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Whose Problem Is It Anyway?
The Depiction of Syrian Refugee Influx in Political Cartoons

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Political cartoons demonstrate the Syrian refugee crisis and their influx into bordering and European countries from different perspectives by using both visual and verbal metaphors in a caricaturised way. For this reason, this research aims to reveal how political cartoons represent the perilous journey of Syrian refugees and their families visually and verbally. In this regard, twelve political cartoons were selected randomly from the international political cartoon website cagle.com between March 2011 and February 2016, referencing the Syrian refugee crisis, and have been analysed in accordance with metaphorical analysis. From this point of view, as the theoretical framework, this paper uses a semiotic approach that points out the relationship between signs and meanings. Representation of the Syrian refugee crisis, the political stances of the different countries, and their perceptions as reflected in political cartoons are the focus point of this research. Results show that countries remain generally indifferent to Syrian refugee movement. In fact, they do not see the issue as their own problem, and they only consider the threats to their security and socio-economic interests posed by the influx. Moreover, Syrian refugees are represented as lonely, vulnerable and unwanted.

Introduction
Cartoon, as a visual communication tool, can express different opinions and perceptions about various subjects, such as social, political, economic, artistic and historical issues. The difference

between cartoons and other visual communication tools is that they use satire, making readers laugh as well as think. As noted by Fiske (1990: 48), "cartoons are examples of messages which attempt to convey a wealth of information by simple, direct means—they use simple signifiers for complex signifieds." Following this assumption, this paper focuses on political cartoons representing the visual and verbal image of the Syrian refugee crisis as a political, social, and cultural problem in a satirised way. From this aspect, this paper considers cartoons bearers of political thinking of the USA, neighbouring, European, and Arab countries.

The enduring conflict in Syria has entered its fifth year, and lack of a political solution, human rights violations, insecurity and abuses during this period have forced many Syrians to leave their country (OCHA, 2016). During this civil war, over 250.000 civilians have been killed and over one million have been wounded. Almost 6.5 million Syrians have been internally displaced - often multiple times - making Syria the world's largest displacement crisis. Inside Syria today, it is estimated that 4.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in hard-to-reach and besieged places. Insecurity and violence restrict humanitarian access and aid services to various parts of the country (OCHA, 2016; UNHCR, 2015).

Due to these deteriorated circumstances, Syrians – who form one of the largest refugee groups in the world – are seeking protection, safety, and better life either in neighbouring or western countries. While the largest population of Syrian refugees have fled to the neighbouring countries, such as Iraq (245,022), Egypt (117,658), Lebanon (1,069,111), Jordan (637,859), and Turkey (2,620,553) (UNHCR, 2016), thousands of Syrians are on the move to European countries.

Syrian refugees illegally enter Europe either crossing the sea or land borders.[1] They mostly travel unseaworthy boats and dinghies on the Aegean and Mediterranean seas, and distressingly, some of these journeys end in tragedy, as in the example of the dramatic death of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi (UNHCR, 2015). The number of Syrian

refugees reaching Europe is increasing day by day, and 897,645 Syrians had sought asylum in Europe between Apr 2011 and Dec 2015. This number comprises only 20 per cent of all Syrian refugees leaving their country (UNHCR, 2016). Serbia (and Kosovo: S/RES/1244 [1999]), Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Austria, the Netherlands, and Denmark are the top countries receiving asylum applications. Other European countries, such as the UK, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, and Finland, have received only 12% of the total applications (UNHCR, 2016).

Despite these increasing numbers, not all the European countries welcome Syrian refugees. On the contrary, they make serious efforts to prevent the flow of Syrian refugees. Austria, Macedonia, Hungary, and Slovenia, for example, erected fences to stop the flow of migrants (Graham-Harrison, 2015, Oct 31; Smale, 2015, Aug 24; Tomlinson, 2015, Sep 10). Bulgarian authorities also took measures to restrict access to their territory along the border with Turkey. They arrested 6,600 Syrian refugees who irregularly crossed the Bulgarian border in 2013 (UNHCR, 2014). Some newspapers carry the issue on agenda and broadcast their vulnerable position. News agencies broadcasted several incidents wherein Syrian refugees were beaten by police or soldiers when they wanted to cross the fences (Thornton, 2015, Sep 6; Withnall, 2015, Sep 6; Foster, 2016, Feb 20).

However, European populations did not pay a lot of attention to refugee crisis until the media broadcasted two events: the dead body of three-year-old Syrian boy Aylan Kurdi's, washed up on a Turkish shore after drowning on the journey, and fifty-three-year old Syrian refugee Osama Abdul Muhsen being tripped by a Hungarian camerawoman while he was carrying his son on the Hungary-Serbia border (Tharoor, 2015, Sep 3; Lister, 2015, Sep 18). These two symbolic incidents brought the situation of Syrian refugees who flee from war, poverty, persecution, conflict, and violence, to the forefront of public discourse. In addition, these two incidents highlighted the dilemma of the western countries between their hesitancy arising from security, economic, and social concerns, and their ethical responsibility toward the innocent Syrians abandoning their lives for a better life at the risk of death.

It is possible to cite more tragic incidents of the Syrian refugees trying to reach the shores of Europe. There are two main reasons why millions of Syrian refugees prefer EU countries to Arabic ones. Firstly,

although the Gulf countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are among the largest donors to Syrian refugees, these Arabic countries do not allow entry of Syrian refugees to their lands. This is not a particular concern about the Syrian refugees, but rather, none of these countries officially recognizes the legal concept of refugeehood. None of the six Gulf countries has ever signed the international resolutions on refugee rights and statelessness, which began to be recognised after World War II. The second reason is that EU countries have signed the UN Convention on refugees that grants important rights to a better life. Besides, there are some EU countries, which give legal status to refugees. To date, there is no internationally standardised comprehensive refugee policy to solve the refugee crisis, and this issue is also one of the biggest contributing factors to the crisis (Malsin, 2015, Sep 8; Kinninmont, 2015, Sep 9).

Although these issues have been addressed in the media through different mediums, such as documentaries, news programs, and in-depth researches, political cartoons have been ignored by the literature. Almost all the political process of the Syrian refugee crisis and their route to the borders of EU countries are depicted by political cartoons, especially from critical perspectives. Therefore, this research focuses on political cartoons to consider the Syrian refugee crisis from a different point of view. Political cartoons were selected randomly from cagle.com international, a political cartoon website which gives the best examples of cartoons. Political cartoons use visual metaphors to interpret the Syrian refugee crisis humorously. Political cartoons not only involve visual but also textual messages on political events presented through cultural symbols. It is an important social medium due to its multiplicity of meaning and forms (Göçek, 1998: 2). Cartoons simply explain and summarize the flow of Syrian refugees and reactions of Western and Arabic countries on social media, newspapers and magazines. They also illustrate the difficulty of the Syrian refugees' journey through both sea and land. Since political cartoons use textual and visual messages simultaneously, they are more effective in drawing the attention of societies, states, or governments to the unimaginable

situations of Syrian refugees. From this aspect, this research can make an important contribution to better understand the different perceptions on the Syrian refugee crisis, as well as fill the gap in the literature in terms of the analysis of political cartoons as a different way of expressing political criticism.

Consequently, this paper aims to contribute to the existing literature in four ways. Firstly, it helps to understand the Syrian refugee crisis. Secondly, it shows clearly how Syrian refugees are represented visually in political cartoons. Thirdly, it illustrates the response of countries to the refugee problem. Lastly, it also draws attention to the global refugee crisis and the circumstances of asylum seekers.

Cartoons as bearers of political thought
Political cartoons are a satiric source of information and truth about universal and local events. They are usually thought-provoking and attempt to inform the viewer about a current issue. With their messages, they touch the conscience and emotions of readers and inform them of what is going on around them. Because they are also a voice for the disenfranchised and the underdog, they have power to sway public opinion (Press, 1981: 62; Neighbor et al., 2003).

Political cartoons represent the visual and verbal image of political, social, and cultural problems or events through satire. The verbal and visual messages of cartoons try to convey a wealth of information by simple, direct means, using simple signifiers for complex signifieds (Fiske, 1990: 48). Because of the multiplicity of meaning and forms embedded within their visual and verbal messages, political cartoons are a significant social medium (Göçek, 1998: 2), a social medium that carries its messages with signs such as index, symbol, and icon. These signs are methods of creating meaning for political cartoons. In an icon, for example, the sign looks and sounds like its object. In the case of index, the sign and its object are directly connected with each other. It is simple to explain icon and index with examples. A photograph, for instance, is an icon; smoke is an index

of fire. Regarding symbol, it is a sign whose relation with its object is a matter of convention, agreement, or rule (Fiske, 1990: 46). A good coat, for example, protects its owner from cold, rain or snow. However, wearing an expensive well-known brand is a sign of wealth, identity, social status, social approval, and fashion.

Besides icon, index, and symbol, political cartoons also use metaphors to create agenda on political issues sarcastically. Metaphors mainly use visual mode to transmit meaning through humor. They visually or verbally summarise the social, cultural or political issues (El Refaie, 2009: 174). Thus, political cartoons, which are published in the editorial or comments pages of a newspaper, are a rich source of metaphors (Gamson and Lasch, 1983: 399; Templin, 1999; El Refaie, 2009: 174-175). However, caricaturists must be cautious about their visual and verbal metaphors, so as not to offend other nationalities. Beliefs, cultures, religions, customs, or traditions, are the sensibilities of nations or persons. For this reason, caricaturists ought to think from different cultural perspectives when drawing metaphors.[2]

Political cartoons are a form of visual news discourse. It is through comedic conventions that cartoons seize upon and reinforce common sense, and thus enable the public to actively classify, organize and interpret meaning in what they see or experience about the world at a given moment. This study examines political cartoons as a form of satirical journalism and a type of visual opinion news discourse, and theorizes on the role of cartoons in the construction of social problems. Political cartoons offer newsreaders condensed claims or mini-narratives about putative "problem" conditions and draw upon, and reinforce, taken-for-granted meanings. By doing so, political cartoons provide metalanguage for discourse about the social order by constructing idealizations of the world, positioning readers within a discursive context of "meaning-making", and offering readers a tool for deliberating on present conditions. Cartoons "frame" phenomena by situating the "problem" in question

within the context of everyday life and, in this way, exploit "universal values" as a means of persuading readers to identify with an image and its intended message (Greenberg, 2002).

Metaphors

Visual metaphor, "as the pictorial expression of a metaphorical way of thinking" (El Refaie, 2003: 75), is the representation of an image or idea through a visual image that bears a particular similarity or resemblance. This similarity between the images can be cognitive as well as physical. From that aspect, visual metaphor uses images or symbols to express the cartoonist's argument. Therefore, some researchers mention them as works of art (Green, 1985; Serig, 2006). For example, visual arts such as drawing, painting, printmaking, design, crafts, ceramics, cartoons, ballet, photography, sculpture, filmmaking, and architecture, are based on non-verbal metaphors (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 107). All these are visual metaphors that employ visual images to express the ideas and emotions of the artists (Carroll 1994: 190). Political cartoon also uses visual metaphors as representations of thoughts, critiques, and opinions. Besides, it is possible to support visual metaphors by using explanatory texts or dialogues. Therefore, it is a part of visual communication, which carries visual knowledge about social, political, and cultural issues. Thus, metaphors must be evaluated within their socio-political context (El Refaie, 2003: 75).

According to the researchers, describing metaphor as visual, pictorial or non-verbal (Hausman, 1989; El Refaie, 2003; Knowles and Moon, 2006: 109, 117; Serig, 2006), verbal concepts are expressed through pictorial metaphors in political cartoons. Using metaphors is also important in speech and writing to explain, simplify, define, express, estimate and entertain topics. Therefore, cartoonists use verbal metaphors to express what they think or how they feel about issues, or to convey a meaning in a stronger, more exciting and more imaginative way (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 3). As Swain (2012: 86) states, verbal texts of cartoons may include "captions, in-text labels, signs, placards,

speech or thought bubbles – rarely consist of more than two clauses, and sometimes of a single word, but are essential to the cartoon's evaluative coherence." For example, fox in literal meaning is an animal, but its metaphorical meaning is a cunning or wily person. While literal meaning here is the most basic meaning, metaphor is considered as non-literal language that involves some kind of comparison, identification, or cognitive assumptions (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 5).

Cognitive framework regarding metaphors depends on the embodied human experience (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). According to Conceptual Metaphor Theory, interpretation and perception of metaphor depend in part upon the participants' social, cultural, political, and educational background (El Refaie, 2003: 173). Therefore, both visual and verbal metaphors are decoded in the context of human experience (Yus, 2009: 148). For this reason, political cartoonists must be very careful about the intended metaphorical interpretation of the cartoon. Universal metaphors are appropriate examples for inferential phase of readers (El Refaie 2003: 81).

Since political cartoons are rich sources of metaphors (Gombrich, 1971; Gamson and Lasch, 1983: 399), metaphor analysis is used to answer the research question. Metaphor analysis is one of the interpretive research methods (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2006: xix) used to analyse political cartoons. According to Fiske (1990: 92), metaphor is used to express the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. It is a way of explaining, describing, and evaluating abstract and otherwise difficult concepts (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 48). In this research, twelve political cartoons were selected randomly from cagle.com, an international political cartoon website, between March 2011 to February 2016, which present different aspects and perceptions about the issue of the Syrian refugee crisis.

The main research question of the paper is how political cartoons represent the Syrian refugee crisis and the influx of refugees into bordering, Arab, and western countries. As noted earlier, verbal and visual metaphors are important parts of social

and political context. Analysis of these representations thus illustrates social and political perceptions of the international society as well. To maintain analytic integrity and systematic analysis, cartoons are analysed according to these thematic headlines: "Syrian refugee influx to border countries", "EU response to refugees", "U.S. response to Syrian refugees", and "The Gulf countries' response to Syrian refugees".

Syrian refugee influx into border countries

This dramatic refugee crisis changed agendas, topics, and headlines of the media. It also became an important issue in political cartoons. Cartoons have great importance for framing phenomena by situating the problem in a visual and verbal context. They also persuade readers to identify with a visual image and its intended verbal message (Greenberg, 2002: 182). Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, more than four million Syrian refugees have been forced to flee their homes for safety and protection. The majority of Syrian refugees have fled into bordering countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon.

The refugee influx has caused important demographic changes in these neighbouring countries. With the increasing number of refugees, various problems have emerged, such as education, healthcare, accommodation, employment, and sustainable sources for the other necessities of these people. Without any systematic and sustainable political solution for the crisis, these countries have tried to implement new measures to alleviate the burden on their economies (Balsari et al., 2015: 942). Although international organizations, and other countries individually, have supported these efforts of the neighbouring countries, the social and ethical responsibilities toward, as well as the economic burdens of, these refugees far outweigh the assistances.

This situation is illustrated in political cartoons with the visual metaphor of giant waves caused by a flood. From this aspect, the Syrian refugee influx is likened to a natural disaster, abrupt and destructive (Figure-2). This metaphoric expression relies on

two different meanings of 'influx'. According to Collins Dictionary (2016), the first meaning of the word is "the arrival or entry of many people or things." Another meaning of influx is the act of flowing in; inflow. From this perspective, in the cartoons, the idea that the danger and risk of the influx is far beyond the capacity and capabilities of the neighbouring countries is illustrated with this visual metaphor.

Figure-1 Syrian Refugees (Nath, 2013)

Figure-2 Syrian Refugee Flow (Nath, 2012)

In Figure-1, Nath features Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and humanitarian agencies, solicitously lifting up their hands to stop the Syrian refugee wave exceeding the wall. The wall implies the borders of the countries. Representatives of Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon stand in knee-deep water. The standing water metaphorically implies the Syrian refugees who were already hosted by the bordering countries. The wave metaphor represents the serious danger of Syrian refugee flow. At the beginning of the civil war in Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon were the first countries to take on the burden of Syrian refugees. The insolvable Syrian crisis leads to more Syrian refugee influx to bordering countries. Thus, the pressure and financial burden of the refugees has increased upon neighbouring countries. While Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon's representatives are in black clothing, Jordan's representative is in dark blue. Colours

are one of important elements of visual metaphor for conveying meaning to readers (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 112). The reason for dark blue colour is that Jordan already provides shelter to a large number of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan. Jordan has a history of taking in refugees especially from Palestine. Thus, Jordan is used to refugees but now Syrians constitute the majority of Jordan's refugee population, according to the United Nations (Martinez, 2015 Sep 10).

International aid organizations and humanitarian agencies are represented as inadequate to maintain necessary conditions for the refugees in political cartoons. The intensity and speed of the rising influx is beyond their capabilities. In addition, the bureaucratic mechanisms of these institutions also prevented them from reacting effectively to the need. As illustrated in Figure-1, humanitarian agencies also feel the same anxiety with the bordering countries – the representative stands with a to-do-list or a document in his hand.

Figure-3 Syrian Refugee (Nath, 2014)

In Figure-3, the attitude and the level of international support are illustrated through stronger visual metaphors. Figure-3 symbolizes the refugee crisis as a giant male refugee with a sad face sitting on an UNHCR desk. Behind the desk, a comparatively small man talking on the phone says that the situation is under control, without realizing the greatness of the problem. The cartoonist uses colour to express different meanings, similarly to the previous cartoons. The dark colour of the refugee

illustrates the unpleasant and risky situation created by the influx. Patches on his pants and ripped shoes signify the poor condition of Syrian refugees. Heavy boxes next to giant man imply the burden of the Syrian refugee crisis. The small desk also symbolizes the inadequate efforts of the UNHCR.

In the political cartoons that illustrate the Syrian refugee influx to border countries, cartoonists use natural disasters as a metaphor to signify the seriousness of the refugee crisis. By using a flood to illustrate the flow of refugees, they emphasise the danger that affects neighbouring countries. The dark colours of the cartoons also reflect the hopeless situation of the refugees. These cartoons illustrate the lack of comprehension and preparedness of institutions of international support for this human suffering by using international agencies and humanitarian organisations as important figures.

EU response to refugees
According to UNHCR spokesperson Adrian Edwards (2015), there are seven factors that can explain why Syrian refugees are fleeing to Europe. Loss of hope for a solution in Syria, high costs of living and deepening poverty, limited livelihood opportunities, aid shortfalls, hurdles to renew legal residency, scant education opportunities, and deteriorating security situation in the region comprise Edwards's seven factors leading the refugees to seek better opportunities in European countries. Respect for human rights, good living conditions, opportunities, and respect for international law on asylum seekers, are a few of the benefits refugees expect to find in Europe. However, the increasing influx creates big anxieties for European countries. According to political cartoons, security, social, and economic aspects are the main points that create hesitancies among European governments towards Syrian refugees. To prevent the influx, European countries have tried to take some precautions. Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria and Macedonia built fences to prevent the refugee flow. Refugees were even beaten and treated badly by the police and border guards of these countries.

Figure-4 Pure Wool European Flag (Kountouris, 2016)

As seen in Figure-4, the exclusivist attitude of the European countries is symbolized with the physical obstacles such as barbed wires in political cartoon. In Figure-4, Kountouris uses dry humour to present the attitude of the European Union. He employs visual metaphors between the texture and fabric of the European Union flag, and their exclusionist manner illustrated by the wool-care label. The label indicates that the fabric is made from barbed wire. According to Kountoris's idea, this exclusionist behaviour of the EU is a characteristic of the Union more than an attitude.

Figure-5 Merkel and Refugees (Janssen, 2015a)

The political cartoons representing the attitude of European countries often use the image of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to illustrate the discussion about whether European countries should accept Syrian refugees or not. In most of the cartoons, cartoonists picture the Chancellor in her red jacket. As an idea, in the uniform and dark nature of the European bureaucratic society, Merkel's red jacket can be evaluated as a contradiction to the general attitude of the bureaucratic society. In Figure-5, Merkel is portrayed as unable to find any supporters for her positive attitude towards the refugee influx. All male politicians in dark suits are fleeing from Merkel's suggestion.

Figure-6 Hungarian Journalism (Kamensky, 2015)

Besides these cartoons, there are different cartoons presenting why European countries are afraid of refugee influx. Figure-6 considers the reason as xenophobia. There are two flags represented in the cartoon; one is that of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the other one is Hungarian. Flags are one of the most common realizations of visual metaphors (Knowles and Moon, 2006: 112). The political cartoon portrays the unfortunate incident when the Hungarian camerawoman tripped a male Syrian refugee with his son fleeing from police at refugee collection point. In the cartoon ISIL terrorists in black with knifes chase Syrian refugee man with his son on one side, and he is stopped by the Hungarian government symbolised by the camerawoman on the other side. "Tripping" implies the attitude of Hungary. The Hungarian government took some precautions to stop the Syrian refugees. First, it blocked its border with Serbia and built wire fence at the border to prevent the refugee influx. The Hungarian police arrested and prosecuted the refugees for committing illegal border crossing. The first refugee has been deported after a very fast trial and could not apply for asylum (Green, 2015). These security considerations caused by the refugee influx increased especially after the Paris terror attack on the evening of 13 November 2015. As French Prime Minister Manuel Valls (2015) mentions, the European bureaucrats think that "some of the suspects in the Paris attacks took advantage of Europe's migrant crisis to 'slip in' unnoticed."

The political cartoons generally criticise EU responses to the refugee crisis. The exclusionist manner of EU countries is one of the important criticisms emphasised in the cartoons. Barbed wires and the Hungarian camera woman are the most widely used symbols of the cartoons. Another symbol is German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who had a bit more positive attitude to Syrian refugees. However, Merkel has been criticised by other European bureaucrats due to her positive attitude, as illustrated in the cartoons.

The U.S. response to Syrian refugees
The United States has also had a similar political attitude to Europe towards Syrian refugees. However, in the USA, the debate is between two different political parties. One side of the debate, consisting of the Democrats and other progressives, welcomes the refugees; however, most Republicans demonstrate a strict opposition to the idea.

Figure-7 The Fear of War Refugees (Matson, 2015)

Figure-7 another important visual metaphor to express the attitude in the USA is the Statue of Liberty. The statue is an icon of freedom and democracy in the country, and has historically been a welcoming sight to immigrants arriving from abroad. In the political cartoons, the Statue is typically used to highlight the contradiction of the Republican's attitude with the soul of the country as a place offering immigrants freedom and peace throughout history, since America is a country founded by immigrants.

Figure-7 demonstrates American people holding banners which include expressions against refugees such as 'war refugees go home', 'keep out', 'terrorists not admitted', and 'no Syrians'. Matson uses the Statue as a visual metaphor to illustrate tolerance and a positive attitude towards the refugees. Moreover, he puts a teardrop on her cheek to emphasise the contradiction between the political attitude and the meaning embodied by the

Statue. Other important details in the cartoon are a rope for execution hanging on the crown and pitchforks in their hands that symbolize hatred.
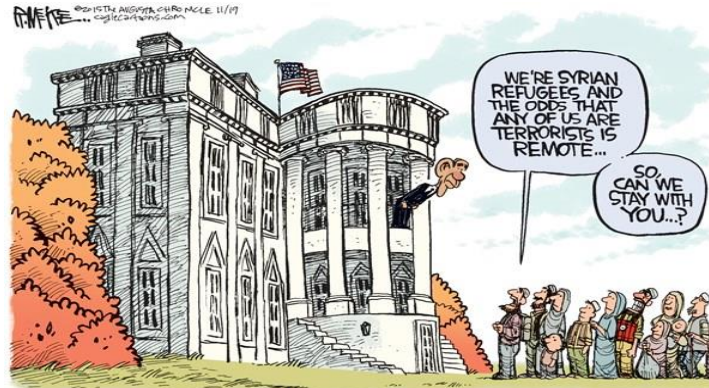

Figure-8 Syrian Refugees (McKee, 2015)

President Obama is also another popular figure in the cartoons. Figure-8, McKee's political cartoon with the topic "Syrian Refugees", represents the migration of Syrian refugee families to the USA. President Obama looks from the window of the Whitehouse to see the Syrian refugees. One Syrian refugee man appeals to Obama: *"*We're Syrian refugees and the odds that any of us are terrorists is remote… So, can we stay with you?"

Figure-9 Local Utah Governor Herbert (Bagley, 2015)

The Syrian refugee wants to say to Obama that he and the other refugees standing behind him are not terrorists, and they desire to obtain asylum in the USA. For this reason, Syrian refugees are waiting in front of the Whitehouse to get help from Obama as he said he is planning to resettle 10,000 Syrian refugees (Healy and Bosman, 2015, Nov 16).

But, despite President Obama's positive attitude, more than half of the nation's governors (Grand Old Party is a nickname of Republican Party) say Syrian refugees are not welcome into their states. As shown in Figure-9, Alyan Kurdi is a common metaphor to illustrate the tragedy of the innocent Syrian refugees. With the exception of Utah Governor Gary Herbert, all the Republican-led states agreed to close their borders to Syrian refugees. Since the Syrian conflict began, Utah has resettled 12 Syrian refugees, from two families. The State of Utah expects to receive a few hundred more Syrian refugees between March and October (Canham, 2015, Nov 16). On the other side, Figure-9 shows that Republican-led states do not see the Syrian refugee crisis as their own problem. As shoe prints seen in the cartoon show that they just passed by the dead body of Aylan Kurdi, even saying: 'C'mon Gary. Not our Problem' when he was looking sadly to lifeless body washed up on the Turkish shore. The Statue of Liberty symbol on the left top of the cartoon implies freedom and U.S. democracy, which is assumed to have a positive attitude towards the migrants as a migrant country. Thousands of Syrian refugees arrive to the country of freedom and democracy to seek asylum. But their arrival is not welcomed in many parts of the USA.

The cartoons illustrate the U.S. response to the refugee crises by emphasising an important contradiction between the feature of the country as a refugee country and negative attitudes among politicians. In the cartoons, the American politicians try to isolate their country from the refugee crisis. The Statue of Liberty is a common symbol used in the cartoons. Security risks that might be posed by Syrian refugees are another important subject of the cartoons.

Gulf countries' response to Syrian refugees

Persian Gulf countries, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have been criticised for not opening borders to Syrian refugees. Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees is one of underlying reasons for this situation. According to the Convention (UNHCR, 2010: 14) relating to the status of refugees, a refugee is defined as:

> A person owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

Figure- 10 Not our problem (Englehart, 2015)

Gulf countries were not among the twenty-six states who signed the protocol. Thus, Syrian refugees in these countries are not formally registered as "refugees", but rather as "guests", or "workers". Therefore refugees do not receive protection, support, or the possibility for citizenship within the Gulf countries. Figure-10, Englehart's political cartoon with the title "Not our

problem," reflects the attitude of Gulf countries towards Syrian refugees. Gulf countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates turn their back to Aylan Kurdi's lifeless body on the shore. Saudi Arabia's representative says: "Not our problem." Gulf countries have been criticised for tepidness, inaction, and unconcerned responses to Syrian refugee crisis.

Figure-11 Arab Refugee Response (Heller, 2015)

The same tepid situation of the Gulf countries is portrayed in Figure-11, as a representative of the U.S., illustrated as Uncle Sam, asks Gulf States: "Why aren't you Arab countries taking in those poor Syrian refugees?" Saudi Arabia, represented as spokesperson of the Gulf counties, replies in Spanish: "*Ahhh… No hablo Ingle*s?" (I don't speak English). In sum, both the USA and the Gulf countries are recriminating each other with different languages. It implies their ignorance of the refugee crisis. At the same time, in the figure, gunny sacks in front of all the Gulf countries signify their wealth and richness with the dollar symbol on them. Their black sunglasses are the sign of their blindness to the refugee crisis. Additionally, the cartoonist illustrates the Arab man speaking in Spanish as a reference to the US attitude to asylum claims from Mexico.

Figure-12 Wealthy Arab States Refuse Refugees
(Zanetti, 2015)

A few cartoons related to the attitudes of Arab countries use similar metaphors within previous cartoons to illustrate European and US attitudes. For instance, in Figure-12, Zanetti pictures a golden Arab male statue as a reference to the Statue of Liberty. However, this statue reflects the negative attitude of the Arab countries; he is a wealthy male figure holding a sack with the dollar sign on it differently from the Statue of Liberty. The text above the cartoon also refers to the New Colossus, but instead of welcoming migrants, it emphasizes wealth as a criterion for acceptance. In addition, there is a western male figure holding a female refugee with her baby in his arms in the cartoon. The western male figure brings the refugees to the Arab countries, but a typical Arab male figure similar to the statue refuses the refugees since they do not fit their wealth criteria. The Arab male figure's fat body also illustrates the wealth of the Arab Gulf countries.

In the last group of the political cartoons, the cartoonists illustrate the political decisions of the Gulf Countries which reject Syrian refugees, although they are the neighbours of Syria. In these cartoons, these Arab countries are illustrated as wealthy and selfish people besides the poor and in-need Syrian refugees.

In addition, there is a similarity between the negligent attitude of American politicians, and the Arab countries in the cartoons.

 Conclusion

The twelve political cartoons, analysed here, are addressing the Syrian refugee influx to bordering, Arab, and western countries, and their responses to refugee crisis. After the conflict in Syria, thousands of refugees have fled into neighbouring countries. At the beginning, the Syrian refugee problem was seen as the problem of bordering countries. Then, the Syrian refugee crisis became the main topic in the agenda of the international society, with the huge influx of Syrian refugees into EU countries to seek asylum.

There were three top topics discussed in mass media. Firstly, how it is possible to stop the Syrian refugee flow into Europe. Secondly, their perilous journey by the Mediterranean Sea and the Eastern border route after the image of Aylan Kurdi's dead body washed up on a shore spread throughout the world, and the Syrian refugee who was tripped while carrying his son by a Hungarian camerawoman on the border, carried on the agenda. After these sad events, some EU countries gave asylum to hundreds of Syrian refugees. These incidents, which were used as symbols in political cartoons, caused deep debates on the ethical responsibility of the global community toward these human sufferings, and the social, economic, and political threats posed by the influx in Europe as well as in the USA. Thirdly, which country should take the responsibility of the Syrian crisis?

Due to the security concerns, and their 'guest' status in the Gulf countries, the USA, the EU, and Gulf countries, do not see the Syrian refugee crisis as their own problem. Countries visually and verbally depicted as insusceptible and irrelevant to Syrian refugee movement in political cartoons. Syrian refugees were depicted as masses, lonely, vulnerable, unwanted, and otherwise. For instance, in the political cartoons that illustrate Syrian refugee influx to border countries, cartoonists use natural disasters as a metaphor to signify the seriousness of the refugee

crisis. Instead of their suffering, the dangerous consequences of the refugee crises are emphasised in these cartoons. The dark colours of these cartoons also illustrate the negative attitude towards the refugees.

The research has analysed different cartoons to reveal the attitudes of different countries and regions. Despite the socio-cultural differences, cartoonists use similar metaphors to illustrate similar ideas. For instance, the barbed-wire metaphor is used as a symbol of the exclusionist attitude of all countries. Wave and flood figures are also commonly used in cartoons to illustrate the dangerous and destructive characteristics of the refugee influx. In addition, use of colours to express attitudes is similar in the cartoons. Thus, as cited earlier, dark colours generally symbolize negative attitudes. However, cartoonists use specific metaphors related to the different cultural, political and social contexts of the countries. For instance, in the cartoons illustrating the attitude of the USA, political figures such as White House and the Statue of Liberty are specific metaphors that cannot be understood by the audience who are not familiar with the context in the country. Metaphors gain special meanings and can be better understood within the social and political contexts of different countries.

Political cartoons illustrating different attitudes criticise the current situation, but the number of cartoons offering solutions to these human sufferings is limited. As an example, one of the most viable solutions for the refugee crisis is to enable a peaceful end for the tragic civil war in the country that evolved into a proxy war between different countries, ethnic groups and religious sects. The main driver of the influx is that these people do not have a proper life in their countries. In this regard, further analyses that evaluate these issues through the political cartoons in terms of visual and verbal metaphors should be done for a better understanding of different aspects of the Syrian refugee crisis. Analysis of political cartoons combining political science and communication literature is one of most appropriate plat-

forms to make comprehensive analysis of the contemporary matters of the international society. Thus, these studies can help people better understand each other's opinions and perceptions as well as their feelings.

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Endnotes

[1] There are six main migratory routes that Syrian refugees are using to enter the European countries. These are Eastern border routes (*long land border between Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and its eastern Member States such as Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania and Slovakia*), Eastern Mediterranean route (*from Turkey, Greece, southern Bulgaria or Cyprus*), Western Balkan route, Apulia and Calabria route (*from Turkey, Greece and Egypt*), central Mediterranean route (*from Northern Africa towards Italy and Malta through the Mediterranean Sea*) and Western Mediterranean route (*from North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the land route through Ceuta and Melilla*), according to Frontex. (2016, Jan 26) Migratory Routes Map.

[2] For instance, cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad published in several western newspapers have caused outrage among some Muslims in different incident such as the Charli Hebdo, the French satiric magazine which has been the target of two terrorist attacks, in 2011 and 2015 due to controversial Prophet Muhammad cartoons. For further examples, please see; Asser M. (2010) *What the Muhammad cartoons portray*. Available at:
 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4693292.stm.