Does Female Trafficking Interact with Regular and Irregular Migration? Evidence from Turkey

Osman Seyhan¹
Halil Akbaş²

Abstract

An empirical focus on interaction between female trafficking and global migration influxes provides an understanding on victimization process of vulnerable groups. Using victims of female trafficking data in Turkey, the study examines whether female trafficking is significantly related to the types of irregular migration (illegal border crossing, visa violation, using fake travel documents and prostitution related deportations) and regular migration into Turkey. Bivariate statistical method is used to analyze the relationship between cross national distribution of people movements into Turkey. The findings reveal that female trafficking is significantly and positively related with three types of irregular migration (prostitution related deportations, visa violation and illegal border crossing). On the other hand, it is not significantly correlated with regular migration and using fake travel documents.

Key Words: Female trafficking, regular and irregular migration, visa violation, illegal border crossing

¹ Doç. Dr., e-posta: osmanseyhan@gmail.com
² Doç. Dr., e-posta: hakbas14@gmail.com
Kadın Ticareti Düzenli ve Düzensiz Göç ile Etkileşir mi? Türkiye’den Delil

Özet

Kadın ticareti ve küresel göç akınları arasındaki etkileşimi içeren ampirik analiz zayıf ve dezavantajlı grupların mağdur edilme süreçlerinin anlaşılmasına yardımcı olacaktır. Türkiye’deki kadın ticareti verilerinin kullanıldığı bu çalışmada, kadın ticaretinin düzensiz göç türleri (yasadaşı sınır geçişleri, vize ihlalleri, sahte seyahat belgelerinin kullanılması ve fuhuş nedeniyle sınır dışı edilme) ve düzenli göçle ilişki olup olmadığı incelenmiştir. İki değişkenli istatistik yönteminin kullanılmasıyla sınır aşan insan hareket türleri arasındaki bu ilişki analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, kadın ticaretinin üç düzensiz göç çeşidiyle (fuhuş nedeniyle sınır dışı edilme, vize ihlalleri, yasa dışı sınır geçişler) pozitif anlamlı bir ilişki sahip olduğunu gösterir. Buna karşın, düzenli göç ve sahte seyahat belgesi kullanılabileceğini ve bu anlamlı ilişki bulunmamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın ticareti, düzenli ve düzensiz göç, vize ihlali, yasadışı sınır geçiş
1. Introduction

Over the last couple of decades, has become a ubiquitous and massive transnational threat affecting almost all countries in the modern world (Nnadi, 2013; Gatrell, 2010). Commercial sex trafficking provides a perpetual monetary source to the traffickers; because the flow of monetary capital used by traffickers is human body. Furthermore, it is one of the most profitable and lowest risk activities compared with other forms of trafficking especially drugs (EUROPOL, 1998; Beare, 1999). Indeed, traffickers and local pimps are expanding their commercial networks to take more risks from this profit.

In central and eastern Europe, the collapse of Soviet Union and civil war and breakup of the former Yugoslavia made women and children vulnerable commodities to be exploited through prostitution (Eades, 2009). A rapid marketization of commercial sex trade occurred particularly in target countries of Europe. Victims of commercial sex industry suffer from sexual and physical brutality and abuse of traffickers (UN, 2000; ILO, 2005). In November 2008, the 3rd World Congress that was held in Rio de Janeiro against sexual exploitation of children declared that:

“We express concern at the continuing high level of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in States in all regions, and at the increase in certain forms of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, in particular through abuse of the Internet and new and developing technologies, and as a result of the increased mobility in travel and tourism.”(UNICEF 2008: 1).

Likewise, the declaration signals the association between developing communication technologies and increasing mobility, and growing commercial sex industry. The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children provides recruitment and movement as a core element as well as means used by traffickers and exploitation of victims. According to the Protocol, even though this mobility, unlike human smuggling, does not have to be a legal or illegal cross border entry, global population movements have a facilitating impact on dispersion of human trafficking. Organized crime groups benefit from the ease of transportation technologies and human mobility to create their criminal networks (IOM, 1995; Kyle and Liang, 1998; Miller, 2006). For example, the refugees fled to Thailand from Burma due to military oppression came up against filthy and depressing conditions in the camps where slave traders make deceitful offers appealing for them (Kara, 2009).

However, despite the growing body of academic scrutiny on different aspects of vulnerability of being a trafficking victim, there has been less empirical focus on its mutual interaction with global irregular migration influxes and sex trafficking. Although the exact magnitude of human trafficking is still unclear, major victims of trafficking are children and females (Bertone, 2000). Children and females are the major vulnerable group within the global irregular migration. The United Nations Beijing (1995:1) platform for action recognizes that “Some groups of women, such as...refugee women,
women migrants; including women migrant workers.... destitute women are particularly vulnerable to violence.” Similarly, the Refugee Council in UK extends that, migrant women are the vulnerable groups against commercial sex trafficking (UNHCR, 2011:5):

Migrant women have been identified as a high risk group for being forced into sex work, and information from law enforcement agencies in the UK suggests that migrant women and trafficked women make up a high proportion of sexually exploited women in the UK. According to research only 19% of women working as prostitutes in flats, parlours and saunas were originally from the UK.

More research on interaction between commercial sex trafficking and global migration influxes will provide an understanding on victimization process of vulnerable groups from a macro level perspective.

2. Research Question and Hypotheses

The basic research question in this study is “Are the types of irregular and regular migration associated with female trafficking in Turkey?” Considering that economic and political reasons are important motivations for international migration, it is expected that the main source countries for female trafficking will send more migrants to Turkey, their citizens are more likely to use fake travel documents in order to cross Turkish borders, and more likely to be involved in prostitution cases. In this context, the study attempts to explore whether female trafficking in Turkey is significantly related to the level of four migration variables: foreigners’ involvement in prostitution, illegal border crossing, visa violation, and using fake travel documents.

3. Turkey in the Conjunction of Irregular Migration Routes

Population movements through global migration influxes are multifaceted phenomenon of modern world. Over the last couple of decades, scholars have proposed that global refugee and migration flows use the social and technological patterns of the world system (Hein, 1993; Massey and Taylor, 2004). Having been on the global migration routes, Turkey is an important affected country from the social and political consequences of population movements.

Irregular migration has always been inherently a relevant political and social challenge in Turkey. Given its geographical location and relatively higher welfare level and democratic structure compared to her neighbors made Turkey a target and transit country within its own region (Icduygu, 2006). Turkey was a country to emigrate from; now, it has turned into country of immigration (Elitok and Straubhaar, 2010; Icduygu and Yükseler, 2012). Turkey sits over one of the transit routes of human trafficking bound for Europe from Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries (Seyhan 2012). Particularly after the end of the cold war, it has become a target for those from the former Eastern-Bloc countries, who took advantage of the flexible visa policies following the collapse of the Soviet Union.
Irregular migration flows in Turkey used to target mostly to Europe; yet, increasing number of immigrant workers and asylum seekers heads for Turkey as a destination point today. Icduygü (2006) contends that irregular migration in Turkey has diversified characteristics in terms of migrants’ origin. The motivation of migrants from Middle Eastern countries is generally based on political reasons as asylum seekers and those migrants from former Soviet Union countries such as Romania, Moldavia, Russia Federation, Georgia who are seeking for better economic conditions. In both circumstances, migrants mostly enter the country legally, but remain either for the purpose of asylum seeking or clandestine working industry including prostitution upon expiration of their visas. Migrant women without secure immigration status in Turkey face many barriers to access life-saving services and legal protection. They work in informal sectors or as domestic workers and even they are forced into sexual slavery without having a social security since they lack regular immigration status. Female migrant workers are vulnerable groups for trafficking syndicates in commercial sex industry. They are deceived to have legal working permission to work in several areas like entertainment and fashion sectors. Exploitation of these groups starts upon arrival to the destination points.

In terms of the relationship between irregular migration and migrant smuggling, the majority of irregular migrants, without relying on the help of human smugglers, cannot travel such long distances and cross country borders. Cicekli and Demir (2013) found that 93 percent of irregular migrants in Turkey cross Turkish borders illegally and 85 percent of them receive help from people smugglers. 85% of illegal entries are carried out by land borders, 7% are carried by sea borders.

4. Female Trafficking in Turkey

Since the early 1990s, female trafficking in Turkey has become a serious issue in terms of both public security and health (Demir and Finckenauer, 2010). Female trafficking cases in Turkey are particularly in the forms of sexual exploitation or forced labour of people arriving from Eastern Bloc countries for prostitution purposes. While there are people knowingly visiting Turkey for prostitution among citizens of those countries, there are also victims brought here with certain promises and then forced to work in the prostitution sector using methods of intimidation and pressure including seizure of their identification cards and travel documents. Involved actors in the process of movement do not present a discernible case of sex trafficking since the exploitation may start upon arrival to the destination point (Seyhan, 2009). The methods used include employment in sectors like childcare, restaurant services, recreation and tourism or marriage promise.

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3 Even possibly the important portion of the remaining one still receive help from smugglers for creating fake travel documents.
In Turkey traffickers use various methods, such as debt bondage, violence, confinement, confiscation of travel documents and threats to control victims who usually enter the country from the cities of Istanbul, Antalya and Trabzon, major gateways where transportation services are directly available through air, sea or land (Demir, 2010). However, not all sex workers coming from these countries encounter with so called methods and even some enter the illegal sex markets *sua sponte*. Kaya (2011) examined the similarities and differences between *sua sponte* and involuntary groups in the commercial sex markets in Turkey and revealed that involuntary groups have more economic disparity and more vulnerable to be exploited by the traffickers.

Akbas ve Hamarat (2014) found that trafficking victims in Turkey are mostly young, single, poorly educated and have lower income levels. According to the region they come from (Asia or Europe), there is also some variations in victims’ characteristics. Compared to Asian victims, European ones are more likely to be young, low educated, unemployed, and single. Traffickers who recruit victims at first is important to understand how female trafficking operates in Turkey. The research finds that recruiters’ characteristics examined in terms of nationality, relationship to the victim, and gender is significantly varied based on the context the recruitment takes place (it is measured as source or target country). Recruiters are inclined to be female, the same nationality with and known by victims when the recruitment takes place in the source countries. However, they are males and strangers when victims are recruited in Turkey. An important difference between Asian and European victims is that European victims, compared to Asian ones, are less likely to be deceived by female recruiters.

**5. Efforts for Protecting Trafficking Victims in Turkey**

Responding human trafficking, in addition to the seizure and punishment of criminals, it is also vital to single out the victims of such crimes and provide them with legal, medical, and humanitarian support. Turkey, both as per the United Nations Palermo Protocol it has signed in 2003 and as a requisite of its national regulations performs her activities in awareness of her liabilities regarding the singling out of human trafficking victims, legal, medical and human protection and assistance. According to the 2009 report issued by the Department for the Struggle against Smuggling and Organized Crime, The Turkish National Police (TNP), 148 human trafficking victims were singled out within this year, most of them being from Central Asian countries, and necessary efforts were made to protect and safely repatriate them.
Numbers of Human Trafficking Victims Identified in 2011 in Turkey, by Their Nationalities

Source: 2011 KOM Report

In 2011, the number of trafficking victims increased of 41% compared to 2010 across Turkey. 73% of the victims are citizens from Central Asia, Black Sea, South Caucasus countries and Central Asian countries. The policy makers are regarding the issue of protecting trafficking victims as the critical component of effectively responding human trafficking. In this sense, protection efforts could be categorized in 5 themes as follows (Seyhan 2009):

1. Legal assistance and appointment of civilian-dressed female public officials to assist women victims,

2. For minor trafficking victims, taking protective measures in cooperation with organizations such as Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the Agency for the Protection of Children,

3. Providing residence permits for immigration status and safe return to their countries,

4. Keeping victims’ personal details confidential throughout the investigation and making sure they are safely repatriated *sua sponte*\(^4\),

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\(^4\) Regarding the repatriation of human trafficking victims from Turkey, departure transactions are now free of charge and fines, and a resolution was made for taking no court orders about them for the prohibition from entering into the country for a definite period.
5. Providing medical and psychological support and supplying shelter for trafficking victims.

Aside from this, human trafficking victims were given the opportunity to benefit from health services with a decree issued as per the resolution of Council of Ministers of 5 December 2003 no 2003/6565. According to this decree, foreign nationals who were singled out to be victims of human trafficking as per article 201/b of the Turkish Criminal Code and found to be unable to afford their health expenses will be entitled to free service from official governmental institutions and organizations.

Coordinated efforts are underway with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for the protection of human trafficking victims. Within this framework, a protocol was signed between the Foundation for the Human Resource Development and the TNP, the Ministry of Interiors. As per this protocol signed on 4 September 2003, principles were set out regarding issues including the conditions for the protection and accommodation of human trafficking victims in Turkey, accommodation, psychological and medical services that be offered to the victims within this framework, legal support to be provided, and at the same time, the establishment of a center that will function as a communication center, and creation of a regional communication network with the governments of nations affected from human trafficking and non-governmental organizations.

Another Program entitled “Program for Supporting Turkey’s Struggle against Human Trafficking and Promoting All Victims’ Access to Justice” was run together by Turkey and the International Organization for Migration. The Program covered titles including the prevention of human trafficking, training of law enforcement units, and protection of victims through national disclosure campaign. Within this scope, a 157 hotline, accessible from anywhere in the country, was created to provide emergency assistance and information to the victims of human trafficking. Operators employed at the 157 hotline could speak Russian, Romanian, and English in addition to Turkish and has worked in coordination with the General Directorate of Police.

Improved transportation technologies of modern age escalated the global human movement. Human trafficking syndicates profit from the global migration mobility. The ease of global transportation as well as communication technologies enables trafficking syndicates to organize and run their networks easily. In the forms of irregular migration victims become much more vulnerable due to their unsecured economic and social status in destination points (Seyhan, 2009). Migrant women can easily be trapped in a slave-like situation because of this status.

The transnational human trafficking syndicates target countries where they can recruit people living under cruel social and political conditions and benefit from the weak legal structure. As the nations legislate against human trafficking and penalize the traffickers, the patterns of human trafficking will be impacted from this policy change. Yet, given the nature of human trafficking as a transnational organized crime, only the threat
of punishment itself cannot deter a trafficker’s intention unless a worldwide response does not exist.

In global perspective there might be several approaches on the study of human trafficking. The first approach emphasizes trafficking as a part of the irregular migration flow (Koser 2010). In the second approach, human trafficking is viewed as a criminal activity (Winterdyk and Reichel 2010). Yet, both approaches underline the structure and actors of this illicit market. By no means, without connections among involving trafficking nets and intermediary actors like recruiters and pimps, this illegal business cannot function. To protect trafficking victims governments strengthen their institutional capacity and expertise. One of the protection practices, for instance, employing females in law enforcement units and at the institutions responsible for health and shelter units for trafficking victims. Therefore, governmental organizations, law enforcement agencies and NGOs should share more data and information on protecting trafficking victims.

6. Data and Measurements

The purpose of this study is to explore how female trafficking is associated with the types of international migration into Turkey. Source countries sending migrants to Turkey is the unit of analysis of this study. The data with regards to three main variables (female trafficking, regular migration and irregular migration) obtained from General Directorate for Security.

6.1. Female Trafficking

Female trafficking is measured as the number of foreigners identified as victims of trafficking by Turkish authorities. Female trafficking in Turkey is mostly explored by (1) calls for police service, (2) calls for human trafficking help-line, and (3) police raids on various illegal activities, mostly on prostitution-related cases. Between 2009 and 2011, 54 percent of victims were identified by calls to the police, 40 percent were identified by the police following raids on illegal activities, mostly on prostitution cases, and 6 percent were identified by the calls for help-line for female trafficking victims.

6.2. Regular Migration

Regular migration is measured as the number of foreigners who legally enter Turkey from border crossings (land, air, sea and railroads). Legal migration numbers indicates the number of foreigners who use the legal border crossings which are land, air, sea, and railroads in order to enter Turkish territory for various purposes (tourism, studying, working etc.,) Between 2009 and 2011, entries through airway constitute the majority of regular migration (70 %) and it is followed by entries through land (28 %).

6.3. Irregular Migration

The study uses four types of irregular migration data. The first one is illegal border crossings into Turkey from places which are not legally assigned. Turkey’s eastern border particularly with Iran is overwhelmingly exposed to illegal border crossings, especial-
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ly from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The second irregular migration type is measured as the number of over stayers who are identified as violating travel documents, such as passports and visas. These foreigners legally enter the country; however, they continue to stay in the country although the validity of their travel documents expires. The third irregular migration type is measured as the number of foreigners who use fake travel documents to cross the border. The fourth one is the number of deported foreigners involved in prostitution. Under certain conditions, the distinction between female trafficking for sexual exploitation and prostitution is very tiny in that some victims are actually identified following prostitution raids by the police. Therefore it is possible that some females who are voluntarily involved in prostitution show themselves as victims of trafficking to escape from punishment and deportation. However, it is also highly possible that some actual trafficking victims are exposed to punishment and deportation because they are not identified as victims by government authorities. All the migration data mentioned above was collected by local police departments and organized into categories, and then sent to General Directorate for Security, which is the center department of Turkish National Police. Additionally, this data covers the years between 2004 and 2011.5

7. Findings

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether female trafficking is significantly related to the types of international migration into Turkey. The intention has been to analyze how female trafficking is linked with (1) regular migration, and (2) the types of irregular migration in Turkey.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study. Between 2004 and 2011, 1253 victims were identified from 22 countries, 15466 foreigners were deported because of involving in prostitution from 55 countries; 318291 foreigners were arrested for illegally entering from 127 countries; 5175 foreigners were arrested for using fake travel documents from 118 countries, and 35333 visa violation cases were identified from 127 countries. Finally, more than 176 million foreigners entered Turkey at the border gates from 127 different countries.

When we examine both the standard deviation and range scores, the table shows that the distributions of all variables are highly skewed. All the standard deviation scores are considerably higher than the mean scores. The range values of all the variables are also far above the mean values indicating that few source countries in all variables constitute the majority of cases in the distribution.

5 General Directorate for Security delivered the majority of migration management issues to General Directorate for Migration Management which was established based on the Law on Foreigners and International Protection adopted by the Turkish Parliament in April 2013.
Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Trafficking</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1253</td>
<td>1-290</td>
<td>56.95</td>
<td>78.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15466</td>
<td>1-15466</td>
<td>562.4</td>
<td>2104.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Crossing</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>318291</td>
<td>1-46903</td>
<td>2066.82</td>
<td>6455.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Entry</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>176686863</td>
<td>29-33224165</td>
<td>1391235</td>
<td>3992187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa violation</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>35333</td>
<td>1-12313</td>
<td>278.21</td>
<td>1210.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake Documents</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>5175</td>
<td>1-730</td>
<td>43.86</td>
<td>109.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second part of the statistical analyses shows the bivariate correlations between dependent variable (female trafficking) and independent variables examined. Table 2 provides the correlation statistics regarding the variables used in the study. Results reveal that Pearson correlation coefficients (p<.01) of our independent variables partly support the hypothesis of the study. Female trafficking is highly and positively related to three types of irregular migration: Involvement in prostitution (.713), violation of visas (.445), and illegal border crossing (.548). We did not find a statically significant relationship between female trafficking and using fake travel documents (.0087, p>.05).

Table 2: Bivariate Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Female Trafficking</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Prostitution</td>
<td>.713**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Visa Violation</td>
<td>.445*</td>
<td>.445**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.Fake Documents</td>
<td>.0087</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.297**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.Legal Entry</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.Illegal Crossing</td>
<td>.548**</td>
<td>-.005</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.467**</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
In terms of regular migration, there is not a significant relationship between legal entries and female trafficking (.022, p>.05) meaning that the number of foreigners who enter legally Turkey from border crossings of land, air, sea and railroads is not related to the prevalence of female trafficking in Turkey. Results also indicate that as the number of victims from origin countries increases, so does the number of foreigners in the same countries involved in prostitution, visa violation and illegal crossing.

8. Conclusion

This study examined how female trafficking is correlated with regular and irregular migration forms in Turkey. The types of irregular migration used in the study as independent variables are illegal border-crossing, visa violation, using fake travel documents, and prostitution related deportations.

Overall results indicate that cross national distribution of people movements in Turkey shares certain common characteristics. Female trafficking is inclined to be significantly related with the most types of irregular migration while it is not correlated with regular migration. Moreover, the finding that female trafficking is significantly correlated with visa violation and involvement in prostitution is not surprising. Countries with higher number of trafficked victims in Turkey have also higher number of visa violation cases. Many trafficked victims enter Turkey legally, however they continue to stay even after the expiration of their documents’ validity. Similarly, Turkey is exposed to more prostitution cases from countries which have also more trafficked victims. Although the target variable in the study is female trafficking, there is also significant bivariate positive relationship between prostitution and visa violation cases. As the number of prostitution cases increase for a country so do the visa violation cases for the same country.

The finding that there is a significant relationship between female trafficking and irregular migration types provides several implications for policy makers. First, it emphasizes the importance of the establishing an effective risk analysis methods to check international passengers at border gates. Studies explore that the overwhelming portions of females trafficked into Turkey are actually legal visitors but generally over stayers. Taking the advantage of flexible visa policies after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey has become a target country for people arriving from the former Eastern Bloc countries. In order to prevent the misuse of visa related gaps, it is necessary to explore potential traffickers and particularly travelers who are at the risk of being trafficked at borders. This method can be effectively achieved by carrying out systematic risk analysis techniques. Second, implementation of risk analysis requires the institutional and legislative arrangements and reforms, such as collection and management of Passenger Name Record (PNR) and Advanced Passenger Information (API) data. Finally, international cooperation among the countries particularly between the authorities of source and target countries in terms of information sharing is needed since the parties of human trafficking may operate in destination and source countries.
In this study, bivariate correlation is used between female trafficking and other immigration variables. Correlational research that examines the relationship between two variables has important limitations since, for example, the change in female trafficking may not be because of the change in target variables (illegal border crossing, prostitution related entries, and visa violations).

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