

Syrian Refugees in Duhok City: Socioeconomic and Sociocultural Integration of Refugees (Field study results)

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ABSTRACT

The conflict erupted in Syria in 2011, and the situation since that time is continuously deteriorating, while the factors of the conflict and its groups are increasing. The subject of this study are the problems that Syrian people living in Duhok city center experience in the context of econ, socio-cultural integration and the factors that lead to cultural conflict between the locals of Duhok city center and the Syrians.

In order to uncover these issues, studies and observations from the first did week of August until the last week of September 2022 in the city neighborhoods (Malta, city center, Masik, etc), where the Syrians constitute a significant part of the population, During the study we did an opportunity to interview and talk with both the locals and Syrians. Within the study's framework, between 5- 10 focus group interviews did conduct with 5- 10 non-governmental organizations and 5-10 Syrian people.

In addition, face to face interviews will conduct with the leaders of the neighborhoods where the Syrians live. 125 residents of Duhok city center and 125 Syrian people did also interview in order to discover the local society's perceptions of Syrians. Thus an attempt did to determine with fieldwork-based interview technique the problems faced by Syrians in the context of economic-socio conflict and integration. The field research did enriched by drawing on researchers' previous field experience and previous studies conducted in the area. The analyses also indicated that selecting a study case in the Egyptian society was fundamentally due to the convergence of customs, traditions, and values which contributed to the efficiency of positive readiness to social participation, composition of social networks, and social interaction in daily life practices. The previous finding resulted in reproducing the Habitus (system) of immigrants who have acquired the customs, values, traditions, and culture of the recipient society on the one hand, and created new positive activities on the other hand that served as their symbolic capital as (P. Bourdieu) argues in his theory of practice. This resulted in re-producing social structure and in reinforcing the sense of inclusion in spite of the existence of some obstacles in the physical aspects especially in the variables of residence, education, and health.

Keywords: Syrian refugees, social integration, economic integration, sociocultural cohesion, forced migration, Duhok. Theory of practice.

Introduction:

Long-term displacement situations and a decline in resettlement have spurred the quest for local integration (UNHCR, 2021). This includes economic integration, building on the idea that the displaced, if entitled and empowered, can be actors that can sustain themselves, thereby contributing to the social and economic development of local communities. The majority of displaced populations are hosted by neighboring low- and middle-income countries.

There is no dispute on the level of complexity of the Syrian conflict where there are many parties involved in the conflict, and each pursues its own interests by exchanging military attacks and competing for land control. As for civilians, they live under the weight of the constant fighting and the failure of cease-fire agreements one after the other. The figures indicate the killing of approximately (400,000) and the injury of about (2.1 million) civilians since the beginning of the conflict in March 2011, in addition to the external displacement of approximately 6.8 million Syrians registered as refugees in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and some of them have disappeared and are not registered yet, most Syrians were forced to migrate to other countries such as Iraq, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and 85% of them are concentrated in the neighboring countries of Syria and some European countries. (table no 1).

Table 1: Syrian Refugees in the world (UNHCR, 2022)

Country	Registered refugees	Ratio to Total Asylum Seeker
Iraq	371410	5.4
Turkey	3649740	53.7
Jordan	741786	10.9
Lebanon	914648	13.5
Egypt	151098	2.2
Germany	540324	2.3
Europa and America	450023	7.9
Total	6800000	100.0

and the internal displacement of 6.7 million people inside Syrian territory (UNHCR, 2022). The figures also indicate that more than (75%) of the refugees are women and children, including 1.2 million female refugees at childbearing age and at least 80,200 pregnant women. According to United Nations estimates, 8.4 million Syrian children inside and outside the country suffer from the negative impact of this conflict, that is, more than 80% of the children in Syria.

About (371410) of them headed to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, especially the Duhok city center (UNCHR, 2022), due to its geographical proximity and the presence of relatives in this city. According to data issued by the Department of Migration and Displaced, Duhok city center comes in second place after Erbil, estimated at (106059), of whom about (68619) estimated at (64,7.0%), live in camps. Duhok city center is the second city in the number of immigrants at the level of Iraq

and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. According to the data of the Center for Statistics and Planning in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the population of Duhok governorate is about 1.6 million, while the population in the Duhok city center is 395123, Syrians are about 26,8% of the local duhok peoples (Statistic and Planning Center, Duhok, 2022) and this is a large and effects number, and the impact of the influx of the Syrians immigrants have effects affected the Duhok city center and particularly the city of Duhok center economically, socially and culturally. On one hand, Syrians suffer from social problems in the city, and from economic problems on the other. Syrians inside and outside the camps face the same problems such as (housing, proper nutrition, health services, education).

-Aims of the study:

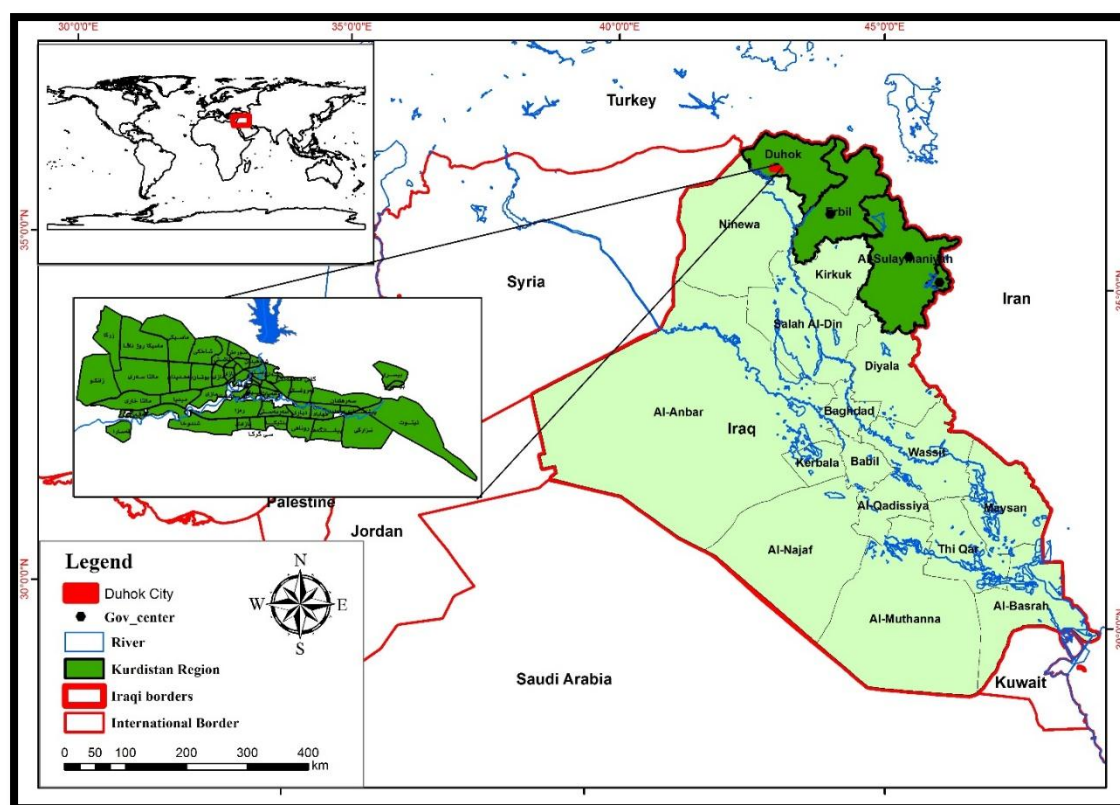
using duhok city center as an example, this study aims to define the problems of the socio-cultural integration of the Syrians and to examine the factors underlying these problems. After a brief description of the research, information will be given regarding the situation of the Syrians in duhok city center , followed by explanation of such concepts as immigration, refugees, asylum seekers and integration. Then problems that the Syrians have encountered in this context did discussed. The research will conclude with an attempt to apply the concepts of “living together”, “social exclusion” and “cultural conflict” to the analysis of a field study in duhok city center.

-Methodology:

The statistical data in this study were obtained from the General Directorate of Migration Management, the Duhok Directorate of Migration Management, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Iraq (Hari-kari organization), IOM and UNHCR.

The area of this study is Duhok city center. Duhok city center is city of the Iraq Kurdistan Region, it lies between latitudes (36,9 -36,5)and longitudes(43,5-43,0) . It is 585 m above mean sea level, covering an area around 49,01 km² (Joined Human Information Center, 2019, p36). (see Map 1).

Map1.Duhok location



The subject of this study are the problems that Syrian people living in Duhok city center experience in the context of econ, socio-cultural integration and the factors that lead to cultural conflict between the locals of Duhok city center and the Syrians. In order to uncover these issues, studies and observations did from the first week of September until the last week of October 2022 in the city neighborhoods (Malta, city center, Masik, etc), where the Syrians constitute a significant part of the population. During the study we did an opportunity to interview and talk with both the locals and Syrians. Within the study's framework, between 5- 10 focus group interviews did conduct with 5- 10 non-governmental organizations and 5-10 Syrian people. In addition, face to face interviews did conduct with the leaders of the neighborhoods where the Syrians live.

125 residents of Duhok city center and 125 Syrian people did also interview in order to discover the local society's perceptions of Syrians. Thus an attempt did to determine with fieldwork-based interview technique the problems faced by Syrians in the context of economic-socio conflict and integration. The field research did enriched by drawing on researchers' previous field experience and previous studies conducted in the area.

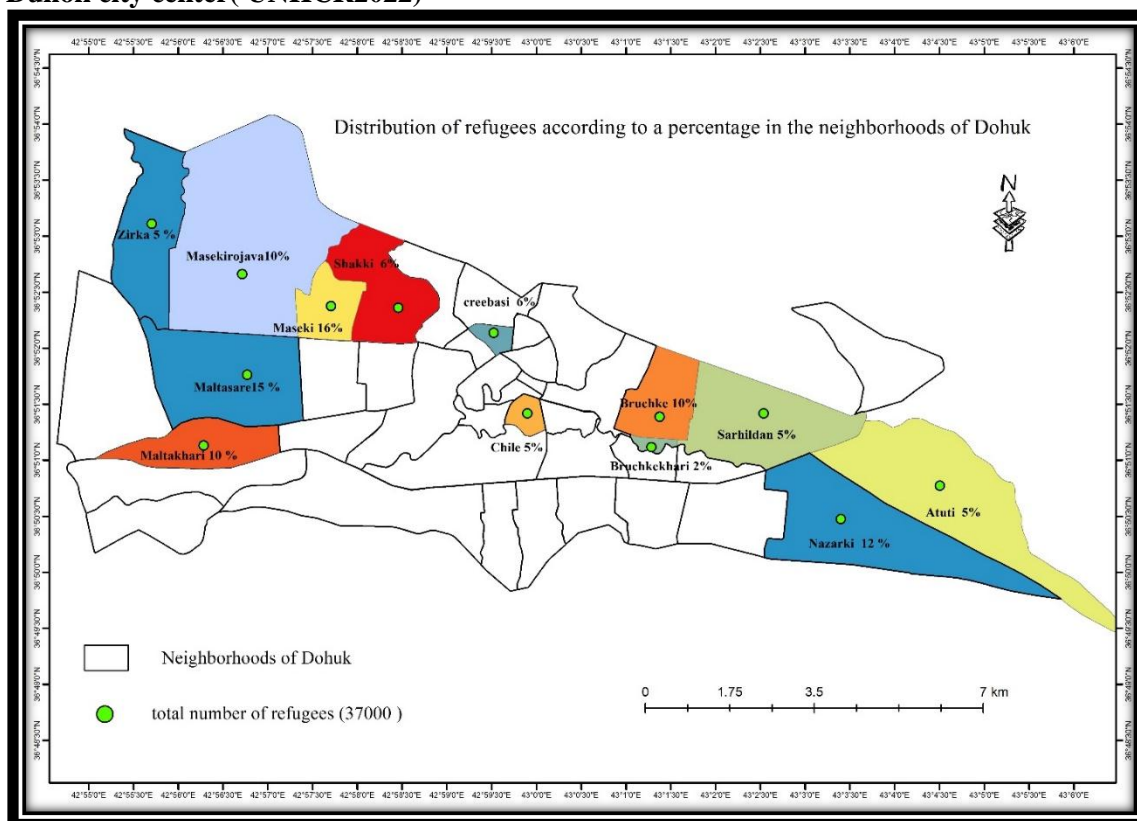
- Status of Syrians in General and the status of Syrians living in Duhok city center in Numerical Data.

According to the data gathered by the Duhok Directorate of Migration Administration , a total of 106059 people lived in Duhok province as of December 2022 , with 68619 persons in 5 camps and The 35,0 % (37440) of the Syrians living in the province of Duhok were living on their own in the city of Duhok , which comprises the central districts of Duhok province (Maltaland 2, market, masik, Gribasi etc.) . According to the data obtained from the Directorate of Migration Management of the Governorship of Duhok , the Syrians who remained in camps stayed in 4 cities - Semel, Akre, Gawilan and Brdarash districts located close to the Syrian border(table and map 1)

Table 2. Number of Syrians by district (UNHCR2022)

District Name	Persons
Central Districts	37440
Domiz Camp1	38133
Domiz Camp2	13447
Gawilan Camp	11008
Bardarash Camp	4694
Akre Settlement	1337
total	106059

Map 2. Distribution of refugees according to a percentage in the neighborhoods of Duhok city center(UNHCR2022)



Analyze and discuss the results

-General characteristics of the immigrant participants:

It is assumed that the study simple here consists of all immigrants arriving in the city of Duhok after 2011, and therefore this study was based on a purposeful sample. They numbered 125 Syrian immigrants and 125 host community, diverse in terms of gender, age groups, occupation, location, educational qualifications, and socioeconomic status.(table n3).

Table 3: General characteristics of the immigrant participants

		Numbers	%
Gender	Male	64	51
	Female	61	49
	total	125	100.0
Age	17	6	4.8
	27-18	29	23.2
	37-28	33	26.4
	47-38	40	32
	60-48	16	12.8
	+60	1	0.8

	total	125	100.0
Social situation	Married	101	80.8
	single	15	12
	separate	9	7.2
	total	125	100.0
Educational situation	Uneducated	4	3.2
	Lerner	37	29.6
	primary school	16	12.8
	middle school	19	14.6
	high school	36	28.8
	university	10	8
	master	3	3
	total	125	100.0
Ownership	rent	119	95.2
	Privately owned	6	4.8
	Total	125	100.0
Monthly rent	\$200-150	26	20.8
	300-250	95	76
	400-350	3	2.4
	+400	1	0.8
	Total	125	100.0
Monthly salary	\$150-0	12	9.6
	300 -151	21	16.8
	400 -301	48	38.4
	600 -401	30	24
	1000 -601	10	8
	+1000	4	3.2
	total	125	100.0

The total population in urban areas is divided by gender into (52%) men and (48%) women. The participants in the statistical form were selected according to this division, where the percentage of the participants was men (51%), while the percentage of females was (49%) of the Syrians Age structure studies held in Syria show that Syrian immigrants fall within the age group (27-37) years with a percentage of (26.4%), then within the category (17-26) at a rate of (23.2%), because the ages fall and the target was The main reason for the migration of this age group was an economic and academic motive within the economic housing, and the percentage of immigrants whose age in an area reached 16 years (4.8%). It was found that the highest percentages within the age groups were within the economically active category (17-60 years), which is the most influential category in the local community, which the study focuses on.

We have noticed that the vast majority of Syrians are in the married category (101 people) and their percentage is 80.8%, out of the community, which amounted to 125 Syrians, and (15 people) at (12%) are single, and (9) by (7.2%) are separated, and in terms of education, where (37 people), with a percentage of (29.6%), were literate, but they did not have scientific certificates. As for the educated people with certificates, they were, respectively, university graduates with a percentage of (8%), while the percentage of secondary school graduates was (17.6%). Primary graduates accounted for (12.8%), while those who did not know how to read and write were (3.2%), while the percentage of master's degree graduates was (3%).

And when we look at the social, economic and cultural status of Syrian immigrants according to the research sample, within the question, did you have health insurance in Syria? (107 people) answered no with a rate of (85.6%), while (18 people) answered (14.4%) yes, and therefore we can see that Syrian immigrants did not have health insurance before emigrating with a rate of (85.6%) in Syria, so when they face Any health problems and difficulties that their use of health services is less than a quarter of the subscribers. The majority of immigrants answered that they can go to hospitals in the city of Duhok if they have residency or through Syrian identity, easily and without difficult conditions.

And when trying to find out where the immigrants came from through the question, Where did you live in Syria?

The answers were: (52 people) or (41.6%) of the sample of respondents from Al-Hasakah governorate, while the rest of the immigrants came and amounting to (21 people) (16.8%) from Aleppo governorate, and (10 people) with (8%) from Raqqa, came (12 people) with a percentage of (9.6%) from the Levant, and Latakia (19 people) with a percentage of (15.6%), and the lowest percentage was from the governorates of As-Suwayda and Daraa (8 and 5 people) at rates of (6.4 and 4%) respectively, and on the other hand, it was (113 people) (90.4%) were living in Syria in the city or downtown neighborhoods, while (12 people) lived in villages, including (4 people) in each of the villages of Al-Omari and Ain Dewar, and (3 and 1 people) in the villages of Shiran and Jabal Samaan. This indicates that the highest percentage of immigrants came from urban areas and their percentage (90.4%) while (9.6%) came from villages.

When we tried to find out the security situation in their area before emigration, most of the Syrian refugees from the study sample answered that they were previously residing in areas with armed conflict, their number was (83 people) with a percentage of (66.4), while the number of residents in areas prone to armed conflict was (31 people) with a percentage (24.8%), and (13 people) and only (10.4%) of the study sample lived in a safe area.

This may be due to the large population of cities being exposed to armed conflict in order to change and reach an end to the armed conflict, and to flee to safe areas to escape from the scourge of war and to preserve life.

It was found through the answers of the respondents within the research sample through the question: How were the public services (education, health, etc.) in Syria? More than half of the participants (67 people) with a rate of (53.6%) answered average, and (33 people) with a rate of (26.4%) answered good, the rest answered bad and very bad and their percentage (10.4 and 9.6%), respectively.

Although the civil war began in 2011 in Syria, we see that only (2 people) at a rate of (1.6%) came in 2011, and (7 people) at a rate of (5.6%) in 2012, while the period from 2013, 2014 and 2015 was the peak of the number of immigrants To the city of Duhok as a result of the worsening of the war situation in Syria, their percentage constituted (15.2, 19.2 and 24%) respectively and constituted a burden on the local government economically and socially, while it declined in the years 2016 and 2017 at rates (2.4 and 4%) respectively, and increased in the years 2018 and 2019 As a result of bad conditions, at rates of (6.4 and 8%) respectively, especially in the areas of Ras al-Ain, Tal Abyad and other areas of northern Syria, while their percentage in 2020 and 2022 amounted to about (3.2 and 2.4%), respectively.

As for the geographical distribution of the regions and neighborhoods inhabited by Syrians, it was as follows: It was found that the highest percentage of the Syrian participants resided in each of the Masika shops, and their number was (20 people) (16%), and Malta's locality 1 and their number (19 people) (15.2%). While the locality of Malta was 2, their number (15 people) and their percentage (12.7%), followed by the district of Broshke, whose number was (14 people) and their percentage (12%). The reason for this is due to the proximity of these areas to the city center and the level of monthly rent for housing in these three areas is somewhat acceptable.

Whereas, a region such as Shelley, Kiri Bassi, Shakki and Nazraki came in the lowest ranks for Syrian immigrants, and their percentage was (8, 7, 6, and 5%), respectively. They live in the neighborhood of millions and some other stores with a high-income indigenous population.

And when the Syrians were asked about the type of their profession in Syria before and after emigration, it became clear that there is a big difference in the type of profession, through the question, what type of profession did you have when you were in Syria? Answer: (22 people) at a rate of (17.6%) working in the public sector, and (13 people) at a rate of (10.4%) in the private sector. While (11 people) answered (8.8%) experienced workers, and (51 people) answered (40.8%). And (4 people) answered (3.2%) that they are housewives, and (8) people (6.4%) work jobs that do not need experience, while (3 people) answered (2.4%) that they are unemployed. And (13 people) responded with a percentage of (10.1) other businesses (student -

military - merchant). In comparison with his work now in the city of Duhok, we find that according to the answers in the statistical form are as follows: (20 people) answered (16%) grocery, and (10 people) At a rate of (8%) a tailor, (10 people) responded by (8%) selling phones, and (9 people) at (7.2%) selling fabrics and clothes.

As for the question, why did you choose the city of Duhok among the Iraqi cities? The answer was: (75 people) answered with a percentage (60%) of geographical proximity, 23 people answered with a percentage of (18.4%) and the presence of relatives, while (15 people) answered with a percentage of 12%) shared nationalism, and (11 people) answered with a percentage of (8.8%) the presence of relatives. Jobs . And (1 person) answered (0.8%) for other reasons.

The Syrian participants were asked about the type of ownership in the city of Duhok, what is the type of ownership, is it private or rented? (119 people) at a rate of (95.2%) answered that they are in rent, and (6 people) at a rate of (4.8%) said they own homes, with the exception of the remaining 6 people who answered that they pay rent every month, where (95 people) answered with a rate of (76%) they pay rent between 250 - \$300 per month, answered (26 people)

At a rate of (20.8%) they pay \$150-200 every month, while (3 people) responded by (2.4%) they pay between \$350-400, and (1 person) answered (0.8%) more than \$400 a month.

Owners of these professions were asked if their workplace belongs to them, through the question, Are you the employer or not? Where (99 people) answered (79.2%) that they are not the employer, and (26 people) answered (20.8%) that they are the employer.

In order to know the economic situation after emigration of Syrian immigrants, the question was asked, What is your monthly income? (12 people) answered with a rate of (9.6%) 0-150 dollars, and (21 people) answered (16.8%) 151-300 dollars, and (48 people) answered (38.4%) 301-400%. (30 people) answered (24%) 401-600 dollars, while (10 people) answered (8%) 601-1000 dollars, and (4 people) answered (3.2%) more than 1000 dollars. It was found through the answers that the majority of Syrians had an average income or less than the average because the lowest income in the city of Duhok is \$500, where most of the Syrians had their income between \$301-400, and this indicates that most of the Syrian participants are not in a good economic situation Very, most of them are low-income families and part of them are middle-income.

In order to know the social integration and competition between the Syrians and the local population by asking the question, who are your customers, are the Syrians or the locals? (30 people) answered (24%) Syrians, (23 people) (18.4%) locals, while (72 people) answered (57.6%) both.

As for other problems of integration, the economic meeting of the Syrians in the city of Duhok, has been put to the immigrants, if they have relations with the local population and how they are, by asking the question, How is your relationship with the local population? (104 people) answered with a rate of (83.2%) good, and this indicates that the relationship between Syrians and local residents is good to some extent, and (6 people) at (4.8%) very good, and (10 people) answered with (8%) average, while (3 people) answered with a rate of (2.4%) bad, and (2 people) answered (1.6%) very badly.

Also, within the context of the problems of economic and social integration, the Syrians, especially the merchant category, were asked, how is your relationship with the local merchants? (77 people) answered with a rate of (61.6%) good, and (16 people) with a rate of (12.8%) very good, while (25 people) answered (20%) medium, and (6 people) answered (4.8%) bad, while (2 people) with a rate of (1.6%) very bad. He noticed through the comparison between how is your relationship with the local population and how is your relationship with the local merchants that there is a difference that has occurred, which is that the Syrians who answered their relationship was good with the local population (104 people) and decreased to (77 people), and this causes a reflection on the social relationship, especially The economic aspect between the Syrians and the host community.

When evaluating the economic situation of Syrians before and after emigration, the question was raised, if we compare your economic status before emigration when you were in Syria with your current economic status, how now? (92 people) with a rate of (73.6%) answered bad, (8 people) with a rate of (6.4%) are good, and (6 people) answered (4.8%) very good. It is clear that a large percentage of Syrians are in a bad situation now in the city of Duhok, and this affects their economic conditions, and their economic situation has become bad after emigration.

In order to reveal the social perceptions of the COVID-19 disease among the Syrian participants, through the question, did the COVID-19 disease have an impact on the perceptions of local residents toward the Syrians? (108 people) answered with a percentage of (86.4%) no, it did not affect negatively, and (7 people) answered (5.6%) yes it negatively affects their view of the Syrians, and (10 people) answered with (8%) I don't know.

The Syrians answered the question that was put to them by being exposed to any situation that shows discrimination because you are Syrian, through the question, Do you face any form of discrimination because you are Syrian? (14 people) at a rate of (11.2%) answered yes, and (103 people) answered (82.4%) no, while (8 people) answered with a percentage of (6.4%) sometimes. If it is expected at any time to be discriminated against.

In order to predict the future, a question was asked of the Syrian immigrants: Will they ever return to their country if the situation becomes more secure and stable in their country, Syria? (104 people) answered yes at a rate of (83.2%), and (13 people) answered no with a rate of (10.4%), while (7 people) answered with a rate of (5.6%) it was possible. It is clear that most of the immigrants will return to their country after the end of the war, but a small part of them will remain outside their homeland even if security and stability return to their country.

Conclusion:

The data revealed many indications that answer the question posed, about the reasons behind forced migration? It became clear from the migrants' answers, with the exception of the civil war in Syria, that there are latent manifestations of social exclusion in the country of origin, from which the immigrants previously suffered. The manifestations of this exclusion are manifested in economic crises, marginalization, high unemployment rates, low wages, and the absence of justice. Social exclusion has caused a rupture in the social fabric between political systems and citizens, whether in deprivation of access to job opportunities, stable income, or quality education. Most of the cases explain this, due to the absence of the role of social policies capable of promoting social progress.

It was also found that the immigrants chose the city of Duhok for several reasons, the most important of which is the convergence of values, customs and traditions, and the geographical proximity, in addition to being a vast arena for investment in small projects for those who immigrated and have sufficient economic for this matter.

As for the impact of the dignified period on the process of social integration, it was found from the general characteristics of the study sample that the majority of cases have resided in Duhok for more than 7 years, which contributed to their integration compared to other recent residents.

As for the question about the manifestations of the social and economic integration of Syrian immigrants in the practices of daily life, some study cases see that despite the movement of Syrian families to Duhok years ago, they still preserve their customs and traditions in the practices of their daily lives, and that their presence resulted in a change in many From the practices of daily life, especially in the Syrian food preferences of a local community, and the furniture of Duhok cafés and their contents in the study community.

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