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Asymmetric Warfare and Its Effect on the Neighboring Countries: Syria Crisis as a Case Study

Abstract

Asymmetric warfare affects not only the country where the conflict is taking place, but also highly affects the neighboring countries. The spillover of massive migration and influx of arms leads to a crossover effect on the economic, political, social, educational, and health conditions in the host communities. This crossover may be filtered by historical and current political, economic and cultural environment of the neighboring countries.

This paper analyzes the direct spillover effect of the conflict and the crossover effect on the neighboring countries. It identifies the positive and negative consequences of the conflict on the neighboring countries by focusing on the possible negative and positive impacts of refugee influx.

The paper utilizes existing data regarding the Syrian conflict and the refugee influx on the neighboring countries, as well as field visits to the neighboring countries to illustrate the Spillover–Crossover model. It also provides a description of the influx of migration including statistics and policies of the host communities to help identify the different possible consequences along with a detailed description of the crossover effect.

Introduction

Historically, the term “asymmetric” has been used to define the balance of powers. Hence, asymmetry goes back to the dawn of time, as early as David’s combat with Goliath in the Old Testament, though it became more prominent after the end of the Cold War.¹ In the 19th century Bismarck in Germany provided a description of asymmetric warfare by saying that “we live in a wondrous time in which the strong is weak because of his moral scruples and the weak grows strong because of his audacity.”² However, these battles do not lend themselves to today’s concept of asymmetric warfare, they are battles with imbalance of powers. The term asymmetric warfare refers to the conflict between state and

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¹ Anna WITTMANN, *Talking Conflict: The Loaded Language of Genocide, Political Violence, Terrorism, and Warfare* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2016).

² David BUFFALO, *Defining Asymmetric Warfare* (Arlington, VA: The Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the US Army, 2006).

non-state actors. 9/11 attacks, the war in Afghanistan, and the so called “Islamic State” are among the best-known examples of asymmetric warfare.

Asymmetric warfare has adverse consequences on the people living in a given region. The war erupts as a result of lack of human security of a certain group or groups within the country. However, it expands to deteriorate the human security of all. The international community should be alert to this impact; but most importantly, it should be alert to the spillover–crossover consequences and impact on the neighboring countries, the region, and the possible global impact as it became evident in the Syrian crisis that had an immense regional and global effect.

Asymmetric conflict spills over into neighboring countries since the groups fighting against the state are in most cases in conflict with each other as well, as is the case of the groups in former Yugoslavia in World War II and the combats in Syria with and against the regime.³ The spark of the spillover is the influx of refugees who carry with them potential benefits as well as possible harm and burden to the neighboring countries.

This paper presents the Spillover–Crossover model, illustrating the possible consequences of asymmetric warfare on the neighboring countries. The first part of the paper presents a brief literature review of the negative and positive spillover. The second part is a description of the Spillover–Crossover model, and the third part is the application of the spillover–crossover using the Syrian crisis as a case study.

Spillover Effect

Asymmetric warfare affects human security of the people within the countries involved into the conflict. Costs of asymmetric warfare include security, economic, and social costs. Furthermore, the costs of asymmetric warfare extend to reach the neighboring countries and the international community. “Peaceful countries that are adjacent to countries engaged in civil war suffer from direct and long-term effects caused by the civil wars of their neighbors.”⁴ Neighboring countries receive the most evident spillover of the conflict through the arrival of the refugees. The largest number of Syrian refugees is currently in Lebanon and Jordan, and the largest number of Afghani refugees moved to Pakistan.

Negative Effects

Considering the different cases of asymmetric warfare, it is evident that the conflict’s spillover onto the neighboring countries stimulates political instability, economic instability, and influx of refugees.

Political instability of neighboring countries results from the spillover of conflicts, combatants, and arms. The spillover of refugees might entail crossover of the conflict on the different sectors. This could be possible through the use of refugee camps as a base

³ WITTMANN, *Talking Conflict*.

⁴ Elliott P. COLLIER et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (Washington: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, The World Bank, 2003).

for armed groups.⁵ During the refugee crisis in the Congo, the militias established training bases in the refugee camps; where they stored weapons, trained refugee fighters and launched cross-border attacks.⁶ A conflict between the neighboring countries erupted as a result. Hence, the spillover of a conflict onto another country can escalate into regional or international war. Lischer identified different types of political violence involving refugees. These include: conflict between sending state and the refugees, between the receiving state and the refugees, and among refugees themselves resulting in intrastate and interstate conflict.⁷ In the case of Somali refugees, they served as domestic opposition groups in the host country, where they often worked closely with ethnic Somali separatists in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia.⁸

Researches show that instability in the region affects negatively the economic performance of neighboring countries⁹. The effect is evident in the living cost and the trade cost affected by the conflict: “Mozambique doubled Malawi’s international transport costs and triggered an economic decline.”¹⁰ In another case “Congo closed the river route to the sea for the landlocked Central African Republic.”¹¹

Some recent research indicates that the economic benefits of refugee influx resulting from conflict conditions outweighs the costs of the influx to the neighboring countries. However, so far only the costs of the refugees’ influx have been discussed thoroughly in many researches indicating the economic strains and burden on the host communities.¹² The adverse effect on the neighboring countries may lead to a “contraction in growth, higher inflation, large fiscal and current account deficits, loss of reserves, and weakened financial system.”¹³ It has also been indicated that the economic impact depends on the initial economic status of the host countries along with the number and income of refugees they host.¹⁴ Others found that directly bordering countries receive negative spillover while non-bordering neighboring countries receive a positive spillover as those wealthier and more skilled are able to travel further distances.¹⁵

⁵ Idean SALEHYAN, “The Externalities of Civil Strife: Refugees as a Source of International Conflict,” *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 4 (2008), 787–801.

⁶ Sarah Kenyon LISCHER, “Collateral Damage: Humanitarian Assistance as a Cause of Conflict,” *International Security* 28, no. 1 (2006): 79–109.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Margarita Puerto GOMEZ – Asger CHRISTENSEN et al., *World Development Report 2011: The Impact of Refugees on Neighboring Countries: a Development Challenge*. Available at: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/9221/WDR2011_0028.pdf (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁹ Alberto ADES – Hak CHUA, “Thy Neighbor’s Curse: Regional Instability and Economic Growth,” *Journal of Economic Growth* 2, no. 3 (1997): 279–304.

¹⁰ COLLIER, *Breaking the Conflict Trap*, 34.

¹¹ COLLIER, *Breaking the Conflict Trap*, 35.

¹² *The Economic Consequences of the Kosovo Crisis: a Preliminary Assessment of External Financing Needs and the Role of the Fund and the World Bank in the International Response* (Washington D.C.: International Monetary Fund & World Bank, 1999), *IMF.org*. Available at: www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/kosovo/041699.htm (accessed: 4 May 2016).

¹³ Randa SAB, *Economic Impact of Selected Conflicts in the Middle East: What Can We Learn from the Past?* (IMF Working Paper, International Monetary Fund, 2014), *IMF.org*. Available at: www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2014/wp14100.pdf (accessed: 4 May 2016).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Olaf de GROOT, “The Spillover Effects of Conflict on Economic Growth in Neighboring Countries in Africa,” *Defence and Peace Economics* 21, no. 2 (2010): 149–164.

Research has also revealed possibilities of transferring endemic diseases as a result of the conflict. For example, there is a high correlation between the increase in the malaria incidents and the number of war refugees.¹⁶

Positive Effects

The results of several research projects reveal that the benefits of refugees' influx to host communities exceed the costs.¹⁷ It has been shown that refugees often make positive contributions to the state economy. For example, in Uganda "these contributions are exemplified by the significant volume of exchange between refugees and Ugandan nationals, as well as by refugees' creation of employment opportunities for Ugandan nationals".¹⁸

In Uganda, which received a huge influx of refugees from Rwanda, Sudan, Kenya and Congo; the educational sector has witnessed benefits to host communities. The assistance strategy was based on development rather than emergency projects. The policy used was "integrating refugee primary and secondary schools into the district education system".¹⁹ Assistance that was provided for the refugees targeted the host communities including those who did not originally have access to educational services. The temporary infrastructure ends to provide support beyond the crisis in such a way that it supports the host communities directly.²⁰

Another significant benefit is filling the gap in the labor force. Refugees usually accept lower-skilled jobs that are not filled or demanded by the host community labor force. Additionally, refugees coming from different backgrounds and educational levels usually pursue diverse job opportunities. The refugee labor force does not necessarily compete with, but complements the host community labor force.²¹

In the most adverse conditions, refugees find ways for income generating activities. Some are able to relocate their businesses from their country of origin to the host countries, while other start innovative ideas and activities. In Kenya, refugees were able to engage in creative income generating activities despite the challenging security conditions.²² In Uganda, several cases of successful innovative entrepreneurship were established, which were able to contribute to the local economy.²³

¹⁶ COLLIER, *Breaking the Conflict Trap*, 35.

¹⁷ Karen JACOBSEN, *The Forgotten Solution: Local Integration for Refugees in Developing Countries* (New Issues in Refugee Research, Working Paper No. 45, 2001). Tania KAISER, *A Beneficiary-Based Evaluation of the UNHCR Programme in Guinea* (Geneva: UNHCR, Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, 2001).

¹⁸ Alexander BETTS – Louise BLOOM – Josiah KAPLAN – Naohiko OMATA, *Refugees Economies: Rethinking Popular Assumptions* (Oxford: University of Oxford Refugees Studies Centre, Humanitarian Innovation Project, 2014).

¹⁹ Sarah DRYDEN-PETERSON – Lucy HOVIL, *Local Integration as a Durable Solution: Refugees, Host Populations and Education in Uganda* (New Issues in Refugee Research, Working Paper No. 93, 2003).
²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ BETTS et al., *Refugees Economies*.

²² Alexander BETTS – Louise BLOOM – Nina WEAVER, *Refugee Innovation: Humanitarian Innovation That Starts with Communities* (Humanitarian Innovation Project, University of Oxford Refugees Studies Centre, 2015).

²³ BETTS et al., *Refugee Innovation*.

Generally speaking, the spillover of refugees has both negative and positive consequences, which depends on the host communities. In Tanzania, after the spillover of refugees from Rwanda, Burundi and Congo, “hosts who already had access to resources, education, or power were better poised to benefit from the refugee presence, while those who were already disadvantaged in the local context became even further marginalized”.²⁴

The spillover of refugees leads to interaction between the host communities and the refugees. This interaction has been heavily discussed in the acculturation theory. The theory was first suggested by Redfield and his colleagues.²⁵ In the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) Bourhis and his colleagues proposed that the intergroup relations between the host and the refugees are defined by the “relative fit” between the two groups. The three levels of fit are consensual, problematic, and conflictual.²⁶

The Spillover–Crossover Model²⁷

This section provides an illustration of the spillover-crossover model to help understand the positive and negative consequences of asymmetric warfare on neighboring countries. The spillover of the refugees and arms starts as the asymmetric warfare erupts. The extent of spillover depends upon the level of conflict and its impact on the human security of the people. The number of refugees depends on the severity of the conflict. However, the distance to which refugees’ flow depends on the financial status of refugees, many would rather stay close to the borders in the hope of returning; however, this also depends on their financial capacity. Syrian refugees travelled to the neighboring countries while many made it to Europe and reached further to Canada and the US. Those who were better off ended up in more distant countries and those who were worst off ended up in the neighboring countries.

Given the literature and arguments reviewed above, the Spillover–Crossover model is proposed (see Figure 1). It suggests that during an asymmetric conflict there is lack of human security amongst certain groups. As the conflict intensifies, a larger sector of the community lacks human security. This starts to spill over into the neighboring countries. The spillover is usually filtered by the border policies of the neighboring countries. Hence, those countries with strict border policies are able to prevent spillover more than those with flexible border policies. Border policies may filter armaments to enter the neighboring countries and may also be able to decrease the influx of refugees. For example, during the Syrian conflict border policies in Jordan and Lebanon were stricter towards the Palestinian refugees from Syria; therefore, the number of refugees was minimized to a certain extent.

²⁴ Elise WHITAKER, “Refugees in Western Tanzania: The Distribution of Burdens and Benefits Among Local Hosts,” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 15, no. 4 (2002): 339–358.

²⁵ Robert REDFIELD – Ralph LINTON – Melville J. HERSKOVITS, “Memorandum on the Study of Acculturation,” *American Anthropologist* 38, no. 1 (1936): 149–152.

²⁶ Richard Y. BOURHIS – Léna Céline MOISE – Stéphane PERREAULT – Sacha SENÉCAL, “Towards an Interactive Acculturation Model: A Social Psychological Approach,” *International Journal of Psychology* 32, no. 6 (1997): 369–389.

²⁷ The Spillover–Crossover model term is used in psychological research to examine the impact of the work domain on the home domain.

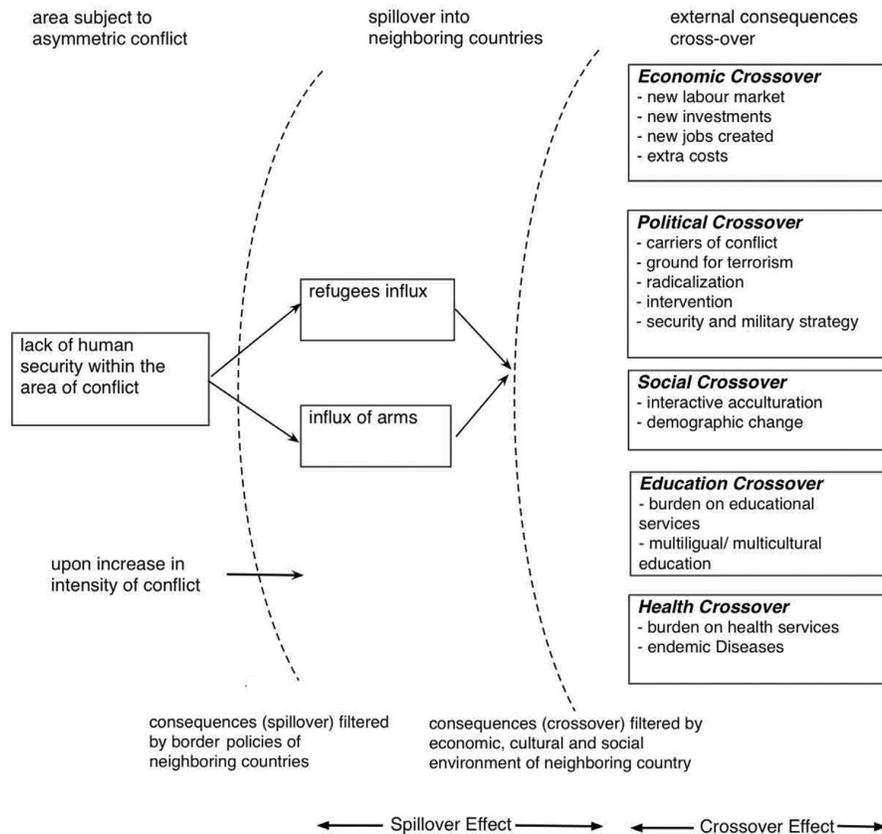


Figure 1
The Spillover-Crossover model

Source: drawn by the author

The spillover may affect significantly the various sectors within the host countries, which are called crossover effects. These effects could be either positive or negative depending on the original economic, social and political environment of the neighboring countries. They also depend on the historical engagement in civil war, and the relationship between the two governments and/or the people of the two neighboring countries. They also depend on the characteristics of the refugees. Those refugees who are better off from an economic and educational point of view have positive economic crossover and less of political or social burden.

The model suggests that there are five main possible consequences of crossover factors. These are: economic, political, social, educational and health consequential factors in the neighboring countries. These crossover factors are usually filtered by several economic indicators in the neighboring countries, which include poverty, labor market, local economic

policies. They are also filtered by the political environment, which includes internal conflict and the political system. Additionally, they are filtered by the cultural environment that include the acceptance of refugees, conflict and power differences, and the feel of relevance to the country of conflict and its nature of conflict. Also, the crossover factors are filtered by political factors including history of conflict in the area, history of refugee influx, internal conflicts, and different policies especially those targeting refugees.

Economic crossover is especially filtered by the economic environment. Countries with stronger economic conditions are benefiting from the influx more than those with weak economy. This is also dependent on the local economic and investment policies. Some researchers suggest that due to the conflict, investors might be discouraged to start their businesses in the region. However, those who started or planned to start in the area under conflict would rather move their investments from the area of conflict to the neighboring countries. Therefore, the neighboring countries will be a potential area of investment for internationals and for nationals of the area under conflict. Small and micro businesses would be a big market attracting refugees. Upon their settling down, refugees would want to start new businesses to be able to cope with their new status. This could help create niche markets that did not exist or new crafts that originate from the sending country. It also helps create new jobs for the refugees along with the host communities.

Labor might be considered a threat to the local economy, as it forms a competition to the existing labor force. However, new labor force is a source of new skills and knowledge that could enrich the existing market. Moreover, in many cases the new labor force could help fill the gap in the labor market, either because of the lack of certain skills or the lack of interest of the locals to work in certain sectors. Additionally, it helps in providing diversified skilled labor and diffused competition.²⁸ The refugees' competition on low-skilled jobs "doesn't hang native workers out to dry, but rather forces them to develop a set of complementary – and usually higher skilled – contributions to the labor force".²⁹

During the conflict, several humanitarian organizations start working in the neighboring countries, either to support the refugees in the host countries, or to support those in the area under conflict. However, due to security reasons they mostly operate remotely from the neighboring countries. These new projects usually create new job opportunities for the locals there. Accordingly, humanitarian organizations open huge opportunities in the neighboring countries depending on the severity of the conflict and the influx including new job markets and attraction of internationals.

Despite the possible advantages discussed earlier, refugee influx can also cause a huge economic burden on the neighboring countries. The costs of services provided to the refugees and the humanitarian attention are inevitable and include the educational, health and welfare support that brings strains and burdens on the budget of the host country.

²⁸ BETTS et al., *Refugee Economies*.

²⁹ Kevin SHELLITO, *The Economic Effect of Refugee Crises on Host Countries and Implications for the Lebanese Case* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, Joseph Wharton Research Scholars, 2016). Available at: http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1022&context=joseph_wharton_scholars (accessed: 4 May 2016).

The political crossover factor in the neighboring countries is another consequence that could cause disruption in a neighboring nation. However, this is filtered by the local policies of those receiving countries and the political environment in general.

The arrival of refugees is already filtered by the refugee policies in the neighboring countries. However, as the conflict increases, even those countries that are strict in accepting refugees receive the spillover of refugee influx. Strict policies cannot eliminate the influx, but it can only reduce and manage the numbers. The crossover effect of the refugees' arrival impacts the neighboring countries in various ways, depending on the local policies and of the characteristics of the arriving refugees; including their educational level and their economic status.

In some cases, the flow of refugees disrupts and alters the structure of the state, by imposing different religious, ethnic or cultural structures. For example, the majority of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are Sunni Muslims, while the religious structure in Lebanon is formed of Sunni and Shia Muslims, Catholic and Maronite Christians, and Druze, among others. The influx has led to a feeling of existential threat amongst some due to the disruption of the existing structure.

Within the huge influx of refugees, there is a high potential of an influx of carriers of conflict. The influx itself facilitates the flow of arms and combatants, which may lead to the onset of a conflict in the neighboring countries. This could be in the form of conflict among the refugees themselves, between the refugees and the host community and/or the host government, or with the sending countries. The host country could become a sanctuary for terrorism, where it becomes possible to recruit and arm combatants. However, this crossover is usually filtered through the political positions, security policies and the state strength of the host countries. Countries filter the flow of conflict by having strict security measures. In many cases the refugee influx is securely managed by accepting the refugees in temporary camps on the borders for security check until they are transferred to the refugee camps to mitigate the conflict, while some have very strict policies on the movement of refugees outside the refugee camps.

Radicalization is another crossover factor that may influence the neighboring countries. This is possible when the host community identifies a certain group or case of conflict as relevant either ethnically, religiously or even humanely. The host community might act vigorously to show their solidarity and sympathy to a certain group, or they might even demand their government for intervention as a result. This causes internal conflict within the host communities. Such crossover is filtered by the social environment within the neighboring countries.

Another possible crossover is the intervention of the neighboring country in the conflict. This happens when the government decides to support one group, or when conflict is foreseen to affect their own people. At this point, the conflict is altered from a local to a regional or from an intrastate to an interstate conflict. It is altered from radicalization to war status.

Social crossover is possible through interactive acculturation. It is the interaction and the possible merge of the two different cultures. Although more changes tend to be experienced by the refugees, both the host and the refugees are affected by acculturation. It is

possible that the refugees will face one of the four strategies suggested by Berry.³⁰ These are: integration, assimilation, separation or segregation and marginalization.

Educational crossover is a factor that affects neighboring countries depending on their policies towards refugees. In general, the influx of refugees is a burden on all public services, including education. However, crossover may also have a positive effect on the educational sector, especially in the case of integrating refugees within the system. This integration helps to create social diversity, mutual awareness of the societies and cultures, along with possible multilingual and multicultural communication and education. This integration through inclusive educational system and intercultural dialogue facilitates the integration in society as a whole and the linkage of the diverse communities achieves mutual benefits for the two communities.³¹

Health is another main crossover factor resulting from the spillover. The refugee influx may bring cause strains that burden the health services provided by the host communities by increasing the number of beneficiaries. It may also facilitate the transfer of epidemic diseases causing a widespread health crossover effect. For example, researchers have observed an increase in the incidence of malaria during civil war in the regions under conflict and in the neighboring countries.³²

Spillover–Crossover of the Asymmetric Conflict in Syria

This section provides an application of the model using the Syrian crisis as a case study. First, it illustrates the spillover of refugees and possible armaments, and then it describes the consequential crossover effects.

Spillover Effect

The warfare conditions in Syria started in March 2011 when protests erupted in the city of Deraa. This has then escalated into an asymmetric conflict in various cities and towns. The spillover of conflict is evident through the huge influx of Syrian refugees. More than 4.8 million people have fled Syria since the eruption of the conflict. The neighboring countries – including Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey – have received the largest refugee influx; about 4.8 million refugees continued to seek safety across the Middle East. About 10 percent of the Syrian refugees made it to Europe; around 884,461 Syrian refugees applied for asylum in Europe between April 2011 and October 2016.³³

³⁰ John W. BERRY, "Immigration, Acculturation and Adaptation," *Applied Psychology* 46, no. 1 (1997): 5–68.

³¹ Life Long Learning Platform (European Civil Society for Education), "Integrating Refugees and Migrants through Education: Building Bridges in Divided Societies," *Lllplatform Position Paper*, September 2016. Available at: <http://lllplatform.eu/lll/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/LLL-Platform-Policy-Paper-Refugees-and-migrants-and-inclusive-education-Sept-2016.pdf>, (accessed: 4 May 2016).

³² Jose MONTALVO – Marta RENYAL-QUEROL, "Fighting against Malaria: Prevent Wars While Waiting for the 'Miraculous' Vaccine," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 89, no. 1 (2007): 165–177.

³³ UNHCR, "Syria Regional Refugee Response," *UNHCR.org*. Available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> (accessed: 4 May 2016).

According to UNHCR statistics, Jordan hosts approximately 655,496 Syrian refugees as of December 2016, which is equivalent to about 10 percent of the country's population. The total camp population amounts to 141,091. The influx of refugees has been immense since the conflict started.

Jordan did not ratify the 1951 Convention of refugees and its 1967 protocol. However, Jordan is part of other conventions that respects non-refoulement, including the UN convention against torture, and the 1965 international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination among others. Jordan is also bound to the right to seek asylum as per the universal declaration of human rights. Jordan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UNHCR, which defines refugees as per the Refugee Convention, respects the non-refoulement and non-discriminatory obligations that ensure the right of work to refugees and temporary residence. However, the MoU requires UNHCR to find a durable solution within 6 months. The Jordanian constitution, on the other hand, implies that the right to work is reserved only for Jordanians, otherwise the non-Jordanians would require working permits.³⁴

Jordan has imposed several entry restrictions. In early 2012, it has barred the entry of certain groups, including Palestinian refugees coming from Syria.³⁵ In 2013, it restricted the numbers of entry to 300 refugees per day. In June 2016, Jordan effectively closed its borders with Syria.³⁶ However, despite the strict filters imposed by the Jordanian government, the spillover – resulting from the severity of the Syrian conflict – was enormous.

According to UNHCR statistics, Lebanon hosts approximately 1,017,433 Syrian refugees as of September 2016, which is equivalent to nearly a quarter of Lebanon's estimated 4.3 million original residents. The huge refugee influx to Lebanon has affected the religious and sectarian composition of the Lebanese society, as well as its economic status.³⁷

Lebanon is not part of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees or its 1967 protocol. However, Lebanon is party to conventions which support protecting the human rights of the residents in Lebanon, including refugees. These include the 1965 international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. Additionally, Lebanon is bound to the right to seek asylum as per the universal declaration of human rights. Additionally, Lebanon signed an MoU with UNHCR, granting a temporary "circulation permit" to registered refugees. This is a permit to stay for one year after which the UNHCR is expected to resettle the person to a third country. Despite the refugees' prevalence, Lebanon imposed the "no camps" policy.³⁸

Lebanon started officially with an open border policy regarding Syrian refugees, though refugees faced significant difficulties on the border. October 2014 was the turning point, when the policy towards the Syrian refugees was announced based on three aspects.

³⁴ Sarah BINDER et al., *Protecting Syrian Refugees: Laws, Policies, and Global Responsibility Sharing* (Boston: Boston University School of Law, International Human Rights Clinic, 2014).

³⁵ Palestinian refugees who had originally found sanctuary in Syria.

³⁶ BADIL Staff, "Palestinian Refugees from Syria: Ongoing Nakba, Ongoing Discrimination," *Al-Majdal*, no. 56 (Autumn 2014): 2–5.

³⁷ International Labour Organization (Regional Office for the Arab States), *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Their Employment Profile* (Beirut: International Labor Organization, 2013).

³⁸ BINDER et al., *Protecting Syrian Refugees*.

“First, that Lebanon had done more than what was reasonably to be expected with regards to the refugee situation. Second, that Lebanon would enforce legislation to limit – and in fact end – the flow of refugees in the country. Third, that measures would be adopted to reduce the numbers of UNHCR registered Syrians in Lebanon.”³⁹ Restrictions were imposed on Palestinian refugees from Syria since the early phases of the conflict. However, despite the strict filters imposed by the Lebanese government, the spillover – resulting from the severity of the Syrian conflict – was enormous here as well.

The number of Syrian refugees in Turkey (as of 2 June 2016) is 2,743,497, with 50.8 percent male and 49.2 percent female; 20 percent are of age under 4 years. The Government of Turkey hosts close to 270,000 refugees in 25 refugee camps. About 90 percent of the Syrian refugees live off-camp, under very poor conditions with minimal services provided and no cash assistance. The refugees’ camps are under the control of AFAD.⁴⁰

Turkey ratified the 1951 UN Convention of Refugees, but not the 1967 protocol. This means, it has maintained the geographic limitations; this restricts the refugee status to those whose circumstances had come about before 1951 in reference to the events occurring in Europe. This implies that Syrian refugees are not included in this agreement. However, according to the 1994 law on Foreigners and International Protection, Turkey permits non-European refugees to remain in Turkey on a temporary basis until they are resettled.⁴¹ On 22 October 2014, the Council of Ministers issued a regulation on temporary protection. Article 91 of this regulation addresses foreigners and international protection. The regulation applies to Syrians as well as stateless persons from Syria. The Government of Turkey also facilitated the family reunification for Syrian refugees. This policy helps bring relatives of registered Syrians in Turkey from Lebanon and Jordan to join family members.⁴²

The border policies and local policies regarding migration in general are different in the three neighboring countries. However, the severity of the Syrian conflict led to huge spillover of refugee influx towards the three countries.

Crossover Effects

In the section above it became evident that the spillover of Syrian refugees is immense towards the neighboring countries. The crossover resulting from the spillover will be further discussed hereby as per the four crossover factors: economic, political, social and health.

³⁹ Filippo DIONIGI, “The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon: State Fragility and Social Resilience,” *LSE Middle East Centre Paper Series 15*, February 2016. Available at: http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/65565/1/Dionigi_Syrian_Refugees%20in%20Lebanon_Author_2016.pdf. (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁴⁰ AFAD, “Disaster Report,” *AFAD.gov.tr*, 5 September 2016. Available at: www.afad.gov.tr/ar/9842/Current-Status-in-AFAD-Temporary-Protection-Centres (accessed: 4 May 2016). (AFAD is the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency in Turkey directly accountable to the Prime Minister’s office.)

⁴¹ Metin CORABATIR, *The Evolving Approach to Refugee Protection in Turkey: Assessing the Practical and Political Needs* (Washington D.C.: Migration Policy Institute, 2016).

⁴² Ibid.

Economic Crossover

In this section, the economic crossover resulting from the spillover is discussed through the results of the related studies of economic consequences of the Syrian crisis on the neighboring countries. From the results, it is evident that there is a payoff between the possible economic growth and the strains on the public services and public finances due to the illegal status of the refugees and the lack of working permits in the three neighboring countries.

In Turkey, the influx of refugees helped to fill the gap in the labor market. Researchers indicated that this influx is not a threat to the local labor market as it helps to diversify the employment opportunities by bringing in new skills.⁴³ The influx helped to fill the needed positions for unskilled labor.⁴⁴ Other researches indicated clearly that there are no negative impacts on poverty for the host community despite the high poverty rates experienced among the recent migrants.⁴⁵

“In Gaziantep, it is believed that Syrians contribute to the economic growth of the region because of their involvement in production as well as consumption.”⁴⁶ There is a visible increase in investments from high-income Syrian business people in Mersin and Gaziantep, which are formally registered in the Gaziantep’s chambers of commerce. Altogether 209 businesses are registered in Gaziantep with a high level of exports, while 100 are listed with the Syrian Economic Forum willing to relocate to Turkey.⁴⁷

Syrians are bringing with them a knowledge and wealth of relations from their country of origin. For example, the Syrian Economic Forum has been formed by Syrian businessmen supporting Syrian big businesses and entrepreneurs in Turkey.⁴⁸ Other Syrian craft businesses and food industry have been revived in Turkey.⁴⁹

Another important advantage is the benefit received by the local NGOs in Turkey. Most of the humanitarian aid distribution are supplied through local firms especially textile and agriculture.⁵⁰ This created new opportunities for Turkish institutions.

On the other hand, several burdens and strains on the Turkish economy have been observed; including, but not limited to: increase in rental prices, child labor, and illegal, cheap labor. Burden on municipal services has been observed, especially since municipalities receive their budget according to their population, but this budget does not take into consideration the influx of refugees. For example, in areas like Kilis, the population has doubled. In general, Turkey has spent around 4.5 billion dollars on the Syrian refugees so far.⁵¹

⁴³ BETTS et al., *Refugee Economies*.

⁴⁴ Oytun ORHAN – Sabiha S. GUNDOGAR, *Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey* (Ankara: ORSAM–TESEV, 2015). Available at: www.orsam.org.tr/files/Raporlar/rapor195/195eng.pdf (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁴⁵ Joao Pedro AZEVEDO – Judy S. YANG – Osman Kaan INAN, *What Are the Impacts of Syrian Refugees on Host Community Welfare in Turkey? A Subnational Poverty Analysis* (World Bank Group, Policy Research Working Paper, 2016). Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/878901468184471663/pdf/WPS7542.pdf> (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁴⁶ OORHAN–GUNDOGAR, *Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey*.

⁴⁷ Rami SHARRACK – Tamam ALBAROUDI, Interview with the Syrian Economic Forum in Gaziantep, Turkey, 31 March 2016.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ OORHAN–GUNDOGAR, *Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey*.

⁵¹ Ibid.

In Lebanon, the impact was evident in increased unemployment, especially in the agricultural sector and low-skilled labor.⁵² This is especially true as a limited number of working permits has been issued to the Syrian labor. This caused an adverse working environment as Syrians are mostly working illegally without permits; as a result, the wage rate decreased and health insurance was not provided. Additionally, Syrian refugees in Lebanon were allowed to work as laborers in three sectors: construction, agriculture and garbage collection.⁵³ Refugee child labor is another socio-economic aspect, affecting the Syrians and the Syrian-Lebanese relations.⁵⁴

With the huge number of refugees, the impact on Lebanon's governance and services was immense. Strains on governmental services – including education, healthcare, waste management and infrastructure – have been observed. “Refugees are being hosted in areas that are already facing immense public services strains to accommodate the Lebanese.”⁵⁵

On the other hand, research indicates that the influx of Syrian refugees has also contributed to the Lebanese economy. Refugees are a source of demand of the Lebanese local products, supported through international aid and remittances of relatives abroad. One percent increase in refugees led to a 1.5 percent increase in exports.⁵⁶ This has also created opportunities for Lebanese exporters replacing the “loss of Syrian production in the Syrian and other markets”.⁵⁷

In Jordan, it has been observed that there is no relationship between the influx of refugees and the Jordanian labor market,⁵⁸ although the perception of the people does not share this observation.⁵⁹ The labor force participation rate for Jordanians and the distribution of workers between the different sectors at present is similar to what it was before the Syrian crisis,⁶⁰ as Syrians were part of the labor force even before the crisis started. However, it should be noted that in many cases Syrian refugees work in the informal economy due to their illegal status in Jordan. Additionally, Syrian laborers participate in the low-skilled labor market that the Jordanians are not interested in; as most Jordanians are interested in the public sector and services.⁶¹

⁵² SHELLITO, *The Economic Effect of Refugee Crises*.

⁵³ Sawсан SABRA, Interview with the Lebanese Ministry of Labor, 3 May 2016.

⁵⁴ Rana Bou HAMDAN, Interview with the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, 3 May 2016.

⁵⁵ Sawсан MASRI – Illina SROUR, *Assessment of the Impact of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and their Employment Profile* (Beirut: International Labour Organization, 2013).

⁵⁶ Massiliano CALI – Samia SEKKARIE, “Much Ado about Nothing? The Economic Impact of Refugee ‘Invasions’,” The Brookings Institution, 16 September 2015. Available at: www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2015/09/16/much-ado-about-nothing-the-economic-impact-of-refugee-invasions (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁵⁷ Massimiliano CALI – Wissam HARAKE – Fadi HASSAN – Clemens STRUCK, “The Impact of the Syrian Conflict on Lebanese Trade,” *World Bank Report*, April 2015. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/908431468174247241/pdf/96087-WP-P148051-PUBLIC-Box391435B-Syria-Trade-Report.pdf> (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁵⁸ Ali FAKIH – Ibrahim MAY, “The Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Labor Market in Neighboring Countries: Empirical Evidence from Jordan,” *Defence and Peace Economics* 27, no. 1 (2015): 64–86.

⁵⁹ Focus groups with Jordanians living in areas crowded with refugees, 12 May 2016.

⁶⁰ Svein Erik STAVE – Solveig HILLESUND, *Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Labour Market: Findings from the Governorates of Amman, Irbid, and Mafraq* (Beirut: International Labour Organization, 2015).

⁶¹ FAKIH–MAY, *The Impact of Syrian Refugees on the Labor Market in Neighboring Countries*.

Strains on the already limited resources in Jordan – especially water and the public services – have been immense. “Despite the neutral or even positive impact on labor markets and growth, Jordan’s case indicates that a trade-off between these impacts and the added strain on public finances will arise in the short run.”⁶²

Political Crossover

In this section, an illustration of the political crossover – resulting from the different political factors described in the model – is discussed. These political factors include: carriers of conflict, sanctuary for terrorism, radicalization, intervention in conflict, security and military strategy. The political crossover is slightly different among the neighboring countries due to the filters in each. Turkey is a stronger state than Lebanon and Jordan; therefore the crossover effect is different. Additionally, the cultural filter is different as Lebanon and Syria are inextricably linked historically, which led to the fact that most Syrians sought Lebanon as a first refuge.

In Turkey, several conflicts took place between the refugees and the host communities. In Hatay, ethnic tensions arose in 2012 between Syrian refugees and the host community, and resulted in anti-Syrian demonstrations. Also, following the explosion of two cars in Hatay in 2013, the host community attacked Syrian cars. “We don’t want Syrian refugees” was the slogan of demonstrations that followed the killing of a Turkish landlord by a Syrian refugee.⁶³ On the other hand, “Syrians have been discussing the possibility of organizing in order to protect themselves. Such a development may result in small judicial issues turning into larger scale conflicts.”⁶⁴

“Syrian refugees is a topic that feeds an already existing, polarized political discussions in Turkey.”⁶⁵ Intervention in the conflict has started since the early phases, either explicitly or implicitly by the Turkish government. “Both the Syrian National Council and the Free Syrian Army have used Turkey as a base for organizing their resistance against Assad’s forces. Turkey has also supported the war against Assad by quietly allowing the passage through its territory of volunteers from Muslim countries to fight in Syria.”⁶⁶ Turkey has experienced clear carriers of conflict, sanctuary for terrorism, and radicalization, which in turn affected the Turkish security and military strategy as apparent in the government’s intervention in the conflict.

⁶² Ali FAKIH – Walid MARROUCH, “The Economic Impacts of Syrian Refugees: Challenges and Opportunities in Host Countries,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 9 November 2015. Available at: www.georgetownjournalofinternationalaffairs.org/online-edition/the-economic-impacts-of-syrian-refugees-challenges-and-opportunities-in-host-countries?rq=marrouch (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁶³ Burcu Togrul KOCA, “Syrian Refugees in Turkey: From ‘Guests’ to ‘Enemies’?” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 54 (May 2016): 55–75. Available at: www.cambridge.org/core/journals/new-perspectives-on-turkey/article/div-classtitle/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-from-guests-to-enemies/div/29536558EBF6E27022769A7B858F29E7/core-reader (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁶⁴ ORHAN–GUNDOGAR, *Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey*.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Richard WEITZ, *Turkey’s New Regional Security Role: Implications for the United States* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Press, 2014). Available at: www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/PUB1218.pdf (accessed: 4 May 2016).

Lebanon's fragility and its inextricably linked history with Syria have led to an immense crossover effect of the conflict on the political environment. The Islamic State is more active near Arsal. "Refugees and locals also supported clashes in Arsal in August 2014 between the Lebanese Armed Forces, Nusra Front and ISIS."⁶⁷ Therefore, Lebanon is caught up immensely in the Syrian political affairs. This is apparent through the direct intervention and the deepening involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian civil war. Hezbollah operated openly across the borders with Syria.⁶⁸

The refugees' influx has fed into the already polarized and radicalized political environment in Lebanon. The refugees' influx has been perceived as an existential threat to the Lebanese community and to the Lebanese social fabric. Moreover, the Lebanese government claimed that militant cells are embedded in the refugee population and imposed a curfew on Syrian refugees.⁶⁹ Tensions between refugees and the host communities have been strained, and several suicide bombing attacks took place in Lebanon. The policy of "no policy" towards Syrian refugees has affected the political and social environment. Additionally, many Syrians lack the proper documents to stay and to work. Syrians cannot renew their documents, hence they refrain from leaving their settlements in fear of being arrested; this makes them more belligerent and prone to use "negative coping strategies."⁷⁰

The protracted nature of the Syrian conflict altered the Jordanians perspective of the Syrian refugees from welcoming them to a hostile position. Therefore, tensions between the refugees and the host communities tapped the surface. As a result, the refugees' influx has fed into the already radicalized political environment in Jordan. However, little evidence is available that combatants have control over refugee camps,⁷¹ especially since the refugee camps are administered and controlled by the UNHCR in coordination with the Jordanian government.

Social Crossover

Acculturation is a major source of change for refugees as individuals and as families. In general, refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey are settling down as families, and not as individuals. Acculturation for neighboring countries are experienced by the families, while in further distanced countries individuals face acculturation, as not every family member is able to travel the long and risky journeys.⁷²

⁶⁷ Carol TAN, "The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Conflicts in the Making," *IEMed Mediterranean Yearbook*, 2015. Available at: www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxiu-adjunts/anuari/med.2015/IEMed%20Yearbook%202015_Panorama_SyrianRefugeeCrisis_CarolTan.pdf (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁶⁸ Marisa SULLIVAN, *Hezbollah in Syria* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, 2014). Available at: www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Hezbollah_Sullivan_FINAL.pdf (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁶⁹ Dionigi, *The Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon*.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Lauren BARNHART et al., *The Refugee Crisis in the Levant: Demographics and Risk Factors for Conflict in Jordan and Lebanon* (Washington D.C.: School of International Service, American University, 2015). Available at: www.american.edu/sis/practica/upload/AU-Practicum-Fall-2015-Intelligence-Analysis-1.pdf (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁷² Focus group with refugees in Lebanon, May 2016.

Refugees in the neighboring countries encounter many challenges. Syrian refugees in the neighboring countries are mainly facing discrimination, where the perception of people is that Syrian neighborhoods jeopardize security.⁷³ Also, discrimination against Syrian school children creates a hostile environment. There is also refusal to discuss possibilities of social cohesion in Jordan and Lebanon.⁷⁴ In Turkey, refugees are facing the language challenge, they are living in camps and ghettos, which leaves them marginalized, with less possibility of integration into the Turkish society.

With the huge number of refugees there is a high possibility to change the social structure of the host country. This is especially evident in Lebanon that has faced structural change from a religious and socio-economic point of view. For example, the percentage of Sunni Muslims in Lebanon changed from 27 percent to 44 percent, which changes the social fabric.⁷⁵

Educational Crossover

Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey reported intense burden on the educational services resulting from the huge influx of refugees. However, there is a policy of segregation of education within the educational system. "Lebanon is providing evening shifts for Syrian school children in public schools, despite the fact that there is a possibility to integrate them within the morning shifts."⁷⁶ Hence, current policies of education are preventing possible positive crossover of multicultural or multilingual education. In Turkey language is the main barrier to integration. There is also the problem of the lack of recognition of Syrian educational certificates and Syrian curriculum.⁷⁷ Moreover, the adverse economic situation of the Syrian refugees causes high potential of school dropout and child labor.

Health Crossover

With the lack of security in Syria, health services, including vaccination for epidemic diseases, were severely affected. This facilitated the transfer of diseases through the refugees in the neighboring countries. Gaziantep reported the highest rates of measles in Turkey in 2013.⁷⁸ "In Jordan, 24 cases of measles were reported in 2012, while over 200 cases were reported in 2013. In Lebanon, there were nine reported cases of measles in 2012, and this increased to 1,760 cases in 2013, only 13.2 percent of which were among Syrian refugees."⁷⁹

⁷³ TAN, *The Syrian Refugee Crisis*.

⁷⁴ Meeting with officials in Lebanon and Jordan.

⁷⁵ *The World Factbook: Middle East Lebanon* (Washington DC: CIA, 2015). Available at: www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html (accessed: 4 May 2016).

⁷⁶ Thaera Badran's (Project Coordinator at the Centre for Lebanese Studies in Lebanon) presentation at the NOW Conference (International Mayor's Conference NOW, 30 January 2017).

⁷⁷ Shelly CULBERTSON – Louay CONSTANT, *Education of Syrian Refugee Children: Managing the Crisis in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2015).

⁷⁸ ORHAN–GUNDOGAR, *Effects of the Syrian Refugees on Turkey*.

⁷⁹ Sima L. SHARARA – Souha S. KANI, "War and Infectious Diseases: Challenges of the Syrian Civil War," *Plos Pathog* 10, no. 11 (2014). Available at: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4231133 (accessed: 4 May 2016).

Conclusion

Asymmetric warfare is a local conflict with regional and global impacts. This is demonstrated by the Spillover–Crossover model. The spillover is the direct effect of the conflict that includes spillover of refugees and armaments. However, this spillover is filtered by the border policies of the neighboring countries. The spillover increases as the level of conflict intensifies. The border policies may not be able to prevent the spillover, but they can minimize it. The crossover effect is the crosscutting impact on the neighboring countries' environmental factors. These include the political, cultural, economic, education and health crossover effects. These effects are filtered by the fragility of the neighboring countries, along with their economic, political and cultural environment. The political crossover effect is mainly negative. However, the economic, educational and cultural crossover effect may vary across the spectrum from a positive effect to a severe negative effect, depending on the imposed filters. Additionally, health crossover should be dealt with diligently so as to prevent the negative crossover.

Syria's spillover–crossover effect on the neighboring countries varied, according to the specific conditions in the specific country. Economically, it is evident that there are costs and benefits from refugees' settlement. These costs are affected by the policy towards refugees. However, the economic benefit outweighs the costs. Turkey, who was relatively flexible towards refugees, was able to attract hundreds of Syrian investments and investors. However, Syrian investments were mostly illegal in Lebanon, where the policies are stricter. Such investments helped households to be financially independent. Hence, facilitating their settling down helps to decrease the costs. Political crossover is mainly negative in the three countries. However, it is filtered by the political environment within the host country. The fragility of the state is a main factor that facilitates the crossover of the conflict. Additionally, the transnational and cultural ties between the sending country and the host country increase the probability of political crossover. Social crossover is mainly negative. Syrians are living in ghettos – it is a factor that does not support their integration within the host communities. The negative effect is also evident in the demographic change that especially took place in Lebanon. Currently, the possibility of positive educational crossover is not possible in the neighboring countries due to the policies towards Syrian refugees. Moreover, there is a high possibility of negative health crossover through the transmission of epidemic diseases.

In order to minimize the harm of the spillover and alter the conditions into opportunities rather than threats, it is better for host communities to manage the filters to accomplish positive crossover effects. One of the main filters that should be tackled with is the policy in regard to refugees. Integration of refugees could be achieved in a manner that minimizes the cost. Keeping the refugees out of the system means less integration, more poverty, and more burden to the existing systems. Host countries could analyze their needs, identify gaps and integration possibilities, and accept refugees in a manner that accomplishes mutual benefit. Certain countries have gaps in the labor market, which refugees could fill. Other countries might not have a balanced population distribution between rural and urban areas. Refugees could restore the balance, not only by working in agriculture, but also by establishing businesses that might fit the locations and the population. Host countries might lack certain specialties, and this could be filled by the refugees themselves.

Therefore, means of integration is subject to the host countries' political and economic conditions. Uneducated refugees will not be able to integrate or cope with the new conditions. They could be the spark of a new insurgency or terrorism in the host communities. However, the host communities can avert this by facilitating the integration of refugees in the existing educational system, and provide them an opportunity to catch up with their local peers through accelerated means of education. Cultural filters could also be managed by raising the awareness of the host communities about the importance and the possibilities of integration. This could lead to mutual benefits between and among the two communities. Other filters might not be possible to manage; however, filters and factors are interrelated. Therefore, a change in one factor can help in altering the other.

According to the model, it is vital to reconsider the policies towards refugees so as to facilitate integration, which will enable positive economic and educational crossover and prevent the negative political crossover. The long-term economic sustainability of the refugees' presence should be facilitated by the host country, the humanitarian organizations and the international community. Additionally, it is essential to consider neighboring countries in conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction as these are the means to minimize the accelerating trend of asymmetric warfare.