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**FROM TEMPORARY TO SEMI-PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION:  
GAZIANTEP'S TENT CITIES AND THE ONGOING NEEDS OF  
SYRIAN REFUGEES**

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**Abstract**

The world refugee population increases day-by-day, and countries are not prepared from this sudden and unexpected situation. It remains a mystery whether or when the problem will end and refugees will be able to return to their homelands. Thus, as time passes by, it is becoming necessary for refugees to live in more stable and sustainable communities. Consequently, it is also necessary to obtain information regarding the nature of how these communities should be and their ability to meet basic human needs and international standards. It is likewise significant to understand the sociological conditions of refugees' former homes, e.g. culture, living situations, traditions, and lifestyles, as individuals' satisfaction with their environment is essential to their social and physical adaptation. Accordingly, the opinions of refugees living in Nizip refugee camp were obtained in this study via the administration of a survey. Although the camp was comprised of areas dedicated to education, sports, and social activities, only one-fifth of the individuals surveyed regarded these facilities as sufficient. They expressed that the camp did not adequately address their social needs due to its location outside the city center, its economic inability to meet their social needs, and their long-term residence in the same area.

**Keywords:** *Refugee; Migration; Permanent residence; Tent city*

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## 1. Introduction

All around the world, 257 million people must continue their lives outside the countries in which they were born [1], and the intricacies of their situation increase on a daily basis. People are forced to migrate for several different reasons, mainly because of security and economic problems. On March 15, 2011, the Syrian opposition launched an armed struggle to overthrow the current Baath/Assad regime. It was unthinkable that Turkey would not be affected by the conflict. As a matter of fact, hundreds of thousands of Syrian citizens have relied on Turkey for safety and refuge and have settled here by crossing the border [2]. Since April 2011, Turkey has allowed Syrian refugees into the country based on the government's self-declared "open-door" policy [3], and the geopolitical situation in Syria continues to increase the flow of refugees into the country [4,5]. This large influx over the past five years has had a serious impact on what were already meager national resources [6].

A refugee emergency is defined as any situation in which the lives or well-being of refugees are threatened unless immediate and appropriate action be taken. This type of emergency demands an extraordinary response and exceptional measures [7]. It is crucial to protect these individuals, ensure their safety, and manage their migration [7,8]. Thus, it is also necessary to provide suitable accommodation for these individuals upon their arrival in their host countries prior to arranging their new living situations. Shelter such as camps fulfill this need, as they may be temporary or permanent and their tents are simple and light, comfortable, recyclable, and compatible with different lifestyles [9,10].

Because the Syrian migration process has been longer than expected and unclear, and because refugees' lives continue in limited and temporary conditions, it has become necessary for local, national, and international authorities to manage this situation [11]. People who reside in conditions meant to be temporary and are secluded from the rest of society are not able to assimilate successfully into their host communities. Nor are they capable of leading healthy social lives, applying the education they have received, or continuing their jobs and careers which previously supplied their living costs. These individuals experience serious problems in unifying with their host community and its inhabitants [12]. While meeting their living, job, education, and social needs,

these individuals would like to lead balanced lives compatible with both their host city and their home culture. Individuals who choose their own living spaces would like to continue their normal daily activities in safe and accommodating spaces [13].

In answer to the above issues, these adaptation problems may be reduced when the culture of the host environment is similar to that the individual's former environment. Nevertheless, this similarity between cultures also contributes to additional problems [14]. Secluded areas such as camps may limit an individual's sense of belonging to his/her host community, as this belonging derives itself from ownership and personalization. Interaction between elements in an individuals' social environment and location contribute to a sense of cultural identity and spatial appropriation. Moreover, behaviors in a physical and social environment are determined by a larger structural environment. When a structural environment accommodates individuals on a practical level, social integration improves and dependency on a place decreases [13]. A cultural identity, residential area, and local environment together enable the formation of a spatial residence identity [15].

Tent life symbolizes a nomadic phase in world history as well as a psychosocial state. Individuals who live in tents do not consider themselves as part of normal life. These individuals do not focus on building a future because they feel themselves "temporary." As they believe that they will not stay in these places in the future, they lack motivation for securing a job, home, or social life and thus experience a sense of ambiguity which may be detrimental to their well-being. The solution to this ambiguity is to provide permanent shelter these individuals and, consequently, a sense of belonging and purpose.

### **Refugees Coming From Syria And The Latest Status In Camps**

Syrian citizens were forced to leave their countries and migrate to other locations because of civil turmoil in 2011. Given the proximity and large border length of Syrian and Turkish lands, a large number of refugees rapidly entered Turkey's border towns. During the first phase of resettlement, 1,700 Syrians entered Turkey and were granted "temporary protection" status by the Turkish government [16]. Camps were established in border cities under the coordination of AFAD (T.R. Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency), and refugees who crossed the border were placed in these camps.

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**Table: 2.1.** Distribution of Syrian Refugees by Country

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of Refugees</b>
Turkey	3506532
Lebanon	995512
Jordan	657628
Iraq	247379
Egypt	127414
Others	30004
Total	5564469

Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> (17.02.2018)

Turkey stands out as the most preferred destination among Syrian refugees, and 63% of these refugees currently reside in Turkey (see Table 2.1). This situation brings with it many risk factors for Turkey, but it also offers numerous benefits in terms of production and consumption activities in the economy. Turkey has become the center of attraction for regular and irregular migration. As a result, the effects of migration on Turkey’s economic, socio-cultural and demographic structure are brought to the agenda [17].

Mass migration reached its peak between 2012 and 2014 and subsequently lessened though continued to occur. Some of the refugees who initially resided camps transitioned to new lives in city centers. Nevertheless, as of late 2017, a large number have remained in camp settings. As the camps were designed as temporary solutions to a longer-term problem, they no longer meet the needs of refugees. Therefore, projects are needed for establishing affordable housing options for these individuals. It is more important for whom temporary time means. Maybe 1 to 2 years for migrants is temporary while 8-10 years is still temporary for host country. But the fact is that these structures do not seem to be satisfactory as far as the host country is concerned.

As of August 8, 2017, the number of Syrians in camps totaled 233,064. Most have since settled in Hatay, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Osmaniye, Adıyaman, Adana, and Malatya, all of which are border cities. Nevertheless, approximately 104,490 Syrians have remained in roughly 31,860 tents, while others continue their lives in container cities. According to Table 2.2, 21,584 refugees remain in 5,901 tents in Gaziantep [18].

**Table 2.2.** Number of Syrians Living in Tent Cities in Gaziantep, By District

<b>Tent</b>	<b>Number of tent</b>	<b>People</b>	
İslahiye Tent City	1.586 tents	6336 Syrians	In 21 584 tents
Karkamış Tent City	1.632 tents	5963 Syrians	
Nizip 1 Tent City	1.873 tents	9285 Syrians	

Source : [18].

The capacity of tent cities established by AFAD is a minimum of 2,000 tents (10,000 people) and a maximum of 3,000 tents (15,000 people). In order to shelter 200,000 individuals, a maximum of 20 and minimum of 13 tent cities generally are erected. Moreover, a minimum of 45m<sup>2</sup> of space are provided per person in a settlement area, with 2 meters between the tents, 6 meters between the tent clusters, and living areas divided into neighborhoods [19]. The ceilings of the tents are made of PVC, walls are composed of 100% cotton fabric, and heat-insulated felt is applied to ceilings and floors [11,20]. Social facilities like schools, kindergartens, rehabilitation centers, coffee shops, laundries, computer rooms, markets, worship places, health centers, solid waste centers, water supplies, feeding centers, sports complexes, and various course-designated areas (e.g. tents for vocational training and adult literacy courses) are all currently available in AFAD's tent cities.

Because emergency structures should be quick in terms of set-up, tent cities initially were an effective solution. Countries who were unprepared for the sudden influx of Syrian refugees quickly erected camps and directed the refugees to these areas. Some individuals arrived wounded and in search of basic living needs as well as security. Life in these tents was intended to be temporary. Nevertheless, tents are not suitable for long-term living, and the effective durability of tents is between 2-6 months. As stated in the reports of the Human Rights Research Association, tents are sufficient in terms of social security, but they are vulnerable to outdoor air conditions [12] and thus problematic in terms of meeting seasonal changes and other needs for a long period of time. Tents should be renewed once every 2 years for efficiency and durability. Moreover, their design and features should be simple. Problems such as ventilation problem, possibility of fire and low quality of life increase when tents are designed to meet permanent needs such as with bathroom and kitchen features. Moreover, tents do not respond to spatial needs regarding life style changes and demographical

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situations. Due to the increase in the number of family members and the growing age of the children, personal privacy problems can be experienced.

As mentioned previously, the hosting of Syrian refugees in Turkey was initially a temporary situation, but it continues today as a semi-permanent lifestyle. As demonstrated in Figure 2.1, people's needs, expectations, and spatial use naturally have changed.

**Figure 2.1.** Tent Interiors and Spatial Uses According to Survival and Physiological Needs.



**A)**



**B)**



C)



D)

Shelter solutions are not applicable to all forms of shelter. Both the number of people in a shelter and their skills affect the practicality of shelters [21]. Tents are of standard quality during set-up. Although all tents are of the same size and possess the same physical characteristics, their interiors include different spatial characteristics for each and every family. These differences depend on the number of individuals in a family, number of children, traditions, cultures, and lifestyles. The varying spatial features of tents also deems it difficult to manage urgent situations like fire, disease, and security. For tent residents, the social and physical uses of their tents as well as their life expectations influence the design of their shared areas.

The fact that some refugees remain in emergency shelters such as tents is baffling to some. In spite of their living conditions, these individuals' personal demands continue to increase. Thus, it is necessary for them to transition to city life. Some refugees are capable of facilitating this transition themselves, but, unfortunately, some of them are incapable. In terms of statistics, 343,000 Syrians are now living in the city of Gaziantep, while 21,548 remain in tent cities outside the city [22]. This situation should be managed, meaning that efforts should be made to ease the transition of refugees in tent cities to accommodation in the city center. Due to the prolongation of the process, the expectations of people living in tent cities are increasing. Some expectations (work and study, university education) do not seem possible in the tent city.

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This insufficiency of emergency shelters among crisis-affected populations is not unique to Turkey, as similar cases have occurred elsewhere in the world. For example, shelters built after a tsunami that hit Sri Lanka in December 26, 2004 [23], those erected after a natural disaster in Haiti [24], and those built for 1.5 million people due to civil war in Somalia (I-beam design, 2008) all were insufficient in terms of cost, material, and semi-permanent as well as permanent life cases after the respective emergency. These structures were, perhaps, effective for addressing temporary emergency situations. According to Barakat (2003) however, it is known that humans, especially those affected by crisis, feel safer in permanent residences rather than in temporary accommodation and they re-build normal, healthy lives more quickly when they possess permanent forms of shelter [26]. These findings demonstrate the need for addressing issues of displacement with more permanent solutions.

Recognizing that the provision of suitable accommodation for refugees is not a sufficient means of their integration or coping with trauma [27], still the shelter problem should be prioritized among the hierarchy of needs. In order to solve this issue satisfactorily, however, it is necessary to recognize the characteristics of a given refugee populations' former residences. Indeed, previous studies have demonstrated that, together with economic difficulties, the negative effects of trauma among these individuals decrease when they are able to maintain aspects of their own cultures within the process of transition to a new life elsewhere [13].

Recently, policies have been changing regarding refugee camps. It is recommended that the camps be preferred at the early stage and solutions should be taken at the next stages[40]. Concerning the transition of refugees to city life, these individuals must overcome several obstacles in obtaining sufficient accommodation. Among many common problems such as lack of residence and social support, refugees who move to cities may also face bureaucratic issues in the housing process. Permanent residence for refugees is no different from that of normal consumers, but it can be seen as an opportunity to create additional and various residence options in order to promote social adaptation and integration. In short, the provision of permanent residences for refugees should promote socially conscious and economically viable options [28]. Thus, interdisciplinary and flexible construction planning arrangements and residence authorities are essential. Residence designs should be appropriate to the lifestyles and needs of their residents [29].

Some solutions for refugees in terms of accommodation in host countries have included cheap and innovative housing in Denmark; restricted access to social residences with the support of municipalities in France; the re-purposing of offices as residences with necessary zoning changes in the Netherlands; the use of empty houses by refugees in Portugal; mass housing, small and special residences, revival of social residences and temporary buildings, and the establishment of standards for asylum houses in Spain; and the use of vacant apartments, determination of public or private vacant residing areas, and active residence within social service law in Sweden [28].

### **3. Aims of This Study**

Many researchers concerned with refugees and asylum seekers have stated that the most important factor in reducing the impact of trauma among displaced individuals is satisfaction with living accommodation following resettlement [30]. It has been observed that although tent life initially is a successful solution, its temporary intention deems it insufficient in facilitating social integration and resilience. This insufficiency also necessitates the involvement of managing bodies and institutions in the transition of refugees from tent life to city life. In order to ease this transition, it is further necessary to examine the transition of refugees from previous homes to tent life as well as from tent to city life. Changes in life expectations throughout this transitional process should be thoroughly analyzed, as well.

This study examined the prior living spaces of Syrian refugees in Turkey who currently reside in tents as well as numerous aspects of their daily living situation. The purpose of this examination was to evaluate the sufficiency of tents in a semi-permanent life situation, levels of satisfaction with tents on behalf of the refugees, various uses of the tents according to needs as well as their sufficiency, and the amount of vital needs that the tents meet in terms of spatial arrangement.

The following research questions guided this study:

- a. What are the general demographics of the participants?
- b. How were the previous life standards of the participants in their home country?
- c. What are the participants' reasons for leaving Syria and preferring Gaziantep?
- d. How are life standards in tent cities?
- e. Does the needs-level of participants vary according to social status?

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- f. Is there a correlation among the needs perceptions, compartment needs, and satisfaction of participants?
- g. What are participants’ life expectations for post-tent life?

**4. Methodology**

*4.1. Data Collection and Sampling*

A questionnaire developed by the researcher was administered to participants in June 2017. The questionnaire was comprised of 25 questions and five parts: demographic information, previous life standards, reasons for leaving the home country, standards and expectations for tent life, and planning and expectations for post-camp life. The questionnaires were administered by AFAD experts who understand Arabic, the mother language of the participants. AFAD experts do not have direct camp management roles. At the beginning of the study, the interviewers were instructed that they should not be treated in a biased manner and that the expressions and thoughts should be transferred in the same way.

*4.2. Demographic Information of Participants*

The research sample consisted of individuals who were living in Nizip Tent Camp at the time of the study and volunteered to participate. The sample size included 115 families out of 9,285 individuals living in the camp. Details about participant demographics are presented in Table 4.1 below:

**Table 4.1.** Participant Demographic Information Per Tent.

<b>Person/Number</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>total</b>
Mother	1	113		1					115
Father	1	114							114
Child	4	5	6	11	17	27	40	5	528
G. Mother	96	18			1				22
G. Father	17	18							18
Other	114	1							1
<b>General Total</b>									<b>798</b>

As indicated above, a similar number of mothers and fathers participated, with an average of 4.6 children per family. 62% of the families had 5 or more children, and the amount of elderly participants like grandmothers and grandfathers was low. These amounts are similar to those of a previous AFAD study conducted in 2013.

Table 4.2 below displays the educational backgrounds of the adult participants in this study:

**Table 4.2.** Educational Backgrounds of Adult Participants.

Person	Illiterate	Up to university	University
Mother	47	56	11
Father	14	70	27
G. Mother	4	2	
G. Father	4	3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>69 (29%)</b>	<b>131(57.4)</b>	<b>38 (13.6%)</b>

In addition to the above information regarding adult participants, the following details regarding the educational backgrounds of child participants were also recorded: illiterate (45), kindergarten (15), primary school (195), middle school (125), high school (97), undergraduate and graduate (49). Moreover, the previously mentioned AFAD study conducted in 2013 observed the following regarding adult education backgrounds: illiterate (12.3%), literate (5.5%), primary school (36.6%), secondary school (24.7%), high school (3.2%) and higher education (7.8%). It is remarkable that the rate of illiterate adults in the present study’s sample is higher than in previous research groups. In general, when the statistics on all Syrian migrants are examined, the ratio of illiteracy is lower than this study. According to research, only 20 percent of these refugees possessed high school education or above as of 2016 [31].

The table below displays information related to participants’ employment backgrounds:

**Table 4.3.** Profession and Job Statistics.

Participants	Profession				Job			
	No		Yes		No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mother	100	87.7	14	12.3	98	86	17	14
Father	31	27.6	81	72.4	46	41	66	59
G. Mother	20	100	0		20	100	0	

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G. Father	16	89	2	11	17	94.4	1	5.6
Children			80	15	462	87.5	66	12.5

As displayed in the table above, two variables were defined for analyzing participants’ employment backgrounds: having a profession and owning a job. Some participants possessed previous professions in their home country such as teaching but they lacked jobs while residing in tents. For example, 72.4 percentage of fathers have a profession but only 59 percent of fathers have got a job. Also, 12.3 percentage of mothers have a profession but 14 percentage of mothers have got a job. According to another study concerning the distribution of professional groups of Syrian refugees, the highest rate was that of public employees (23.5%), followed by self-employed (20.6%), laborers (18.8%), and students (10%) [32].

The following table displays information regarding participants’ income levels:

**Table 4.4.** Income level in Turkish Lira (TL- \$).

<b>Income</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 399 TL (103\$)	66	57.4
400-799 TL (103-206\$)	27	23.5
800-1199 TL (206-309\$)	9	7.8
1200-1799 TL (309-464\$)	9	7.8
1800-2499 TL(464-644\$)	2	1.7
2500-4999 TL(644- 1287\$)	1	0.9
5000 TL or more (1287\$)	1	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of participants possessed a monthly income of 400 Turkish lira (TL-103\$), and the average income was 780 TL(200\$). Studies outside this camp have produced similar results. For example, according to a survey conducted in Izmir, although households were quite crowded, 68% of households possessed a monthly income of 1000 TL (257\$) and below [13].

### 4.3. Analysis

Participants' responses were coded and the data were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive analysis was then conducted to determine proportions for the categorical data. A Chi-square test and Pearson correlation were employed to identify correlations and important differences among participants' responses, with the accepted statistical significance being  $p \leq 0.05$ . New variables that were defined based on the questionnaire data include the following:

**Formula 1:** Need of Perception = (Necessary, But Unavailable) + (Accepted As Inadequate)

**Formula 2:** Compartment Needs = (Necessary, But Unavailable) + (Insufficient)

**Formula 3:** Number of Reasons for Asylum = (Number of Accepted Reasons)

**Formula 4:** Perception of Satisfaction = (Number of Dimensions Accepted As Adequate)

## 5. General Findings And Discussion

This section will first present the data regarding participants' former lives in Syria including their home characteristics. Next, participants' views and expectations concerning their lives in the tent city will be presented followed by their thoughts about leaving the tent city. At the end of each section component, the findings related to that section will be interpreted together with existing literature.

### 5.1. Life Standards in Syria

The majority of the participants formerly lived in villages (50, or 43.5%), while others lived in districts (42, or 36.5%) and city centers (23, or 20%). This information is similar to that obtained by Yıldız (2013), who found that the Syrian refugee population in Turkey came mainly from districts and villages (rural origin).

The table 5.1 displays information regarding participants' previous household incomes:

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**Table 5.1.** Previous Income in Syria.

<b>Income</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under \$200	57	49.6
\$200-400	26	22.6
\$400-800	10	8.7
\$800-1600	8	7.0
\$1600-2500	9	7.8
\$2500-5000	2	1.7
\$5000 or more	3	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown in the table 5.1, half of the participants formerly possessed monthly incomes below \$200 (1\$ = 3.884₺, as of Nov. 15 2017). In Gaziantep camps, however, a 120₺ monthly fee is given to each tent resident.

This study further examined the life standards of refugees prior to resettlement, including their house characteristics, property ownership, and number of spaces; the reasons for their residence preference; and environmental characteristics as well as spatial sizes of their current residences. The types of houses and ownership/rental details of their previous residences in Syria are presented Table 5.2:

**Table 5.2.** Types of House, Ownership/Rent.

<b>House Type</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Rent</b>	<b>House Owner</b>
Garden House	38	5	33
Flat	25	10	15
Studio flat	1	0	1
Duplex	1	0	1
Housing estate	4	1	3
Shanty	6	3	3
Old Arabic house	38	5	33
Other	2	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>89</b>

The table above indicates that a great majority of participants formerly lived in detached houses such as garden houses and old Arabic houses when they were

in Syria. One-fifth of these refugees resided in flats, while a particularly low number lived in housing estates, shanties, and studio flats.

**Table 5.3.** Square Footage of House When They Were in Syria.

Square footage	N
Smaller than 75m <sup>2</sup>	12
75m <sup>2</sup> - 100 m <sup>2</sup>	25
100 m <sup>2</sup> - 125 m <sup>2</sup>	29
125 m <sup>2</sup> - 150 m <sup>2</sup>	12
150 m <sup>2</sup> - 200 m <sup>2</sup>	17
larger than 200m <sup>2</sup>	20

As Table 5.3 above indicates, almost half of the participants formerly lived in residences between 75-125 m<sup>2</sup>, and nearly half lived in residences larger than 125 m<sup>2</sup>. Only one-tenth have lived in residences of 30-60 m<sup>2</sup>.

Standard indicators of the quality of life include not only wealth and employment but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging [39]. However, the cumulative levels of income, house ownership, and square footage are related to the quality of life. So that I calculate score for personal the quality of life (PQOL). For PQOL score, the minimum value was 0, and the maximum value was 14. Frequencies are displayed in the table below:

**Table 5.4** PQOL Score Frequencies.

PQOL Score	N	%
2	3	2.6
3	10	8.7
4	19	16.5
5	20	17.4
6	11	9.6
7	17	14.8
8	11	9.6
9	5	4.3
10	8	7.0
11	5	4.3

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12	3	2.6
13	2	1.7
14	1	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100</b>

Chi-Square=57,843 df=12 p=0.000

As indicated Table 5.4, only one family scored a maximum value. Approximately 80% of participants’ scores were 8 and below. To compare the frequencies between groups, a Chi-square test was conducted. The determined *p*-value was 0.000; as this value is under 0.05, it can be said that there were significantly different frequencies between the groups. In addition, the following three levels were determined: a low level of scores 2-5 and comprised of 52 families (45.2%), a moderate level of scores 6-10 and comprised of 52 families (45.2%), and a high level of scores 11+ and comprised of 11 families (9.6%). Most participants belonged to low or moderate levels.

5.2. Participants’ Reasons for Leaving Syria and Preferring Gaziantep

This study assessed participants’ justifications for leaving their homes and choosing to resettle in Gaziantep. It also assessed participants’ satisfaction with life in Gaziantep and their preferences for returning to their home country. As referenced in Table 5.5, survival was the main justification given by participants for leaving Syria. Education, work, health, and better life opportunities were cited by a small portion of the participants.

**Table 5.5.** Reasons for Leaving Syria and Preferring Gaziantep.

	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Leaving Syria	Survival	111	97
	Job	15	13
	Education	29	25
	Health	12	10
	A better life	14	12
	Other	15	13
	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Prefere	I do not have an alternative.	72	63
	It is close to border.	26	23

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I have close acquaintances.	26	23
I had a previous commercial connection.	26	23
It is close to our culture.	15	13
It is a beautiful city.	6	5
It is cheap.	4	4
I have been here before.	4	4
I have a higher possibility of finding a job.	3	3
Its life standard is high.	2	2

As the table above indicates, great majority of the participants chose to resettle in Gaziantep due to a lack of other alternative, one-fourth due to Gaziantep's proximity to the border and having a close acquaintance here, and some due to its similarity to their home culture. According to other field research, security (57.2%) and political (18.9%) reasons rank first among refugees' choice of resettlement here [33]. A significant number of Syrian refugees residing outside of camps reported that they left their homes for security reasons and chose Turkey because of the ease of transportation and proximity to their home [31]. According to another study, 53.7% of refugees chose Gaziantep because of its proximity to the border, 20% due to business opportunities, 17.6% due to safety, and 8.57% due to a lack of other alternative. The most important factor in the choice of Gaziantep is its proximity to the Turkish-Syrian border [17]. Lee's migration theory, which explains the reasons for migration [34], also illuminates the current situation in its assertion that the attractive characteristics of a city (availability of employment, high standard of living, etc.) are not perceived as positive factors by the majority of asylum seekers. This study's participants may have been unable to realize the effects of these factors due to their inability to participate in the city life itself. Thus, survival became a more significant factor in their decisions to resettle in Gaziantep. After Immigrants to Turkey despite being the possibility to go to different regions in Turkey prefer to live in areas close to the border. Moreover, the findings of this study are supported by immigration theories which emphasize migration distance as an important factor in resettlement preferences. Many studies have observed that the preferred places for migration in Turkey are close to the border [35].

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5.3. Evaluation of Tent Cities in Gaziantep

Three-quarters (80) of this study’s participants came to their tent city directly from Syria, one-fourth stayed in different places prior to their arrival, and most of those who stayed in different places resided either with an acquaintance (9) or in an apartment (10).

**Table 5.6.** Tent Size.

<b>Size</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
16m <sup>2</sup> (400x400) Standard	97	84.3
36m <sup>2</sup> (600x600) Standard	7	6.1
12-Person Hangar (400x400)	1	0.9
14.5m <sup>2</sup> (400x350) Disaster	3	2.6
16.5m <sup>2</sup> (300x530) Tunnel-type	1	0.9
16m <sup>2</sup> (515x328) Framed Prototype	5	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As indicated Table 5.6, most participants were residing in 400x400 standard tents at the time of this study. Measurements were calculated in terms of m<sup>2</sup>/person, with an average of 2.4 m<sup>2</sup> for each person. 6 participants (5.3 %) were occupying 1.00-1.99 m<sup>2</sup> of space, while 64 (56.1%) were occupying 2.00-2.99 m<sup>2</sup> . 8 participants (7%) were occupying 3.00-3.99 m<sup>2</sup>, 15 (13.2%) were occupying 4.00-4.99 m<sup>2</sup>, 7 (6.1%) were occupying 5.00-5.99 m<sup>2</sup>, 6 (5.3%) were occupying 6.00-6.99 m<sup>2</sup>, and 8 (7%) were occupying 7.00+m<sup>2</sup>. In terms of the duration of stay in the tents, 76.5% of the participants had been living in the tents for 36 months or longer at the time of this study. 5.2% had been living there for 20-26 months, 5.2% for 24-30 months, 7.8% for 18-24 months, 2.6% for 12-18 months, and 2.6% for 12 months or less.

**Table 5.7.** Necessary Tent Compartments.

<b>Place</b>	<b>Number of Existant</b>	<b>Necessary but unavailable</b>	<b>Insufficient</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>	<b>More</b>
Rooms	88	63	16	7	
Kitchen	15	54	30	10	1
Only WC, washbasin	4	40	43	15	1
Only Bathroom	4	37	46	14	

Bathroom& WC	4	40	46	12
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Most participants required rooms and kitchens, and 40% perceived their bathrooms and water closets to be insufficient (see Table 5.7). According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, these needs are in the first level and basic needs [36]. Although the tents had been built as single compartments, the participants were able to create additional compartments with simple materials such as curtains.

**Table 5.8.** Required Equipment.

Equipment	Existant	Non-existent	Necessary but unavailable	Insufficient	Sufficient	More
Ventilator	18	41	13	21	20	
Cooker	12	23	26	40	11	1
Refrigerator	21	33	13	15	29	1
Oven	10	20	20	48	12	
Kitchen Equipment	28	22	15	18	28	1
Sleeping Equipment	23	28	14	26	21	
Television	25	20	11	23	33	
Computer	6	20	27	55	5	
Heating (Stove, etc.)	28	24	12	18	27	

Regarding the equipment required for survival within each tent, the following was observed (see Table 5.8):

- One-fourth of participants evaluated heating and kitchen equipment as “available”, with the lowest evaluation belonging to computers.
- One-third evaluated ventilators and refrigerators as being “unavailable”, and one-fourth regarded heating and sleeping equipment as being “unavailable.”
- Ovens and cookers were most commonly rated as being “necessary but unavailable.”
- Computers, ovens, and cookers, respectively, were most commonly regarded as being “insufficient.”
- Televisions, kitchen equipment, and heating, respectively, were evaluated as being “sufficient.”

Initially, tents were a necessity for asylum seekers and local managers in Turkey. However, since 2012, different solutions have become increasingly

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necessary. Considering the needs expressed by refugees living in tent cities in Turkey, it is obvious that they need more permanent housing solutions.

Perceived needs were defined in terms of the number of equipment needed to live in a tent. Participants were divided into three groups according to the mean and standard deviation of the number of needs. The low level was comprised of participants expressing less than 5 needs, the moderate level was comprised of participants with 5 -12 needs, and the high level consisted of participants with 12 or more needs.

**Table 5.9.** Comparison of Social Status and Need Level.

Social Status Level	Need Level			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	
Low	10 (19.2%)	33 (63.5%)	9 (17.3%)	52 (100.0%)
Moderate	11 (21.2%)	31 (59.6%)	10 (19.2%)	52 (100.0%)
High	2 (18.2%)	7 (65.7%)	2(14.3%)	10 (100.0%)
Total	23 (20.0%)	71 (61.7%)	21 (18.3%)	115 (100.0%)

Chi-square=0.190; df=4; p= 0.966

Among all social levels, the majority of the participants belonged to a moderate level of need. When the percentages of low and high need levels were compared, these percentages were found to be approximately equal (see Table 5.9). To determine whether need levels changed according to social status, a Chi-square test was applied. Because the significant level (0.996) was greater than 0.05, it was determined that social status did not significantly influence need level.

**Table 5.10** Participants’ Satisfaction with Tents.

Tent	sufficient	insufficient	Not important
As size	14	95	5
As height	24	84	5
As comfort	13	95	5
As security	46	60	5
Heating	41	61	10
Insulation in hot weather	10	91	12

Insulation in cold weather in winter	13	87	10
Insulation in rainy weather	14	85	12
Insulation windy weather	11	88	10
Insulation and sagging in snowy weather	10	87	13

Concerning the sufficiency of the tents for survival, the components perceived by most participants as being sufficient were security and heating. On the other hand, the aspects most frequently regarded as being insufficient were comfort, size, and insulation in hot, cold, and windy weather, respectively. Around 10% evaluated climatic conditions and 5% spatial sizes as being unimportant (see Table 5.10).

The perception of satisfaction was defined as the number of sufficient items. To investigate whether there existed a correlation among perception of satisfaction, need perception, and compartment need, a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated.

**Table 5.11.** Pearson Correlation.

	<b>Need Perception</b>	<b>Compartment Need</b>	<b>Perception of Satisfaction</b>
Need Perception	1	0.630**	-0.195*
Compartment Need	0.630**	1	-0.296**
Perception of Satisfaction	-0.195*	-0.296**	1

\* Signification at 0.05 level \*\*significant at 0.01 level.

A negative correlation was found to exist between perception of satisfaction and need perception (-0.195) as well as between compartment need and perception of satisfaction (-0.296) (see Table 5.11). It can be inferred from these results that, to increase satisfaction, need perception should be decreased. Also, there was a high and positive correlation between compartment need and need perception. One study has mentioned the demand on behalf of Syrian asylum seekers for the Turkish government to improve the social and living conditions of their camps [2].

**Table 5.12** Service Availability in Tent City.

<b>Service Network</b>	<b>Available</b>	<b>Unavailable</b>
Fire Alarm System	54	61
Internet Network	38	77
Security Alarm	35	80
Satellite Network	23	92

Regarding service availability in the tent city, almost half of the participants were aware of the fire alarm system, one-third used the internet network and realized the existence of a theft alarm, and one-fifth realized the existence of a satellite network (see Table 5.12). According to another study, among the camp facilities offered to Syrian refugees, security systems ranked 49.7% in terms of satisfaction, while 15.5% were satisfied with the peace of the camps [32].

The following additions and alterations had been made by participants to their tents: compartmentalization (51), windows (24), insulation of the ground against rain (30), insulation of the ground against heat and cold (26), insulation of the cover coat against rain (33), and insulation of the cover coat against heat and cold (26). These findings indicate that precautions were taken according to climatic conditions and additions were made to the doors and open floor space in the front parts of the tents. Moreover, almost half of the tents had been compartmentalized (room), one-third contained additional insulation material against rain, one-fourth possessed additional floor and cover-coat insulation against heat and cold, and that one-fifth had encountered window additions.

In terms of camp space, almost half of the participants evaluated security as sufficient, one-third evaluated cleaning, education, and worship areas as sufficient, and one-fifth evaluated green spaces, social areas, cultural appropriateness, children’s playgrounds, sports areas, outdoor sitting areas, and shopping areas as sufficient. One-fourth considered the camp area to be dense, and one-third did not find it acceptable. Almost half of the participants were indecisive regarding the suitability of the above camp features.

#### *5.4. Life Plans After Tent*

This portion of the study examined participants’ moving plans, time, location, and reasons for being unable to move. Both the Syrian refugees and local Gaziantep population initially thought that the refugees would return to their countries within 6 months’ time of their coming. The first coming of the Syrian

refugees to Turkey commenced in 2011, and they have been living in Gaziantep for 6 years now. Residence in the tent cities began in 2012, and when participants in this study were asked if they would like return to their home country, almost all confirmed that they would. According to research, a common desire of the refugees who have resettled in Turkey is to see their future in Syria. 84% of these individuals have stated that they would definitely return to Syria after the war. Only 12.5 percent have claimed that they would remain in Turkey if employment were allowed [32]. With regulations dated April 26, 2016, the Turkish government granted work permits to Syrian refugees in Turkey. Although asylum seekers have indicated that they want to return to their countries, asylum seekers in many countries do not return to their countries in short or medium term. For example the is research about Afghan refugees. The study implemented among young Afghan refugees living in Iran found that the majority of the population did not want to return to their home country in the short- or medium-term [37].

**Table 5.13** Time to Move From Tent.

<b>Time</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
3 Months	15	20
6 Months	7	09
9 Months	6	08
1 Year	47	63
Total	75	100

For participants contemplating moving from tents, one-fifth stated that they were planning to move within 3 months and two-thirds within 9-12 months (see Table 5.13).

**Table 5.14** Reasons for Wanting to Leave Tent.

	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Comfort	43	55
Education	25	32
Health	26	33
Job Opportunity	22	28
Social Needs	45	58
Growth of Family	30	39

The table 5.14 above indicates that the main reason for wanting to leave the tents is social needs followed by comfort.

**Table 5.15** Reasons For Not Being Able to Leave Tent.

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Economic	49	63
I am planning to move back to my country in a short time.	32	41
Security	26	33
I do not know the city or I do not have acquaintances.	21	27
I am happy with the life here.	9	12

In reality, all of the refugees residing in tents here wish to continue their lives in houses of their own. Yet, while some of them are planning this, others cannot. The most important reason for not being able to leave the tents is economic, but some are also considering moving back to their country in a short time (see Table 5.15). Around one-third cited anxiety regarding security as their reason, and one-fifth mentioned not being familiar with the host city.

## 6. Conclusion And Suggestions

The first refugees who arrived in Gaziantep resettled in tents. However, since then, most have found housing in the city and others have transitioned to container cities built later. Eventually, some of the refugees moved back to tent cities from their residences in the host city and container city.

House ownership is important in terms of the future expectations of Syrian refugees residing in Turkey. Although the most important plans are to return to Syria, the fact that life in Syria has not yet returned to normalcy as well as the low number of returnees highlight the necessity of transitioning to more livable permanent structures. Acclimation to the life standards of their host city would continue to be a daily struggle for former tent residents. Likewise, they would continue to experience ambiguity in terms of their life plans and expectations as they settle in a city meant to be a temporary living space. However, changes in property ownership and economic situations could enable these individuals to rebuild a permanent life in Gaziantep.

This study has demonstrated that the daily activities and spatial needs of refugees together with other environmental factors form residence types [38]. Moreover, information regarding the types of former residence possessed by

refugees in their home country as well as their former life standards is essential to accommodating them in host cities as well as easing their assimilation into the host culture.

### *6.1. Conclusions*

Most of the refugees residing in Gaziantep's tent cities have come from districts and villages inside Syria. In addition, most of the families possess children, with the average child number per family being 4.5. It has also been observed that the number of children in each tent increases by one each year and that the elderly did not come to Turkey. Half of the families residing in tents possess a monthly income of less than \$200.

In addition to the above information, this study also gleaned that most refugees transitioned directly into tent cities and have been living there for more than three years in standard-sized (4.00mx4.00m) tents. In terms of living needs, it has been observed that computers, ovens, and cookers were considered by participants as being insufficient; that some participants lacked a ventilator and an oven; and that while the ventilator was considered a need in terms of climate, ovens and cookers were important tools for residents' food culture. Finally, televisions and refrigerators were among the equipment regarded as sufficient.

It has also been noted that participants perceived their tents to be insufficient for meeting the expectations of permanent life including comfort and climatic conditions. Although there were fire and theft alarms in the camps, some participants were not aware of this fact. Moreover, although there were internet and satellite networks, some lacked the knowledge, experience, and equipment necessary for taking advantage of these features. Due to survival needs, traditions, and an increase in family size, the need to compartmentalize the tents arose among this study's participants, who attempted to address this need by dividing the tent with curtains. A negative correlation was observed between perception of satisfaction and need perception as well as between compartment need and perception of satisfaction. A high and positive correlation was also identified between compartment need and need perception.

Although there were education, sports, and social areas within the camp, only one-fifth of the participants regarded these as being sufficient. They expressed that the tent cities could not adequately address their social needs due to its location far away from the city center, their lack of economic resources, and their long-time residence in the same location. Moreover, as the tents had been intended as a temporary solution, they did not adequately meet the social and comfort needs of the participants.

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Almost all of the refugees had abandoned their homes in Syria due to life-threatening causes, but the youth left particularly for educational opportunity. One-fifth evaluated the security of the tents as being insufficient, while one-third evaluated the cleanliness as insufficient.

In conclusion, this study evaluated the demographics, previous accommodation characteristics, and living standards of Syrian refugees residing in Gaziantep camps as well as their reasons for coming, satisfaction with their current accommodation, alterations and additions made to their living arrangements, and their daily living needs. As temporary living places, tents are expected to assist individuals in building new lives. Thus, they should reflect the spatial expectancies of their residents and imitate the characteristics of their former residences. In this regard, the findings of this study contribute to the future design of emergency, temporary, and semi-permanent structures for Syrian refugees in Turkey.

### *6.2. Suggestions*

Additional studies should be conducted regarding refugees' social integration and smooth transition from tent cities to the actual host cities here in Turkey. In this regard, precautions should be taken for establishing or revising social reinforcements without ignoring the expectancies of refugees. In the shorter-term, tents in Gaziantep should be renovated to meet the semi-permanent needs of residents, including the addition of compartments, division into separate compartments according to the number of family members, and the use of materials more resistant to fire, wind, heat, and other climatic conditions. Essential sociological reinforcements should also be made to future tent cities, including updates to education tents, practical skills-building tents, surveillance areas, etc. Finally, an average time for each resident's occupation of the tents should be determined.

Politicians, administrators, architects, and engineers should evaluate the desires and expectations, customs and traditions, and other cultural aspects of Syrian refugees in devising their respective solutions. Moreover, the security, green spaces, social domains, population density, cultural appropriateness, educational needs, playground, sports area, outdoor recreational area, prayer area and shopping areas of camps should be evaluated in their designs. An analysis of the sociological needs and satisfaction of refugees in Gaziantep's camps would lend positive results in terms of how resources are being used. In this regard,

spatial sizes, climatic conditions, traditions, number of family members per tent, and social needs should also be evaluated. Finally, future refugee settlements should be closer to city centers rather than isolated from existing local life so that residents may integrate more easily into host communities. Other camp characteristics should also be evaluated based on their support of such integration.

Refugees should have the chance to contribute to the local economy and acquire more permanent forms of residence while increasing their household income. It is also necessary to train and provide refugees who lack a profession in villages close to the center with agriculture and livestock incentives and to solve the residence problem in those areas, as well. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to provide housing for other sections of refugees in areas which are close to industrial zones. It is important to provide quotas to refugees while constructing urban transformation areas in the city and design these places according to their own cultures. Inclusion of refugees in decision-making mechanisms which affect them would contribute to more thorough and long-lasting solutions.

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