Impact of Visa Regimes over Travel Decisions and Patterns of Turkish Citizens (Erhan Doğan)

Since 1980s travel of Turkish nationals to European countries has been restricted via visa regimes due to the reasons mainly related with migration control. These restrictions and new regulations combined with the arbitrary and tiring practices of visa granting consular units led to many problems and have concrete impacts and effects for Turkish citizens. It is these effects that motivated the designation of this project.

One can group these influences in two separate categories. The first category consists of mainly the impacts of these regulations and practices over the flows and human mobility. Have visa procedures and practices led to a decrease in the number of Turkish nationals who travel Europe and have they led to some much more structural changes over the travel patterns and behavior of Turkish citizens, are the questions that can be asked from within this first category. Second category is about the socio-political impact of these policies. As it is known Turkey is an acceding state to the European Union. It is the only country which signed a customs union agreement with the Union without being a full member. In these circumstances the visa creates a lot of repercussions over the functioning of this relationship between Turkey and the Union. The visa influences dynamics of Turkey-EU relations as it creates an unfair competition between the European and Turkish traders and as it makes the accession process, cultural and social integration slower. Another indirect impact of the visa is related with the increasing Europhobia and nationalism. The visa itself would be one of the reason of increasing Europhobia and nationalism in Turkey.

So this study will first try to discover the direct concrete effects of the visa. The questions here are: Is there a decrease in the number of Turkish nationals visiting Europe, and is there any change on travel patterns of Turkish citizens? Then, the study will focus on the indirect effects of visa which is observable in the form of Europhobia and nationalism.