asylum seeker? Please explain your reasons.
7. How would you categorize Afghan asylum seekers economically?
8. Do the economic aids provided for Afghan asylum seekers bother you? Please explain your reasons.
9. Do you think that Afghan asylum seekers get more supplies than the local people in need? Please explain your reasons.
10. Do you think that Afghan asylum seekers exploit the resources of Sivas Province? Please explain your reasons.
11. Does it bother you to work with Afghan asylum seekers at the same workplace? Please explain your reasons.
12. Do you think that the authorities take precautions for Afghan asylum seekers and solve their problems? Please explain your reasons.
13. Do you think that Afghan asylum seekers are granted by a privileged status? Please explain your reasons.
14. What do you think about the acceptance of Afghan asylum seekers to Sivas? Should the authorities continue to settle them in Sivas? Please explain your reasons.
15. Would you support granting Turkish citizenship to Afghan asylum seekers? Please explain your reasons.
16. Have you had any problems with any Afghan asylum seekers?
17. Have any of your relatives had any problems with any Afghan asylum seekers?
18. Do you think that Afghan asylum seekers constitute any threats to the local people? Please explain your reasons.
19. Would you support that Afghan asylum seekers leave Sivas and return to Afghanistan? Please explain your reasons.
20. Which group bothers you more: Syrians or Afghans? Please explain your reasons.
21. What is the correct approach to manage the asylum seeker issue?
22. Is there anything else you want to add?

The interview has finished.
Thank you for your valuable contribution!

CURRICULUM VITAE

MEDINE DERYA CANPOLAT

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date of birth : 05.01.1991

Hometown : SİVAS

Marital status : SINGLE

EDUCATION

10/10/2017– Social Sciences University of Ankara, Ankara
Institute of Social Sciences/ International Relations (MA)

10/09/2009–27/06/2014 Marmara University, İstanbul
Department of Political Sciences and International Relations

10/09/2017–29/07/2019 Anadolu University, Eskişehir
Justice School (college)

10/09/2012–15/02/2013 Warsaw University, Warsaw (Poland)
Erasmus Exchange Program

WORK EXPERIENCE

02/04/2018– Research Assistant at Cappadocia University, Nevşehir

15/09/2018– Project Assistant at Cappadocia University, Nevşehir
Mathematics Workshop Project
Think Tanks in Turkey and the World

11/02/2013–22/02/2013 Intern at Directorate for EU Affairs, Department of Project Implementation, Ankara

03/09/2012–21/09/2012 Intern at Turkey's National Agency, Lifelong Learning Program, Ankara

PERSONAL SKILLS

Social, Open minded, Hardworking, Responsible

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Office, Outlook, Computer Program for Statistical Analysis (SPSS IBM Statistics)

LANGUAGES

English (Advanced), Persian (Elementary), Russian (Beginning)