Research Article/Araştırma Makalesi

What Defines the Final Destination? Rights or Culture[1]

Nihai Destinasyonu Ne Belirler: Haklar mı Kültür mü?

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Abstract

Crossing borders legally or illegally, seeking for shelter in another land have been an issue of today's world for the last couple of decades. Some specific regions affected more than others. Syrians, especially, as a result of the ongoing war within their borders, are forced to move for the sake of saving their lives. With respect to the religious, cultural, and social ties, it is expected that they would seek refuge into the wealthy Arab countries in the Gulf because of the good economic conditions as well as social and cultural ties. Instead, it is seen that Syrians mostly migrate to Turkey and European countries. Even if it is very complicated to analyse as the process is continuing, the reports, observations, and interviews make it possible to come to some certain point to comprehend the situation. When people are forced to migrate from their own country, it could be said there are two stages of it: 1st move, and 2nd move. In the 1st move, people are seeking security more than anything else. The political approach and legal applications of the government of a country towards migration as well as geographic availability are the first and foremost reasons why people choose to go to certain countries. As soon as life treating conditions are off the table, however, people seek for a place to settle and raise their children in, which can be called the 2nd move. In the second move, people look for security, and more. At this specific moment, social and cultural ties determine what to choose and where to go. In this paper, we are going to demonstrate the reasons behind these preferences by comparing people's experience both in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Our data collection method is in-depth interviews with participants face to face and online. We analyse the data with descriptive analysis techniques. As a result of our research, we could say that fundamental rights and freedom are the most important reason. Human rights and feeling free in a country mean more significant than social and cultural ties for Syrian migrants.

Jel Codes: *D63, D71, J15, N40, B50*
Keywords: *Migration, Rights, Culture, Social Cohesion.*

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[1] This paper was presented at the workshop titled "Living Together Separately: Social and Cultural Implications of Migration to the GCC Countries" held by Gulf Research Centre, University of Cambridge on July 14-16, 2022.
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Öz

Sınırları yasal ya da yasadışı yollardan geçmek, başka bir ülkeye sığınmak son birkaç on yıldır günümüz dünyasının bir sorunu haline gelmiştir. Bazı bölgeler diğerlerinden daha fazla etkilenmektedir. Özellikle Suriyeliler, kendi sınırları içinde devam eden savaşın bir sonucu olarak, hayatta kalmak için yer değiştirmek zorunda kalmıştır. Dini, kültürel ve sosyal bağlar açısından bakıldığında, Suriyelilerin, ekonomik koşulların iyi olması ve sosyal ve kültürel bağlar nedeniyle Körfez'deki zengin Arap ülkelerine sığınmaları beklenmekteydi. Bunun yerine, Suriyelilerin, çoğunlukla Türkiye ve Avrupa ülkelerine göç ettikleri görülmektedir. Süreç devam ettiği için analiz yapmak çok kolay olmasa da raporlar, gözlemler ve görüşmeler durumu anlamak için belli bir noktaya gelmeyi mümkün kılmaktadır. İnsanlar kendi ülkelerinden göç etmek zorunda kaldıklarında, bunun iki aşaması olduğu söylenebilir: 1. göç dalgası ve 2. Göç dalgası. Birinci dalgada insanlar her şeyden çok güvenlik arayışı içindedirler. Bir ülkenin hükümetinin göçe yönelik siyasi yaklaşımı ve yasal uygulamaları ile coğrafi uygunluk, insanların belirli ülkelere gitmeyi seçmelerinin ilk ve en önemli nedenleridir. Ancak hayati tehlikeler ortadan kalkar kalkmaz insanlar yerleşecekleri ve çocuklarını büyütecekleri bir yer ararlar ki buna 2. göç dalgası denebilir. İkinci dalgada ise insanlar güvenlik, ve daha fazlasını ararlar. Bu noktada, sosyal ve kültürel bağlar neyin seçileceğini ve nereye gidileceğini belirler. Bu makalede, Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan'daki insanların deneyimleri karşılaştırılarak bu tercihlerin arkasındaki nedenler ortaya konulmaktadır. Veri toplama yöntemi, katılımcılarla yüz yüze ve çevrimiçi olarak yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelerdir. Verileri betimsel analiz teknikleri ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda temel hak ve özgürlüklerin 2. dalgada nihai destinasyonun belirlenmesi için en önemli neden olduğunu söylenebilir. Temel insan haklarına sahip olmak ve yaşadığı/yaşayacağı ülkede özgür hissetmek, Suriyeli göçmenler için sosyal ve kültürel bağlardan daha önemli görünmektedir.

Jel Kodları: *D63, D71, J15, N40, B50*
Anahtar Kelimeler: *Göçmen, Haklar, Kültür, Sosyal Uyum*

1. Introduction

> "Exile is not about breaking off piece by piece from the country where they live.
> To live without loving it."
> Edgar Quinet

Forced displacement of people has been a big issue specially for the last decades. Overlapping a variety of crises makes people move from where they were born to where they make better lives. Seeking better lives generally means that people are moving from developing countries to developed ones, which is the most common case, and predominantly explained by economic reasons. The people on the move are considered as a labour force who would contribute to the host countries economically by being cheap labour supply or/and human capital. People leaving their homeland because of compelling circumstances are treated as a component of economic structure even from the beginning of their journey. Immediate actions taken by any actor who related the issue is about the economic one. From host country to international community, trying to justify people's presence in there by claiming that migrants definitely good for economy.[4]

The growth-oriented neoliberal system is basically composed of capital savings, the savings that turn into investments, population that creates labour, technology that accelerates production and an entrepreneur who looks to the future with hope by taking all kinds of risk. Every component in the system utterly serves the single goal: economic growth. Economic and political system stops serving human beings, instead people begin to serve the system. As early as 1966, Galbraith opposes the slavery of machines by saying that "what interests me is to give an idea of the general lines of liberation from bondage. Otherwise, we will have to allow our lives to fall under the monopoly of economic goals at the expense of other and more valuable matters. It is not the quantity of our possessions that matters, but the quality of our lives." (Galbraith, 1971). In his article Joseph Stiglitz (2019) states that "what we measure affects what we do, and if we measure the wrong thing, we will do the wrong thing. If we focus only on material wellbeing …we become distorted in the same way that these measures are distorted; we become more materialistic". It is important because how migrants are considered today is closely related to adopting a growth driven economy instead of development driven one. Once economic growth is the paramount one, and everything is fair on the road to growth, it should not be surprising to witness any tragedies of human beings. With the Syrian War beginning in 2011, we all witnessed how millions of people fight for their lives first inside their borders then outside within that of others. We have seen some drown in the sea while crossing country to country, some lost their lives on the barbed tape in a border, some died because of the absence of fundamental things for living as basic as food and shelter. Meanwhile, people in charge were discussing the economy of migration. In terms of economic dimension of migration mainly construct on two opposite notions, to specify with

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[4] It is ongoing debate which does not seem to end soon. Here are some examples form the most respected institutions: OECD Migration Policy Debate in 2014, https://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf; World Economic Forum in 2019, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/migration-myths-vs-economic-facts; IMF in 2018, https://blogs.imf.org/2016/10/24/migrants-bring-economic-benefits-for-advanced-economies/

the basic form: 1) Migration contribute economy as it is an injection to economy as labour force, 2) Migration has many economic costs for the public and the government as increase in population means many more to take care of. According to which of two people agreed on, decision makers produce policies accordingly.

No one can deny that the economy has a grave importance in the modern world. It, nevertheless, is not the only thing to pay attention to. Leaving your own land could be quite harsh when you are forced to do that. On top of it, while someone is suffering from facing a sudden change in every aspect of their lives, another is calculating the economic benefits that they might bring. The expectation of a decrease in the cost of production owing to migration, however, could turn into an increase of the cost of social cohesion because of it. From motivations to results, not everything is about the economy in relation to migration. There are much more, and conceivably they are much more significant. Since almost all discussions about migration are going around the economy of the host country and wilful ignorance towards nearly all other dimensions of migration led us to conduct this research. With the respect of its importance, economics is not the issue that we are focusing on in this paper. Instead, noneconomic reasons are taking place. The main question we tried to answer here is what the main motivation is to choose a final destination for Syrian people who live out of their country. How does the decision-making process work and why did they choose where they live now?

In this paper, the main motivations of Syrian migrants' preference of the host country is examined to demonstrate cultural ties or fundamental rights and freedoms that matter more for them. In addition to statistical data, the study is based on fieldwork data made in a period of nearly 2 months between March 2022 and May 2022. From field qualitative research data collections to semi-configuration completions, no observations and field references were made. The interviews were conducted with a total of 26 Syrian immigrants, 12 women and 14 men, aged between 21 and 64. The interviewees were reached by snowball and purposive sampling methods. In the interviews, issues such as the ways in which the immigrants came to the country they are in, whether this is the country they first came to, and how they decide in which country they will live are discussed. In addition, various activities organised for immigrants were attended and field notes were taken by communicating and making observations with Syrian immigrants in classrooms and in the cities where the authors lived. These data are analysed with a phenomenological approach. With the phenomenological approach, the meaning of a phenomenon and the essence of an experience are tried to be understood from the perspective of those who experience it. Findings and interpretations are developed and emerged by interpreting data obtained from participants who have experienced it (Koestenbaum, 1998). In this study, what is tried to be understood with the phenomenological approach is to understand the motivations of Syrian refugees who left their country for various reasons in deciding where to live. The study is limited to Syrians residing in Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

This article examines the subject in four main sections. First, a brief look at people in action is discussed in the section below. In the second part, the motivations of people to migrate are explained and examined in detail. The third section presents the details of the methodology,

the data, and the approach on how to analyse the data accordingly. The last section includes the findings and discussions.

2. People on the Move

Lofland (2020) begins her well known book, A World of Strangers, by telling a story about how foreigners are received in various societies throughout history. Strangely enough, for a long time in our history people did not see outsiders even as humans, but instead portrayed them as supernatural creatures, ancestral spirits, things with magical powers. With modernization, societies began to recognize each other. Yet, despite knowing each other now, people continued to see strangers as a threat. That is affecting people's preferences of the destination. Factors such as being discriminated against in a country, not being able to obtain citizenship or not having equal rights with citizens no matter how long you stay there are deterrents. While some places embrace immigrants by constitution and law more than others, some are closer in culture. People make choices based on what is more important to them. Cultural ties sound more dominant, but in reality, people seem to attach more importance to fundamental rights and freedoms, which is the main focus of this paper.

Global migration takes place at different rates in almost all countries around the world. For many developing countries, migration is a matter of social crisis which occurs with modernisation as well as global integration. Wide urbanisation has no longer served for creating employment like it was in the early days of industrialisation. People who moved from rural to urban beginning to experiences a new phenomenon: moving to developed world from less developed ones (Castles & Miller, 2008) to seek for better lives. Living in a poverty, in a conflict, in a war, under pressure politically, being subject to discrimination because of your race, colour, religion, gender are the most important reasons behind the forced displacement. There is brain drain and highly skilled people mobility cross countries as well, but it is not the issue of this paper since it is about the decision-making process of human beings when they are forced to move.

Even migration is one of the most usual things of all times, it is treated as a new phenomenon, a challenge that is precarious, a vexed issue. Host countries usually do not know what action they will take. Thus, migration turns into a challenge for both the government and the migrants, and challenges get different forms in different countries. For instance, migration from less developed countries to the West results in a challenge to their society. After a while, they can have equal rights with the natives of the country and even acquire citizenship. Meanwhile, social integration is not realised as quickly as it is expected. "To the extent that immigrants are perceived as representing cultural diversity, special needs or social marginalisation, they also challenge the work forms of the welfare state and the fundamental legitimacy of the community" (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012). It seems that, for the West, social cohesion is more to worry about because as soon as outsiders get into a Western country, they obtain fundamental rights and freedom and are treated as equals, benefiting from the welfare state. In other respects, for Gulf countries, migration is another kind of issue. This time, governments are not the ones who are concerned, migrants are. Legal regulations are not allowing people to refuge in the Gulf, instead, migrating to the Gulf is mostly for

work. Migrants become workers, and due to the lack of protection and benefits of the welfare state, they are subject to abuse. Abuse of migrant workers, furthermore, is extremely common (Human Rights Watch, 2021) Even though there have been improvements since 2016 in some Gulf countries, there are many issues that need to be put on the table for the migrant workers. First and foremost, migrants have no chance to have equal rights with natives regardless how long they stay in the Gulf countries; inequality both in economic and social life is one of the biggest issues. Kafala system which is a kind of sponsorship for migrant workers that gives the employers make critical decisions for the workers such as they cannot 'change or leave employers without their permission' because workers visas are tied to their employers. The United Arab Emirates, i.e., labour law does not include protection of domestic workers. They are faced "a range of abuses, from unpaid wages, confinement to the house and workdays up to 21 hours to physical and sexual assault by employers. …While a 2017 law on domestic workers does guarantee some labour rights, it is weaker than the labour law and falls short of international standards" (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Displaced people, like Syrians during war, make two "move"s. First one is the leave for their lives, second one is for the better lives. In the first move, people choose to go wherever closer and safer regardless of what the host country offers them. However, in the second move, which is focused on this research, the decision-making process becomes much more complex and sensitive. In the second move people are looking for more than security and safety. Pursuing a better life is the centre of the second move, but how to describe "better" is the puzzle. Syrians have left their homes since the beginning of the civil war until today. Continuous movement from motherland to abroad is a usual thing for people living in Syria over the last decade. According to UNHCR data, the recent number of Syrian refugees there are 5,791,001 people who are asylum seekers today. In 2021, the total number of Syrian refugees in Turkey is 3.68 million which makes the country hosting the highest number (Table 1). Turkey is followed by Lebanon with 851.000 Syrian refugees (Szmigiera, 2021). It means about 6 million Syrians are migrants now, they are residents in countries of which they are not citizens.

Table 1: Total Syrian Migrants by Country of Asylum

Location name	Source	Data date	Population (%)	Population (number)
Turkey	Government of Turkey	19 May 2022	65.8%	3,763,447
Lebanon	UNHCR	31 Mar 2022	14.7%	839,086
Jordan	UNHCR	30 Apr 2022	11.8%	674,458
Iraq	UNHCR	30 Apr 2022	4.5%	258,965
Egypt	UNHCR	30 Apr 2022	2.5%	141,303
Other (North Africa)	UNHCR	31 Dec 2021	0.7%	41,742

Note: Total persons of concern 5,719,001.
Source: Syria Regional Refugee Response[5], 2022.

Syrian forced displacement started in 2011, and about 13 million people have left their homes and settled someplace else within their national borders or out of it. First and the biggest movement observed in Turkey in April of 2011, then it had increased incrementally until 2014,

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[5] Available at https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria.

when Jordan and Lebanon started to implement highly compelling immigration policies. Dispersion was widely framed by the regional proximity and pre-war ties with the host country. Sharing borders can be read as people have relatives cross borders to help for the newcomers. At the beginning it was a temporary settlement, then with the prolongation of the war, the temporary settlement turned into a long-term life-building adventure. Once the hope of going back to homeland is off the table, and the life conditions are worsened because of the vast number of outsiders in the country of the first move, for Syrians the second move is started, which is mostly towards the European countries, particularly in Germany. Syrians have existed in Amman, Beirut, or Istanbul even before the war began. Thus, when arriving in Europe was costly, they changed direction towards these places (Lagarde, 2019: 18-19).

The place and impact of migration in the Gulf countries is undeniably huge. Migration, as Fargues & Shah (2018: 1) denote, "has been instrumental in nation-building processes in the Gulf". Migration in the Gulf is an ongoing debate with outnumbered foreigners, and their grave effects in the Gulf countries' social, cultural, and economic lives. Even though most Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, have not signed any international agreement on migration such as 1951 Refugee Convention, most of the Gulf countries have migrant workers more than their own population. In four out of six GCC states, foreigners outnumbered inhabitants (National Statistical Institutes, 2020). Despite the number of Syrians in Saudi Arabia is impossible to forecast, De Bel-Air calculated it by using the data from CDSI Statistical Yearbooks (Table 2). Only in a couple of years numbers reached 138,640. And even though there are no officially justified numbers, the number of Syrian residents in Saudi Arabia is estimated between 500,000 and a million (De Bel-Air, 2015: 4).

Table 2: Syrian Inflow in Saudi Arabia

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Cumulative flows 2011-2013
Entries	1,596,094	1,333,538	1,047,241	766,571	3,147,350
Exits	1,586,058	1,299,071	965,288	744,351	3,008,710
Net migration	10,036	34,467	81,953	22,220	138,640

Source: CDSI Statistical Yearbooks, 2011 to 2014. (Date of reference: December 31, given years in De Bel-Air, 2015)

After the war, roughly 6 million Syrian people have been moved to other countries. Mostly to Turkey, some to EU and some GCC even though EU and GCC have had no legitimate policy to take Syrian refugees. Moving on the reasons behind going to give more ideas about the decision-making process.

3. Motives of Moving

Having pictured the migration in the globe, and Syrian migrants' patterns, in this section the main motivations underlying the second move is examined here. As it is discussed before, because in neoliberal world people are counted as a labour force only, the motivation behind the move is mostly based on economic reasons. People need to be better off, mostly the claim. Living under threat of one's life, freedom, stop hoping for a better future for their lives as much as their children are also should count as important motivations especially if migration is discussed in the Middle East. People move from their homelands because of various

reasons. As it is summarised in Table 3, Martin & Zürcher's (2008) well-known Pull-Push theory is enriched by Parkins (2010).

International migration is a very common phenomenon as it is noted before. But consistently rising inequality in demography and economy make international migration much more probable in our century. With mass communication and social media, people would like to have the same standards of living as the residents of developed countries (Martin & Zürcher, 2008: 3). In the endless needs' era, people are not considered citizens anymore, all are consumers. Moreover, the world has never been that globalised, almost free mass communication that is strengthened by social media has never been that ubiquitous. Under these circumstances, people see, and people want. Young people especially want their lives to be as good as their peers who live in better conditions. Keeping up with the Joneses is one of the common motivations of moving. In terms of rights and freedom, people want to move to some place where they could be protected by law.

Table 3: Factors That Determine Migrations

Type of Migrant	Demand- Pull	Supply- Push	Network/Other
Economic	Labour Recruitment	Unemployment or underemployment issues such as low wages	Jobs and wage
Non-Economic	Family Unification (husbands and wives join spouses, children join parents)	Fleeing war and/or civil unrest	Communications; transportation; assistance organizations; desire for new experience

Source: Martin & Zürcher, 2008: 4.

Parkins' study shows four key factors of migration among Jamaican people, namely, crime, violence, lawlessness, and general societal indiscipline; occupation and skill mismatch; lack of economic opportunities, and lack of social opportunities (Parkins, 2010). These factors put forward by Parkins are also similar to Syrian migrants who escaped from the war and want to go to a European country. More detailed examination held by Francesco Castelli (2018), he divided factors by their impacts into three: macro, meso and micro: "Among the 'macro-factors', the political, demographic, socio-economic and environmental situations are major contributors to migration. These are the main drivers of forced migration. … Among the 'meso-factors', communication technology, land grabbing and diasporic links play an important role. … However, 'micro-factors' such as education, religion, marital status, and personal attitude to migration also have a key role in making the final decision to migrate an individual choice".

Moving onto the Syrian people migration, as the second move because they do not choose the Arab Gulf instead of Europe. As Ahmad (2013) discussed in his book compliance of Asia with European culture and values not only results from European preponderance in economic, political and military aspects, but intellectual, moral, and spiritual. During the modernising period of Muslim community, two things happened: Elites as secular intellectuals were comfortable with the Western way of life and ordinary people "ordinary people were left stranded, materially and spiritually by westernisation" (Ahmad, 2013: 7). Everlasting turmoil in the Muslim World, both in Asia and in the Middle East, combining with the semi-

westernisation result in rootless people. These people do not fit into both societies. On the one hand, the education they are taking, the law they are subjected to and regulations they are supposed to follow are all westernised. The implementation of these laws and rules, on the other hand, are not westernised at all. Because of malpractice and corruption, institutions are not functioning as they should. After higher education, i.e., even with two degrees, people have to work in a lower job as they do not know anyone in government to put them into a job they already deserved to be. "In the past, oil-rich governments guaranteed jobs to native born residents, but rapid population growth has made this policy unsustainable. Instead, Saudi Arabia and other oil exporting countries have required that only some jobs be filled by the native-born" (Martin & Zürcher, 2008: 15). Treated as inferior or unequal in a country of residence, makes people belong to nowhere. In Eastern culture, attachment, and feeling belonging to somewhere in any level has been important. And as Confucius wisely states, inequality is worse than poverty. Thus, we believe, Syrian nationals who unrooted from their own seek somewhere to belong to.

4. Methodology and Data Analysis Methods

This research is substantially addressing the migration patterns of Syrian immigrants. The main concerns here are to understand whether immigrants make their migration decisions according to cultural proximity or fundamental rights and freedoms. A mixed method with both statistical and qualitative data was used to examine the research question. This paper, which examines the decision-making process under immigrant behaviour, is designed as a qualitative study supported by statistical data. In the process of processing the data, a phenomenological approach is adopted. Qualitative research methods were adopted in the field study as well as field notes and observations.

In qualitative research, the nature of social life is studied. Events, facts, and realities are tried to be understood and interpreted from the perspective of the subject who experiences them. Social events and phenomena are interpreted by adopting an interdisciplinary and holistic approach with the meanings that people attribute to them. While the aim in quantitative research is to discover global and objective codes and facts, in qualitative research it is tried to give meaning to social realities and cultures. While hypotheses are tested on groups in quantitative research, after research and discussion topics are selected in qualitative research, the data collected while the field work is still in progress begins to be analysed simultaneously (Neuman, 2016: 221-260). The aim is not to experiment on hypotheses and reach generalisations, but to define and interpret the research in depth and to try to understand the perspectives of the research participants (Karataş, 2015: 63-65). Data collection is done on both a public and personal level. At the cultural or collective level, the qualitative researcher gathers information about the community or its systems. These include activities that describe the dynamics and tensions of the community, as well as its cultural practices (Schensul, 2012: 89). The focus in fieldwork is to explore and tell. The more time is spent with the researched communities, the more sincerity and trust can be built with the individual. The questions asked during the interviews are open-ended and semi-structured. It is preferable to establish intimacy with individuals and conduct in-depth interviews on the subject, rather than

conducting official interviews and asking questions one after the other from a definite and clearly defined list of questions (Flick et al., 2004: 3-11).

In this study, both the phenomenological approach and the grounded theory approach is used. A phenomenological approach has been adopted, as the primary goal of the study is to understand the thoughts of Syrians, who are closer to Arab Culture, about why they want to immigrate to Europe. In addition, since it was observed during the field study that the theories developed in previous research were not compatible with the experiences studied in this research, the research process and the data obtained, the methods of the embedded theory were applied especially in the data analysis phase.

In a study that adopts a phenomenological approach, the meaning and reality of a phenomenon is tried to be discovered and interpreted from the perspective of those who experience it (Creswell, 2020). It is wondered how the participants relate to that phenomenon, how they perceive and experience the phenomenon.

By leaving aside the pre-existing opinions, judgments, and prejudices about the experience, it is tried to be understood as the experience is interpreted, in the social and personal reality of those who experience it, in their own minds (Moran, 1999: 4). For this reason, the testing of some hypotheses, which have been prepared before and based on the literature and previous studies, is not done in studies with a phenomenological approach. Findings and interpretations about the experience are developed and revealed by the induction method, by interpreting the data obtained from the participants who have had the full experience (Koestenbaum, 1998). It is repeated until a new category emerges in the data, that is, until the data is saturated (Bryman, 2012: 571).

While studying the subject of migration, statistical data is very important in terms of the essence of the subject. However, the qualitative method is just as important. As a matter of fact, while statistical data, figures and reports are easily accessible in the field of migration studies, qualitative studies that consider the human factor are less common. For this reason, observation and interview were used together in qualitative methods. As a result of studies carried out in close contact with immigrants in academia and humanitarian aid in the Southeast of Turkey for more than 4 years, it has been determined that cultural proximity is not as important as personal rights and freedoms. In the semi-structured interviews, repeated interviews between 45 minutes and 1 hour were conducted with 26 Syrians, 12 women and 14 men aged between 21 and 64, reached by snowball method. Findings are improved by re-referring to participants' feedback with repeated interviews. The limitation of the study is that interviews were conducted only in Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

5. Findings and Discussions

In this paper, as stated before, motivations of Syrian people who move to Turkey and Saudi Arabia are examined. Driven forces behind the move asked people in interviews. A total of 26 Syrians were interviewed, 12 of them women and 14 men. Living in the area and observing people seeking better lives for a long time, led authors of this paper to conduct such research. As a result of participatory observers, we made interviews after having and establishing

intimate conversation with the participants. Since some of the interviews repeated themselves, the most striking and comprehensive ones are quoted here. Still, in interpretations, observations and all interviews are covered.

T (32) is a man, married with 2 kids and lives in Turkey. He works for an INGO in the humanitarian aid sector. When we started the interview, he stated his reason to leave Syria and story of coming to Turkey: "We left Syria because we had to choose a side we do not belong to. No corruption, freedom, human rights we wanted. Army wants to control everything. While you are fighting for your freedom, they want to take your freedom away." In general, settling down more than twice in different countries is a very difficult decision to make. However, for Syrians, after losing everything, mobility is not a big issue anymore. Thus, now as in the second move, all interviewees state that they want to leave the country they are living in, only two out of ten want to be in the GCC states, the main motivations are economic and cultural.

However, he did not find what he was expecting in Turkey either. He wants to move to Europe. The main reason he wants to leave Turkey is racism and discrimination against Syrians. "I check the passport index everyday" he said and showed the application in his smart phone and added "it shows where you can go easily without visa requirements." The people with no savings or wealth basically cannot escape from neither war nor poverty. They are stuck in their home country or the neighbouring one. When immigrants reach their destination, they experience a difficult and contradictory adaptation process that awaits them (Castelli, 2018). Leaving their home country in an unpleasant way, they hope to find more satisfaction with their lives.

While pursuing freedom and improvements of life conditions, people in Syria disappointed twice. They started an uprising against the government, but the "army" also has turned its back to its supporters.

> "We were disappointed that the educated people were marginalised and neglected by the armed groups, as there was no longer a place for the word with the presence of the gunshots. As some armed groups were practicing the same behaviours that the ruling regime applied to the Syrian people, such as arbitrary arrests, torture, killings, and disrespect for political freedoms in the first place for a while and then personal freedoms and other freedom types. I am now not a supporter of any armed party. I am waiting for the war to end so that the only victims can live in peace, which are the civilians." T, 32.

As a young single man living in Turkey, when we interviewed A (27), he started the interview by stating that he is very happy with his life in Turkey and loves his job. He came to Kilis 2016, his family settled in 2013. As soon as he had migrated to Turkey, he started working in an INGO in the humanitarian aid sector.

"Helping people like me makes me happy, we are in the same position, but I have tools to help them" he adds. When he was asked if he ever wants to move, "I am already a refugee in a country" he said, "I want to be an expat". For individual freedom, he does not want to live in any of the Gulf countries. "Freedom of speech and the weather is my hesitation about the Gulf states." He points out the weather forecasts in Saudi Arabia on his phone. "I can't even go back to Syria anymore; I was 21 when I came here. I couldn't fit in. Community should be

respected all the time. I respect the community's sensitive issues but am not happy with living like that. That's why I want to move to Europe." Fundamental rights and freedom are more important among young Syrians. It is safe to say, having classroom experiences for almost 5 years with university students from Syria, they do not consider themselves as Middle Eastern anymore. With the mass communication and living in a relatively free and democratic country, make them seek for rights and freedoms above all.

> "The main reason to leave Syria is seeking freedom, the main reason for leaving Turkey is racism. It is very disappointing how much discrimination we face here. I personally like Turkey as a place, but I don't want to rise my children here by knowing they are going to face to discrimination and racism. When I imagine my daughter at a university, I definitely want to leave for any English-speaking country." A, 27.

The interview with D (39) lives in Saudi Arabia, married with 3 kids is one of the unexpected ones. Since Saudi Arabia is ranked 147th out of 156 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, it is expected that Syrian women are not happy with their lives in Saudi Arabia. D has been living in Saudi Arabia since 2004. She wants to move to another country but not because she is discriminated against as a woman.

> "For Europe, not freedom, citizenship, my children's future. In Europe, children's futures are guaranteed. Proof of this issue in Europe people earn less but living conditions are better in Arabian Gulf. Most of my concerns are about the future. Today people are happy and living well but for the future they don't know about the future. If my country (Syria) becomes safe again I will go back today and raise my children there instead. Saudi Universities have limitations to accept foreigners." D, 39.

She is asked if you have a plan to solve this problem. She answered quickly; "I am thinking of moving to Egypt, or Europe. I think Europe provides more in terms of better living conditions, but I do not speak the language and there are cultural differences. My third option would be Turkey." She explains the reason why Turkey is the third choice: "I've been in Turkey twice and people treat me badly. Because I am Syrian, and to escape from the war, they want me to be sad and when I go shopping, they make me uncomfortable. I bought an expensive toy for my children, and they judged me because I am Syrian. For Turkish people, all Arabs are Syrian already." "Not only Syrians, Afghans, Pakistanis have the same issues. We all could send back to our home countries. That is the biggest problem for us as migrants, no guarantee." Increasing racism and discrimination against foreigners in Turkey, the most common reason among Turkey Syrians' community.

D's notions of the European states, on the other hand, reflects the most common perspective of migrants which is not taken very welcoming in native Europeans.

> "I have never been to Europe, but I have friends there. At the beginning they had problems with fitting in but now their lives are perfect. In the EU, the government takes care of their people in many aspects, they give you a job, equal education. They (Syrians in the EU) have a good life there. I want to move from Saudi Arabia because of future concerns, to the EU because the government gives lots of opportunities." D, 39

In 1986, one of the much-cited articles about welfare state and migration, Freeman states that "immigration has a tendency to erode the normative consensus on which generous welfare systems depend: When the welfare state is seen as something for "them" paid by "us", its

days as a consensual solution to societal problems are numbered" (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012: 2). Welfare state of the EU provides a lot, even for migrants, let us state. M (64), who has been living in many countries including some in the Gulf and in the EU, is an engineer and currently living in Turkey. He is married with a kid. Before moving to Turkey, he was living in Saudi Arabia. Even before he was asked for comparisons, he started to tell how he feels about these countries and regions.

> "In general, Arab countries are hard to live. There is no creativity in our countries. They (in Europe) study Islam and teach Qur'an better than us. I left my country, long before war because I was being suppressed and can't make a living there. Neither scientists nor engineers are not valued in the society in the East." 45 years in abroad, many countries he lives. He is asked which is the best for you. He answered: "Saudi Arabia is the best in terms of financial returns but when it's come to the human rights Europe is the best. And I want to live in there. For myself and my child. Your race, religion, or origin doesn't matter, they only care what you're doing. You are what you do and what you know not Syrian or migrant in their eyes." M, 64.

Cultural affinity, social compatibility, and future anxiety are the most mentioned by the interviewees. Syrian migrants have shared their experience and decision-making process in the interviews.

6. Conclusion

A phenomenon as common as migration which has been happening for hundreds of years, and obviously going to continue happening, depends on various factors. In this humble paper, among non-economic reasons, what is more significant for Syrian immigrants is examined. The methodology we use is mixed methodology, qualitative analysis supported by quantitative ones because migration has macro and micro dimensions. Statistical data and data obtained from interviews held with Syrians living in Turkey and Saudi Arabia is used. Analysing the data, we use a phenomenological approach. Moreover, grounded theory is used for accurate analysis. To make a comparison, we choose Turkey and Saudi Arabia, one is relatively more like a Western County by providing fundamental rights and freedom for migrants, the other is a GCC, an Eastern country, although there are some improvements in recent years, not signatory party of the 1951 Refugee Convention and still keeping kafala system for migrant workers.

As a result of observations and interviews supported by statistic data, we reached, three main results:

- Fundamental rights and freedoms are more important than cultural ties among younger Syrians migrants,
- People wants to be protected by law and wants to guarantee their future as well as their children,
- Racism and discrimination are the main motivation for Syrians who are planning to leave Turkey, and inequality for that of Saudi Arabia.

To decide the final destination for Syrian migrants in the second move, it is seen that they prefer living in places where they have fundamental rights and freedoms to living in places where they have cultural and social commonalities. There is no harm to state that when people already leave their own homeland, they seek for fundamental rights and freedom instead of similarities. It must be because it was the usurpation of their rights and freedoms that caused them to leave their home countries in the first place, Syrian migrants prefer to live in countries where they can live freely and not be under pressure, rather than in countries with cultural and social similarities.

The limitation of research is participants are living in only two countries, for future research, density and number of interviews can be expanded. In addition, it is believed that, in the near future, people's motivations are going to shift from cultural similarities to fundamental rights and freedoms. Globalisation, mass communication and social media brought us closer worldwide.

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Etik Beyanı: Bu çalışmanın tüm hazırlanma süreçlerinde etik kurallara uyulduğunu yazarlar beyan eder. Aksi bir durumun tespiti halinde Fiscaoeconomia Dergisinin hiçbir sorumluluğu olmayıp, tüm sorumluluk çalışmanın yazarlarına aittir.

Ethical Statement: The authors declare that ethical rules are followed in all preparation processes of this study. In the case of a contrary situation, Fiscaoeconomia has no responsibility, and all responsibility belongs to the study's authors.