

Capacity Building or Resource Dependence: The Effect of Foreign Aid on the Power Dynamics of Turkish Civil Society

By
Mahur Özgül

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Supervisor: Assistant Professor Robert Sata

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ABSTRACT

The Syrian refugee flow has been an unprecedented event in the history of the Turkish migration regime. Civil society organizations and local NGOs have been important bodies in assisting Syrian refugees. With the help of large amounts of foreign funding. This thesis evaluates the impact of foreign funding to local NGOs in Turkey, and examines the positive and negative effects of foreign aid, and how has this aid effected the operation of Turkish local NGOs?" It approaches the subject from a liberal perspective of civil society and critical foreign aid theory as a theoretical framework. This thesis is a single country case study and uses in depth interviewing as a data gathering technique. This thesis argues that although foreign aid has contributed to the empowerment of local NGOs, it has not granted them the necessary political power to act as a mediatory body between the state and society; and although foreign funding is an important capacity builder it also has had negative effects such as resource dependence and over bureaucratization.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Starting from the 1980s, Turkish civil society has been relatively weak compared to its counterparts in Western societies (Keyman, 2006). Although it has developed considerably during the 2000s and it is still in the process of development, scholars argue that it is still not effective enough due to the strong patrimonial state tradition, taken over from the Ottoman Empire (Atauz, 1999). However, there have been watershed events that accelerate the process of civil society strengthening: The Syrian migrant flow has been the second watershed event for Turkish civil society organizations after the Marmara, also known as the Düzce earthquake of 1999. These critical events opened up an opportunity for NGO's and civil society organizations to flourish and gain visibility in society.

According to the European Commission (2018), there are over 3.5 million registered Syrian refugees in Turkey, and probably many more unregistered. This situation was acknowledged as a humanitarian emergency by many states and INGOs. The Syrian refugee flow has attracted more foreign funding from international donors since it is considered to be a large-scale issue that requires global response (World Economic Forum, 2015). This thesis aims to evaluate how foreign aid has affected local NGO's in Turkey looking at the specific case of Syrian migrant flow. The current situation will be examined in the framework of foreign aid dependency theory by shifting the state level of analysis to the NGO level. The main question of the thesis is "How can we

conceptualize the positive and negative effects of foreign aid and how has this aid effected the operation of NGOs?”

Critical scholars who work on foreign aid theory argue that aid does not automatically provide economic growth. On the contrary, it might cause the developing country to be dependent on foreign aid and not develop the relevant technology and skilled labor to maintain its autonomy. Today, when we look at the cases of foreign aid to developing countries, it is clear that economic growth is not the only targeted outcome. To a certain extent, donors tend to choose the receiver states based on their interests in foreign policy (Apodaca, 2017). Although the level of analysis of foreign aid theory is the state, a similar dichotomic relationship between the donor and receiver could be seen in the case of foreign aid to civil society organizations. Foreign funding to local NGOs mostly help local NGOs in developing countries to flourish and empower (Teets, 2009; Jalali 2000), but direct consequences of foreign donation does not only consist of positive developments. The process of regular donation might cause negative results as well, such as over-professionalization in local NGOs or resource dependence.

The literature has started to discuss the negative effects of foreign aid relatively later than the positive ones. The main puzzle of the thesis and the gap in the literature lies in the case of how foreign aid has not automatically led to a more empowered and autonomous civil society, but NGOs could still provide themselves wider social space: main aim of this study is to critically evaluate foreign aid, the tension between state and civil society and the role and effect of foreign actors in the particular case of Turkey and the Syrian refugees in Turkey. This thesis is a single country in depth case study.

Five in depth interviews are used as a data source with four NGO representatives and a political science scholar. Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV), The Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (MAZLUMDER), Refugee Support Center Association (MUDEM) and Medical Rescue Association (MEDAK) are the four local NGOs that have been contacted and interviewed, and Ilgar Seyidov is a professor in Ankara University specialized in civil society and NGO operation.

Despite the ambiguity of the legal status of most Syrian individuals in Turkey, this thesis uses the term "refugees" as an umbrella term to refer to the regular and irregular migrants that came to Turkey after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war. Turkey is referred to as a developing country not in the economic sense, but in the development level of civil society. Due to the need to determine the level of civil society advancement, social and political stability, the level of civil and political rights are taken as references. Since Turkey has been under the "Partially Free" category of the Freedom House since 1999 and it has been moved under the "Not Free" category in 2018, it is referred to as a developing country (Freedom House, 2018).

There are four chapters in total in the thesis. The first chapter explains the methodology of the thesis. It contains details about the data gathering method of conducting in depth interviews, and why it is chosen as the most appropriate method for this study. It also legitimizes selection of the organizations in the interview process, the interview questions, the hypothesis and the expected outcomes.

Second chapter examines critical foreign aid theory and takes it as a theoretical framework. It evaluates the question of whether foreign aid to developing countries automatically brings economic welfare and development. Critics of foreign aid and their arguments are scrutinized. The relationship between donors and receivers; intentions and expectations of donors and the possible shortcomings of aid are addressed. After the conceptualization of the theory in the state level, the level of analysis will shift to the NGO level. The functions of civil society organizations and expectations are mentioned using a liberal definition and perspective. The theoretical function of civil society and the role it plays especially in developing countries is touched upon. The question of whether NGOs could be independent and act autonomously despite their donors is answered. The concept of “piper hypothesis” is introduced and the discussion of whether donors damage the autonomy of NGOs by creating dependence on aid is scrutinized.

The Third chapter introduces the case of Turkey and gives the state of civil society in contemporary Turkey together with a brief historical overview. Evolution of Turkish civil society organizations and NGOs is examined. A watershed event in the evolution of Turkish civil society and an important step in the process of its advancement, the Düzce earthquake of 1999 is explained and the effect on civil society-state relationship is mentioned in the specific case of the Syrian refugee flow. The large number of registered and unregistered refugees in Turkey, the reason of their arrival and the effects of Syrian civil war on large migrant inflows to Turkey are demonstrated. The importance of the case and why it is considered as a watershed event in the progression of Turkish civil society is analyzed. The activities of NGOs and other kinds of civil entities vis-a vis the state policies towards Syrian refugees are examined.

Lastly, chapter four is the analysis part and it aims to review the situation of financial independence, advancement of Turkish civil society and the effect of foreign funding using the information gathered from the interviews with local NGO workers and experts. Hypothesis listed in the methodology chapter are tested in the fourth chapter using data provided by the interviews and the findings from the existing literature. The thesis ends with a conclusion and the discussion part section where the findings are interpreted and explained.

1.1 Hypothesis

The first hypothesis tested in this thesis is the Tocquevillian understanding of civil society. The main presumption is that a vibrant civil society and active NGOs bring democratization and liberalization to a country by giving sub-state actors the necessary negotiating power across any repressive state (Chambers and Kopstein, 2001). This thesis argues that the Syrian migrant flow helped local NGOs in Turkey to flourish and empower institutionally and become more professional by attracting foreign funding. Foreign aid helped the NGOs to develop capacity and this situation advanced civil society in Turkey. In this sense, the Syrian refugee flow could be considered a follow up event of the Düzce earthquake. At the same time, the thesis shows that NGO activity and an empowered civil society does not necessarily provide political bargaining power but might end up in following the path opened by the state, as could be seen in Chinese civil society and NGO culture (Perry, 2012).

The second hypothesis, following the logic of the Marshall plan, is that foreign aid to developing states and sub state actors became crucial in ensuring political alliance. The second hypothesis combines the piper hypothesis (Themudo, 2004) and foreign policy hypothesis (Kabonga, 2017): Donors influence local NGOs by providing funding and funding cannot be dissociated from active foreign and domestic politics of states and non state actors. The thesis argues that foreign funding to local NGOs, while having positive effects such as professional training and capacity building have also had negative effects: firstly, aid creates a hierarchical relationship between the donor and receiver, which damages the autonomy of local NGOs. Secondly, by applying strict technical and bureaucratic inspection, foreign aid creates professionalization which harms the spirit of voluntarism. Lastly and most importantly, foreign aid and tight international cooperation causes underdeveloped local NGOs to become dependent on foreign aid for operation, which is referred to as aid dependence (Pankaj, 2005).

1.2 Methodology

This thesis can be classified as a qualitative work and a single country in depth case study. It is a typical case study based on Gerring's (2008) criteria: a typical case must be generalizable and should fit the causal expectations. The case of local NGO transformation in Turkey is a representative case to understand the context of international funding to developing country NGOs in the aftermath of a critical event. The specific case of Turkey is chosen for this thesis firstly because the migration wave from Syria to Turkey is an unprecedented event in the 21st century and one of the most significant ones after the migration waves of 1994 Rwandan Genocide (Ihlamur-Öner, 2013). However, the in the sense of high NGO visibility and foreign aid attraction

Turkey acts as a typical case of developing countries that experience extraordinary social situations. Western supported civil society organizations played an important role the orange revolution of Ukraine, which was an example case when foreign capital inflow caused the local NGOs to become more visible (Wilson, 2007). China earthquake of 2008 is another case when foreign aid to local NGOs helped increase visibility of local NGOs (Teets, 2009). In this sense, this thesis is demonstrating how an extraordinary social event and the foreign capital inflow causes similar results in developing countries.

In depth interviews are used in this study as a method of data collection. Five interviews have been conducted in total. Four NGO representatives and one scholar who works on civil society have been interviewed.¹ The interviews are semi-structured and further questions are asked depending on the answers. The names of the interviewees are not revealed both due to their requests and due to the tense political situation in Turkey. The recent increase in the detention of human rights activists, journalists and academics after the declaration of state of emergency in Turkey (Sputnik, 2017) was another incentive not to include the names.

In depth interviewing is the suitable method to examine the issue of NGO transformation for a number of reasons. Firstly, the hierarchical relationship with

¹ Four local NGOs that have been interviewed are Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV) on the 17th of April 2018, took place in their office in Istanbul and took about 25 minutes. The Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (MAZLUMDER) on 18th of April 2018, took place in their office in Istanbul as well and took about 40 minutes. Refugee Support Center (MUDEM) on 9th of May 2018 over Skype and took about 40 minutes. Medical Rescue Association (MEDAK) was contacted over Skype on 14th of May 2018, and the interview lasted about 30 minutes. Ilgar Seyidov from Ankara University Faculty of Communication on the 28th of April over Skype, which took about 25 minutes.

donors and how the hierarchy is maintained-recreated through funding is an issue that could be understood through the perception of the parties. Secondly, as mentioned before, local NGOs in Turkey have not been highly bureaucratized institutions. Therefore, although this does not mean that the system is not transparent, the exact amount of aid and the list of donors is not public. This makes a quantitative analysis difficult and inconvenient for this thesis. The specific stories and the effects of aid are more important than the exact amount of provided aid.

Understanding the power dynamics between social-political institutions and conceptualizing the relationship between them requires an interpretive approach towards the interviews. Interview as a data gathering technique is a method that requires an interpretive position in itself (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2006). The position before and after the aid and transformation of local NGOs is examined both through their own perspective and each experience is valuable in grasping a general view of the situation of local NGOs in Turkey at the time of the Syrian refugee flow.

There are three potential methodological shortcomings of this thesis. Firstly, the perception of the international donors is lacking because they are highly bureaucratic institutions and do not reply to e-mails. Secondly, because of the limited time and resources, the number of interviewees is limited to five. Although the sample is small, it is meant to be chosen from different types of local NGOs and a scholar that could be considered to be in a more objective position is included in the research, therefore it is relatively representative. However, as a last potential difficulty, sample NGOs are small compared to large state-funded local NGOs. State sponsored NGOs, such as

Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH) are highly bureaucratic and difficult to reach out for an interview; and even though it has been tried to reach IHH and multiple international donors in the process of interviewing it was not possible to conduct an interview with them. Various attempts to reach the state sponsored and highly developed local NGOs and international donors include contacting them via e-mail multiple times, going to their offices in person and trying to contact them via personal connections.

Building on the statement that interviews are semi-structured, not every question asked to the interviewees is listed. However, written and unwritten all the questions aim to understand the relationship between the local NGOs, international NGOs and other donors based on aid, how international aid affects local NGO dynamics and their relationship with the state, and how foreign funding affects the political liberalization process of Turkey. All the questions evolve around the basic questions that are listed below:

- 1) It has been said that the refugee wave from Syria to Turkey has provided international funding to local NGOs. What can you say about this? In which ways has this situation effected your NGO/the local NGOs that you are in cooperation with?
- 2) How is your experience with the NGO-donor relationship? Do you think that donors usually have a say about the policies that NGOs follow?
- 3) Do you believe that the funding provided by the international organizations such as the UNHR or EU empowers local NGOs?

- 4) How do you think the state perceives the local NGO-international NGO cooperation?
- 5) There are certain theories that bureaucratization and professionalization of certain jobs that require volunteering damages the voluntarism spirit. Do you agree? Do you agree with the statement that international funding brings professionalism and bureaucratization to the local NGOs?
- 6) Do you think NGOs can operate independently despite the received aid, or does the donor-receiver roles that foreign aid causes create a hierarchical relationship in which the receiver NGO is dependent on the donor in its policies?
- 7) Do you think international aid in this specific case creates foreign aid dependency? What do you think will happen after the foreign NGOs leave?

Details about the donors and amount of aid have not been included in the questions in order not to make the respondents uncomfortable. Apart from that, representatives were open and comfortable answering the questions and talking about their experiences and projects of their organizations.

1.3 Selected Actors of Turkish Civil Society

Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV) is an organization that was founded after the 1999 Marmara earthquake. It aims to bring an end to the male oppression and violence and keep a network of solidarity with women and other groups that are targeted to sexual oppression such as the LGBT groups. On their website it is also stated that they

aim to help the migrant women and minority groups fight the discrimination that they face (KADAV, 2018).

The Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (MAZLUMDER) is an organization that was founded in 1991. While they have highly Islamic references on their website, they act with the philosophy that all human beings have basic human rights and these rights cannot be abolished. They are a group of activists that provide mostly legal assistance to the oppressed groups, and they have a specific section in their website about refugees in which they publish reports and news about refugees (MAZLUMDER, 2018).

Refugee Support Center Association (MUDEM) is a specific institution that was founded for the sole purpose of refugee solidarity in 2014. The organization provides both humanitarian and legal assistance to refugees and aims to strengthen the cooperation among other NGOs in the field. They organize conferences, panels and other kinds of gatherings and help refugees get in touch with international organizations regarding their necessities (MUDEM, 2018).

Medical Rescue Association (MEDAK) is founded in 2013 order to coordinate the search and rescue operations in times of earthquakes and other types of extraordinary social situations. Although the organization is based in Istanbul, they conduct projects in different parts of Turkey in order to be in solidarity with individuals that need medical support. Vulnerable groups that they work with include seasonal workers and now Syrian refugees (MEDAK, 2018).

This specific combination includes local NGOs from different positions and ideologies: while MAZLUMDER refuses to accept any kind of donation from any donor, other NGOs are in cooperation with international donors and are familiar with the issue of institutional cooperation.

Ilgar Seyidov is a Political Science professor from Ankara University. He is specialized in civil society dynamics and NGOs. He is also experienced in working with multiple NGOs. His contributions are important because he is familiar with the literature of civil society and he could combine his theoretical knowledge with his experiences from the field.

CHAPTER 2 – FOREIGN AID THEORY

2.1 Foreign Aid: Aid, Dependency and Power Relations

Foreign aid has been a debated issue in the literatures of political economy and democratization. What is referred to by “foreign aid” is mostly in accordance with its lexical meaning: “The international transfer of capital, goods, or services from a country or international organization for the benefit of the recipient country or its population” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). Gukurume (2012) argues that there are several motives of aid flowing from developed to less developed countries: it can either be helping a military ally, rewarding another state as a diplomatic move, and infrastructural aid. However, it could also be a means to gain access to the resources or the market of another country. Aid may have political, economic and humanitarian dimensions; which he argues are complementary. This thesis will not conceptually differentiate between humanitarian and economic aid, or aid through cash and other means because the emphasis is not on the amount, means or types. The focus will be on the motives of the donors, the result of aid in terms of dependency and the hierarchical relationship that the act of aid creates between the donor and the recipient.

The literature on the issue approaches the concept of foreign aid from two viewpoints: while pro-aid scholars suggest that there is a positive correlation between aid and the economic growth of states; critics such as Boone (1996), Kabonga (2017) suggest that these theories of foreign aid benefitting developing countries in terms of economic growth are questionable and should not be detached from the overall power dynamics.

In order to understand the theory of foreign aid, it is important to understand the general theory that examines the growth promoting aid and the relationship between the donor and the receiver state. The pro-aid arguments evolve around the reasoning that foreign aid provides a significant opportunity for underdeveloped states to advance their economies. Anti-aid arguments vary based on practical arguments such as the unsustainability of the aid would cause dependence, and some go into normative debates questioning whether the donor states use aid as a foreign policy tool to influence less powerful states.

Pankaj (2005) is one of the scholars in the foreign aid literature that takes into account both pros and cons of the process. In coherence with the theory of capital being the most important factor of economic growth, he argues that foreign aid has been crucial in influencing the development processes of underdeveloped countries after the Second World War. He evaluates the three approaches of the pro-aid scholars to the concept: firstly, the approach that aid helps to close the gap between savings and investment. Secondly, foreign aid helps countries purchase goods that they cannot produce domestically but are necessary for their development. Lastly, foreign aid would increase the capital absorptive capacity of countries. When we come to the critics of foreign aid, the criticism to aid that Pankaj gives is that foreign aid does not have a positive correlation with aid. Firstly, it prevents the aided country from learning the process of production. The skills and technology required for production are not internalized by the home country when capital is provided exogenously and creates aid dependency for the receiving country (Pankaj,2005).

Apart from the effects of aid to receiving countries, the motive of donors is also a debated issue in the literature. According to the critical scholars, foreign aid can be used as a foreign policy tool for the donor country in order to impose its interests on the receiver country (Kabonga, 2017; Apodaca, 2017). To understand and evaluate whether aid has succeeded in the receiving states, Kabonga (2017) continues, the effectiveness and the sustainability features of aid should be evaluated. Focusing on African countries, he demonstrates that half of the budget of Rwanda, Tanzania, Nigeria and Malawi are sustained by foreign aid and their economies became dependent on the aid that they receive. Despite the effect of aid on the receiver states, this puts them into a disadvantaged situation since it is potentially used as a bargaining chip by the donor countries in order to control the governments of the receiving states. He continues by giving Malawi as an example case, since it tried to outlaw homosexuality but could not because USA threatened it with cutting the aid. Although this might be considered a liberalizing case for Malawian citizens, it is also a good demonstration of how foreign aid can be utilized as a domestic and/or foreign policy influencing tool for disadvantaged states (Kabonga, 2017).

Another critical approach towards foreign aid is based on the argument that donor behavior and the choice of receiver states is not always based on poverty and vulnerability. According to the OECD reports, although the total amount of global aid is in gradual increase, the aid granted to the poorest countries has been decreasing in percentage terms; even together with the humanitarian aid to refugees, the total amount of aid to the poorest countries is in decline (OECD, 2018). The poorest African countries today receive less aid than they used to. The data supports the argument that aid does not aim to solve poverty reduction and infrastructural development, or

else donors such as the EU should have to relocate their aid budget and make it cover only the poorest countries. Instead, EU institutions' foreign aid mostly goes to the countries that they potentially have closer economic and political relations with (Apodaca, 2017). Overall, in the case of foreign aid, it is not difficult for the donor states to create a dichotomy based on power hierarchy and use this power to control the policy preferences of receiving states.

While the state as an actor should not be ignored in the evaluation of foreign aid, NGOs also constitute an important dimension. International NGOs are an important source of foreign donation, with varying aims from infrastructural development to democratization. Banks et al. (2015) argue that despite their different societal and political goals, NGOs have not been able to cause transformative change in the societies that they function in; mostly because they are stationary institutions themselves. They explain this with three factors: firstly, NGOs sometimes lack strong roots in the societies that they operate. Secondly, the foreign aid dimension put NGOs in a position where they are "clients" and a technocratic relationship has evolved between them and the donors. Lastly, they are not isolated actors, but they are also parts of the power dynamics of the political environment in which they operate. When focused on the second factor, we see that local NGOs suffer from the narrow agenda that is defined for them by the donors and policymakers, which prevents them from achieving transformative change in the societies that they target.

According to most liberal scholars following Gellner (1996), democratization and political liberalization comes as a result of economic advancement. However, to

understand the relationship between democratization, liberalization and aid, Bourdieu's (1986) classification of the forms of capital should be introduced. While economic capital, which is the amount of accumulation "directly convertible into money", Bourdieu's contribution to the literature has been the introduction of the difference between economic, social and cultural capitals. Cultural capital is "any given cultural competence"; and he gives the example of ability to read. Cultural capital can be transformed into economic capital under certain circumstances. Social capital is defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986: 51). Deriving from the definitions, civil society organizations in general and NGOs in particular could be counted as the social capital of a society.

An active civil society and accumulated social capital is viewed as a necessary condition for democratization for liberal scholars (Fukuyama, 2001; Gellner, 1994). However, there is no direct correlation between economic capital and social capital accumulation (Bourdieu, 1986). While forms of capital are transformable to each other, economic capital accumulation does not necessarily lead to the rise of social capital. In this regard, foreign capital that inflows a state does not necessarily lead to a stronger civil society and social capital accumulation. Fukuyama (2001) has also mentioned that foreign capital inflow may only create a stratum of elites as NGO employees and might not provide a full-fledged social network unless there are no local roots.

All in all, the critical literature on foreign aid suggests that international NGO's and other civil society organizations may be aiming to develop the target country economically or have a narrower target such as fostering democratization. However, they may not be able to achieve a full-fledged transformation for a number of reasons: Firstly, even if the local NGO's have the will to be beneficial for the receiving country, they may not be effective because they are bound by the technocratic relationship with their donors; and the donors may not be beneficial because they lack the necessary familiarity with the country that they operate in. Secondly, although aid is a useful way of boosting production and/or empowering local sub-state actors, it is not a sustainable form of resource for the local population and political institutions.

It is important to understand the theoretical framework of foreign aid and its impact on the receiving state in order to examine the relationship between Turkey and its foreign donors, the transformation of local civil society actors and the overall impact of the process for Turkey. The following chapters will adapt the theory of foreign aid to the NGO level of analysis and take the Syrian refugee flow as a case study.

2.2 The Transformative Power of Mobility and The Political Reasons Behind Foreign Funding

In order to evaluate the potential institutional transformation of local NGOs resulting from the Syrian refugee flow, the reasons behind the large amount of international funding should be understood. While Syrian refugee flow is an unprecedented event and requires global response, not the absolute amount of aid was due to humanitarian

reasons stemming from social responsibility. Particularly European Union as an important international donor, has been struggling with keeping its borders tight and even contrary to the Schengen agreement, border closings within member states have been taking place even though it is against the Schengen policies. Funding to Turkey and readmission agreements should be evaluated from the perspective of social and geographical closeness as well (Özcan, 2016).

The current power relations and border policies of states constitute an important dimension in understanding foreign aid. Considering the Dublin regulations of Europe and the EU-Turkey deal, we can say that one of the reasons why the Syrian civil war has had such a drastic impact on Turkey is mostly because of solid border policies of states in general and specifically Europe. De Genova (2017) argues that the inflexibility of border policies starts with the problematization of mobility and continues with the choice of vocabulary to support the policies. He goes on to say the term “refugee crisis” is based on the implicit assumption that mobility is not desirable across borders and it recreates the verbal distinction between North and South, citizen and migrant, local and foreigner.

The process of restricting mobility and providing aid and providing aid in return constructs an unequal relationship between the donor and the receiver by taking the form of “charity” (Baban, et al., 2017). While the large number of Syrian migrants and the material incapacabilities of the state is the determinant factor legal constraints, bureaucratic procedures and material inconvenience in the asylum granting process of the state paves the way for a charity-based approach towards the Syrians (Mackreath

and Sağnıç, 2017). Baban et al. (2017) argue that this approach towards Syrians as an object for humanitarian assistance instead of political actors with rights puts them in a vulnerable position and fosters anti-refugee sentiments in society.

The reconstruction of European borders for undocumented Syrian refugees through the EU-Turkey refugee deal contributes to the situation by reducing the residence options for Syrians. The objectification of Syrians could be observed better in the discourse during the process of EU-Turkey negotiations about the readmission agreement: President Erdoğan uses the Syrians as a “bargaining chip” in the negotiation process of the deal (BBC, 2017), and the European Union member states accept refugees based on their personal qualifications, such as education. This objectifying approach of political actors towards refugees is state-centric and the problematization of mobility is the main reason of how this wave has had such drastic effects.

2.3 Functions of Civil Society: A Liberal Perspective

In order to evaluate the pros and cons of aid to NGOs, the expectations from NGOs and civil society in general should be clarified. Although there are multiple definitions of civil society, this thesis would follow the liberal theoretical school of thought and define civil society as such. Civil society organizations play the third sector role (United Nations, 2018), after the public and private sectors. In this context, the basic function of civil society is to act as a mediatory body between the state and the citizens. Alongside this process of mediation, civil society organizations play role in establishing

the common good in society, which includes protecting the disadvantaged segments of society; including women, children, and the handicapped (Sharma, 2015).

While civil society is a general concept that is used to define any kind of activity that takes place outside of state institutions, this thesis will only focus on NGOs as a kind of civil society organizations because of practical reasons: Political institutions could be observed in relation to the state and society since they are supposed to have transparency. Data gathering about the funding in NGOs is more convenient in other civil groups that help refugees because they are under state supervision and conduct documented assistance.

The basic function of civil society in the liberal perspective is protecting the rights of individuals and communities against the state, society and other individuals (Gellner, 1994; Özer, 2008). Despite its multiple dimensions and definitions, the basic features evolve around the individual rights protection by making the injustice visible and linking the judiciary to the injustice. Mainly its features are that it is a voluntary organization outside the control of state structure, it is an area of communication and negotiation and a public sphere that helps democratically regulate the relationship between the individual, society and the state (Keyman, 2004). Following the definition and the emphasis on the individual rights protection dimension of liberal conception of civil society, the concept has been mostly linked to social and political development, societal peace, a sustainable economic system and democratization (Bignam, 2007; Keyman, 2004).

In the liberal theory of civil society, an important function of civil society is establishing a living space for citizens where they can be free and equal. Civil society has the responsibility to monitor and point out the inadequacies or unjust policies of the states in any case of oppression or authoritarianism. With an alternative understanding of civil society following Putnam, the republican perspective views the civil society as a space to practice citizenship. While the communitarian framework of liberal school of thought views civil society as an area which consists of family and friends, cosmopolitan theorists view civil society as a form of global governance (Bignami,2007).

Due to the mediatory and democratizing role of civil society, the traditional civil society-state relationship is not static and it is sensitive to social and political incidents. Civil society is a concept that can be considered complementary to the state in the case of a liberal state where the state aims to maximize individual rights and liberties. Keyman (2004) emphasizes how the Turkish civil society during the 2000s has contributed to the democratization process of Turkey. The AKP government, who had initiated the EU negotiation process adopted a liberal discourse and cooperated with the civil society in the process of democratization. Another example of state-civil society cooperation could be Bangladesh during the early stages of state formation. The new NGOs that attracted foreign capital were in cooperation with the state in their motivation for infrastructural and social improvement. (Kennedy, 1999).

State and civil society can have a tense relationship when the state is repressive (Heurlin, 2010). In a dichotomist relationship where the civil society organizations aim liberalization and democratization and the state has a different stance, the state could

show the reaction of repressing overall civil society or claim the institutions and take them under state control. In China, as an example; where the state is quite repressive and authoritarian, civil society organizations found the solution in framing their demands within the state rhetoric – and most of the NGOs in China actually work closely with state institutions and they are called GONGOs (Government organized nongovernmental organizations) (Perry, 2012). It can be seen that the state response is not repressing the civil society which could lead to riots and more destructive outcomes, but it just canalizes a vibrant civil society to the legal frame.

Another authoritarian state, however, did not choose the same path as China. Russia has restricted foreign funding to NGOs and implemented restrictive regulations. As a result, many NGOs were shut down (Beissinger, 2012). However, there are triggering situations that ease these kinds of tense relationships: such as the Sichuan earthquake of 2008 has been noted as a turning point in the state-civil society relations in China. The active role played by the NGOs in the relief efforts at the first phase of the earthquake has opened up space for civil society to strengthen and gain visibility in Chinese society. Yet, civil society did not act as a substitute for the state in this case but as a complementary body (Teets, 2009).

Despite gaining social visibility and public acceptance, NGOs could hardly be an example of a democratizing force in the process of carrying out relief efforts. Rather, these institutions have acted in the framework of the political space that the state has opened up willingly. Although Teets (2009) argues that the visibility of civil society and NGOs in particular has advanced the Chinese civil society by providing familiarity to

the society, there is no visible democratization or political liberalization brought by the result of provided relief efforts. China and Russia are crucial examples to observe the tension and different reactions of authoritarian states towards NGOs, and these examples help us to understand the relationship between Turkish state and civil society in times of refugee flow.

Although it is important to understand the conceptualization of civil society as a liberalizing social sphere vis-à-vis a potentially repressive state, it is also important to emphasize the intertwined features of state and civil society. The lines between these two political entities are often blurred especially in non-Western contexts through political parties and mixed institutions (Şimşek, 2004). As the analysis chapter will further explore, especially under conditions where the state provides funding for certain NGOs, the binary of state and civil society loses its feasibility as a conceptual tool.

Due to the Western origins of civil society and civic culture, what is referred to as civil society mostly consists of what exists in Western states and civil society definition mostly refers to the Western model of civil society. This chapter demonstrated other types of civil society that exist under different circumstances and cultures on the contrary to the generic civil society understanding of Western approaches (White, 1996). As a country that has not experienced Western stages of civil culture advancement, democratization and political liberalization; it is important to understand where the state, civil society and the individuals stand in Turkey. Aim of the following chapters is to conceptualize the relationship between NGOs as civil society agents and

political actors, the balance of power dynamics in between these social and political agents and how the Syrian migrant flow as a case has affected the situation in Turkey.

2.4 NGO Independence and the “Piper Hypothesis”

As the previous sections demonstrated, NGOs aim to bring aid to disadvantaged groups in society. For this reason, NGOs and repressive states in certain cases have a tense relationship (Puplampu and Tettey, 2000). NGOs even are claimed to be incompatible with dictatorships (Heurlin, 2010). The examples given in the previous section of Russia and China aimed to provide an insight in the cases of where the authoritarian state and the civil society had tension. This chapter scrutinizes international NGO-local NGO cooperation and its dimensions in developing countries.

In the second half of nineteenth century, NGOs were founded and specifically aided developing countries to promote democratic norms and values. Some international donors conduct his process in coordination with local NGOs and civil society organizations, such as the Open Society Foundations (2018). However, due to foreign aid being one of the prominent sources of NGO capacity, it is important to understand the objectives of donors and question whether they coincide with the targets of local NGOs. In case of a potential conflict in donor and receiver agenda, local NGOs might have to comply with the receiver policy which would damage their autonomy and influence their policies in an undesired direction.

Themudo (2004) examines NGO behavior under various donors, such as the government or international contributors. He questions whether NGO's can work independently even in the cases when they are financially dependent. He coins the term the "Piper Hypothesis" to refer to the situation where the NGO cannot act independently due to financial dependence, indicating the proverb "he who plays the piper calls the tune." (Themudo, 2004, 33) He quotes the arguments of Deakin (2001) and Edwards and Hulme (1997) who state that NGOs may not be capable of acting independent from the state when the states provide their funding. Donor and foundation aims might well be in conflict (Barman, 2008), and this situation might create an incentive for the NGOs to shape their policies not on their own behalf, but the donor interests.

However, there are also studies which demonstrate the piper hypothesis is not empirically proven. In his two case studies of Portugal and Mexico, Themudo (2004) tests his own hypothesis and as a result, illustrates that independence is a complex issue and does not have a direct negative correlation with funding. However, it is also important to consider the competition for funding. Kennedy (1999) argues that in developing countries, such as his case of Bangladesh, NGO's have to compete for resources and funding from the state; which might also be a determinant in how policies are shaped implicitly with donation motives. Following chapters will analyze the issue of foreign aid to local NGOs over the case of Turkey, and examine the effect of foreign aid on the independence of local NGOs in the process of Syrian refugee wave.

CHAPTER 3 - SYRIAN REFUGEE FLOW AND ITS EFFECTS: THE CASE OF TURKEY

3.1 Historical Evolution of Civil Society in Turkey

Civil society has been an important actor of democratization since the enlightenment, and today it is seen as the key feature of democratization especially in authoritarian regimes (Aslan, 2010a). For a young country such as Turkey that has experienced multiple coups and interruptions in democratization, it is important to understand where civil society stands.

During the time of the Ottoman Empire, a form of civil society existed under the name of “lodges” and “zawiyas”. These were religious institutions mostly under the control of the Ottoman Empire, which indicates that they do not fit the definition of a modern liberal civil society. These institutions maintained their existence until the 19th century, but afterwards the state-controlled modernization process of the Ottoman Empire began, and the already limited civil society started to be further patronized by the state (Aslan, 2010b).

The transition to the Turkish Republic marked a transformation to a secularist and modernist state in 29th of October 1923. Civil society organizations did not have a fertile ground to progress after the formation of Turkish republic. Republican People’s Party was in government, and the party was highly restrictive towards civil society

organizations and political participation (Özkiraz and Arslanel, 2015). Turkish Republic held its first multi-party elections in 1946. After the election of Democratic Party in the second multiparty elections in 1950, the political sphere became relatively more liberal compared to the one-party era. This was the time when the newly found Turkish state systematized its economic development and socio political organization. Labor unions, associations and political parties started to take part in a participatory democracy (Özkiraz and Arslanel, 2015). Before the military coup closed down more than 20,000 of them, there were more than 38,000 NGOs in Turkey (Şimşek, 2004).

The dynamics were different after the Democratic Party era. 1980 coup was a triggering event in the depoliticization of social realm. The new constitution drew a strict boundary for civic and political life - hundreds of people were arrested, and political parties were shut down. The environment was not suitable for civil society to progress. However, during the late 1980's after the relative easing of the political atmosphere, associations and foundations started becoming active again (Hira and Şan, 2004). After the 1990's, Turkey initiated its Western oriented foreign policy era and democratization process. After 90's, civil society started to play a more active role in the social and political spheres.

We should not interpret the advancement of civil society in the 1990's as a phenomenon that is specific to Turkey. However, the shift in the industrial advancement and economic liberalization was what made Turkey different in this process. New industrial relations brought with capitalism redefined the position of state and civil society. As a result of this redefinition, there was more room for NGOs in the

social and political sphere which allowed civil society to further advance (Buğra and Savaşkan, 2014).

For the reasons stated above, Turkish civil society has gradually increased its importance especially during the 2000's. It is important to note the significance of the Helsinki summit of the European Council in 1999 as a breaking point (Kaya, 2017): Turkey was officially announced as a member candidate country and the summit became a benchmark in Turkey-European Union relations. According to Keyman, this activation was due to three reasons: firstly, the 2001 economic crisis increased and its devastating effects rose the need of responsive and accountable political institutions. Secondly, the 2002 elections and the victory of Justice and Development Party (AKP) brought the first single majority government to the Turkish parliament: the election results were the outcomes of the demand for political stability and democracy after a long period of fragile coalition governments. Lastly and most importantly, the Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy and the modernization and democratization process that corresponded with the EU negotiations of Turkey initiated the efforts to raise its level of democracy to European standards (Keyman, 2006).

Despite all the recent progress, scholars such as Biber argue that civil society in Turkey has never been as advanced as civil society in Western states. He claims that the Islamic tradition that dominated Ottoman Empire promoted a patrimonial state that deeply penetrated the political and civil life (Biber, 2009). Even though he admits that there are many functioning organizations, he adds that these organizations do not fulfill the mission of democratization or mediation between society and government

sufficiently. According to the statistics, 20% of the individuals who think of taking part in a civil society organization consider joining a philanthropy, which is the highest ratio. 58.8% of the organization directors argue that they do not have a political role, and 83.9% of the organizations did not take part in any of the policy making process in the year of 2011 (Yada report, 2015).

Certain scholars such as White (1996) argue that the culture of civil society is not indigenous to the West, and civil society in various geographies should not be evaluated with Western criteria. She emphasizes that alternative states and civil society experiences exist, and that although Turkish culture, societal dynamics and state-civil society relationship are different from Western states, civil society and civil culture are important elements of Turkish political life (White, 1996). Such as the 1999 earthquake of Marmara was an important event in demonstrating the importance of how the vibrant Turkish civil society and NGOs can be effective in handling difficult situations. The next chapter will focus on the issue in more detail.

3.2 Turkish Civil Society in Action: The Case of Düzce Earthquake

Civil society is known to have drastic effects on disaster relief both in developed and developing countries. In the specific case of earthquakes, the first search and rescue operations are usually conducted by the civil society organizations, and disaster management reveals the nature of the relationship between the state, society and the NGOs in context (Atauz, 1999; Jalali, 2002). A recent example of a developing country assisted by NGO's in the time of disaster management is the Haitian earthquake of

2010. The earthquake has had destructive effects on Haiti because of the infrastructural underdevelopment and political instabilities resulting from its colonial past. It has received thousands of dollars of foreign aid both from national governments and NGOs, in fact Haiti has earned the nickname “NGO republic” in the aftermath of the earthquake (Williams and Shepherd, 2016). This example demonstrates how civil society and sub state actors could be significant enough to change a country’s reputation in times of emergency if the state is inadequate.

The Düzce earthquake happened in the Marmara region of Turkey on the 17th of August 1999. It was noted as one of the most difficult to manage emergency situations, and it resulted in a loss of more than 7% of the overall GDP (Jalali, 2002). The physical and psychological damage was also significant, with more than 15,000 deaths and 40,000 injuries (Özerdem and Barakat, 2010). A member of parliament reports that the state could not enter the central zone of Kocaeli until two days after the earthquake and it was materially unprepared for the disaster (Sabah, 2015). Similar to the Haitian case and many more, local NGOs together with international organizations such as the UNDP, EU and many other nation states from Denmark to Japan offered aid in the post disaster period (Hürriyet, 1999).

According to Atauz (1999), the earthquake was a watershed event in the public and political existence of the Turkish state because it was the first time the state felt that there were other societal structures and organizations besides itself. The earthquake demonstrated that despite repressive authoritarian government, civil society in Turkey managed to stay vibrant and could manage to cooperate once an opportunity occurred

(Jalali, 2002). The success of civil society in assisting the state in the aftermath of the earthquake has provided trust and opened up space for carrying out their activities (Atauz, 1999). The case study conducted by the charitable foundation TÜSEV has stated that the 1999 earthquake had been an improving experience and the immediate response of the state and NGO's were more in coordination during the 2011 earthquake of Van compared to 1999 (TÜSEV, 2013). To conclude, what makes extraordinary situations an opportunity for local NGOs is the lack of civil society in the social sphere. The reluctance of the state to recognize other actors caused lack of cooperation at first, but the 1999 earthquake acted as a triggering event in forcing the state to acknowledge the presence of other social and political actors. This paved the way to the easing of NGO operation in any other event, including the 2011 earthquake and the Syrian refugee flow.

However, it is important to differentiate the disaster relief function of civil society from the function of social and political mediation function. Even though NGOs and civil society organizations gained visibility and public support after the post-earthquake disaster relief, this does not necessarily mean that Turkish civil society has also advanced in its role of state- society mediation. However, the earthquake showed that civil society could manage to preserve its status as a vibrant force despite an authoritarian state (Jalali, 2002).

CHAPTER 4 – TURKISH CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE REFUGEE FLOW

4.1 Syrian Migrant Flow to Turkey and its Effects on Turkish Civil Society

According to the UN ambassador Guterres, one of the most serious results of the Syrian civil war is the refugee crisis; “and it is the worst one that the world has witnessed after the Rwandan refugee crisis in 1994” (Ihlamur-Öner, 2013). This refugee flow has had serious consequences on the neighboring countries, especially Turkey. Foreign affairs minister of the time, Ahmet Davutoğlu stated that Turkey was following an open-door policy towards the Syrian refugees (Turkish American News Portal, 2014). The open-door policy of welcoming Syrian refugees has resulted in over 3.7 million registered individuals, making Turkey the country with the highest number of Syrian Refugees (European Commission, 2018).

The Syrian refugee flow in Turkey has been controversial since the first wave of refugees started to enter the border. One of the reasons of this controversy stemmed from the foreign policy choices of the Erdoğan government: The president of Syria, Bashar Assad, was viewed as temporary and the foreign policy trajectory was shaped on the presumption that Assad would quit (NTV, 2012), which would put an end to the long-term conflict in Syria. According to then Prime Minister Erdoğan, the Syrians were to be returned to their hometowns once the conflict was over (Cumhuriyet, 2014). The government did not develop long term policies about the issue during the first phases of the wave (Erdoğan, 2014) because the Syrian migrants were seen as temporary and referred to as “guests” (Agos, 2014). It could be seen that the guest rhetoric does

not only arises from the perceived temporary position of refugees in Turkey, but also arises from the state's reluctance to give Syrians a clear cut legal definition: The regular and documented Syrians today are under the status of temporary protection instead of refuge which creates legal and definitional problems (İçduygu, 2015).

Turkey does not have an established migration regime for the reason that it had only been a sending country rather than a receiving one until the 1980's (İçduygu, 2015). Turkey has put a restraint on the 1951 Geneva Convention and the legal system is designed in a way that it only allows citizens from European Union member states to have the refugee status (Kutlu, 2016). Because of the underdeveloped legal framework, the reception policy still does not allow Turkey to recruit non-European and non-Turkish origin refugees (European Parliament, 2016). For this reason, their status has been defined as "temporary protection" (İçduygu, 2015).

Partially because of the legal constraints on Syrians having refugee status, partially because of the material inadequacies the state faces due to the large number of people, civil society support has been crucial since the beginning of the flow (Erdoğan, 2017). The Syrian migration wave has been the most important incident for the NGO's after the 1999 earthquake of Düzce, because it has given room for the contribution of civil society to the public. (Mackreath and Sağnıç, 2017).

The number of associations founded in order to assist Syrians in Turkey has been increasing. Today, there are 48 national and 17 international organizations that facilitate assistance for the Syrians (Syrian Refugees and NGOs in Turkey Report, 2018). They have been effective both inside and outside the camps, in the areas of humanitarian aid, education, health services, cultural and art activities and many others. Especially during the first stages of the migration wave, the Turkish state was reluctant to cooperate with the international society in assisting and monitoring charity for Syrians; even the UNHCR agencies were kept out of the camps (IGAM report, 2013). However, after the intensification of the migration wave, philanthropies started to play an important role and “filling the gap of the state” in providing basic services for Syrians. The overall awareness and the will for aid has also increased in society (Mackreath and Sağnıç, 2017:24).

According to the IGAM research center report on refugees (2013), international organizations are subjected to a government permit in order to function and this process takes time. If they are caught operating in Turkey without the permit, they lose their chance of receiving the permit overall; which makes the procedure even more difficult. Under these circumstances, although facing logistical and operational problems, INGO's cooperate with local NGO's in order to pursue their functions. This situation creates a different dynamic than the relationship between donor state and receiver state, and the donor NGO and receiver NGO. The domination of more professional INGO's in the field coexisting with the local NGO's leads scholars to the question of how the relationship is constructed, how this process has transformed local NGOs and what would happen when INGOs leave and terminate their activity in the area.

4.2 Experiences from the Field

During the interviews, interviewees were asked questions regarding their perspective on their relationship with international donors, the state and the overall transformation that their organizations went through in the process of Syrian refugee flow. This chapter is structured in a way that arrays the paragraphs in order with the answers to the questions, not in order with the interviewees individually. The answers are in coherence with the number of questions that are stated in the methodology chapter.

The interviewees first answer the question of how they started to work with Syrian refugees, and whether the process of funding has empowered their organizations and Turkish civil society in general. The interviewee from KADAV reports that there had been multiple factors that played a role in their involvement with refugees; even the building that they operate in played a role. Their central location within Istanbul allows them to come across refugees and their building includes NGOs that work with refugees such as MUDEM. They started working with the refugees with Afghans, and now they are mostly in touch with Syrians. This situation has provided them funding from various international bodies such as the UNHCR and the EU. They argue that this process has empowered them, but an important factor that played a role in the process of their empowerment was that they choose supportive donors.

The answers are different when it comes to the issue of state funding and intervention: KADAV representative argues that the state does not have an empowering stance towards local NGOs. “The state would eliminate the local NGOs if they could, but

INGOs want to cooperate with the local NGOs,” she remarks. In KADAV representative’s point of view, the state would minimize the role of local NGOs if they could; but the international donors do want to work with NGOs instead of working with the state itself. The interviewee from MEDAK has a similar stance and mention that the state wants the funding for itself. However, the state has favored NGOs and it chooses to empower certain NGOs by channeling funding towards them. MAZLUMDER has a more optimistic, although similar approach to the issue: the state willingly cooperates with certain groups and empowers certain NGOs.

MUDEM has also got a similar approach and they state that they find the donors after their projects and policies are pre-defined: thus, the donor does not sign up for the project of the NGO in the first place. This allows them to work with supportive donors and protect their policy making autonomy as well. “We prefer donors that do not interfere in our policies and restrain our autonomy,” KADAV representative states. Similarly, MUDEM representative elaborates: “The necessities of the organization are identified, and the fund is determined accordingly. Due to the prior definition of the project, interference of the donors to the projects and autonomy damage is usually not the case in our organization.”

MAZLUMDER representative however, has a different take on the issue of independence and funding relationship. They define themselves as a right-based organization and they do not provide material assistance to refugees. They do not accept funding at all – the reason is that they do not believe that organizations can protect their autonomy while receiving funding from an external source. “Who pays the

piper calls the tune, ” states the representative of MAZLUMDER, using the same terminology as Themudo (2004).

Seyidov’s answer is similar to MAZLUMDER’s point: he states that it is not possible for the organizations to act contrary to the donor. When he is asked about whether he agrees on the statement “who pays the piper calls the tune,” he concludes: “there certainly is such a thing. The donor provides everything for you, therefore you cannot do anything contrary to the donors will.”

As a follow up to the previous subject of donor interference to NGO operating, all of the representatives agree that there is a hierarchy between the donor and local NGO. However, KADAV representative argues that the donors are well aware of the fact that locals are the powerful ones in the field: “We have the information,” she states. Familiarity with the local culture and traditions gives them an advantageous position even though there is an “invisible hierarchy” between the organizations. However, this relatively advantageous position of having information helps local NGOs protect their autonomy against INGOs.

Seyidov draws an analogy between the donors and receivers: “The UN acts as an elder brother for locals,” he states. The family analogy is a strong example to emphasize the level of influence donors have over local NGOs: donors may not explicitly dictate the projects or policies in every case, but they make sure that the outcome is not contrary to the overall interest of the donor. “The donor pays for the

NGO that does what it wants,” the representative of MEDAK states; emphasizing the implicit influence.

When asked about the effect of international donors on local NGOs, most of the interviewees mentioned both the positive and negative effects of funding. KADAV representative has evaluated the process as positive in terms of the lobbying facilities and mediation between the state and local NGO: “UN is an empowering institution,” she admits. However, she also addresses the negative sides of funding: “They (the donors) focus too much on numbers,” she states. “KADAV is an organization that is based on empowering women, not aiding them. It is problematic that their attitude is donation-oriented.” MAZLUMDER representative also defines his organization as a “rights-based” one: they aim empowering individuals through judicial support. Therefore, they only work with volunteers and do not have to accept funding from any source.

MEDAK representative does not use the words ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ to define the process after foreign funds. However, he summarizes the situation as the funds have played the role as a capacity developer. He mentions the professionalization and the increasing number of local NGOs at this point: “The concept of “NGO worker” came into existence. Now there are people around that want to be NGO workers.”

While MAZLUMDER and Seyidov have a more realistic approach regarding funds and the hierarchy that it creates, KADAV, MUDEM and MEDAK have more experience in the field and they are in direct connection with the donors themselves. Therefore, there

was no consensus on a strong opinion, the funding was not touched upon as a necessarily negative or positive process for the institution. However, all except one interviewee have states that foreign funds act as capacity developer for local NGOs. Professionalization and bureaucratization are processes that all the representatives have agreed upon as a result of foreign aid, but it did not come up as a mere fact that damaged voluntarism.

MEDAK and KADAV representatives also accepted that the funding part may be problematic for NGOs that have a more critical stance towards the government. MAZLUMDER representative, while agreeing that funding from the state takes away the organizations' power of being critical, argues that NGOs in Turkey have been relatively more civil due to public funding as a main resource, and stronger compared to its Western counterparts. The reason for this is both the state-NGO cooperation, which is a point that KADAV and MEDAK representatives do not agree on, and the overall state support for the NGOs.

Seyidov and MUDEM argue that it is not possible for the NGOs or other kinds of organizations to operate without the consent of the state. "It would not be possible for neither local nor international NGOs to operate without state consent." Seyidov suggests. MUDEM and MEDAK have reported that the state's main aim has been to control the organizations and turn their facilities in favor of their own operations and policies. They both argue with MAZLUMDER's point that the state willingly empowers certain organizations and is more distant towards others. "The state wants to empower its own NGOs," as the MEDAK representative puts it.

Following the point of state support to NGO empowerment, the fourth question of whether the state perceives this cooperation of local and international NGOs in a positive way could be analyzed in this respect. KADAV and MEDAK argue that the state would deal with the INGOs and foreign funding itself and eliminate local NGOs from the process if it had the chance. MAZLUMDER and Seyidov have the same perception towards the issue. MAZLUMDER suggests that the state has been positive towards the cooperation as long as the international NGOs had the real intention of helping the refugees. Seyidov and MUDEM representative both agree on the statement that this cooperation could not have happened without state support and supervision. However, the representatives of MEDAK and KADAV agree that the state did not want to cooperate with the INGOs at first: “The state is putting effort in pushing the INGOs away,” MEDAK representative claims.

The question of how the state perceives the cooperation of international donors and local receivers is one of the questions that the interviewees gave different answers. In this case, KADAV and MEDAK representatives’ answers are important because they are two active members and receivers of international aid. However, MUDEM is also an active receiver and Seyidov is an NGO expert. It could be concluded that certain local NGOs could have got the impression that the Turkish state has been reluctant in promoting funding and empowering their organizations. These two examples does not automatically lead to the result that the state has been unwilling to grant funding for local NGOs. Reluctant funding to both KADAV and MEDAK may not rise from the general stance of the state towards local NGOs, but from the selective cooperation approach of the state. Although the experiences of KADAV and MEDAK as institutions are important, it may not be generalizable.

Three of the interviewees agreed that foreign aid specific to Syrians creates aid dependency in local NGOs. KADAV states that they are a political organization based on strengthening and empowering women rather than providing aid for them. The donors are aid oriented and their policies are also based on this approach. However, foreign funding is an important source for KADAV and they do not know what the situation will be after the donors leave. MAZLUMDER representative has a different position in this issue: he argues that the Turkish civil society is more dependent on the public's own support rather than international aid. "Turkish NGOs are the most publicly supported and the strongest NGOs," MAZLUMDER representative notes. He continues: "Humanitarian aid foundations in Turkey survive on civil donations." According to the MAZLUMDER representative, it is more independent compared to Western NGOs because they take less funding from the state and other institutions; and depend on their own resources.

Seyidov completely agrees with the statement extensive foreign aid creates dependence for local NGOs: "Nobody knows what would happen once INGOs start withdrawing funds," he states. He observes that lots of new local NGOs have been founded and they have been looking for fund raisers because the external funding is limited both in terms of material and time.

As a follow up to the previous paragraph, MUDEM representative took a different stance in the issue of foreign aid dependency: they argue that this type of resource has been flowing the entire time after the wave and NGOs never had the opportunity to learn operating without external funding. Multiple local NGOs that have been found

after the wave depending on the sole external funding would shut down after the aid is cut. However, he argues, the funding is to be sustainable in the short term, since the European Commission and ECO have been planning long term aid to Turkey for the purpose of helping NGOs in assisting Syrian refugees: "Social integration is a process that lasts longer than humanitarian aid. Once the social adaptation is maintained, sustainability without foreign funds would be possible," MUDEM representative sums up.

Funding will continue for a long time until the first stage of the response is over, which is the humanitarian aid, and the Turkish state implements an effective social adaptation program for the refugees as the second stage of crisis response. MEDAK representative agreed that the form of aid has transformed and follows a different pattern compared to the first phase of the refugee flow. However, he approached from a different perspective and his statement was similar to the other three organizations, he argued that the foreign funds have already started to withdraw.

Another statement that all of the respondents agreed upon is that international donors cause bureaucratization and professionalization in local NGOs. KADAV representative points out that project-based working is important to donors and this procedure limits the NGOs capacity to the numbers of people that they aid, ignoring the overall quality of it. Although MAZLUMDER representative does not have institutional experience with funding, they often emphasize how the civil support and the community spirit in Turkey is strong and external funding does not create a big difference in the operation of local NGOs. However, they also explain their choice of not receiving funds by their will to

keep the voluntarism at the highest level. Seyidov agrees that the process of getting technical damages the spirit of voluntarism, However, he also argues that this is not only about external funding, but voluntarism in general is in decline and it is regarding the “spirit of the time.”

MEDAK representative has a different take on the issue of local professionalization. He agrees that voluntarism is in decline and NGOs have become a new sector in Turkey; the concept of “NGO employee” and working in an NGO as a job has been a recent development. However, he does not view this as a necessarily negative process. Volunteering in Turkey is a process that is perceived as something that one would do as long as they want to, and they could stop whenever they want,” he says. “Professionalism has increased the capacity of local NGOs in that sense. However, the EU hires people and make them work like company employees. There should be a middle ground.”

With a similar approach, MUDEM representative emphasizes the foundations in Ottoman Empire and the culture of volunteering: “Collectivism is not new in Turkish culture, but it is not systematic. It is a culture of ‘give-and-take’. It is recently structuring.” Following up to this approach, professionalism is not perceived as a process that damages voluntarism, but it is a process that channels the existing voluntarism into a more productive outcome.

4.3 Findings from the Interviews

Conducting interviews has led to various unexpected findings. One of this is the public reaction towards Syrian refugees: although hostility towards refugees and social tension is increasing as time goes by, the situation of the refugees has also resulted in a desire to volunteer for the Syrians in Turkish society. KADAV and MUDEM argued that the overall discourse towards Syrians gets more and more discriminatory. KADAV gave the example of myths circulating about Syrians. To make the point clear, online newspaper Yeşil Gazete has compiled the myths that were told: refugees enter any university without being subjected to any kind of exam, Turkish state is paying for the phone bills of the Syrians, free flats will be provided for the refugees and they will vote in the general elections (Yeşil Gazete, 2018). It has also been stated by the media that discriminatory attacks towards Syrians have been in rise (Birgün, 2018).

However, this tendency of the public and media to spread false news that would trigger hate crimes to refugees does not affect the voluntarism spirit of the Turkish society. MUDEM mentions that Turkish society is overall conscientious and tells a story about how university students gather together without any formal organization and provide free education for the unschooled Syrian children in poor neighborhoods. They also tell that there are people who come to their organization asking for a volunteering opportunity. As a supporting source, MAZLUMDER states that Turkish society has been the driving economic source of NGOs not only in times of crisis but in everyday life. To sum up, international funding is important in the operation of local NGOs but public voluntarism should not be ignored as a factor in the acute humanitarian aid period.

Another finding is about the donors and the readmission agreement between Turkey and the EU. Even though there were no questions about the motives of donors, both KADAV and MUDEM representatives further elaborate the issue of aid to local NGOs as a way for the Western states to keep the Syrian refugees away from European borders, and Turkey acts as a buffer zone in this process. It has been mentioned in both of the interviews that the EU funding would continue in order to keep Syrians in Turkey and prevent them from moving to Europe. KADAV emphasized that the EU is selective in their acceptance of refugees and have criteria, such as higher education; or belonging to a vulnerable group such as the LGBT community. Turkish state in this sense is seen as generous and benevolent by the local NGOs.

The point raised by MEDAK and MAZLUMDER has also been influential in observing the overall state-NGO relationship in Turkey. In the case of foreign funding specific to Syrian refugees, Turkish state helped local NGOs get empowered; or at least did not interfere harshly to their flourishing. Although all the NGO representatives agree that there are most favored NGOs that the state helps get empowered by directing funds, Seyidov, MUDEM and MAZLUMDER have argued that the general flourishing of local NGOs would not have happened without the consent of the state.

A point that was raised only by the MEDAK representative was the role of new sources, mainly the Islamic funding. He stated that large amounts of funding have been provided by Islamic foundations and states, despite the fact that they do not get as much attention as Western donors. Especially Middle Eastern states that do not want refugees in their countries fund religious NGOs in Turkey, he explains.

MEDAK representative is also the only one that references the rise of local Islamic NGOs. Humanitarian Relief Fund (IHH) has been one of the religious organizations that receive funding from the state and foreign funding from Islamic sources. However, deriving from the fact that this “trend” of Islamic funding and religious local NGOs has only been mentioned by one interviewee out of five, it is still not perceived as a significant phenomenon in the field, compared to Western funding sources such as the EU and the UN.

Another finding pointed out by the MEDAK representative is the selective funding process of international donors. The Kurdish and Afghan refugees that existed before the Syrian refugee flow did not attract as much attention by neither the state nor the international donors. “The state does not care about the 500,000 stateless people,” MEDAK representative reports. This point could be linked to the scale of the Syrian refugee flow, but also to the media coverage and public visibility.

4.4 Discussion

According to the in-depth interviews that have conducted by this thesis and the interviews that Mackreath and Sağrıç (2017) have conducted with the local NGOs, this situation of foreign aid flow to Turkish NGO's has both positive and negative impacts. Positive impacts include capacity building through teaching operational skills to the local counterparts, create monitoring mechanisms for the state and create employment for the local professionals. However, the potential negative effects should also be

considered. The negative effects include potentially declining voluntarism, over bureaucratization and resource dependence.

4.2.1 Tocqueville Hypothesis and Positive Effects of Aid

The first hypothesis is that foreign funding has helped local NGOs to develop their capacity and flourish. The expected result deriving from the liberal civil society literature is that foreign funding to local NGOs in times of social and political unpredictability allows NGOs to gain power and become a social and political actor in developing states. China earthquake of 2008, Ukrainian Orange revolution of 2004 and the Düzce earthquake of 1999 are some examples that support the case of foreign funding for developing countries. The Syrian refugee flow could be counted as a similar incident of social and political unpredictability in terms of abruptness, state ineffectiveness, and public unease.

All the interviewees except one has agreed that foreign funding has been effective in the capacity building process of local NGOs. One interviewee did not see foreign funding as the primary source of NGO operation, but the rest of the interviewees had the same opinion about foreign funding being a source of capacity building. Despite its negative effects that are mentioned in the following paragraphs, foreign funding in general helped local NGOs get empowered institutionally. However, the interpretation of institutionalization and how much power institutions gain from this process is debatable.

Based on the interviews and similar cases of developing countries in the literature, (Teets, 2009; Perry, 2012) it could be concluded that advancement of civil society organizations and NGOs do not necessarily provide democratization and political liberalization. Similar to what China has experienced in the time of earthquake, disaster relief function fulfilled by local NGOs does not grant it enough power to act as a mediatory body between the state and society, or to secure the rights of individuals against state repression. Although classical liberal civil society literature suggests that NGOs ensure a certain type of relationship between state and society (Gellner, 1996), cases demonstrate that foreign funding does not provide immediately lead to higher cultural capital. To sum up, it is difficult for foreign funding to provide political transformation in a country unless it is a gradual and rooted process (Fukuyama, 2001).

Mackreath and Sağnıç (2013), Şimşek (2004) and two of the NGO representatives agree on the statement that civil society should not be conceptualized as an alternative body to the state in the first place: according to the authors, the migrant flow has been handled in cooperation of the state and local NGOs. Four out of five interviewees have taken a similar position and argued that it is not possible for foreign funding to strengthen local NGOs against the state because it provides cooperation among local NGOs and foreign donors itself. The general approach was that state had the monopoly over the issue of decision making in most of the circumstances. If the state had not wanted the local and international NGOs to cooperate, the funding would not have happened in the first place. Most interviewees did not perceive the state as a prohibitive entity, but a potential ally in providing aid, assistance and empowerment to the refugees. In this sense, it could be concluded that hypothesis one has been

verified, foreign funding has contributed in the process of capacity building, but this process has taken place in the consent of the state, following the resources that state itself has provided.

4.2.2 Piper Hypothesis and Negative Effects of Aid

The second hypothesis was about whether foreign funding had significant negative effects together with positive ones, and the most important negative effect is the technicalization and bureaucratization of local NGOs. Based on the literature that Turkish civil society and NGOs had been relatively underdeveloped compared to its Western counterparts and its struggle for existence is relatively new (Aslan, 2010; Keyman, 2006; Atauz, 1999), the potential disharmony between international donors and local NGOs should be evaluated. The settled procedures and professional approach of donors might be different from the operation of local NGOs which are mostly based on voluntary work and public donations. The hypothesis is based on the assumption that the bureaucratic processes of donors creates professionalism among local NGOs which damages the spirit of voluntarism.

There was a consensus among the interviewees on the argument that funding caused professionalization and all the representatives agreed that the process became more bureaucratic. The voluntarism part of the argument, however, generated different answers. Although there was no denial about the public approach towards Syrians in Turkey and that it is getting more hostile, it has been touched upon by multiple representatives that people who want to volunteer for the Syrians also exist. There was

no consensus on the argument that the spirit of voluntarism had any correlation with the operating of local NGOs. The general opinion is that this professionalization may sometimes bring obstacles to legal and institutional procedures, but it has not decreased the quality of aid, and it was even mentioned by a representative that aid became more systemic and productive.

The other argument of the second hypothesis that was addressed is the Piper Hypothesis. Piper hypothesis suggests that when donors provide funding to NGOs, they control they gain the power to influence their policies because NGOs become dependent on funding. Themudo (2004) argues that the Piper hypothesis is not always accurate, such as local NGOs in Mexico have managed to protect their policy autonomy despite receiving funding.

In the case of Turkish NGOs, deriving from the interviews, it could be said that the Piper Hypothesis has been both falsified and confirmed in certain aspects: although there have been two negative answers, interviewees that work in NGOs that receive foreign funding have stated that they could protect their autonomy event though they receive large amounts of funding from highly professional foreign donors. The most important cause of this is that donors prefer to work with NGOs that suit their interests in the first place: projects are released, and funding is provided after the project is already finalized. In this case, locals can choose donors that would fit their projects in the first place and INGOs can work with projects that they are willing to support.

There were only two interviewees that claimed the withdrawal of foreign funding would not create malfunctions in the operation of local NGOs. These interviewees claim that the resources have provided a certain background for local NGOs to operate, and they would manage without foreign aid because the relevant capacity to operate autonomously have been built. Although funding does not always damage local NGO autonomy, it does create resource dependence. The findings coincide with the basic critical argument of aid literature that aid, while providing welfare for a temporary period, creates dependence and makes the receiver dependent on the donor.

There is an implicit hierarchy between the donor and the receiver, and this might implicitly affect the policymaking process of local NGOs. Even if INGOs do not influence the process explicitly, competition for donation implicitly leads local NGOs to set their policies based on the premise that they have to meet the criteria of donors in order to get funding. However, professionalization of local NGOs is not perceived as a necessarily negative affect: it could be a factor that increases productivity and efficiency. It does not have a direct correlation with the decline of voluntarism. In this case, hypothesis two has been partially verified.

Overall, the extracted data from five different interviews have helped reach the conclusion that foreign aid has had a positive effect to local NGOs in terms of capacity building. The effects of bureaucratization and professionalization have been addressed by all the representatives as well, but not as negative effects; although it might slow down the operation due to tight inspection and bureaucracy in fact, two representatives have argued that the professional approach of INGOs increase the efficiency and

capacity. The only shortcoming of international aid is the potential economic dependence that it creates.

CONCLUSION

The Syrian refugee wave has had unprecedented legal, social and political effects on Turkey. This thesis scrutinized the impacts of foreign aid on Turkish civil society, on the role and responsibility of Turkish civil society organizations according to the liberal understanding of civil society, and the institutional transformation that it has initiated.

The first hypothesis is that foreign funding is an empowering source to local NGOs. It helps them institutionalize, professionalize and gain political power. However, social relief function of civil society does not always guarantee political empowerment to NGOs and does not assist them to undertake the mediating role that is associated to civil society by liberal theorists. While foreign funding was beneficial for local NGOs and helped them in their institutional development process, there was no sign indicating that this increased the role of civil society organizations as a democratizing political force in Turkey as a country with weak civil society. The crisis response mission of local NGOs in Turkey was carried out with the consent of, and in coordination with the state. Thus, hypothesis one has been rejected.

The second hypothesis was that although foreign funding was overall beneficial for local NGOs, it also had significant negative effects: Firstly, aid creates a hierarchical relationship that damages the autonomy of local NGOs in Turkey. Secondly, the professionalization that it creates mechanizes the worker dynamics of local NGOs, which damages the spirit of voluntarism. Lastly, as a potential negative impact of

foreign aid, it creates a form of dependence that is possibly harmful for receiver NGOs in the long run.

Even though the hierarchy between donor and receiver was approved, there was no direct sign that this hierarchy was explicitly autonomy-damaging. This mostly resulted from the practice of finding donors after the project had been decided on. Following the next premise, professionalization of NGOs was perceived more of a technical issue that did not cause immediate fall in the volunteering rate. As the last potential negative effect of foreign aid, multiple interviewees have stated that foreign funding constituted an important part of their resource. Resource dependence premise was approved, hypothesis two had been only partially confirmed.

Developing states have experienced a different development process of civil society compared to its Western counterparts. This thesis helps emphasize that the classical civil society literature is not enough to understand the potentially repressive developing states and their relationship with civil society. NGOs and other forms of civil society organizations have more diverse roles, missions and impacts compared to the ones that emerged after the enlightenment as a mediatory body between state and civil society and as a guarantor of individual rights protection. Although the findings of this thesis regarding NGO foreign resource dependence correspond with the critical foreign aid theorists position, more context specific study should be conducted.

Studies should be carried out in order to consolidate the proposition that an active civil society and vibrant NGO activity does not always result as a source of democratization

and liberalization but might refer to a less politicized form of social relief. Civil society activity and NGO studies is still a relatively new area in Turkish political science literature. It is important to address the transformation of NGOs with the disaster relief role that they play in a comparative perspective and point out the similarities and differences with other developing countries. While there is literature about the disaster relief role of NGOs in times of earthquake, literature regarding other types of times of social and political distress is lacking.

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