



THE EFFECTS OF REFUGEES ON KİLİS CULTURE AND ECONOMY

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Abstract: The average three million refugees emigrated from Syria to Türkiye. Many of these refugees have left their country with their own means. Immigrants have struggled with unemployment in Türkiye. With the unrequited assistance and support of the Turkish state to refugees, they settled in Turkish territory. In addition to the humanitarian aid provided by the Turkish state to the people, many of whom live in refugee camps, the personal assistance of people to refugees in Turkish cities is very high. The Turkish people, who see these people as their own siblings, have cultural interaction with Syrian immigrants. After cultural interaction, these people created a cheap labor market. Benevolence and cultural interaction have also affected the labor market. Kilis is located in Türkiye's southern border. It is a city about 30 km from Syria. According to statistics, Kilis is a province with the highest density refugees in Türkiye. More than three times the population of refugees lives in this city. In this study, most of the Syrian refugee samples were selected from this city. Issues such as intercultural interaction, health problems, education issue and contribution to economic development are discussed in this study.

Keywords: Syrian refugees, Cultural interaction, Economic change, Türkiye, Kilis

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1. Introduction

The war, which started in the Middle East, spread to Syria. Many people have immigrated to Türkiye with their families. These were helpless, hungry and homeless. Millions of desperate people came to Türkiye a hope. Refugees fleeing the war came to Türkiye with few belongings and they take their children with them. According to the first data in 2015 to 2.5 million refugees he had come to Türkiye:

“According to the Commission’s estimates by the end of 2015, Türkiye had registered 2.5 million Syrian refugees; Lebanon, around 1 million; and Jordan, 600000” (European Commissions, 2016).

Immigrants come from their own country, claiming that they fled persecution. They exist in the countries they shelter with a new job and a new lifestyle. They want to be accepted as refugees for social reasons in the countries they shelter:

“Modern migration tends to involve considerable temporary or permanent movements for economic or study reasons and social or family purposes. Among this general population of migrants is the subset of asylum seekers, those persons who claim they are fleeing persecution in their home country and seek to be recognized as refugees in another country” (Keogh, 2013).

The Turkish government has opened up the country's doors to these people. Then Türkiye offered all his economic opportunities to them. However, when the incoming refugees reached million numbers, the Turkish

people also supported them:

“Following the war and conflicts experienced in Syria in 2011, 3070000 Syrians have sought refuge in Türkiye. Temporary protection status was given to Syrians seeking refuge in Türkiye as an exceptional procedure in international law. On one hand, while driving discussions related to problems sourcing from the temporary protection status in this process, discussions related to providing citizenship to Syrians residing in Türkiye who offer added value to the country have gained speed on the other hand. However, perhaps the most neglected issue in this process has been “What are Syrians’ thoughts on the issue of being granted citizenship? (Koyuncu, 2018).

Refugees coming to Türkiye because of the war here began to experience a different culture and with his nation.

Refugees who encounter different cultures and social environments will of course have different problems in education, culture and many other areas. “The educational life of Syrian students at universities in Türkiye naturally brought along many socio-cultural and economic problems as well as language and education problems” (Paksoy et al., 2016). However, cultural and other problems were experienced at the minimum level between the Syrians and the local Turkish people, who belong to the same belief system and traditions. The immigrants preferred to settle in Anatolia because their food culture and beliefs were similar to theirs:

“Some also think about relocating to Türkiye, as they



found the situation more comfortable with regards to schools, food and practicing their religion. Others have the intention of staying in Europe” (Cochetel, 2016).

Thus, intercultural interaction accelerated. In particular, the number of refugees in Kilis located in Türkiye's border with Syria has reached about three times the local population. Thus, Kilis became the only province that received more refugees than its local population. With the increase in the population in Kilis, some economic and cultural problems started to occur. Especially intercultural interaction, cheap labor problem, home problems, unemployment, poverty and health problems started to appear.

2. Method

In this study, qualitative research methods were used to reveal the social and economic conditions of Syrian refugees living in the center of Kilis. Before conducting the field research, the studies on this subject were determined by the literature review method and the results were combined with the data collected from the field. This study, in which observation and detection methods are mainly used, is based on concrete data. In addition to these, in this research, in which observation, interview and document collection methods were used together, concrete data were revealed by observing the lives of refugees.

3. Intercultural Interaction

According to the data of 2020, Syrian immigrants have a population of around 300000 in Kilis. The total local population of Kilis is around 100000. We can say that a new culture has emerged between immigrants and indigenous people. Turkish and Syrian citizens work in common jobs, thus increasing interaction. For example, in Syrian men, polygamy is considered normal. However, monogamy is common in Turkish culture. Apart from some minor differences, we can say that there are common values between Turkish and Syrian immigrants. Especially locals and immigrants with the same belief have similar cultural values:

“One of the key elements that make Syrian asylum-seekers comfortable in Türkiye has been sharing the same religion. Sharing the same religion means having similar customs, beliefs, norms and festivals including Eid.” (Karipek, 2017).

In Turks, monogamy is common. However, with the influence of Syrian immigrants, polygamy is becoming more and more common. While Turks have a very solid family structure, this is not very important in Arabs. While a maximum of three children are seen in Turkish families, this number can be up to 7-8 in immigrants. Immigrants who fail to earn enough money try to have many children by ignoring this. These behaviors are gradually passing from Arabs to Turks.

“Immigration in the sense to leave the country of birth and the establishment of family and clan old

phenomenon; it causes leading up to it, whether voluntary or forced, and positive results on the country's immigrant to and from it, and the most prominent in recent years, the migration of Syrians inside and outside the country, and specifically to the Turkish they account fold in European countries of Syrian immigrants. It is most Turkish immigrants chose south adjacent to their country is subject to the bulk of the Syrians, and the impact of the Department no small residence in Istanbul and other Turkish cities, and that the cause of the Syrian exodus to neighboring Türkiye due political, religious and geographic factors” (Neccar, 2017).

Syrian refugees in Türkiye prefer especially the southern regions. The reason for this can be said as the southern cities are on the Syrian border and show cultural similarity. In addition, the similarity of climatic conditions is seen as a reason for preference. These similarities cause easier intercultural interaction. Immigrants undergo physical and spiritual changes after migration. They show a natural change when they meet a new country and new people:

“Furthermore, migrant groups may go through profound changes at group level on multiple areas including physical, biological, economic, social and cultural changes. Physical changes include urbanization, population density while biological changes include new dietary intake and exposure to new diseases” (Karipek, 2017).

In addition, they encounter new diseases. Thus, they change both physically and spiritually. As a result, various health problems arise.

4. Health Problems

Immigrants living in Türkiye, free treatment facilities. They even have more opportunities than the local people. While local people pay premiums for health insurance, immigrants do not have this requirement. In addition, they can get free health services from the hospitals they want. Patient queues in hospitals mostly originate from refugees. The fact that refugees benefit from hospital services for free also increases the concentration in these areas. In addition, it is spreading in epidemics in places receiving mass immigration from Syria. Viruses that cause diseases are evolving and can cause many different health problems.

Especially, refugees waiting to be examined in hospitals attract the reaction of the locals and the presence of immigrants is being questioned. Indigenous people, who say that they have difficulty in getting treatment because of Syrian immigrants, complain about health problems. There is a hospital built for local people in Kilis. When the population suddenly tripled, the hospital was insufficient. In this case, the need for a new hospital emerged. As a result, new hospital buildings are built and opened in Kilis. However, new hospital buildings and healthcare professionals will not be sufficient in the face of increasing immigration waves. Unfortunately, the patient is treating over the existing hospital capacity. Most of the

patients are Syrian immigrants. In this case, local people have difficulties in being treated. In addition, various diseases that occur in areas receiving mass migration frequently occur. Since the immunity of the people in Kilis and their resistance to diseases are different from immigrants, the local people are getting more diseases. Various studies on this subject have been published. Various diseases have increased due to migration: "The frequency of polio, measles, tuberculosis and leishmania has changed irregularly between the years 2012-2017." (Sezen et al., 2018). These changes continued as migration continued. Immigrants carried their own health problems to the countries where they migrated: "Migrant groups carry their own health problems which do not exist before on the places they migrated. The substructure and potential of the migrated country may not be enough to solve the problems of immigrants." (Aydoğan and Metintaş, 2017).

In this case, serious health problems arise for the local people. Even if necessary studies are carried out in this regard, the health effects of migration will continue for many years. Since the immune system of local people and immigrants are different, new diseases in the region have appeared. This is one of the most important health problems.

5. Education Issue

Especially in primary schools, half of the classes are Turkish and half are immigrant children in Kilis. The communication and cultural interactions between children are very high in the classroom. Thus, Turkish and immigrant children grow with a different cultural identity. Families who migrated to Türkiye read together with the Turks. This situation, which also leads to decreased quality in education, is perceived as a problem by Turkish students and their parents.

It is seen that Syrian refugees have more children than Turks. The number of refugee children studying in schools has increased substantially in recent years. Refugees and Turkish children study in the same classes in Kilis. This creates some problems. The quality of education decreases, as most refugee children do not speak Turkish. In addition, refugees who are mixed with Turkish students and have mixed education have difficulties in understanding the lessons.

"There are various problems on the education of Syrian children to deal with where the language is the foremost impediment. Apart from the language problem, other problems are those experienced during the enrollment procedure, those arose due to the students joining at intermediary classes because of the abolishment of the temporary education centers and finally the risk of marginalization. In this respect, precautionary measures need to be taken so as not to leave Syrian children out of the education process. Some of the factors restraining the Syrian parents from sending their children to the school need to be considered; particularly the issue of keeping the girls away from schools has to be tackled" (Tanrıku,

2017).

These problems of Syrian refugees lead to education failure. These people, who cannot speak the same language with the citizens of the country they shelter, experience many problems over time. The difficulty of learning languages and the large number of asylum seekers bring with it various educational problems.

6. Cheap Labor Problem

Refugees in Türkiye have created cheap labor market. Syrians took refuge in Türkiye car mechanic, construction workers, agricultural workers and skilled or unskilled people began to work at lower wages:

"The penetration of Syrian refugees into the Turkish labor markets through the informal employment channel generated labor cost advantages in the informal labor intensive sectors. These cost advantages, in turn, reduced the consumer prices of the items produced in these sectors relative to the ones produced in the formal labor intensive sectors" (Tümen, 2016).

As a result, the cheap labor market is emerging. The price comes to the forefront, not the quality of the work. The Turks eventually faced losing their jobs. Because they preferred immigrants who want low wages. It can be said that although Syrian migrants' working at low wages affect the labor market positively for the employer, Turkish workers are negatively affected by this situation. As the labor force increased above the current employment volume, the unemployment rate of the local population increased:

"With the arrival of Syrians, there have been many changes in the field of employment and employment in Kilis. Low wages, unregistered and social insecure work, and the unemployment rate of indigenous people may increase" (Paksoy et al., 2015).

Refugees had to work to live. Therefore, they preferred to work with low wages. As a result, many qualified or unqualified workers appeared in the market:

"According to the results, a considerable amount of refugees came to the province of Kilis after the beginning of civil war in Syria. Most of those refugees are living and working in the city center. Most of them have to work in various positions in order to live on" (Paksoy et al., 2016; Paksoy and Karadeniz, 2016).

In this case, the refugees who had to work contributed to the development of the Kilis economy. However, the Turkish government gives refugees work permits and grants various rights:

"The Turkish government now allows Syrian refugees who possess temporary identity cards and have resided in Türkiye for six months to apply for work permits" (Roger and Héloïse, 2018).

The cheap labor market has left many Turkish workers unemployed, causing immigrants to make some money. Therefore, the numbers of Syrian refugees work in the construction sector. In addition, people working daily in the field, which we call seasonal workers, are refugees. In this case, domestic workers who did these jobs with

normal wages faced unemployment. Employers prefer refugees because they both work cheaply and do not want any assurance:

“Türkiye’s Disaster and Emergency Management Agency, the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization suggest that at least half of the over two million working-age Syrians work informally. Of these, most are men; the percentage of women working is low, peaking at 7% among women aged 30 to 44” (Roger and Héloïse, 2018). Thus, the informal labor market emerges. In this case, employers and job seekers begin to think differently. Uninsured and illegal workers can find jobs more easily. In this case, the unemployment problem in the local community emerged.

Syrian child workers work informally. Although it’s a crime according to the law they work illegally. In this case, there are some employers who prefer child workers for cheap cost. Refugees live in state-controlled and established camps.

“Another social issue caused by large refugee populations is child labor. Only a small group of the children outside the camps have access to education. The first reason for this is the inability of the Turkish government and NGOs to offer sufficient education to the refugee children. Another major factor is that Syrian parents often have their children work instead of sending to school. The economic and social desperation of many families results in an increase of child labor. Many children from Syrian backgrounds end up working in factories, selling goods on the street or begging in public” (Orhan and Gündoğar, 2015).

The Turkish government spends millions of dollars in education, especially for the education of immigrant children, and provides various aid to immigrant families. All needs of refugees provided free of charge. Nutrition, sheltering and perversion needs are provided free of charge by the state. However, there is a preference for accommodation in the city for those who do not want to stay in camps. However, those who live in the city are those who live in the rents or buy and live in their own home. These refugees work as workers or artisans. They earn money in this way. Low-wage workers are the majority. Tradesmen prefer to work with low profit. Unfortunately, if no measures are taken against new waves of migration, both immigrants and official institutions will be in a difficult situation.

7. Street Markets

Selling food in the street markets is one of the most important jobs that immigrants prefer. The majority of people selling vegetables and fruits in the public markets are Syrian immigrants. Thus, immigrants who took over market sector started to make serious gains from this trade. People also shopped from immigrants selling cheap goods. Thus, refugees, who had their own business in a short time, began to contribute to the country’s economy. These markets were established in a separate district every day and attracted great attention of the

public.

Public markets are economical but very weak in terms of hygiene. However, Syrian refugees earn money by selling vegetables and fruits. The majority of public markets are operated by refugees. Thus, it is aimed for them to have their own businesses and earn money. Also, achieving economic independence is another goal. These markets are set up in separate districts almost every day of the week. Syrian marketers buy the products from the producer at low cost. However, they sell at low price with little profit. Therefore, local people show great interest in these markets where cheap products are sold.

8. Contribution to Economic Development

Syrian immigrants have started to contribute to the country’s economy with both cheap labor and companies they have established. From an economic perspective, refugees bring mobility to the markets. They help economic development and acceleration. Contributions of immigrants to the economy cannot be ignored:

“If well and quickly integrated, refugees can help to improve the performance of the labor market, address demographic challenges, and improve fiscal sustainability. The characteristics of the migrants as well as of the structure, cyclical position and the integration policies of host countries will define the results. The impact will differ across countries, but also within countries, as it depends on the extent to which the skills of migrants substitute or complement those of the native work force” (European Commissions, 2016).

If migrants are directed in a planned manner, they will undoubtedly contribute to economic development. Refugees working with cheap labor and low profit rate are stimulating the economy.

Recently, immigrants who were taken from refugee camps and settled in city centers founded their own business. However, the number of immigrants who still cannot found their own business received financial aid from the state. However, immigrants contributed to economic change with their own assets. In addition, cultural change has accelerated with the sudden increase in population.

It is known that foreign migration always contributes to the country’s economy. The manpower factor is a power source for the economy. Particularly, if the immigrants who come are young and male, their economic contribution becomes clearer and much more:

“Foreign migration is an advantage for countries with insufficient labor supply. Because immigrants increase the workable population and eliminate the labor shortage in the country contribute to the national economy. Since the preferences of the immigrant countries regarding population intake will be in a way to improve the country’s economy; care is taken to ensure that the population received is young, workable and male” (Bayraklı, 2007).

When we examine foreign migration events in history and today, it is seen that migration has beneficial effects.

The effects of foreign migration become more evident after many years. Foreign migration should be evaluated economically with its pros and cons. When we look at the example of Kilis, it is seen that the city's own population is 100 thousand. In addition, 300 thousand refugees came to the city and settled down. In this respect, Kilis has a rare position in the world. It is seen that the city is currently developing economically. Especially the trade volume has increased more than before. Syrian immigrants have more homes and businesses than indigenous people. Thus immigrants support the further advancement of the city. It can be said that mutual tolerance and solidarity are increasing. However, it can be said that the indigenous people being economically poorer than Syrian immigrants and some security problems are negative effects.

"In Türkiye, which is the most affected country from this duration, the authorities talk about 3 millions of refugees. The Issue of Syrian Refugees, who is accepted temporarily at the beginning, had not been solved for six years unlike it has big tended to be permanent. At this point the integration of the Syrian refugees is getting more important. The labor market seems the most important integration argument. Because the access of the Syrian refugees to the work market and earning income in this way, living without any help from the government, other people and civil society organization will eliminate the temper of the society and means their position change, from being to contributing. But as including the Syrian refugees to the labor market has economic and social many benefits it is the reality that it has many serious problems. In this study it is evaluated the positive and negative effects of Syrian refugees on Turkish labor market" (Duruel, 2017).

There may also be members of terror among immigrants from Syria. This means a serious risk. Refugee flow is useful in terms of labor. However, it can be harmful in terms of security.

9. Humanitarian Aid to Refugees in the Republic of Türkiye

Türkiye provides an extraordinary aid to refugees. These aids are distributed to refugees by the state. Every family is cared for. Both economic contribution and health benefits are provided to these refugees for free. Help has reached a level above that of Türkiye's economic power. Türkiye continues its humanitarian aid without any expectations. This assistance is continuous, but imposed a serious burden on Türkiye's economy.

10. Discussion

The issue of the extent to which economic assistance provided to refugees has damaged the country's economy is discussed. International aid and support from other countries is not continuous.

"As is most clearly seen in developing countries receiving large numbers of refugees, such as Jordan, Lebanon and

Türkiye, the concentration of refugees in specific localities can "crowd out" public services such as schools and hospitals, or cause the transport infrastructure to become congested" (Dadush, 2017).

In order for the refugees to continue their aid, the international aid should continue and the Turkish government should not be left alone in the aid. Supports made at irregular intervals make the country difficult. In this case, continuity of assistance to be provided on how or how new resources can be found to the question of Türkiye's funded his help is discussed. Culture and to discuss this issue in the context of economic and cultural contribution or economic difficulties will need to be provided to Türkiye compared. In addition, there are also security problems due to the migration wave.

"In the history, human beings have migrated in the world due to geographical conditions and climate. But in modern times it occurs due to human rights violations, unequal distribution of rights, increase in population, inadequate resources, a better life search and civil wars. Migrations affect the destination society in many ways such as the economy, politics, security concerns and social issues. While these effects are perceived as a threat at the beginning of migration, they have the potential to turn into an opportunity later on. The example of migration in recent years is the Syrian civil war and the mass migration of the Syrians, especially to the peripheral countries" (Tunca and Karadağ, 2018).

There may also be terrorist groups seeking to enter the country in refugee clothing. It is very difficult to separate them. It is difficult to see if people with no identity are truly refugees. These are also a subject of discussion. There are academic studies on this subject. For a study on this subject, see (Sezik and Ağır, 2016). Security problems with refugees are still under discussion.

11. Conclusion

Refugee flows from Syria to Türkiye is increasing. In this case, both cultural interaction and some problems arise. These problems are seen as education, health, shelter, unemployment and security problems. With the assistance of the Turkish government and the Turkish people are refugees living in Türkiye. The highest number of refugees is seen in Kilis. There is more than three times the population of refugees. Therefore, there are many Syrian refugee examples in this city. In this study, generally examples of refugees in Kilis are given. The contributions of refugees to the economy or the financial aid they received from the Turkish state economically were compared and some inferences were made. The refugee flow in Kilis is increasing and the situation in the city is getting more and more complicated.

Author Contributions

All task made by H.D. (100%) data acquisition and analysis, writing up, submission and revision. The author

reviewed and approved final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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