

Economic Hardship of Refugee Hosting Country: An Analysis of the Case of Turkey

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Abstract

Today's refugee dilemma is not simply a humanitarian issue but also a crisis from economic perspective. The number of people forced to flee their home due to war or natural disasters is increasing in the world. Due to a lack of data and the fact that the topic does not lend itself to proper impact evaluation techniques, the economic effects of refugees on host countries are debatable and little understood. This study will address various scenarios in which host countries for refugees encounter crisis related to their social, economic, and infrastructure status. This study will first evaluate how much Turkey initially accommodate for the refugees as a host nation. On the other side, host nations are likewise in a problematic situation because of various state and non-state actors. Such issues with Turkey's neighbours are also present, one of which is the relationship between Turkey and the EU. This study will evaluate Turkey's prior economic difficulties as a host country based on secondary data to comprehend financial hardship due to the problem. The veracity of various sources was carefully considered in this study without overlooking the potential for prejudice. Priority was given to academic books, articles, journals, statistical websites, and official reports; nevertheless, when other sources of information were exhausted, online newspapers were also consulted.

Key Words: Refugee, Economy, Turkey, Host country, Impact.

Introduction

During the 17th century, human beings were curious about bordering policies, and crossing of border was not a critical issues like today's. In 1604 the European Union (EU) depicted colourful geographical borders in the European map book. The Dutch-origin geographer Matthews Quad first published his atlas map of the European states, which marks boundaries between the states to indicate every state's uncertain or heated discussion status. Mentioned borders neither accept their neighbours nor permitted to visit them. Before the creation of the modern state, during the last century of slow political development and ongoing struggle, Europe fully recognized sovereign state borders. This transformation is dependent on several factors, one of which is the gradual expansion of state bureaucracies focused on the periphery that control taxation and military operations, the stretching of secularist ideology under the banner of nationalism,

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the emergence of capitalism, and the routine exploitation of local economies, including currencies, trade, and industries. These mentioned barriers create an efflux of undocumented, displaced people. Those people are hosted in both their destination countries and transit countries. By no means did they get rid of themselves from their first entry country because of their unknown situation. Since 2005 the EU has already signed the EU Readmission Agreements (EURAs) with different refugee-sending countries (Marc LILIENKAMP & SALIBA, 2015). However, their Readmission Policies are still questionable for the emerged uncompleted financial “give and take situation.” But despite the defined funding of the EU, host countries are spending from their budget.

According to the report of “World Economic Forum Turkey received more than 4 million refugees until December 2017, which is the most significant undocumented people proportion among the receiving countries (Edmond, 2017). According to the official numbers, there are 3,640,466 Syrian refugees in Turkey as of January 2019 (UNHCR, Operational Portal Refugee Situation, 31). Unofficial numbers are estimated at more than 4 million. These numbers mean that Turkey hosts 62% of the Syrian refugee population (officially). These populations are 4.29% of the total Turkish population (UNHCR, Operational Portal Refugee Situation, 31). In 2016, Lebanon experienced a vast number of refugees where one person in six persons was a refugee. It was stated that Lebanon hosts a large number of people in comparison to its population. The primary source of these undocumented people in Syria and the remaining second largest group comes from Iraq. Thus, the refugee issue has become a growing economic challenge through public, academic, and policy debates for the hosting countries. To provide “temporary protection status” to those refugees, host countries are spending money from their self-budgets. One of the most giant hosting countries, Turkey almost spends an enormous portion of its budget. Thus, it becomes essential to evaluate the affecting role of the refugee crisis on hosting countries along with the challenges and opportunities. This study will examine several concerns of hosting countries in the process of accommodating refugees in terms of social, economic, and infrastructural matter. This study mainly aims to assess the considerable expense and hardship Turkey has to incur because of the refugee problem

Methodology

This research aims to examine the different types of refugee crises in hosting countries, especially in Turkey, as the largest refugee-hosting country. Turkey is the first arriving country for Syrian refugees and this is one of the reasons for effecting Turkey’s economics, politics and social life. There has been a different type of researches on these issues but there also has a requirement of finding a deep background of this influx upon Turkey. Grounded on this; the research questions “How a lengthened refugee crisis causes a long-standing economic security crisis for hosting countries?” have been framed with the aim of disclosing how Turkish economic security has been threatened and how Turkey overcome and benefited from this refugee flows. This research question intended to find out, along with changing social security; which securities are being affected. The

Study is based on secondary data and qualitative in nature. “Document study” method is used to analyse the hardship facing Turkey for the refugee crisis taking reference from a wide range of books, articles, newspaper, reports and online sources

The Refugee crisis in Turkey

Nowadays, a refugee crisis is not only a humanitarian crisis but also a tool to deadlock a country's economic situation and make an indirect dependency. Turkey as a hosting country already spent 30 Billion US dollars according to its different news agencies. A country with a growing economy, it is really a vast expense for Turkey. In compare with other developing nations who are hosting refugees, their financial pressure is somehow supported by NGO or INGOs. According to an official research, UN observing that refugee hosting cost is increasing gradually. In 2013 and 2014, Jordan received 5.3 billion USD whereas UN estimated that only in 2014 it would see an increase of over 2.1 billion USD. Nevertheless, host countries suffer dilemma because of the relationship of the host country with different nations and non-state actors. Turkey also faced such complications with its neighbours, and the EU-Turkey relations also is one of the factors. Getting visa-free facilities is one of the major promises from the EU that Turkey anticipated. From the very beginning of the accession process, Turkey completed all the necessary conditions that the EU demanded, for example, customer policies, sharing market policy and so on. The EU accession journey for Turkey was not as good as expected. From the beginning of 1959, due to hidden political agendas, the EU accession process has been delayed. (HASAN, S. 2018). But in spite of integrating with all of those rules and regulations, the EU neither accepts Turkish accession nor granted visa-free process. In the meantime, the EU provided visa liberalization facilities to those countries that are connected after Turkey. This decision made critical for the relations of Turkey with EU nations. This is how it is stated that the EU has dual policy for Turkish accession and visa liberalization process as well.

Final thing is, few years back of this refugee crisis; Turkey undergo different economic hardships. After a long deadlock situation, Turkish economy started to flourishing from 2000 which continued till 2012. During this time, Turkey achieved per capita income record approximately \$10,500 which changed the Turkish economic position among the world. Turkey struggled with poverty for a long, and during that timeframe, poverty dropped a dramatic way. Extreme poverty dropped from 13% to 4.5% and moderate poverty dropped from 44% to 21% because of dramatic development of different public service sectors including health, education, municipal services etc. After the global economic crisis, Turkey created 6.3 million jobs, developed labour policy, increased women's participation etc. Along with that, Turkey developed relation with the EU in different sectors, for example, trade & finance, rules & regulations etc. But internal clash within different Syrian interest groups effects almost stable Turkish economy (Hasan, 2018). However, Professor. Dr. Bekir Berat Özipek in his report (Özipek, 2018) described migrants and asylum seekers as a positive force in term of economic contribution to the host countries. He opined to have miss concept of refugee crisis as an

economic burden as the refugees can differently contribute in shaping host countries economy both as a producer and as a customer. In this situation, Syrian refugees in Turkey have a great impact on the Turkish society and economy. Different cities in Turkey where Syrian refugees are staying seem to vibrant cities (in a sense of professions) and these waves can be measurable. According to Dr. Özipek, the process is not only presenting economic integration but also projecting affirmative reflections. (Özipek, 2018)

Hosting of Refugees affect the economy of Turkey

Turkish economic is expanding.(Hasan, 2018) Regular infrastructure development, accessing banking loan in private sector, decreasing trade defecate with foreign countries, expanding new trade partners, exporting high level taxed products, increasing economic zones, and establishments of different government institutions, providing tax benefits and low cost of utilities, and ready to use areas for investors are the sign of the progress of Turkish economy. Hasan also mentioned that Turkey focused on producing low costing technology products and its seen that Turkey already developed in its own automotive sector. Turkey also increases government support to SME sectors and rearranges policies of this sector. (Hasan, 2018) Turkey also had a rapid development in the airlines sector. According to the last official statistics, Turkish national flag career enlightened Turkish economy with a 23% profit increase.

Robert Chambers in his impeccable paper (Chambers, 1986) stated that refugee issue dependents on host countries economic situation. He differentiates poor hosts and non-poor hosts in a sense of poor host mean underdeveloped country and non-poor host means developing country. According to his analysis, when a poor country accepts refugees the country has to face economic scarceness from food, wage, labour, general services and so on. He also analysed organizational attitude of donor institutions or countries upon host countries. Generally, donor institutions or countries extended help to the host countries in a drive of the improvement of refugee crisis, not for the development of host countries. In case of Turkey, donor countries or institutions are seen helping Syrian refugees, but they are not structurally helping Turkey. Most of the NGO's allocates funds to their local counterparts in Turkey, and those local counterparts work with different Turkish NGO or INGO's. They follow their own process, make the proposal, present the proposal, get the permission of administrative or institutional body, then they contact with their local counterparts and bargain with project financing and finally when both donor and local counterpart agrees on the final expenditure, then the project can start. But host country cannot stop the regular expenditures on refugee hosting even for a day. Moreover, existing refugees are seen increasing in number each day. Nevertheless, it's an obvious duty of the hosting countries government to pay from their own budget. Chambers mentioned that donor countries and institutions overlook not only diffident issues of hosting refugees but also the situation of hosted peoples. (Chambers, 1986)

Refugee crisis and management challenges for Turkey

Dr Harun Öztürkler & Dr Türkmen Göksel their report (Ozturkler & Goksel, 2015) analyses the effects in hosting countries in two ways: First, employing a method known as synthetic modelling that calculates the time trajectories of economic variables in different refugee-receiving provinces of Turkey, such as refugee flow, foreign commerce, employment, education on services, health services, housing, and migration rate. The second process was interview and FGD process. They opined based on their findings that integration needs a smooth process which will depend on both refugees economic, social and demographic characteristics and legal and institutional frameworks. (Ozturkler & Goksel, 2015) Oytun Orhan & Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015) seek attention for three basic functions: First, there has a probability for the huge number of refugees will either stay in Turkey or will return to Syria. Second, ground on the first observation, it is as crucial for Turkey to prepare a comprehensive refugee policy that contains anticipatory methods to deal with possible-negative feedbacks comes from the local communities in different provinces of Turkey. It's almost about social incorporation, and commendations for central decision makers are provided in the conclusion. The third observation is related to diversity. This Syrian refugee situation might contribute to an enhancement of the diverse makeup of Turkey if the incorporation process works successfully. (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015)

According to the OECD report (OECD, 2017), hosting countries face some policy challenges to establish proper management tool for migration crisis. Among those challenges, migrated family have different tendency to integrate. Comparing with another group of migrants, adult family migrants have marked a slow integration in host countries. As OECD marked, there have some different policy challenges such as dealing with family unification rights for minor families, using hosting countries conditions to accelerate family migrations, making a proper balance between sending countries flow and hosting countries labour market integration in the context of integrating families. Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford portrayed some scenarios of host countries and hosted refugees in their report (RSC, 2017). In the report, they have mentioned that local authorities have used their own policies for hosting Syrian refugees. In fact, some of the governorates and municipalities in Turkey have adopted relatively more inclusive or restrictive policies towards Syrian refugees. The report mentioned three different cities where those policies are being implemented: Gaziantep, Adana, and Izmir. According to their arguments, across all the governing levels, capacity building is the most important issues for host countries. (RSC, 2017). Emma Carmel in her research paper (Carmel, 2013) illustrated that analysis of EU migration policy is straightly related to EU law and its different application to individual member states. The union's free movement and migration policies organized both within and beyond its member states. Like other integrated functions, this function also part of border governance. Hereafter EU policies always integrated with three factors, firstly, member state hierarchies in the EU's political economy; secondly, variation in the national and local labour market for informal

economy and secondly, integration in social policies along with migration in national and local variations. (Carmel, 2013)

The Role EU

Heaven Crawley (Crawley,2017) in her report claimed that this refugee waves started from the Second World War, and existing refugee system can't protect the flow or event for a long lasted and mutually benefited solution for all. She opined that global approaches towards refugees should be reformulated and recommended to shift policies from humanitarian assistance to development programs. The refugee crisis of Turkey is closely related with her relation with EU countries. In his research paper titled "Türkiye-Ab Geri Kabul Anlaşması ve Vize Diyalogu," Dr Mehmet Uğur EKİNCİ (Ekinci, 2016) discussed the pros and cons of the Readmission Agreement and its effect on Turkey – EU politics. He also On December 16, 2013, readmission agreement was signed between Turkey and the European Union and it comes into force on 1 October 2014 partially. In 2015, responding the refugee crisis, Turkey wanted a quick move from EU to start the agreement and, finally EU agreed to activate the agreement on 1 June 2016. As return of Turkish support, EU promised to provide Visa Free entrance for Turkish citizens and also promised to finance the process to strengthen Turkish refugee management system. But unfortunately, the EU didn't finalize the visa roadmap system and also made a lengthy process for fund disbursement. Considering this situation, Turkey should finalize its own decisions for the future. Manfred Weber in his research paper (Weber, 2018) mentioned that in recent years Turkey and EU relations have changed a lot due to migrations issues. Weber stated that EU should keep a good relation with Turkey to secure their borders. But for a long-term goal, the EU needs a fresh start with Turkey. In his article, he tried to focus on strengthening EU-Turkey relation using management of migration as a common platform. He stated that the refugee crisis is a good instance where Turkey and the EU can work together. But he did not mention EU's fund disbursement issues. He also indicated the 15th July failed de 'coup as an internal situation which is not countable. But in his recommendations, he mentioned again that EU must recognise Turkish effort for refugees.

Syrian refugee crisis and Military expenses

Syrian crisis not only a humanitarian challenge for Turkey, it poses militancy threat from security perspective. Can Acun & Bilal Salaymeh (Acun & Salaymeh, 2018) discussed on a new dimension of the Syrian refugee crisis. Their paper titled "SURIYE KRIZİNDE YENİ SAFHA IDLIB" proceed an analysis on the military gains of the Bashar al-Assad regime in the Syrian war that has been continuing since 2011 resulted in increasing border terrorism and the Idlib region become a hub . (Acun & Salaymeh, 2018) Indeed, seven years of ongoing conflict affected the infrastructure and service facilities of the region. Refugees from various parts of Syria gathered in the region with a good number of foreign citizens from different countries along with Idlib citizens who were eventually displaced due to the conflict. For example, in Syria there have thousands of Palestinian

refugees living in Damascus; they also deported from Idlib. In their report, Murat Yeşiltaş, Merve Seren, Necdet Özçelik (Yeşiltaş, Seren, & Özçelik, 2017) focused on the intensity of the crisis and shed light on the expenses of Turkey for resettlement of undocumented refugees. This report made a cost-benefit analysis for the military and tactical dimension of the operation and also projected future duties and responsibilities. (Yeşiltaş, Seren, & Özçelik, 2017) Researchers also stated that when Turkey was containing terror from Syrian regions, at the same time Turkish non-government organizations made structural developments for resettling refugees. Besides that, Turkey also spent a lot in the military sector which also documented in this report. (Yeşiltaş, Seren, & Özçelik, 2017) Murat Yeşiltaş, Merve Seren, Necdet Özçelik made a one-year assessment of the Operation Euphrates Shield which was the first step of the resettlement process for refugees. (Yeşiltaş, Seren, & Özçelik, 2017) In this report, the researchers examined the security environment of the Euphrates Shield area, scrutinized military and political situation of the area, evaluate Turkish efforts in establishing peace for the resettlement of Syrian refugees and finally the researchers drew attention for the outcomes of this mission and portrayed how Turkey could be benefited and made other alternatives. The authors used “Right of Self-Defence” stand for Turkey which is being used in Article 51 of United Nations Charter and is well-defended Turkish peaceful operation in the area for peace (Yeşiltaş, Seren, & Özçelik, 2017)

Concluding remarks

Turkey is playing a big role as the first receiving country for Syrian refugees from the very beginning. Due to geopolitical position Turkey is positioned as a natural barrier to Europe. Beside of irregular migration, Turkey is also known as a transit country for migrants. Migration is not a new issue for Turkey but Syrian refugee influx comes as a burden on Turkey. A huge number of refugees came on a short span of time, and at a time Turkish national security also threatened as well. This massive population directly affected the Turkish social, and economic environment. Turkey got international support but it was pre-conditioned and specified to spend in some definite sectors. Even sometimes Turkey is deprived off from necessary structural support from international institutions as well. Moreover, Turkish accession in the EU is a hanging issue since the last couple of decades. Nevertheless, different organizations are supporting Turkey through their local counterparts as well. But their activities are not directly counting into the Turkish economy. In this perspective, resettlement of refugees is the big challenges for Turkey. Turkey as regional power have a geo-political significance. European Union needs a trusted natural energy transit providing country and the Middle East needs to trade their natural resources to the west. So, Turkey can use the strategical position to resolve the refugee issues as the crisis is hampering Turkish economy in different ways. Turkey is with the stand of peaceful solution of the Syrian refugee crisis from economic perspective. However, Turkey can be benefited from geopolitical point of view, as the

crisis increases Turkish influence in the region. Therefore, the economic hardship due to the crisis can open up new avenues for turkey to strengthen her interest in the region.

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