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Assessing the Implementation of Open-Door Policy in Managing Syrian Refugees in Germany (2015)

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Abstract:
The humanitarian crisis has happened in Syria. Syria has been suffering the dynamics of conflict in their countries spurred by the war under Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, which caused the forced migration by its citizens to the surrounding countries in 2015 through a massive influx of refugees. Germany is one of Europe's countries experiencing the most significant refugee dynamic—evidenced by the development of refugees in that period. Based on that, this qualitative research aims to understand the fundamental reason for various social events, especially for the German government implementing the Open-Door Policy on Syrian refugees. Methodologically, in data processing technique using library research supported by multiple news portals and scientific journals to help the analysis become very appropriate. As a result, this article signifies Germany's decision regarding the Open-Door Policy on refugees from Syria through human security glasses. It refers to economic security and political security. Densely, Germany provides many opportunities as workers in Germany related to its labor market development. Germany has limited the Syrian refugee's activities and provided by the quality of speaking in Germany like what Angela Merkel has said, instead of talking about the national duty on a humanitarian basis by the policy she did.

Keywords: Open door policy, Syrian Refugees, Germany, human security, forced migration

1. Introduction

The humanitarian crisis is one of the most exhaustive conflicts that exist in modern society. One of these is the Syrian crisis, which has affected its neighbors as well. Following the dynamics of war in their countries of origin, some nations allow the presence of Syrian residents as refugees. According to the 1951 Geneva Conventions and the 1967 Protocol, the status of refugees is known as individuals outside their country and requires protection by the receiving government. Their motives to flee are persecution due to ethnic, nationality, or religious differences to participation in a social organization or political party in their own country (Indonesia, 2021).

The Syrian conflict has been underway since 2011, fueled by the war dynamics under the government of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, who is famously autocratic and continues to dispute his citizens. Initially, in March 2011, several students in Daraa city voiced their dissatisfaction by painting a mural with anti-government sentiments of Bashar Al-Assad. Consequently, the Syrian army captured and imprisoned the students. In March 2011, a wave of protests followed one after the other. They were not only imprisoned, but they also committed shootings that resulted in a fatality (Fahham & Kartaatmaja, 2014, pp. 37–38).

As a result of this, the world community, including the European Union, began to pay attention to the crisis. The reasons for Syrian migrants crossing across the Mediterranean and land routes such as Turkey and the Balkans have exacerbated Europe's refugee dilemma. In fact, according to Eurostat data, the refugee crisis is Europe's worst. According to the statement, the expected number of asylums claims for the 27 EU member states has increased from 530,560 in 2014 to 1,216,860 in 2015. In 2015, there was a 2-3 times rise in asylum requests (Eurostat, 2021). According to the UNHCR, 135,711 asylum seekers attempted to reach Europe in 2016, primarily across the Mediterranean (BBC, 2016).

According to Article 3(2) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the European Union, as a supranational institution that promotes security, the formation of free zones, and justice, also collaborates to address the issue of asylum seekers (Parliament, 2021) It all started with the Dublin Regulation in 1990, which stressed the duty for refugee admissions being sole with member states. CEAS (Common European Asylum System) also said that the burden of asylum

acceptance has been imposed on all areas of Europe since 1999 (Commission, 2021a). Since the enactment of CEAS, Germany has been one of the European Region's member states that has adapted it through the Open Door Policy (ODP) on August 24, 2015 (Yuzakhri, 2018).

According to the German Government report, Germany is one of Europe's countries facing the most substantial refugee dynamic, as indicated by the development of refugees till 2016-2017. In 2016, there were over 280,000 asylum seekers, while in 2017, there were approximately 187,000 (DW, 2018). Refugees and asylum seekers continue to arrive globally by the end of 2019, as demonstrated by the annual Global Trends report in 2019, which revealed around 79.5 million refugees. Venezuela has 3.7 million refugees, Sudan has 2.2 million, Afghanistan has 2.7 million, and Syria has 6.6 million (Dzulfaroh, 2020).

While refugee crisis is arguably a protracted social conflict where a virtually durable solution is difficult to discover, regionalized capacity-building and post-conflict intervention are evidently essential in minimizing the inherent effect of forced migration (Alchatib, 2021). Based on the evidence presented above, the authors wish to provide an alternative point of view on the German government's implementation of the Open-Door Policy for Syrian refugees, specifically in 2015.

2. Research Method

The researchers employed qualitative research in this study, which focuses on qualitative phenomena involving specific characteristics and patterns. The purpose of qualitative research is to determine whether or not there is a basic rationale for various social events (Kothari, 2004). The researchers employed descriptive presentations of the German government's implementation of the Open-Door Policy for Syrian refugees. Examining the qualitative nature of this research through descriptive exposure is the process of evaluating and dissecting genuine social problems that are portrayed descriptively to get a conclusion (Sendari, 2019).

Library research is the earliest data collecting strategy utilized by researchers, and it is one of the data collection strategies on sorts of qualitative research methods (Kothari, 2004). The data source, according to Kenneth D. Bailey, is secondary data. A person cannot be in the source's shoes but can nonetheless obtain knowledge by consulting primary data sources and eyewitnesses (Bailey, 1994, p. 294). Secondary data sources will be obtained from various news portals, scientific publications, and official websites by the library research. The data that has been gathered and selected will be processed in the data processing step in data processing techniques. The most pertinent data and supporting research will be processed to aid the analysis and ensure that the study outcomes are suitable. The data is interpreted and evaluated utilizing a theoretical basis derived from a conceptual base. The acquired data is then analyzed and presented by the research's goal and definition of the problem.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Internal Conflict in Syria during President Bashar Al-Assad's Reign

The civil war in Syria erupted during the reign of Hafez Al-Assad, the father of Bashar Assad. On February 2, 1982, a carnage occurred in Hama, one of the most atrocious which was committed by the Syrian military. The atrocity resulted in the deaths of up to 40,000 civilians (Rahman, 2011). Hafez Al-Assad's root to Syria's Alawite minority is the fact that underpins his authoritarian rule. Consequently, it inspired his leadership to elevate the Alawite group to prominence in Syria (Sergie & Setrakian, 2012).

The authoritarianism of Hafez Al-Assad remained under Bashar Al Assad's regime which sparked widespread resistance in Syrian society (Wangke, 2012, p. 6). It started in March 2011 with a protest by a group of teenagers aged 9 to 15 in Daraa city, where they painted a mural with anti-government sentiments directed at Bashar Al-Assad (Sulaeman, 2013). Having noticed this, the local police, led by General Atef Najib, made an arrest. On March 11, 2011, however, it provoked public uprisings in Syria demanding the release of the youngsters (Britannica, 2011). The incident infuriated citizens even more, and protests extended to places like Hama in western Syria, the fringes of Baniyas and Latakia on the Mediterranean coast, and Deir es Zor in eastern Syria. Following that, the local community continued to protest (Fahham & Kartaatmaja, 2014).

Following months of upheaval in Syria, President Bashar Al-Assad appeared in front of the people for the first time on March 30, 2011. President Bashar Al-Assad appealed to his legislators for aid in quelling the protesters in his speech. Nonetheless, community protests persisted from city to city, prompting the police to respond with further violence. The number of casualties continues to soar into the hundreds. The incident drew international attention, with many people demanding an end to the violence perpetrated by Syrian security forces. Syria's government initiated a new approach to quell the demonstrations, deploying state security troops armed with tanks to several major cities deemed hotspots of anti-government activity, including Homs, Baniyas, and Daraa (Fahham & Kartaatmaja, 2014).

In November 2011, Syria agreed on an Arab League initiative against the Syrian military to stop violence against protesters. The Arab League also urged Syria to stop monitoring armored vehicles in various towns. The effort continued until January 28, 2012, when it was called off. Another effort was made in April 2012, when a partial cease-fire was reached as a result of discussions with Kofi Annan, a former UN Secretary-General, backed by the UN and the Arab League. However, the mission also failed, and the UN and monitoring teams were forced to leave Syria (Britannica, 2011).

Tensions between the Syrian government and external parties remain high, exacerbated by Syria's choice to deploy chemical weapons on anti-government protestors. In this case, the chemical weapon that the US fears Syria possesses is sarin gas. The UN Investigation Team verified the widespread use of chemical weapons in an assault on the outskirts of Damascus, Ghouta, on August 21, 2013. As evidenced by the deaths of over 1,400 people, 400 of them were

children. As a result of this, Syria attempted to cooperate by joining the OPCW (Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons). The UN Secretary-General has also given his blessing to the project. Syria's accession to the OPCW implies that it has accepted a prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. As a result, the UN Security Council monitors various Syrian operations including the use of chemical weapons and suggests that any violations be investigated by the International Criminal Court (Pujayanti, 2013, pp. 5–6).

This is undoubtedly a source of concern for the international community. As a result, external parties urged Syria to destroy its chemical weapons as soon as possible, and Syria committed to do so by the end of 2014. Since the tragedy, hundreds of Syrians have opted to migrate to neighboring countries. According to the United Nations, a number of Syrian refugees fled to Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon in August 2013. As a result of this, the United Nations has increasingly encouraged Syria to quickly halt the conflict in the nation in order to reduce the number of humanitarian crises that have arisen (Pujayanti, 2013). Gathered and selected will be processed in the data processing step in data processing techniques. The most pertinent data and supporting research will be processed to aid the analysis and ensure that the study outcomes are suitable. The data is interpreted and evaluated utilizing a theoretical basis derived from a conceptual base. The acquired data is then analyzed and presented by the research's goal and definition of the problem.

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4.2. Syrian Refugee Arrival to Europe

The influx of migrants into Europe is one of the most critical concerns in the context of the humanitarian crisis as it enters the twenty-first century. One of the causes of the influx of migrants into Europe is the dynamics of domestic conflicts such as those in Syria. It leads to forced migration, which is defined as the movement of a person or material targeted by the migration process as a result of natural catastrophes, internal conflicts, or the existence of threats and

coercion (Commission, 2021). Refugees are one aspects of forced migration (Edu, 2021). The vast majority of the refugees crossed the Mediterranean Sea on their way to Turkey and Greece. Others travel across the Balkans to the western Mediterranean Sea and Northern Europe. Furthermore, according to UNHCR Global Trends 2014, 59.5 million people were forced to from their homes in 2014. With 8.3 million refugees, this is the largest substantial increase in a single year since 2013 (UNHCR, 2015, pp. 2–4).
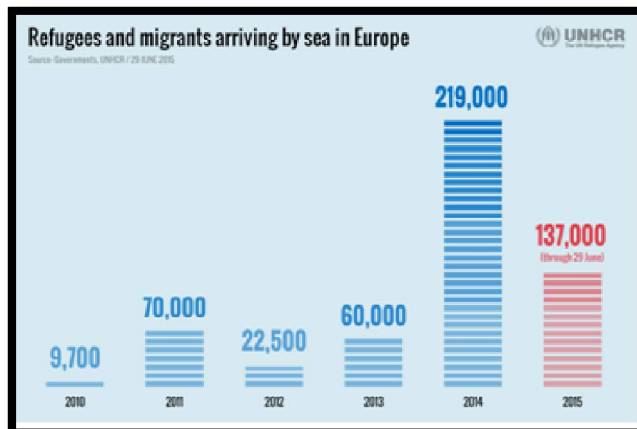

Figure 1
Source: The Sea Route to Europe: The Mediterranean
Passage in the Age of Refugees (UNHCR, 2015)

In the first six months of 2015, 137,000 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe by sea. There are 43,900 Syrians among them. This corresponds to the number of refugees and migrants that arrived on European coastlines in 2014. It is home to around 69,000 immigrants, accounting for 32% of all immigrants. In 2014, 28 EU member states discovered 95% of Syrian nationals in their own countries (UNHCR, 2015).

The movement of citizens over the last few years has also resulted in a degradation of the economy and infrastructure qualities of destination countries. As a result, refugees who arrive in the country may struggle to find jobs or housing. In mid-2015, the majority of refugees that arrived in Europe were men. They require a suitable working and living environment before returning to their respective families (UNHCR, 2015).
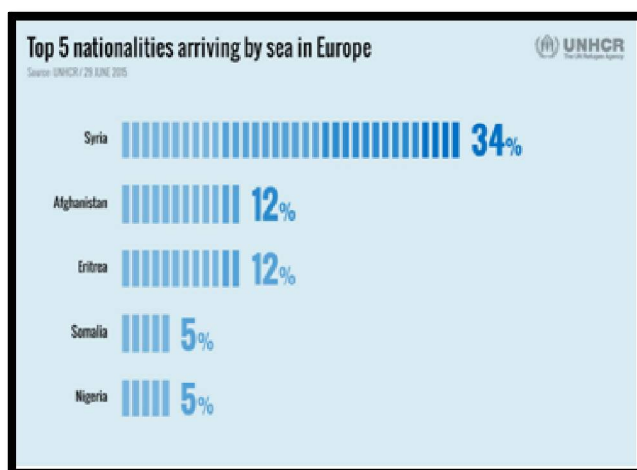

Figure 2
Source: The Sea Route to Europe: the Mediterranean
Passage in the Age of Refugees (UNHCR, 2015)

In this aspect, Syrian nationals are the most numerous as refugees, accounting for 90 % of those entering Europe through the Mediterranean Sea route. Germany is one of the countries with the largest number of refugee cases, where refugees seek asylum and improved employment opportunities (UNHCR, 2015).
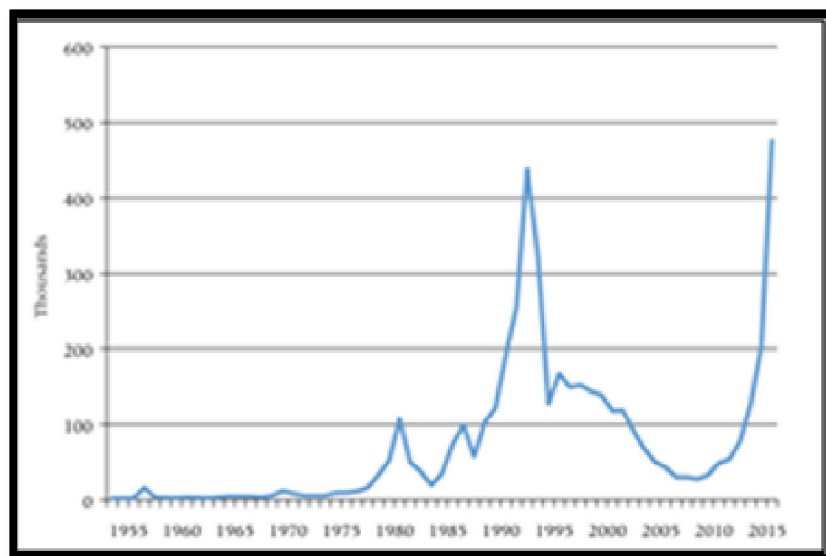
Figure 3
Source: A Profile of Germany's Refuge Populations
(Juran & Broer, 2017, p. 150)

According to the figures presented above, the number of asylum applications in Germany increased significantly, particularly in 2015. Approximately 476,000 individuals have sought refuge. Asylum admissions to Germany are also included in the Dublin Regulations, with Germany participating. The German Immigration Office has resolved to expedite the asylum application procedure, particularly for Syrian refugees and asylum seekers (Juran & Broer, 2017).

4.3. Open Door Policy by Germany to Syrian Refugees

The influx of refugees from Syria into Germany has attracted the international community's attention. Germany is one of the EU member nations that are willing to admit refugees from the Middle East, although many other EU member states oppose it. According to the Asylum Information Database, around 31% of asylum seeker applications were registered with Germany in 2014, totaling 202,815 applications. Syria had the largest number of asylum applicants to Germany that year, with 41,400 applications (Mouzourakis et al., 2016, pp. 14–16).

Germany's decision to admit asylum seekers, primarily from Syria, peaked in 2015 with the Open-Door Policy. As Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel stated, 'Wir schaffen das,' which translates as 'We can achieve this on August 31, 2015.' Merkel described Germany's efforts to assist refugees as a humanitarian national obligation. On August 25, 2015, Germany agreed to put the Dublin Regulations on hold, primarily for Syrian refugees. It implies that Syrian refugees will not have to be returned to the first EU country they arrive in (Dockery, 2017).

Based on the German decision, the authors believe that Germany's Open-Door Policy for Syrian migrants deploys human security perspective. According to Robert J. Hanlon and Kenneth Christie, human security is a form of protection for those who perceive themselves to be susceptible to danger or harm to their surroundings (Hanlon & Christie, 2016, pp. 4–5). According to the UNDP's Human Development Report 1994, the implementation of human security is once again observed through one component of it, namely economic security. In this context, financial security means that everyone is assured of his or her income through employment. Otherwise, the government must be prepared to provide social security services to each of the refugees.

This is evident in Germany's efforts to place Syrian refugees to work as laborers in Germany. Syrian refugees come from a variety of educational backgrounds, with 22 % having completed college and 30 % having completed high school. Syrian refugees with a productive age group can work in Germany (OECD, 2017, p. 22). Nevertheless, refugees from Syria must first wait three months before applying for jobs in Germany (OECD, 2017).

The intensified involvement of the German government resonated with the development of the labor market and German language education accessed by Syrian refugees. This is owing to the fruitful cooperation between the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and the Ministry of the Interior. The Federal Employment Agency, which is overseen by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, plays a role in assisting Syrian refugees in obtaining employment. They also contribute to attempts to strengthen these refugees' professional abilities. At the municipal level, there are around 156 Employment Agencies in charge of integrating refugees and asylum seekers into the job market, particularly those whose asylum applications are still being processed (OECD, 2017). To date, between 2015 and 2017, 3,800–7,000 asylum seekers and refugees were employed in Germany (OECD, 2017)

Researchers perceive political security as the epicenter of German policy in conjunction with the government's attempts to open its doors to Syrian refugees in 2015 in addition to the economic security considerations. Political security refers to the realization of human rights to building expectations for the growth of a country within a social structure of society (Hanlon & Christie, 2016). Including, but not limited to, the application of political repression by a country to limit community activities inside it ((IIHR), 2010). It was felt by researchers in line with Germany's efforts to limit the influx of migrants from Syria into the country's labor force.

Even with the numerous training facilities available, they may communicate in German as one of them. Merkel once stated that everyone seeking asylum in Germany is expected to and should obey established rules and customs, with one of them learning German (Bershidsky, 2015). Thus, the researchers believe that Germany's interest in Syrian refugees allows for the development of a low-cost and productive labor 'system' that may subsequently be used to work in various sectors of the German state. As previously stated by Angela Merkel, Germany's efforts to assist refugees are a humanitarian responsibility. Presumably, with the increase of international pressure on other countries with the treatment of Syrian refugees. One of them is the United States, which also indicated that it will absorb at least 10,000 Syrian refugees (Clibbon, 2015).

5. Conclusion

On March 11, 2011, community rallies in Syria demanding the release of young demonstrators marked a watershed moment in the country's internal stability. Until November 2011, Syria agreed to an Arab League plan to put an end to violence against protesters. Tensions between the Syrian government and outside parties remain high, owing to Syria's choice to deploy chemical weapons on anti-government protestors. In this case, the chemical weapon Syria is suspected of possessing is sarin gas. As a result, foreign parties pressed Syria to destroy its chemical weapons as soon as possible, and Syria committed to doing so by the end of 2014. Since the tragedy, hundreds of Syrians have opted to flee to neighboring countries.

The movement of individuals over the last few years has severely impacted receiving countries. As a result, refugees who arrive in the country may struggle to find employment or housing. In this sense, Syrian nationals are the most numerous as refugees, with 90 percent entering Europe through the Mediterranean Sea route. It can be observed that the number of asylums claims in Germany, particularly in 2015, increased very sharply. The flood of migrants from Syria into Germany has piqued the world community's interest. According to the Asylum Information Database, around 31% of asylum seeker applications registered with Germany in 2014, or 202,815 applications, were rejected.

Based on its initial approach, the researchers believe that Germany's Open-Door Policy for Syrian refugees employs human security perspectives. It pertains to both economic and political security. Economic security implies that everyone is guaranteed a living remuneration from his or her employment. Syrian refugees come from a variety of educational backgrounds, with 22 % having graduated from college and 30 % having graduated from high school, implying that Syrian refugees have the potential to work in Germany in a productive age group. Furthermore, German government engagement is linked to the growth of the labor market by Syrian refugees, as well as a German language course. This came about as a consequence of a conversation between the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) and the Ministry of the Interior. Political security refers to the realization of human rights to freedom to raise ambitions for the growth of a country in a social structure of society, including the performance of political repression carried out by a government to limit its community activities. Depending on the circumstances, they may be able to speak German as one of them, although many training facilities are available. Thus, it is conclusive enough, as Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that Germany's actions to assist migrants were a humanitarian national responsibility, as indicated above.

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