

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DATA ON SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY AND JORDAN

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ABSTRACT

The paper compares official data of the refugee Syrian population in the countries of Turkey and Jordan. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) more than 5.5 million people have fled Syria to neighbouring countries, with Turkey and Jordan in first and third place consecutively. The objective of this study is to compare the refugee host policy, work, education and the situation of the child population especially. The literature research methodology was used to describe the content analysis in this paper. According to the results, the following study leaves suggestions of governmental and non-governmental programs.

Keywords: Syrian Refugees, Turkey, Jordan, Data Study

INTRODUCTION

Since the second half of the 20th century, the Middle East has become one of the most unstable regions in the world. The intricate scenario became more insecure after the Arab Spring, when a series of popular revolts against the government erupted in several countries of the region. Since then, those countries have formed alliances with some other foreign state, and in this way, the global power have been actively involved in the region. The current conflict occurs by geostrategic factors, such as oil control, local rivalries and religious conflicts.

Specifically, Syria became the most dangerous country in the Middle East after the Arab Spring. The peaceful protests began in 15th of March of 2011 against President Bashar al-Assad's regime. However, repressed violently, the protests became uprising against the regime and Islamic extremists have multiplied causing the intervention of regional and international powers. Longer than Second World War (1939-1945), Syria war is today a field of world powers that dispute the geographic control in the Arab region. Owing to dangerous situation, entire communities fled their homes for safety and security, millions have left their country and crossed the national border to find protection in other countries. At

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this point those people became refugees (Betts, Loescher and Milner, 2017, p. 20). As reported by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5.5 million Syrian fled the country.

While the magnitude of the refugee population is an important factor, the size of a host country's population, economy and development level also are central when considering the burden of hosting refugees.

The aim of this study is focused on the refugee numbers that arrived in Turkey and Jordan during the last seven years. The research is limited in compare the situations of the two countries in the following sections: refugee host policy, work, education and children situation.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study originated from a need to compare the Syrians host policy, work possibilities, education and children's situation in Turkey and Jordan. For this purpose, the content analysis was used to describe literature research. The content analysis was researched in two stages. In the first, similar data from the defined themes were collected; in the second, detailed interpretations were made in the study (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011, p. 227).

The material selected in this process were official documents related to the subject. The official documents considered were produced by employees for record-keeping and dissemination purposes such as newsletters, files, yearbooks, and the like are used to study bureaucratic rhetoric (Bogdan and Bilken, 1998, p. 58; Merriam, 2013, p. 132; Karasar, 2003, p. 183).

The official documents used were:

- reports of specialized agencies of the United Nations
- data reported by governments
- data reported by non-governmental organizations

The research considered the publications of official data from UNHCR by the year 2017; from Turkish government and non-governmental organizations by the year 2018.

1. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Over the past two decades, the global population of forcibly displaced people has grown substantially from 33.9 million in 1997 to 65.6 million in 2017.² From this number, more than 4.2 million represent the Syrians refugees in Turkey and Jordan. Condemned by the geographic and political position, those countries were heavily affected by the conflict in Syria. As shown in the Table 1, in 2012, the refugees in Turkey totalled 248.466 while in Jordan 238.798. In that year, it is observed an equilibrium between the numbers of the countries. In 2017, it is verified significant increase of refugees in the two countries: Turkey 3.400.000 and Jordan 744.865. It is concluded that Turkey received a hyper-agglomeration of Syrians refugees in five years.

Table 1. Numbers of Syrian refugees from 2011 to 2017 in Turkey and Jordan

	Turkey	Jordan
2017	3.400.000	744.865
2016	2.823.987	648.836
2015	1.557.899	628.112
2013	585.601	585.304
2012	248.466	238.798
2011	19	193

The information above brought up the need to investigate how the countries in question have responded to the main problems such as the reception policy, the possibility of finding employment, school referral focusing on children's conditions.

1.1. Refugee Host Policy

Turkey hosts the largest refugee population in the world, the vast majority coming from Syria. As observed in the Table 1, in 2017, the number of Syrians under 'temporary protection' reached just over 3.4 million, almost half of whom are children, and 45% of whom live in the South East of Turkey. Upon arrival in Turkey, refugees from Syria are able to register in the city of their choice, fall

² According to United Nations Migration Agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the information does not refer to data after June 2017.

under Turkey's satellite cities asylum system, meaning they are assigned to a specific city, required to check in regularly with local authorities, and restricted from movement outside of the city without special permission (Leghtas and Sullivan, 2017, p. 5). Figure 1 shows the 62 satellite cities where refugees were allowed to live initially:



Figure 1. Satellite cities in Turkey for refugees and asylum-seekers. Refugees International Field Report, February 2017

With the rise of refugees and their infiltration into the society, it was difficult to keep them out of the capital and border cities, today they are allowed to live in the 81 cities of the country. Nonetheless, large numbers of unregistered Syrians have moved to other parts of Turkey and it is estimated that over 530.000 refugees are living in Istanbul alone, making it the largest refugee-hosting city in the country. According to Leghtas, 2017, despite being an expensive city of 14 million residents, Istanbul is a metropolis that attracted many refugees at first of who gravitated to it eventually, and the unregistered Syrian refugees number may well be more than 700.000.

The Syrians are in privileged position in relation to refugees of other nationality: they are granted “temporary protection”, which applies to foreigners forced to leave their country and who arrive in Turkey in a mass influx. A particular set of rules and rights apply to Syrians benefiting from “temporary protection.” The Turkish government has taken a number of positive steps to improve the lives of Syrians in Turkey, holding out the possibility for citizenship. For their registration, applicants provide an address in that city and then wait for their identity card.

The time it takes for people to receive their identity card varies from one place to another and can take between a few days to a few months. The lag carries great significance for the individual since holding an identity card is required for access to public healthcare as well as primary and secondary education.

Yet, Jordan is the third largest Syrian refugee hosting country in the world and occupies the seventh position in the global ranking of refugee population. Besides that, Jordan host the world's largest refugee camp in the world, the Za'atari camp, which at the same time became the fourth largest 'city' in the country.



Figure 2: Za'atari refugees camp opened in 28th of July of 2012

Host countries and communities continued to show exceptional generosity towards refugees, remaining the first and most important responders to the crisis. As in previous years, non-governmental organizations across the region supported these efforts, delivering protection and assistance programming that benefitted Syrian refugees, host community members, and supported the national systems and services that refugees and host communities alike rely on to meet their basic needs.

Originally, Turkey and Jordan planned the places where refugees should stay until they return to Syria at the end of the conflict. However, as the war did not end, on the contrary, it became more complex with the entry of the global powers, it

was difficult to keep the refugees in the pre-established delimitations. The study found that Syrian refugees have spread across the territory of both countries. In addition, the countries in question have taken refugees in distinct political frameworks. Turkey, as bridge county between the Middle East and Europe, assuming the responsibility of keeping the refugees in this region, do not permitting they migrate to Europe or United States. Yet Jordan, an ally Arabian country, for the past several decades, have been an important partner, trading goods and services with an easy flow of workers in Syria.

1.2. Work Possibilities

The specialized agency of the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO), the existing literature on Syrian refugees places a heavy emphasis on the outcomes of humanitarian interventions, the needs of vulnerable populations, social and political rights, gender-based violence, and mental and physical health concerns. Most of this literature contains a very short reference to the prohibition against work that refugees face in host countries, yet rarely provides any in-depth analysis of the legal or policy structures that create this condition. Not surprisingly, recommendations and solutions often fall short.

In Turkey, the Ministry of Labour grants permission hiring only to contractors, the concession is not given directly to the refugee. Contractors must submit a special request to the Ministry of Labour and explain why they want to hire a refugee and not a Turkish citizen. After the long process, the refugee can only work at the company that hired him and receiving a salary subject to the collection of taxes. In case of change work, the refugee must go through the process again. In Turkey, the employment model for refugees is discouraging, working illegally is more advantageous. According to literature reviews, generally, male refugees choose to work in constructions.

The Labour Law in Turkey and Jordan does not contain any references to ‘refugees’ or ‘asylum seekers’. From this fact, ILO defended with the Jordanian government new policies for the access of Syrian refugees to work. Based on findings and research recommendations on the challenges faced by refugees in social integration, the ILO advocated with the Jordanian government to facilitate access by Syrian refugees by providing work permits in key sectors - agriculture and construction - in accordance with regulations national labour union. The first model was implemented in the agricultural sector with cooperatives. In this example, the Jordanian Ministry of Labour has authorized 22 national agricultural cooperatives

to employ refugees in agricultural activities. In the second model, the construction sector was engaged to trade unions. The innovation was to allow ‘non-Jordanians’ to work under the country’s labour laws. Thenceforth, the Ministry of Labour has begun to sign authorizations for registered refugees. 52.906 (2016) and 46.000 (2017) work permits were issued or renewed for registered Syrian refugees: a first step to guarantee livelihood opportunities for these people.

1.3. Education and Children Conditions

Refugees, adult and children, are provided with places of safety by the host country where camps are established. Children is the most sensitive topic on the education problem: in 2016 statistics, they were around half of the total refugees in the world. The majority of Syrians live in urban areas in poverty: over 80% live below the poverty line and 51% refugees are children. Without the protection of family, unaccompanied and separated children are particularly at risk of exploration and abuse.

According to UNHCR publication ‘Refugee Education: a Global Review’, education is one of the highest priorities of refugee communities. However, the schools for refugees are not usually the great problem for the receptor countries; clean water, adequate food, decent shelter and medical attention come first. The number of such children who were reported as having applied for asylum reached 75.000, although this number is considered to be an underestimate. Most of these child refugees have no access to the school system of the receiving country. In this study, the statistics is about the provisions for education that Turkey and Jordan have done. The collected data is from the Regional Refuse & Resilience 2017 Annual Report, and do not include the numbers of children that do not attend schools.

Table 2: Statistics about education in Turkey

45.580	children enrolled pre-primary education
575.931	Syrian children enrolled in formal education (Grades 1-12)
20.806	children enrolled in informal non-accredited education
15.080	students enrolled in tertiary education
1.657.775	Turkish language textbooks provided
13.181	teachers and education personnel provided with incentives
55.682	teachers and education personnel trained

Table 3: Statistics about education in Jordan

130.668	Syrian children (boys/girls) enrolled in camp schools, public schools and host communities
11.461	teachers, facilitators and school staff trained (male/female)
6.421	children enrolled in ME certified catch up and drop out programmes
118.107	children and adolescents (boys and girls) enrolled in learning support services
5.659	adolescents and youth enrolled in learning opportunities
8.617	enrolled in pre-primary in camps and host community

The literature review confirms that half of the total refugees number are children. In the Table 1, in 2017, the registered number of refugees in Turkey are 3.400.000 and in Jordan 744.865. Table 2 and 3 show the number of children that are not attending schools are much smaller than half of total registered child refugee population.

CONCLUSION

This paper explored how the political guidelines of the European Union, in addition to the war in Syria, shaped migration, and consequently, the flow of current refugees in the countries under investigation. The refugees have caused the greatest humanitarian crisis since Second World War, both Turkey and Jordan have no legal or political structures prepared for anything of this magnitude. The intention of comparison between the countries demonstrated the complexity of the issue and how the countries are addressing the same challenges. From the outcome of study, it is possible to conclude and suggest the following:

- a) Refugees who initially could only stay in the camps (Jordan) or satellite cities (Turkey), are now scattered everywhere, infiltrating within societies, with the risk of tripling at any time. Family planning programs should become a key issue to contain population growth.
- b) The right to work of Syrians refugees is not found in national legislation of the two countries, nonetheless, the government has authorizations programs of work to refugees. It was seen that in Jordan, that the flexible work permits models, between international agency with national regulations, helped the refugees to work in the laws. Attempts at national and regional dialogue on the employment of Syrian refugees may also be suggested.

c) Within the refugee group, children are the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. A Syrian baby born in 2011, lived the first seven years of his life directly or indirectly in the instability of the conflicts, it concludes that a generation of millions of Syrian children grows in the war with uncertain future. This study shows that efforts has been devoted to children in both countries, however, there are still much work to be done about the children's rights and their well-being. Humanitarian help, national, international projects and non-governmental organizations are fundamental in social initiatives, their extensiveness and flexibility operates where the State does not reach due to bureaucracy. The one who wishes to help must pay attention to the transparency in the activities and financial reports before joining an institution or non-governmental organizations.

d) Education for the refugees in Turkey and Jordan is a growing problem. The receiving countries have basic problems urgently to be solved, as health, medicines, food, shelters. The study concluded that the number of children that are not attending schools are much smaller than half of total registered child refugee population. Universities initiative programmes for children, non-governmental organizations and Education Ministry shall work strategically together in new projects. The child generation of Syrian war is greater than literature reviews shows and, in the close future, they are potential wasted lives owner (Bauman, 2004).

e) The last conclusion and recommendation is about foreign language for the Syrians refugees in Turkey, as Syrians and Jordanians speak in Arabic. In Turkey, the language is a barrier for the newcomer's communication. The challenge of learning a new language may be encouraged by propagation of integration courses, including orientation and language classes.

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This work is partly supported by Anadolu University, Scientific Research Projects Commission, 2017, Project Number 1705E143.