

Empowering Integration: The Jordan Compact's Impact on Syrian Refugee Employment in the Labor Market

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Abstract

This study investigates work permits and the employment status of Syrian refugees in Jordan, providing a thorough overview of the Jordan Compact. Despite issuing more work permits than required, the initiative has failed to ensure refugees' rights and meet their basic needs. The findings highlight significant challenges, such as complex permit acquisition processes, poor working conditions, and ongoing informal employment. The study underscores the necessity of holistic approaches to refugee employment that address job quality and comprehensive support systems. The implications are particularly relevant for host countries with similar economic conditions. Given the region's political and economic pressures, the recommendations urge major organizations to assist the Jordanian government in balancing job opportunities for refugees and citizens. Overall, this study contributes to a more in-depth discussion of work permits and the employment of Syrian refugees in Jordan, with implications for future policy formulation and implementation.

Keywords: Jordan, Work Permits, Syrian Refugee, Jordan compact, Unemployment.

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1. Introduction

The Syrian crisis stands as one of the most formidable conflicts in recent history, posing significant challenges to its citizens on psychological, social, and economic fronts. Since its inception in 2011, the Syrian conflict has compelled over 14 million individuals to abandon their homes in search of refuge in countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt (UNHCR, 2023). Syria has been in a civil war, leading to economic collapse, a humanitarian crisis, and widespread displacement. Half the country has been forced to leave their homes, and the conflict has claimed the lives of approximately 350,000 people since 2011 (Tozan, 2023). Among the nations extending warm hospitality to Syrians, Jordan stands out as a neighboring host, having welcomed 1.2 million Syrian refugees. The influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan has contributed to a significant population increase of around 10% (Alrababa'h et al., 2021). Due to the extensive strain experienced across all sectors, Jordan's labor market suffered significantly from the arrival of Syrian refugees, worsening an already high rate of youth unemployment in the country. Exploiting the vulnerable position of Syrians upon their initial asylum in Jordan, certain stakeholders favored hiring Syrian workers over Jordanians, often offering substandard wages below the minimum wage mandated by Jordan's Ministry of Labor. In 2011, the average daily wage for Jordanians in the bottom half of private sector occupations (lowest skill) was USD 14. In contrast, the daily wages for unskilled and semi-skilled Syrians started at USD 5.50 for adults and less than USD 3 for children. Unlike Jordanians, Syrians are often willing to work for such low wages since they receive additional support from the UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations (AlShwawra, 2021). However, Jordan has been significantly impacted by this population influx, as it is currently hosting an unprecedented number of Syrian refugees. Although these refugees do not automatically receive the legal right to work, their presence has put additional strain on the already fragile labor market, intensifying existing tensions with local communities (Kattaa, 2016). " Strategic shift from mere humanitarian response to phased development rhetoric has been witnessed in the country's response approach towards the crisis, resulting in the Jordan Compact agreement between the government of Jordan and the international community "(Shalan et al., 2020). Table 1 shows the number of registered Syrian refugees in Jordan by governorate, with a total of 628,135 Syrians registered in Jordan according to the UNHCR, half of whom are of working age (18-59).

Table 1 shows that the highest concentration of Syrians is in the Jordanian capital, Amman, with a total of

187,424. Non-camp refugees in Amman formed ethnically homogeneous enclaves by renting the upper floors of mixed-use commercial buildings in vibrant downtown areas. Consequently, 85% of the refugees reside outside of camps, often in some of Jordan's poorest neighborhoods (Al-Homoud and Ghanem, 2019). The second highest is in Mafraq, with 161,232 Syrians. The lowest concentration is in Tafileh with 1,327, and 471 in various other areas.

1.1 Unemployment in Jordan

Jordan has grappled with unemployment for an extended period, particularly intensified by the arrival of Syrian refugees seeking employment opportunities. Integrating this additional workforce into the economy has proven challenging, leading to heightened competition for scarce job prospects. Jordan's unemployment rate is extremely high, with 35% of males and 40% of females suffering from it (Hjazeen et al., 2021). Before initiatives like the Jordan Compact were implemented, Syrian refugees encountered significant obstacles in accessing formal employment, worsening their vulnerability and dependency on aid. Nevertheless, the Jordan Compact aimed to tackle these challenges by encouraging Syrian refugees to engage in the workforce effectively. Jordan pledged to issue work permits exclusively to Syrian refugees within this framework, facilitating their entry into formal employment and bolstering the national economy. Despite these endeavors, unemployment remains a significant concern for both Jordanians and Syrian refugees. Employing refugees is critical, but difficult due to the competition for the limited number of job openings available to them. (Şahin Mencütek & Nashwan, 2021a). Jordan's labor market has seen a variety of fluctuations, including periods of recovery and contraction. Despite long-standing external and internal challenges, the labor market has not achieved sustained, tangible stability in recent years. This instability is attributed to a variety of shocks, including the impact of Covid-19 and the nation's complex political landscape. High unemployment rates are a major issue for the Jordanian people. Table 2 illustrates the unemployment rate and the count of unemployed Jordanians aged 15 years and above from 2017 to 2023.

Table 2 indicates that unemployment is a challenge for Jordanian citizens. Despite the signing of the compact in 2016, it's evident from the table that unemployment persists among young Jordanians, mirroring the situation for refugees. Therefore, the opportunities granted to them will affect these percentages. The Jordan compact was intended to address this issue specifically for refugees. "For Jordanians, the highly visible presence of many thousands of refugees living in their midst, rather than camps – raises fears over competition for resources and opportunities" (Carrion, 2015).

Bilateral agreements between refugee-hosting countries and donor countries, regional alliances, and the global community are becoming increasingly common. These agreements provide substantial resources and aid with the goal of improving refugees' social and economic well-being and addressing employment challenges. The Jordan Compact, signed in February 2016, is a significant example of such an agreement and represents a critical step in addressing the Syrian refugee crisis. The compact aims to change Jordan's refugee crisis into a meaningful opportunity for development by focusing on creating jobs. The EU-Jordan Compact was established to grant Syrians preferential access to low-skilled employment opportunities in exchange for easing the access of Jordanian companies to the European market (Grawert, 2019a). However, Despite the highly centralized planning system's ability to enable a swift and effective agreement between Jordan and the international community, as demonstrated by the Jordan Compact. Consequently, it ultimately hampered the implementation of certain response programs (Shalan et al., 2020).

Providing refugees with employment opportunities is critical, and it will take concerted efforts from host countries and international organizations to ensure that they have a decent and stable life. Employment is fundamental to life and holds significant importance for both refugees and host countries. It offers refugees opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, self-reliance, social integration, and restoration of dignity. (Şahin

Mencütek and Nashwan, 2021a). In this context, Syrian refugees participate across both formal and informal sectors of Jordan's labor market, where they experience legal uncertainty, job instability, inadequate working conditions, and bias. Refugee women also face additional challenges due to gender norms and cultural considerations (Şahin Mencütek and Nashwan, 2021a). In this article, our aim is to examine the degree to which the Jordan Compact has influenced the efficient issuance of work permits to Syrian refugees over time, as well as to assess the effectiveness of such a compact in enhancing the volume of permits granted.

In the following sections, we will examine the Jordan Compact, its advantages, and its limitations. Subsequently, we will discuss the development of employment trends among Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a focus on the work permits granted to them in the country. The discussion section will provide recommendations and suggestions for increasing refugee employment in host countries and will conclude with a summary of the findings.

2. Jordan Compact Agreement

The Jordan Compact, signed in February 2016 at the major London Conference co-hosted by the United Kingdom, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, and the United Nations, strategically merges international humanitarian and development efforts under the leadership of the host country. It combines \$700 million in annual grants for three years and \$1.9 billion in concessional loans, with payments contingent upon meeting specific targets like formal labor market access (UNHCR, 2018). The agreement also involves the European Union easing trade regulations to boost trade exports from designated economic zones in exchange for specific employment quotas for Syrian refugees. Furthermore, it mandates reforms aimed at enhancing the business environment and formalizing Syrian businesses, alongside ensuring access to education and vocational training for Syrian children (UNHCR, 2018).

2.1 The compact feature

The London Conference resulted in pledges of \$12 billion in grants and more than \$40 billion in loans for the region through 2020, compared to \$3.2 billion for the humanitarian response inside Syria and for regional refugees (UNHCR, 2018). Moreover, under the Jordan Compact, 200,000 Syrian refugees are permitted to legally work in Jordan in return for expanded entry to the EU market for Jordanian exports (Almasri, 2024). As a result, the Jordan Compact represents an important step forward in addressing the challenges of long-term displacement by combining humanitarian and development efforts. Its distinguishing feature is a significant scale of development finance compared to humanitarian funding. This financing is structured around incentive mechanisms and development plans agreed upon by Jordan and international partners such as the IMF and World Bank, with funding released based on predefined targets and objectives (UNHCR, 2018).

2.2 The Limitations of the Compact

Despite the goals of the Jordan Compact to address and resolve the refugee crisis, the initiative has not been without negative consequences following its signing. Burlin (2020) highlighted three main dynamics that have constrained the effectiveness of development programs under the Jordan Compact. Firstly, the presence of a diverse range of actors with varied interests has complicated the implementation of cohesive and impactful initiatives. Secondly, there is a noticeable lack of local governance, indicating a gap in the capacity of local entities to effectively oversee and manage programs. Finally, he identifies a form of "upward" accountability that prioritizes donor expectations and preferences at the expense of the genuine needs and aspirations of the affected populations. This skewed accountability structure can threaten the sustainability and relevance of the development efforts initiated under the Jordan Compact, emphasizing the importance of recalibrating strategies to ensure a more inclusive and locally responsive approach. Morris (2020) drew attention to the differences in how value is derived from refugees' immobility and the lack of direct profit from trade concessions made under the Jordan Compact. In summary, he contended that these policies for economic development formalize

precariousness, thereby allowing the global community to avoid taking on global responsibilities while profiting from its seeming altruism. In terms of refugee employment, when looking at the Compact, we conclude that within the labor sector, there are numerous problems and concerns faced by the refugees. The Jordan Government's intervention in the labor sector by easing work permit requirements for Syrians facilitated their market access. Each intervention strategically led to an increase in the number of issued work permits. However, the main challenge was convincing Syrians of the benefits of obtaining and renewing valid work permits annually, as the Jordan Compact aimed for 200,000 Syrians to hold valid permits (AlShawra, 2021).

3. Evolution of Syrian Refugee Employment in Jordan

In the beginning, job opportunities available to Syrians in Jordan were scarce, primarily restricted to limited sectors like tailoring, agriculture, and construction. These restrictions reflected the kingdom's economic and political challenges, as well as the need to protect its labor market. However, these early opportunities helped refugees establish a consistent income and integrate more effectively into Jordanian society. Peitz et al. (2023) investigated the effects of integrating Syrian refugees into Jordan's formal labor market. Using robust one-to-one propensity score matching on comprehensive, high-quality data from nearly 75,000 Syrian refugee households collected between 2017 and 2019, they discovered new evidence on the socioeconomic benefits of refugee labor market integration. Their findings revealed that having access to formal employment, as indicated by a work permit, is significantly associated with higher refugee income, better food security, lower protection needs, and less child labor. Shalan (2019) examined how refugees in Jordan navigated job opportunities, assessing the effects of employment on their lives and the hurdles encountered. The research highlighted the transformative effect of employment on the journey toward self-sufficiency among young refugees, irrespective of gender. It underscored the multifaceted nature of factors shaping refugee self-reliance, emphasizing the need for enhanced refugee employment initiatives to bolster livelihoods and autonomy effectively. In response to Jordan's compact, Syrian refugees have been granted limited labor rights in five specific sectors: agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and municipal public works that are funded by donor community grants. Additionally, Jordan has allowed the formalization of existing Syrian businesses and the establishment of new tax-generating enterprises (Şahin Mencütek and Nashwan, 2021b). However, "These sectors disproportionately employed migrant labor (and relatively few Jordanians) even prior to the conflict" (Fallah et al., 2019). To help ensure Syrians do not replace Jordanian workers, the Government of Jordan allowed Syrians to enter the labor market only in qualified industrial zones, refugee camps, and specific sectors. Companies benefiting from this initiative must employ a minimum of 15% Syrian refugees in their workforce during the first two years of the agreement, increasing to 25% thereafter. Additionally, another category of benefiting companies is required to establish their operations in 18 designated development zones and industrial areas (Şahin Mencütek and Nashwan, 2021b).

Syrian refugees face a number of labor-related issues and concerns despite the Compact's efforts to support employment and help them settle in Jordan's challenging economic conditions. The Compact's emphasis on securing jobs in particular sectors, like the garment export industry, has raised concerns about dislodging current migrant workers and contributing to inadequate wages and working conditions. Syrian refugees earn, on average, 37.2% and 74% less per hour than non-refugee and native workers, respectively (Jemmali, 2020). These disparities highlight the difficulties refugees face in obtaining fair compensation in the labor market. Additionally, the differences in job opportunities between Syrians residing in camps and those in host communities compound the disadvantages that Syrians, especially those living in camps, face. The difficulties Syrians with work permits encounter in obtaining labor rights and social security expose enduring problems in the execution of labor integration strategies. Just 3% of Syrian workers had access to employer-sponsored health insurance in 2020; 5% had paid yearly leave, and 7% had paid sick leave. Moreover, a significant disparity exists between individuals with and without work permits. Less than 3.5% of Syrians without work permits receive these benefits, compared to 11 to 18% of those who hold work permits (ILO, 2021). Ultimately, the primary source of these concerns is the issue of work permits themselves.

3.1 Work permits

“The integration of refugees into host countries’ formal labor markets is increasingly recommended as a durable solution to forced migration. Yet, this policy response is a contentious political topic” (Peitz et al., 2023). The international community agreed to provide Jordan with trade and facilitated financing, on the condition that formal employment opportunities be created for 200,000 Syrian refugees. Following the announcement of the Compact's signing, there were approximately 320,000 registered adult Syrian refugees in Jordan, with around 51,000 work permits being issued annually to registered adult Syrian refugees in Jordan. However, slightly less than 40,000 of those permits were valid as of May 2017 (Lenner and Turner, 2019). Like Jordanians, Syrians mainly engage in the informal sector, which limits their access to stable and regulated employment. By October 2017, the total number of work permits issued had reached approximately 71,000 (UNHCR, 2018). Despite the cap of 200,000 work permits, only 87,141 had been accepted by the end of 2017 (Fallah et al., 2019). This indicates that the creation of new jobs accounted for less than 50% of the total permits, with the majority being related to market regulation. However, regulating the market has significant benefits for both Syrians and Jordanians, as it integrates Syrians more seamlessly into the formal economy and reduces the size of the informal economy (AlShawra, 2021). The low percentage of Syrians holding work permits, as noted by UNHCR (2018) and previous studies, highlights a significant barrier to formal employment. According to the ILO (2021), more than 230,000 work permits have been issued to Syrian refugees in Jordan since the signing of the Jordan Compact. In 2021, a record total of 62,000 work permits were issued to Syrians, according to figures published by the Government and UNHCR. This is the highest annual number ever since work permits for Syrian refugees were introduced (UNHCR, 2022). “These reforms and shifting policies help integrate Syrian refugees into the Jordanian economy and culture” (Al Khatib and Cox, 2023). Of the 62,000 work permits issued, 31,000 are flexible permits, allowing refugees to move between employers and governorates, as well as between similar jobs within the same sector (UNITED NATIONS, 2022). However, these permits still fall short of meeting a substantial segment of the Syrian refugee workforce.

Obtaining a work permit, described as a “work permit maze,” involves retrieving confiscated documents, applying for an Interior Ministry service card, undergoing a security check, securing a lease or address statement from UNHCR, and paying various fees. Some urban Syrians cannot get the card because they left Zaatari camp without required documents, making them ineligible for a work permit (Lenner and Turner, 2019). Although work permits have been issued to refugee workers, there has been a noticeable negative impact as the intended integration into formal employment has not been fully realized, leading to a continued reliance on the informal sector. The initiative to open specific professions for Syrian refugees in Jordan has encountered difficulties, leaving many without adequate working conditions and forcing them into informal labor.

4. Impact of the Compact on Syrian Returnees

Despite the efforts encapsulated in Jordan's compact, the initiative has not directly facilitated the return of Syrians. A significant barrier remains in ensuring the safety of returnees, as the situation in Syria is still fraught with dangers that make it far from acceptable for many to contemplate a return. Persistent instability and security concerns continue to pose significant challenges, preventing a safe and sustainable repatriation process. The agreement, while beneficial in terms of providing support and resources to Syrians in Jordan, has not effectively addressed the fundamental issues impeding their return. “In the face of lawlessness and destruction, the prospect of Syrians returning to their homeland is hazy” (Adamczyk and Fuad, 2023).

The return of Syrians from Jordan in significant numbers is unlikely in the near future. Since 2018, only 41,000 Syrians have returned voluntarily (Brookings, 2022). For instance, in 2021, approximately 5,800 refugees returned voluntarily from Jordan to Syria (THE JORDAN TIMES, 2022). In 2022, the number of Syrian refugees who left Jordan reached 9,277, with 4,013 returning to Syria and 5,264 resettling in a third country

(THE JORDAN TIMES, 2023). These numbers represent a small proportion of Jordan's total Syrian refugee population. These low numbers indicate that refugees face significant difficulties in deciding whether to return to Syria or relocate to another country.

According to Al-Sarayrah (2022), there are several obstacles hindering the safe and voluntary return of Syrian refugees to their homeland. Politically and security-wise, these include the absence of security, arrests, and forced conscription. Culturally and socially, obstacles include poor service conditions, property confiscation, and the lack of accurate information. Economically, the obstacles are the lack of a job market and limited employment opportunities. Furthermore, the complexities of repatriation go beyond the immediate safety concerns. Rebuilding a war-torn country necessitates significant resources and a stable environment, both of which are currently unavailable in Syria. The primary political and economic reasons driving the flight of millions of people from Syria have yet to be adequately addressed. For these reasons, rather than going back to Syria, Syrian refugees would rather live in poor conditions, be suspended, and face discrimination in Lebanon, Jordan, or Turkey (Adamczyk and Fuad, 2023). The compact's impact, therefore, is more pronounced in enhancing the living conditions of Syrian refugees within Jordan rather than encouraging their return. As the situation stands, ensuring the safety and well-being of returnees remains a daunting challenge, underscoring the need for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to efficiently address the underlying root causes of displacement and create a conducive environment for returnees. Thus, the compact's influence is seen primarily in terms of in-country support rather than as a direct catalyst for repatriation.

5. Discussion

The central goal of signing the Jordan Compact was to address the virtually non-existent employment opportunities for Syrian refugees. Through this agreement, the Jordanian government aimed to facilitate their participation in the labor market in exchange for trade facilitation. In its earnest commitment to the principles of the Compact, the Jordanian government, for instance, took significant measures. Since April 2016, it has removed work permit fees for Syrian refugees and subsequently extended the grace period until the end of 2019 (Grawert, 2019b). In our study, the focus has been on work permits as the primary outcome of actual government efforts to employ refugees and fulfill the Compact's commitment to employ 200,000. As previously noted, since the Compact's announcement, over 230,000 permits have been issued, which is a positive indicator. However, this does not signify the Compact's success. Even after the signing of the compact, refugees of all ages still face suffering and difficulties in their lives. "While the Jordanian government and NGOs have ensured that Syrian refugees can get by in Jordan, they still face many barriers, including the inability to access the legal workforce, lack of information about their rights, and inconsistent aid schedules" (Al Khatib and Cox, 2023). Challenging working environments, including low wages, long hours, remote locations, and short-term contracts, often present further challenges. According to Tiltne et al. (2019), a randomly selected Syrian refugee from each household was asked about their perception of the current Jordanian labor market for refugees. The majority of Syrian refugees believe it is challenging to find a good job in Jordan, with 56% stating it is difficult and 24% describing it as very difficult. Furthermore, a lack of suitable job opportunities for Syrians has hampered efforts to educate Syrian refugee children. Many Syrian refugees drop out of school to support their families, and education becomes less appealing when it does not improve employment opportunities. In addition, there is a significant lack of integration of women into the labor force, which is a role that they urgently require (Al Khatib and Cox, 2023).

Despite its altruistic intentions, the Jordan Compact has faced significant challenges and is considered unsuccessful by certain studies. While informal employment contributes to the problem, the socio-economic marginalization of Syrians arises from a wider range of legal and political obstacles. Therefore, it is increasingly unlikely that the Compact will revitalize Jordan's economy while also providing Syrians with the opportunity to live a dignified, self-sufficient life. (Lenner and Turner, 2019). The influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan has had

profound implications for the country. Jordanians are acutely aware of the significant impact of refugees on their daily lives, including the strain on services, natural resources, and the labour market. This effect is especially noticeable in host communities, where the pressure is highest (Khawaldah and Alzboun, 2022). Local residents increasingly feel marginalized and ignored by both their government and international donors. Addressing local discontent could be accomplished by giving Syrians more legal ways to earn a living, potentially increasing Jordan's benefits from their presence (Carrion, 2015). Furthermore, the rising employment of Syrian refugees in Jordan underscores the urgent necessity for social workers to proactively prioritize addressing employment-related issues and driving advancements that benefit refugees, host communities, and policymakers (Şahin Mencütek and Nashwan, 2021a). However, Fakihi and Ibrahim (2016) sought to assess the impact of the rapid influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan on the country's labor market since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011, and their empirical results from Granger causality tests and impulse response functions show that there is no relationship between the influx of Syrian refugees and the Jordanian labor market.

Some policy legacies, particularly security enhancement, played a crucial role in shaping the framework of the Jordan Compact. This legacy shaped the initial reluctance of the Ministry of Interior to include camp inhabitants in the work permit program due to perceived security risks, leading to their spatial segregation. International humanitarian agencies, including NGOs, tolerated this. However, in mid-2017, when it became evident that the volume of permits granted was insufficient, camp residents were included, and employment centers were established in camps, significantly increasing the number of work permits issued to Syrians (Lenner, 2020). As previously mentioned in Table 1, the total distribution of refugee population across Jordanian provinces is 628,135, with approximately half of them in working age. The highest concentration of refugees is 29.8% in the capital city. The second highest is in Mafraq at 25.7%, predominantly from the Zaatari camp. This point should be taken into consideration as opportunities in the capital are higher compared to those in camps when evaluating the practical aspect for refugees. According to Shalan et al. (2020), regarding the built environment, access to employment and infrastructure services is easier in urban and rural areas compared to camps.

One of the key aspects that must be considered in the future is the importance of agreements that balance between employing refugees and providing jobs for citizens, especially when the host country is struggling with unemployment. The Compact didn't show any significant effect in creating employment opportunities for citizens or addressing a central concern in Jordan. This was anticipated since the primary emphasis of the Compact was on providing jobs specifically aimed at supporting Syrian refugees in their efforts to integrate into the local economy. The alleviation of labor market tensions in Jordan can be facilitated through the establishment of businesses. It is recommended that the Jordanian government eliminate administrative barriers hindering joint ventures between Jordanians and Syrians (Grawert, 2019b). Acknowledging the pressure on host nations and actively striving to strengthen their ability to accommodate refugees would not just bolster regional stability but also foster sustainable development. According to Danish Trade Union Development Agency This initiative is valid until December 21, 2030. If the refugee crisis continues until then, the government must reconsider new investments that improve the condition of workers without compromising Jordanian citizens. Given the unemployment rate among Jordanian youth, it is essential to focus on ensuring job stability for the citizens. As a result, we propose that if a future agreement is signed—such as a Jordan Compact 2, which we support given Jordan's complex employment conditions—the compact be revised and corrected for any errors in the first compact. Moreover, initiatives aimed at enhancing inclusive policymaking by integrating perspectives from non-state actors, civil society stakeholders, and the private sector are crucial in developing a well-informed response policy (Shalan et al., 2020). It should ensure that Syrians have full employment and other rights without jeopardizing Jordanian citizens' job opportunities, which are already declining. In this regard, signing another compact, tailored to address the specific needs and challenges faced by host countries like Jordan, becomes imperative.

6. Conclusion

The Syrian crisis has profoundly impacted the entire region, burdening Syrians in various areas where they have settled. In Jordan, an examination of work permits reveals a complex employment situation for Syrian refugees, it becomes clear that despite the overall number of work permits issued exceeding the Compact's requirements, it has failed to provide job security, empower refugees, or ensure their practical rights through insurance and other rights, and meet all their basic needs. The results may be specific to Jordan due to differing economic conditions in host countries, but the experience of the Jordan Compact can benefit future agreements to avoid similar implementation issues. We suggest that major organizations support the Jordanian government in balancing opportunities for refugees and citizens, considering the political and economic pressures in the region. If the refugee crisis continues to strain Jordanian resources and conditions deteriorate for both Syrian refugees and Jordanians, there is concern that anti-refugee sentiment might become more widespread (Al Khatib and Cox, 2023). From the analysis of previous research contributions, we expect our research to contribute to a deeper discussion on work permits and their employment of Syrian refugees in Jordan. For future studies, we recommend focusing on evaluating infrastructure and assessing support for essential services, exploring strategies to achieve a balanced approach to employment opportunities, and advocating for enhancing job security.

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Table 1. Distribution of Syrian Refugees in Jordan by Governorate

Governorate Distribution	Population of Refugees	% Distribution of Syrian Refugees in Jordan
Amman	187,424	29.8%
Mafraq	161,232	25.7%
Irbid	123,120	19.6%
Zarqa	92,292	14.7%
Balqa	16,159	2.6%
Madaba	12,499	2.0%
Maan	8,228	1.3%
Jarash	8,130	1.3%
Karak	8,045	1.3%
Ajlun	5,435	0.9%
Aqaba	3,773	0.6%
Tafilah	1,327	0.2%
Other	471	0.1%

Source: [UNHCR, 2024].

Description for the above table: The table presents the distribution of Syrian refugees across Jordanian governorates, including the total refugee population and their percentage share of the overall Syrian refugee population in Jordan.

Table 2. Unemployment Trends: Jordanians 2017-2023 (Ages 15+)

Year	Unemployed	Unemployment rate
2017	329,114	18.3%
2018	322,983	18.6%
2019	324,282	19.1%
2020	404,105	23.2%
2021	435,549	24.1%
2022	419,837	22.8%
2023	418,365	22%

Source: [DOS (various years), Annual Yearbooks].

Description for the above table: The table shows unemployment trends among Jordanians aged 15 and above from 2017 to 2023, including the number of unemployed individuals and the corresponding unemployment rate for each year.