

The Necessity of Externalization of Costs of Syrian Refugees (The Case of Turkey) Suriyeli Mültecilerin Maliyetinin Dışsallaştırılması Gerekliliği (Türkiye Örneği)

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Abstract

Many people running away from the civil war in Syria, which started in May, 2011 and has still been going on chancing its business cycle, have been urged to refuge in the neighbouring countries. Turkey is one of the countries housing these refugees. As a result of this immigration movement starting in April, 2011 Turkey has been the house of more than 2.5 million Syrian refugees since March, 2016. 13-14% of these millions of people stay in the refugee camps settled in 10 main cities and the remaining huge part of them live in various cities dispersedly. The refugee mob mostly consisting of dilutees is a serious economic trouble for Turkey. The expenditure amount committed for Syrian refugees has reached 8 million \$ since August, 2016. The economic issues of Turkey, who has been obliged to carry out the the principal of "interiorising the exogeneities" due to its geopolitical position, is scrutinized. By analyzing economic datas year by year via the charts featured by UN, OECD and AFAD it is concluded that the economic cost, undertaken by Turkey, needs to be externalized and shared on the global scale; consequently each country should join in the refugee matter in the rate of its own budget and financial planning.

Keywords: Syria, Refugee, Spending, Geopolitical position.

Öz

Suriye’de Mart 2011’de başlayıp, günümüze kadar, konjoktür değiştirerek devam eden iç savaştan kaçarak gelen çok sayıda insan, komşu ülkelere sığınmak zorunda kalmıştır. Ülkelerini terk etmek zorunda kalan sığınmacıların geldiği komşu ülkelerden birisi de Türkiye’dir. 2011 yılının Nisan ayından itibaren, Türkiye üzerine başlayan göç hareketi sonucu, Türkiye Mart 2016 itibarıyla 2 buçuk milyonu aşkın Suriyeli sığınmacıya ev sahipliği yapmaktadır. Milyonlarla ifade edilen bu sayının sadece %13-%14 ‘ü, 10 ilde kurulan 23 mülteci kampında kalmakta, geriye kalan çok büyük oran ise çeşitli şehirlerde dağınık halde yaşamaktadır. Çoğunluğunu niteliksiz işgücünün oluşturduğu mülteci grup ekonomik olarak ciddi bir külfet getirmekte, Ağustos 2016 itibarıyla, Suriyeli mülteciler için yapılan harcama tutarı yaklaşık 8 milyar dolara ulaşmaktadır. Jeopolitik konumu itibarıyla, dışsallıkların içselleştirilmesi prensibini uygulamak zorunda kalan Türkiye’nin, yıllar içinde yaşadığı ekonomik sorunlar irdelenip; BM, OECD ve AFAD’ın yayınlamış olduğu tablolar aracılığıyla, ekonomik veriler yıllara göre analiz edilmekle birlikte Türkiye’nin yüklenmiş olduğu maliyetin dışsallaştırılması ve bu maliyetin küresel ölçekte pay edilmesi binaenaleyh mültecilerin maliyeti sorununa her ülkenin kendi bütçe ve mali planlaması ölçüsünde katılması gerekliliği sonucu ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriye, Sığınmacı/Mülteci, Harcama, Jeopolitik konum.

Introduction

Arab Spring started in 2011 and it caused the change of governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen. It caused a crisis between the Assad regime and opposition movement in Syria (Sandikli and Semin, 2012). Bashar al-Assad appointed the Syrian Army and organized opposition demonstrations in the country in order to eliminate the opposition rebellion.

However, fire was shot on the opposition by soldiers. The aggravation of the events made the Syrian administration feel the need to make various promises to the protesters (Altundere and Yılmaz, 2016). Syrian Leader Bashar al-Assad promised the protesters that all those arrested will be released and legitimate demands of protesters will be assessed. In the meantime, the Assad administration has promised to consider the end of the ongoing

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emergency situation since 1963 (BBC Turkish, 2011). However, such promises and the foreseen policies were not implemented and the opposition was not satisfied with the steps taken. As a result, crisis has deepened.

Assad did not consider the calls of Turkey and some Western countries to end the harsh policies and preferred to implement policies with more pressure and violence, set up the scene for the start of a civil war (Ağır and Sezik, 2015). The instability caused the Syrians to immigrate compulsorily into safe regions.

These forced migrations occurred both in different regions within the country as well as outside the country (Orhan, 2014, p. 5). While the population of Syria was around 21.5 million in 2010, approximately 10 million of this population have been displaced by 2014, which is almost half of the population of the country. While about 6.5 million of these people are displaced within their own country; 3.5 million had to leave their country, becoming refugees (Yonca, 2014, p. 26). Most of the refugees who have abandoned their country arrived to Turkey since 2011. According to January 2016 figures, the number of refugees registered in Turkey is 2 million 523 thousand 554 people. When the unregistered Syrians are added, we can say that the number of Syrian refugees within the borders of Turkey reaches a number exceeding 2.7 million.

This article argues that as Turkey continues to accept the Syrians despite the dramatic increase in the number of residents (Orhan and Gündoğar, 2015, p. 12), and the impact of ever-growing number of Syrian refugee populations on the social, political and economic aspects of Turkish society (Kirişçi, 2014, p. 12). It has been argued that the cost of the refugee community should be shared with other interested parties to the extent of their budget.

Migration Movement from Syria to Turkey

The rebellions which have started with small scale popular uprisings in January 2011, have turned into larger scale ones in March 2011 at the southern town of Dera. Dera is considered as the starting point of all rebellions. The rebellions, which were thought to be short-lived in the early days, have been going on for 5 years (Sahin, 2016). When the Assad regime opened fire to public and when the tension has increased, a small scale of people have first migrated. In the first year of the conflict, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq were among the countries where Syrian refugees were sheltered. According to the UN data, in the first fifteen months after March 2011, date when the conflicts started, there was a steady flow between the camps in Turkey and Syria, however the official authorities have stated that there were 25 thousand refugees in Turkey (Eren, 2012).

When monitored throughout the years, the number of refugees in Turkey has increased exponentially. The reason for this is the "Open Door Policy", which has been implemented by Turkey since the beginning of the conflicts. As Esen and Binatlı point out in the light of numerical data: *"As a consequence of the open door policy of Turkey since the beginning of the civil war, the number of Syrian refugees, which was 9,500 in 2011, reached 132,000 in December 2012, 587,616 in December 2013, 1,550,000 in December 2014, and to 2,500,000 in December 2015. Thus, Turkey has become the country hosting the maximum number of refugees in the world"* (Esen and Binatlı, 2016, p. 4.) When we look at the number of refugees in January 2016, we see that the number continues to increase dramatically. The number of Syrian refugees has reached to 3.4% of the Turkish population.

Some of the refugees, of which the number exceeds 2.5 million, live in tent cities, provisional acceptance centers and containers established by government in Hatay, Gaziantep, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye, Adıyaman, Adana and Malatya. (AFAD, 2016).

Table 1: Number of Syrians in provinces

Provinces	Center for Shelter Number	Current Number of Syrians
Hatay	5	19.244
Gaziantep	5	44.504
Sanliurfa	5	113.591
Kilis	2	36.731
Mardin	1	4.642
Kahramanmaras	1	18,235
Osmaniye	1	7.250
Adiyaman	1	9.512
Adana	1	341
Malatya	1	10.289
Total	23	258.333

Source: (BarınmaMerkezlerinde Son Durum), 2016 , www.afad.gov.tr/tr/2374/Barınma-Merkezlerinde-Son-Durum, 12.12.2016

Social Effects of Syrian Refugees on Turkish Society

A person who is named as a refugee is the person who feels under pressure in his/her own country due to race, religion or political thought, who does not trust his own government, who thinks that his government will not act neutral towards him/her and therefore leaves the country and asks for asylum in another country and this request is accepted.

As a more comprehensive definition, the term 'refugee' is included in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees. Accordingly;

A person who is out of his country of origin, who is fearful of righteous reasons for persecution due to race, religious nationality, a certain social group membership or political opinion, who does not benefit from or enjoys the protection of his country, or does not want to return there for fear of persecution" is defined as a refugee.

Turkey, which has strong historical, cultural and neighborhood ties with Syria, has followed the "Open Door Policy" for the Syrians affected by the crisis, and it has become the country hosting the most number of refugees with 44 % of acceptance rate (Tunc, 2015, p. 29-63). Between 2011, the beginning of crisis, and 2014, the refugees who came to Turkey from Syria were not in the agenda of society since they were resident at the settlement centers established in the border provinces. However, as they have started to disseminate in almost every corner of Turkey since 2014, the year when the crisis was named as "War", they became more popular in Turkey's social agenda (Güçtürk, 2014).

The Syrians in Turkey live in the camps or outside the camp. People living in the camps live more prosperous in social, health and similar facilities than those living outside the camp. Despite this, 85% of the Syrian refugees in our country live outside of the camp (Tunç, 2015, pp. 29-63). For Syrian refugees who face all kinds of difficulties in life outside the camp, life is very challenging and it seems to become more challenging as the social conflict among the Turkish people and Syrian refugees become more apparent.

The Impact of Syrian Refugees on Turkish Economy

We face with the concepts of risks and opportunities when examining the economic impact of Syrian refugees on Turkey (Orhan and Gündoğar, 2015, p. 17). When we make a classification, we see that refugees have impact on Turkish economy from five different channels. These are:

Financial / fiscal impact, aggregate demand impact, labor market impact, foreign trade impact and demographic impact (Esen and Binatli, 2016, p. 5).

The Financial / Fiscal Impact of Refugees

This channel is the most significant item for Turkish economy as it includes the expenditures and assistance for refugees. Expenditure and assistance are provided by central government, local government and NGOs (Esen and Binatlı, 2016, p. 5).

No report or document showing the amount of expenditure made for the refugees in detail and accepted by each sector could be accessed. However, in our work, we will specify the amounts of expenditures and assistance published by Turkish Government, Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN).

Turkish government generally provides responses to question proposals and thereby gives out the necessary data accordingly. Minister of Finance Naci Ağbal, answering the question proposal by Nigde MP of RPP, Omer Fethi Gurer, stated that approximately 3 million Syrian citizens in Turkey were hosted in temporary protection status and noted that 253,487 Syrian people live in 26 shelter centers established by AFAD in 10 provinces.

President of Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has made a speech at 2016 United Nations Summit on Refugees and said:

Turkey has spent 12.5 billion dollars for refugees so far. A similar amount was also paid by NGOs and municipalities. In other words, a total expenditure of 25 billion dollars has been made,

This amount of expenditure means that it reached to 1% of GDP in 2015 in Turkey (TUIK, 2016).

When we look at the refugee problem in Turkey from the perspective of the European Union; The EU is addressing the refugee issue through ECHO[†]. ECHO urgently emphasizes that refugee communities should focus on the weakest people and those families and individuals who are not adequately serviced. Since November 2015, the union countries and the European Commission have pledged to create a "Turkish Refugee Tool" by creating a 3 billion Euros aid fund to support humanitarian aid and development projects for refugees in Turkey in 2016 and 2017.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the humanitarian aid provided by the EU to Turkey is 588 million Euros as of September 2016. The figure of the Republic of Turkey spent on the refugees shows that there are serious differences between the figures of the European Union and that Turkey almost handles the refugee problems by itself.

From the perspective of United Nations (UN), the refugee problem in Turkey is handled through OCHA[‡]. According to OCHA's declarations of the member states and the statements made by the UN organizations for declarations, the amount of humanitarian aid collected through the UN amounted to 4 billion 586 million 314 thousand dollars. The US alone provided more than one third of this aid (Keleş, 2015). As a result, the amount of aid the UN has undertaken remains as almost the half that Turkey has undertaken alone. It seems like that the world considers the problem of Syrian refugees as the problem of Turkey.

Impact of Refugees on Total Demand

Refugees cause a demand for food, housing, health and education, which they have made to come to the forefront, resulting in an increase in total demand (Esen and Binatlı, 2016, p. 5).

[†] The European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) is run under the Commission and the Council of Ministers of the European Commission to assist the non-EU countries. ECHO assists with basic goods and services, regardless of race, color, religion, political opinion.

[‡] United Nations Humanitarian Affairs Coordination Office

85% of the Syrian refugees in Turkey live outside the camp (Tunç, 2015, pp. 29-63). This causes the shocks that occur beyond the control of the government. When the demand is high and supply is stable, the price for goods and services increase, and not only Syrian refugees but also Turkish citizens will be affected.

Impact of Refugees on Labor Market

While a demand shock appears in Turkey due to the needs of refugees, the refugees themselves cause a shock of supply in labor markets.

The labor supply curve slides to the right and as a result both wages fall and domestic labor force will be replaced with cheaper labor force (Esen and Binatli, 2016, p. 5). This effect is manifested both in the unrecorded and recorded sector. Unrecorded sector manifests itself as the area where more work is done with less amount of wages. When considered qualitatively, the unrecorded sector also emerges in areas where there is a gap of employment in the country that people do not wish to work at and it is increasing as the Syrian refugees increase.

As stated by Çelik (cited in Duran, 2014), the Syrian refugees are treated as the lowest in the labor market in Turkey and also they are employed in sectors with low salary and poor working conditions without any social security. When we consider on a gender basis, the result is unchanged as the refugees participate in unrecorded sector regardless of whether they are male, female, young, old or educated, which causes supply shock in Turkey (Caprio and Wagner, 2015, p. 21).

Impact of Refugees on Foreign Trade

Syria is an entrance gate for Turkey to the Middle East. Therefore, Turkey was greatly influenced by the war in Syria. Turkey-Syria trade relations have increased exponentially after 2000 and especially after 2002, when the single party rule in Turkey started, but since 2011, when rebellions and a full-scale war started in Syria, it has shown a declining trend (Göçer and Çınar, 2014, p. 59).

Our argument is supported by the table below which indicates the export and import rates between Turkey and Syria on an annual basis.

Table 2: Foreign trade values between Turkey and Syria (million USD)

Years	Export	Import	Balance	Volume
2.003	411	413	-3	824
2004	395	358	37	752
2005	552	272	279	824
2006	609	187	422	797
2007	798	377	421	1,175
2008	1,115	639	476	1,754
2009	1,425	328	1,097	1,753
2010	1,845	663	1,182	2,507
2011	1,610	524	1,086	2,134
2012	501	67	434	568
2013	1,024	85	939	1,209
2014	1,801	114	1,687	1,915
2015	1,523	25	1,498	1,548

Source: TUIK, 2016.

As can be understood from Table 4.4.1, the bilateral relations between Turkey and Syria, had a severe decline in 2012 on the basis of foreign trade, due to the Syrian Civil War

which started in 2011. Following this year, the export based relations have reached to the level in 2008, and the levels were even lower than 2000 in terms of import.

Demographic Impact of Refugees

The migration causes an inevitable impact on the host country. As a matter of fact, when considered from the Turkish perspective, Syrian refugees affected the population structure in almost every part of Turkey, especially at border provinces (Esen and Binatlı, 2016, p. 8).

Before arguing the demographic impact of Syrian refugees, it would be appropriate to mention Turkey's demographic window of opportunity. The rate of population growth in Turkey has slowed down and has approached the level of population growth rate in developed countries. As a result, while the share of the young population in the total population declines, the rate of productive population (15-64 years) and the number of elderly population increase within the total population. This situation is called as 'demographic opportunity window' (TÜSİAD, 1999, p. 5).

When we look at the age dynamics of the Syrian refugees, it draws a graphic close to Turkey and can contribute to Turkey's demographic opportunity window (Esen and Binatlı, 2016, p. 8). Refugees in the age group of 15-64, which is the age of participation in the workforce, are in the same level as Turkey, with a lower elderly dependency rate. However, in contrast, the number of people under the age of 18 who are in need of care is higher than the total population (AFAD, 2013).

Conclusion

From 2011, Arab Spring and the new direction of Middle East towards reshaping the maps, the opposition protests that started in Syria and the crisis as a result have caused almost 5 million Syrians to be displaced. Almost 3 million of them had to take refuge in Turkey. The Syrians, who were first treated under the guest status, have then transformed into refugee status due to the events in Syria have been named as "war".

The refugee problem was not in the agenda of Turkey at the beginning. However, it became a significant issue as the Syrian refugees were disseminated almost every city of Turkey and by time it became the most important current problem. The refugee problem, which brings together many economic, social and political problems, is a major issue which should be solved with collaboration of every state. Despite the fact that there are no clear reports on this, according to information obtained from officials, Turkey has had to spend about \$ 8 billion for refugees. In addition with the social problems, its economic role in this problem challenges Turkey on a continuous basis and Turkish officials repeat that this is not only the problem of Turkey, and other institutions and governments, including United Nations and European Union should also take responsibility. The European Union declared that refugees should continue to stay in Turkey and Europe has declared 3 billion Euros in financial support to Turkey.

However, by September 2016, the amount of support that was sent by EU to Turkey was only 588 million Euro.

The Syrian refugee problem in question does not appear to be a problem to be solved in a short time. For this reason, the Turkish authorities should state that the refugee issue is not only a problem of Turkey at every opportunity and condition,

Nations should be in constant dialogue with the European Union and other relevant countries and should address the refugee issue not as its own internal problem but as a common problem with all other countries.

The social problems suffered and their results should also be reflected to other countries.

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