

MIGRATION DIPLOMACY AS A FOREIGN POLICY TOOL IN TÜRKİYE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *A concept as old as human history, migration has almost always affected and changed social dynamics including but not limited to social, political and economic mechanisms. Indeed, Türkiye has been no exception. Serving as both the source and destination as well as the transit country for various groups of migrants, Türkiye has always been affected and experienced tremendous changes by the impact of migration waves. Indeed, Türkiye has been striving to use the phenomenon of migration as a foreign policy tool in the face of mass migrations in the international system. Accordingly, this study is designed to explore and discuss migration policies, the historical development of migration and the migration policy Türkiye has been implementing in recent times. In that, migration diplomacy is first discussed, followed by an in-depth analysis of Türkiye's migration diplomacy practices using the method of comparative analysis. The main research question is to inquire whether Türkiye has a solid migration diplomacy and, if so, the extent to which it is successful.*

Keywords: *Migration, Migration Diplomacy, Türkiye, Foreign Policy, Soft Power.*

Rezumat: *Diplomația migrației și politica externă a Turciei. Migrația, un concept la fel de vechi precum istoria umanității, a fost un element ce afectează și schimbă societatea în toate domeniile sale, în special social, politic și economic, în aproape fiecare perioadă de timp. În mod firesc, această situație a afectat și Turcia. Politica și practicile de migrație ale Turciei, care a fost o țară sursă, țară de destinație și țară de tranzit pentru imigranți în fiecare perioadă a istoriei, s-au schimbat de-a lungul timpului. Turcia a încercat să folosească migrația ca instrument de politică externă în fața migrațiilor în*

masă din țările componente ale sistemului internațional. În acest studiu sunt analizate ce este politica de imigrație, evoluția sa istorică și politica de imigrație a Turciei. Studiul, bazat preponderent pe metoda comparativă, prezintă și analizează diplomația imigrației și, totodată, pune în evidență practicile Turciei în acest domeniu. Principala interogație a studiului este dacă Turcia are o veritabilă diplomație a imigrației și, dacă răspunsul este pozitiv, cât de reușită este aceasta.

INTRODUCTION

Defined as the displacement of people from one place to another, migration is a concept as old as human history. Security concerns, political unrest, and economic factors stand out among the many causes of migration that have been present in practically every historical age. In this respect, migration affects the source and the destination country as well as the transit routes in many positive and negative ways.¹

Since migration leads to multidimensional impacts, it has been a multidisciplinary field of study and a major instrument used by states in their foreign policies, leading the way for the emergence of migration diplomacy practices in the international system over time.²

Actors in the international system use migration as a diplomatic tool in line with their foreign policy interests and strive to shape the international system, especially in periods when international migration is intense. Besides, states use migration diplomacy as a foreign policy tool to manage and canalize the movement of people across borders. Considered a sub-branch of public diplomacy, in this sense, migration diplomacy is a key issue for states with complex ties and relations with numerous actors in different fields.³

In this context, migration diplomacy aims to explore how global migration movements affect the international system. On the other hand, state interests, geo-political positions, and capacities also affect the migration diplomacy of target, source and transit countries. For example, the US is considered a target

¹ Emre Çıtak, *Migration and Securitization: An Assessment in the Context of Human Security*, in "Journal of Management and Economics Research", 2020, Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 2.

² Iver B. Neumann, *Diplomatic Sites. A Critical Enquiry*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 28.

³ Froilan T. Malit, Gerasimos Tsourapas, *Migration diplomacy in the Gulf – non-state actors, cross-border mobility, and the United Arab Emirates*, in "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies", Vol. 47, 2021, No. 11, p. 2560.

country for migration moves, and it has been applying migration diplomacy to prevent asylum seekers from reaching its southern borders. This was particularly the case during the term of former President Trump when several source countries such as India strove to conduct diplomacy to protect the welfare of their citizens abroad.⁴

In the context of Türkiye, this country is considered a transit country for migration waves. Türkiye has been implementing migration diplomacy based on a humanitarian understanding since the outbreak of the mass migration after the Syrian civil war starting in 2011. Thus, Türkiye has built close relations with the European Union (EU) on this issue, and the EU has promised Türkiye financial aid and visa exemption in the fight against illegal migration. However, the EU has not met these promises made to Türkiye and in turn, Türkiye has started to use migration diplomacy as an instrument to push the EU to fulfil its promises by threatening to open its borders to the outflow of migrant groups in its country to flee to Europe.⁵

Comprising three chapters, this study analyses Türkiye's migration diplomacy and its effects on Turkish Foreign Policy. The first chapter introduces the concept of migration diplomacy with an in-depth definition and its ramifications; the second chapter dwells upon the evolution of Türkiye's migration diplomacy in the context of legal regulations; and finally, the third chapter discusses Türkiye's migration diplomacy practices by a comparative method. The main element of the comparative method used in this research is the nature of politics that varies according to the Turkish diaspora in Europe and the immigrants in Türkiye. Different immigrant groups allow Türkiye to use its migration and public diplomacy in different ways, increasing its overall political manoeuvrability.

MIGRATION DIPLOMACY

Migration, a concept as old as human history, is an important element that significantly influences, changes, and shapes decisions in the international system ranging from education to health, from culture to security. Through multilateral strategies, including the promotion or deterrence of bilateral migration flows,

⁴ Ibrahim İrdem, Yavor Raychev, *Syrian Mass Migration in the 2015 EU Refugee Crisis: A Hybrid Threat or Chance for Implementing Migration Diplomacy?*, in "Insight Turkey", Vol. 23, 2021, No. 2, p. 240.

⁵ Ahmet İçduygu, Damla B. Aksel, *Turkish Migration Policies: A Critical Historical Retrospective*, in "Perceptions", Vol. 18, 2013, No. 3, p. 174.

migration has constituted an increasingly important area of states' relations with each other. Its deep impact on many areas has caused many actors to pay more attention to migration. So much so, states have used migration as an important tool in their foreign policies, leading to the emergence of migration diplomacy.⁶

Migration diplomacy includes some intergovernmental agreements that limit or promote migration movements to achieve various goals and develop certain strategies. For example, it can enable the extension of preferential treatment for certain foreign nationals or the use of diplomatic tools, processes, and procedures to manage cross-border population mobility, such as establishing plans for the immigration of guest workers or other temporary workers.⁷ Besides, migration causes diplomatic interactions between states.⁸ In this sense, the migration diplomacy of states is affected in part by their interests and bargaining positions against other states depending on whether they receive immigrants, send them, or transit to other countries.⁹

Similarly, migration diplomacy is often shaped by the power and interest relationship between states, just like in classical diplomacy. Beyond the military and economic capacity, the geopolitical position of a state also determines the strategy for migration diplomacy. In this sense, migration diplomacy offers a way to understand how global migration flows affect international relations.¹⁰ As reflected in the practices of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), migration diplomacy manifests that states can gain interests or empower their bargaining position against others depending on whether they are a source, destination or transit country. In return, this situation has urged states to engage in diplomacy.¹¹

With the increasing number of migrants across the world, migration has become an important dimension in the diplomatic relations of states as well as

⁶ Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate. The United States and Refugees during the Cold War*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 18.

⁷ Fiona B. Adamson, Gerasimos Tsourapas, *Migration Diplomacy in World Politics*, in "International Studies Perspectives", Vol. 20, 2019, p. 115.

⁸ John Torpey, *Coming and Going: On the State Monopolization of the Legitimate Means of Movement*, in "Sociological Theory", Vol. 16, 1998, No. 3, p. 242.

⁹ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 21.

¹⁰ Maria Koinova, Gerasimos Tsourapas, *How Do Countries of Origin Engage Migrants and Diasporas? Multiple Actors and Comparative Perspectives*, in "International Political Science Review", Vol. 39, 2018, No. 3, p. 315.

¹¹ Monica Duffy Toft, *The Myth of the Borderless World: Refugees and Repatriation Policy*, in "Conflict Management and Peace Science", Vol. 24, 2007, No. 2, p. 144.

one of the basic elements in foreign policy strategies. In other words, states use diplomatic tools and procedures to manage international migration through migration diplomacy. Regarded as a significant sub-element of a state's public diplomacy, migration diplomacy plays a crucial role in states' bargaining strategies in the international migration process. Through migration diplomacy, some states focus on absolute gains by developing a zero-sum and confrontational strategy against others. In this way, states choose either a relative gain or a positive-sum bargaining strategy.¹²

In the historical context, one can find the first examples of migration diplomacy in the 16th century. More specifically, after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire in 1453, Europe started to seek new ways to control the Silk and Spice Routes as major trade routes coming along with the Geographical Discoveries. Thanks to the discovery of new places and new trade routes, Europe prospered economically with the transportation of precious metals from the newly-discovered lands to Europe, reaching the Renaissance and Reform movements in Europe. Indeed, during this process, European states forcibly displaced those they thought would disrupt the order, especially in political and religious terms.¹³

In this regard, the Industrial Revolution commencing in the 18th century brought about mass production while rapidly increasing migration from the countryside to cities. In that case, European states had to search for new raw materials, markets and labour force. Thus, colonial states enabled people to migrate to Europe to work as slaves from Africa for commercial reasons.¹⁴

With the French Revolution in 1789, nationalism emerged and laid the groundwork for the emergence of nation-states, ending up with the dissolution of multinational empires. After the French Revolution, the opponents fled to the states opposing the revolution and they played an important role in the coalition wars against France. In this period, the border controls of the states were more flexible and travel without passports made migration easier.¹⁵

Another major development that affected migration movements in the

¹² James F. Hollifield, *The Emerging Migration State*, in "International Migration Review", Vol. 38, 2006, No. 3, p. 892.

¹³ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Geneva, Refuge and Migrations (16th-17th Centuries)*. Foreword, in "Revue de l'histoire des religions", Vol. 1, 2015, p. 5-8.

¹⁴ Davut Ateş, *Industrial Revolution: Impetus Behind the Globalization Process*, in "Journal of Management and Economics", Vol. 15, 2008, No. 2, p. 37.

¹⁵ Kirsty Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution: Emigres in London 1789-1802*, New York, Macmillan Press, 1999, p. 25.

world was, as one can easily assume, World War I. The increase in the number of migrants during and after the war turned migration into a security problem. Furthermore, the conflicts exacerbated this problem all around the world. Besides, the civil war in Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 accelerated migration to Europe, leading to a significant refugee crisis. Western states accepted people fleeing Russia into their own countries and used them as an important propaganda tool, especially during the Cold War.¹⁶

Indeed, during and after World War I, about 1.5 million people emigrated, and most remained stateless and without legal status. At the end of the war, the League of Nations (LN) was consulted to solve this problem. The LN considered those people as a group that faced persecution and was deprived of state protection.¹⁷ In addition, the world acknowledged refugees' lack of identifying documents thanks to the effort of Fridtjof Nansen, the first High Commissioner for Refugees of the LN. As a result, the Nansen Passport was presented to eliminate this deficiency. This document was the first legal document to ensure the protection of refugees in the international area.¹⁸ However, Adolf Hitler's coming to power in Germany in 1933 and his policies against Jews proved that the LN had failed in its policies. As a consequence, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was then established to deal more closely with refugees. However, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 led to the LN being questioned again.¹⁹ With the outbreak of World War II triggered by the invasion of Poland by the Soviet Union and Germany in 1939, approximately 85 million people were forced to emigrate from their countries. As the number of immigrants increased, this issue was taken more seriously by states.²⁰

After World War II, the mandate of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees was expanded. Besides, the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administra-

¹⁶ Delia Rahmonova-Schwarz, *Migrations during the Soviet Period and in the Early Years of USSR's Dissolution: A Focus on Central Asia*, in "Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales", Vol. 26, 2010, No. 3, p. 15.

¹⁷ Christoph Rass, Ismee Tames, *Negotiating the Aftermath of Forced Migration: A View from the Intersection of War and Migration Studies in the Digital Age*, in "Historical Social Research", Vol. 45, 2020, No. 4, p. 10.

¹⁸ Otto Hieronymi, *The Nansen Passport: A Tool of Freedom of Movement and of Protection*, in "Refugee Survey Quarterly", Vol. 22, 2003, No. 1, p. 38.

¹⁹ G. Bruce Strang, *The Worst of all Worlds: Oil Sanctions and Italy's Invasion of Abyssinia 1935-1936*, in "Diplomacy and Statecraft", Vol. 19, 2008, No. 2, p. 217.

²⁰ Dudley Kirk, Earl Huyck, *Overseas Migration from Europe Since World War II*, in "American Sociological Review", Vol. 19, 1954, No. 4, p. 450.

tion operating within the body of the United Nations (UN) transferred its duties and authorities to this Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees. Furthermore, the International Refugee Organization was established within the UN in 1947 after recognizing that organizations founded to solve migrant issues had continuously failed.²¹ Nevertheless, when the organization achieved no positive results about the refugee issue that had emerged after the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, many started to question the organization, causing it to lose credibility.²² In 1950, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was established and granted many diplomatic powers related to refugees. Thus, the organization managed to establish close diplomatic relations with numerous actors in the international system.²³

Looking at recent times, it can be observed that migration has become an important tool in interstate relations and foreign policies of states. The increasing number of migrants around the world has caused countries to generate nationalist policies, as state borders have increasingly become more important. Hence, migration diplomacy has found more use in states' foreign policies for economic and political reasons as well as for security, aiming to enhance soft power and establish and strengthen historical ties.²⁴

From this point of view, an important component used in the practice of migration diplomacy is the diaspora.²⁵ Diaspora enables diplomatic negotiations for a source state while also increasing communication with the target state. Migrants coming to the target country form lobbies and influence domestic and foreign policy in that target country. In addition, the source country uses migration diplomacy to get soft power through migrants travelling to the target country, and many source countries are often observed to use this element quite actively.²⁶ For instance, the Armenian Diaspora has significantly been influencing

²¹ Hasan-Askari Rizvi, *United Nations, and Refugee Problem*, in "Pakistan Horizon", Vol. 38, 1985, No. 1, p. 50.

²² James L. Carlin, *Significant Refugee Crises Since World War II and the Response of the International Community*, in "Michigan Journal of International Law", Vol. 3, 1982, No. 1, p. 12.

²³ International Organization for Migration, *Glossary on Migration*, Geneva, International Organization for Migration, 2019, p. 57.

²⁴ Helene Yhiollet, *Migration as Diplomacy: Labor, Migrants, Refugees and Arab Regional Politics in the Oil-Rich Countries*, in "International Labor and Working Class History", Vol. 79, 2011, No. 1, p. 113.

²⁵ Charles King, Neil J. Melvin, *Diaspora Politics: Ethnic Linkages, Foreign Policy, and Security in Eurasia*, in "International Security", Vol. 24, 2000, No. 3, p. 114.

²⁶ Lena Laube, *The Relational Dimension of Externalizing Border Control: Selective Visa*

the domestic and foreign policies of the states where they migrated after the 1915 incidents. They are particularly observed to have been affecting Turkish Foreign Policy, and the relations between Türkiye and Armenia. Target countries, on the other hand, also tend to use the diaspora in an attempt to increase their soft power. In other words, they endeavour to make any source country dependent on them in economic, social, political and cultural terms, while working to make sure that the source country adopts similar systems to theirs.²⁷

In this context, migration has turned into a major component in interstate relations as countries cooperate in many fields including war, peace, economy, trade, culture, environment, and human rights. On the other hand, the concepts of migration and migration diplomacy still have not received the attention they deserve in the discipline although it is believed that migration diplomacy will be better understood in the future.²⁸

TÜRKİYE'S MIGRATION POLICIES

As defined in previous chapters, migration is the movement of individuals or communities from one place to another to attain better living conditions than their current place of residence, where they live under poor living conditions due to several reasons such as civil war or armed conflicts. The interstate and inter-communal effects of migration are quite extensive and complex. Immigrant individuals or societies enter a new living environment with different political, economic and social dynamics, posing several challenges. Perhaps the most important element in resolving their issues is to address the living conditions of both migrant and host groups. The policies pursued by these states when dealing with migration are essential in this case.

Throughout history, migrations have taken place either voluntarily or compulsorily, and they have been characterized as temporary or permanent in terms of their duration. The forces driving voluntary and forced migration are not the same. It is more difficult for immigrant groups to adapt to economic and social life after they migrate naturally due to compulsory if they relocate for causes other than choice, such as war or natural disasters. In this context, it can

Policies in Migration and Border Diplomacy, in "Comparative Migration Studies", Vol. 7, 2019, No. 29, p. 7.

²⁷ Bahar Senem Çevik Ersaydı, *The Armenian Diaspora and the Need for the Other*, in "Gazi Academic View", Vol. 5, 2011, No. 9, p. 99.

²⁸ Jan Lidak, Radoslaw Stefancik, *Migration Diplomacy as a Foreign Policy Instrument*, in "Modern History", Vol. 25, 2022, No. 2, p. 140.

be assumed that the policies to be followed against forced migration should be more integrated than policies against voluntary migrations.

As such, due to the incrementing migration movements in the world, countries receiving immigrants have been facing the growing need to develop a flexible and sustainable migration policy.²⁹ Therefore, countries such as the US, Australia, and Canada that have traditionally been hosting many immigrants have adopted policies for regular immigration. Indeed, it can be stated that these countries owe their economic development to the manpower coming with this human mobility.³⁰ In the EU member states, however, the approach towards the acceptance of regular immigration, which lasted for half a century due to the demand for labour, changed after the 9/11 attacks. After this date, the policies that externalized migration towards the EU increased, and the EU desired to move outside the European borders through readmission agreements for the control of migrations.³¹

As in the rest of the world, discussions on international migration and migration diplomacy have increased in Türkiye, as well. For Türkiye, this increase is related to the political and economic instability of the states in the Middle East and the Islamic World in general, the mass migration movements starting with the civil war in Syria, and the effects of this situation on relations with third parties.³²

In this regard, the focus of this study is the voluntary migration of Turks in Europe and the irregular migrations that Türkiye is exposed to as a destination country. In addition, the research investigates how Türkiye evaluates its current migration diplomacy rather than whether the nature of migration is regular or irregular.

In this context, the geographical location of Türkiye can be seen as the main reason for being a destination country for migration movements. The most often used migration route to Europe is the Eastern route, where Türkiye is lo-

²⁹ Hasan Canpolat, Hakkı Onur Ariner, *Küresel Göç ve Avrupa Birliği ile Türkiye'nin Göç Politikalarının Gelişimi* [Global Migration and Development of Migration Policies of Turkey and European Union], in "ORSAM Report No: 123", Ankara, ORSAM Publishing, 2012, p. 9, https://www.orsam.org.tr//d_hbanaliz/Analiz_123_tr.pdf (Accessed on 22.09.2022)

³⁰ Ali Zafer Sarioğlu, *Türkiye'nin Merkezi Göç Yönetimi* [Turkey's Central Migration Management], in Adem Esen, Mehmet Duman (Eds.), *Türkiye'de Geçici Koruma Altındaki Suriyeliler: Tespitler ve Öneriler* [Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Turkey: Findings and Recommendations], İstanbul, Aryan Publishing, 2016, p. 45.

³¹ Hasan Canpolat, Hakkı Onur Ariner, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

³² Kaan Akman, *Local Governments and NGO Cooperation in Migration Management*, in "International Journal of Management Academy", Vol. 1, 2018, No. 3, pp. 452-466.

cated, compared to the other two, the Western and Central routes. Yet, the number of irregular arrivals using this route has been greatly reduced thanks to cooperation between Türkiye and the EU. The implementation of the EU-Türkiye statement of March 2016 played a key role in reducing irregular arrivals from Türkiye to Europe. However, this led the immigrants, who had weakened hopes of reaching Europe, to regard Türkiye as their destination country.³³ This is also supported by the fact that Türkiye offers similar religious, political, cultural and historical practices to the neighbouring countries. After 1980, on the other hand, Türkiye faced large waves of immigration due to the political and social crises in the Soviet Union, Iran, and Iraq in addition to the illegal and individual attempts of others from Africa and Asia to reach Europe via Türkiye.³⁴

Therefore, historical developments have led Türkiye to accelerate its migration policies to facilitate the process of managing irregular and regular migrations. Türkiye has made many legal and administrative arrangements to meet the needs over time. In this sense, a great many factors contribute to the shaping of Türkiye's international migration policies. First and foremost, is the need to implement regulations to allow migrants to adapt to host communities. Individuals' ideologies, cultural values, and economic circumstances are all taken into account while creating these policies. Another important issue is developing relations with third parties such as the European Union regarding immigration.³⁵

In this context, the first general regulation regarding migration policies in Türkiye was the Settlement Law in 1934, where the concept of immigrants was defined as "people of Turkish descent and culture" according to the needs of the newly established nation-state. Due to the increase in the number of individual and mass asylum seekers in the early 90s, especially those coming from Iraq to Türkiye, another regulation on asylum seekers was adopted in 1994.³⁶

³³ European Council, *Migration flows in the Eastern Mediterranean route*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-migration-policy/eastern-mediterranean-route> (Accessed on 03.10.2022).

³⁴ Yılmaz Demirhan, Seyfettin Aslan, *Türkiye'nin Sınır Ötesi Göç Politikaları ve Yönetimi* [Trans-Border Migration Policies and Administration of Turkey], in "Birey ve Toplum Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi", Vol. 5, 2015, No. 9, p. 34-35.

³⁵ Erhan Örselli, Veysel Babahanoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Göç Yönetimi ve Göç Politikalarının Gelişimi: Bir Kamu Politikası Analizi* [Turkey's Migration Management and Development of Migration Policies: A Public Policy Analysis], in "The Journal of International Social Research", Vol. 9, 2016, No.43, p. 2065.

³⁶ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior, *Türkiye'ye İltica Eden veya Başka Bir Ülkeye İltica Etmek Üzere Türkiye'den İkamet İzni Talep Eden Münferit Yabancılar ile Topluca*

Although Türkiye has adopted a refugee law based on the 1951 Geneva Convention, the notions of refugees and asylum seekers are defined geographically. According to this law, Türkiye grants refugee status only to citizens of Council of Europe member states. In the Asylum and Asylum Regulation that came into force in 1994, the definition of a refugee was also determined with the said limitation. According to this regulation, asylum seekers from countries that are not members of the Council of Europe can only be granted “temporary protection” by allowing them to “stay in Türkiye for a reasonable period”.³⁷

In other words, immigrants coming from outside Europe cannot obtain refugee status, while migration mostly flows to Türkiye from non-European countries. The masses coming from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria cannot obtain refugee status due to the geographical limitation that Türkiye put into force in the 1951 Geneva Convention.³⁸ Unless Türkiye removes the geographical restriction, these persons under temporary protection cannot receive refugee status.

The logic of temporary protection is based on granting temporary residence permits to asylum seekers on the assumption that they will return to their country after a safe environment has been established.³⁹ However, it is observed that although some countries consider migration as a short-term phenomenon, asylum seekers in such countries are seen to have brought their families to these countries where they have been living for a long time. Moreover, they set up businesses by investing in the target country. Naturally, their second and third generations are born in that country of immigration. Thus, such countries have

Siğınma Amacıyla Sınırlarımıza Gelen Yabancılara ve Olabilecek Nüfus Hareketlerine Uygulanacak Usul ve Esaslar Hakkında Yönetmelik, 14th September 1994, at <https://www.multeci.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/1994-Yonetmeligi.pdf> (Accessed on 04.09.2022).

³⁷ Yücel Acer, İbrahim Kaya, Mahir Gümüő, *Türkiye İçin Yeni Bir İltica Stratejisi Üzerine Gözlemler* [Observations on a New Asylum Strategy for Turkey], in Özlen Çelebi, Saime Özçürümez, Şirin Türkay (Eds.), *İltica, Uluslararası Göç ve Vatansızlık: Kuram, Gözlem ve Politika* [Asylum, International Migration and Statelessness: Theory, Observation and Policy], Ankara, UNHCR Publication, 2011, p. 49.

³⁸ Münevver Kır, *A Reconsideration of Turkey's Geographical Limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention*, (Unpublished Master's Thesis), Hacettepe University, Ankara, 2017, <http://www.openaccess.hacettepe.edu.tr:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11655/3836/10153841.pdf> (Accessed on 28.09.2022).

³⁹ Khalid Koser, Martha Walsh, Richard Black, *Temporary Protection and the Assisted Return of Refugees from the EU*, in “International Journal of Refugee Law”, Vol. 10, 1998, No. 3, pp. 444-461.

had to enact laws aimed at the integration of immigrants into society, as they have become permanent in the target country.⁴⁰

Another issue that adds dynamism to Türkiye's migration policies is the change and development of policies within the framework of the European Union membership negotiations. In this context, circulars pertaining to the negotiations state that asylum seekers are under "temporary protection".⁴¹ Within the scope of this legal status, the people in question are allowed to enter and leave the borders; all their humanitarian needs are met, and their security is ensured. The legal basis of Temporary Protection is defined in Article 91 of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which was adopted on April 4, 2013, and entered into force in April 2014. For a more detailed regulation and convenience in implementation, a new regulation on temporary protection was published on October 22, 2014, by expanding the former regulation. Under article 91 of the aforementioned law, it was announced in July 2016 that Syrians would be allowed to become citizens of the Republic of Türkiye as a vital step in the integration process.⁴²

TÜRKİYE'S MIGRATION DIPLOMACY AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY APPROACH IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

Migration processes can become a part of diplomatic relations over time and turn into migration diplomacy — a process characterized by the use of migration flows as a strategic tool to achieve diplomatic purposes, regardless of the migration policy adopted by a given country. The framework of migration diplomacy is shaped by states' negotiation for solutions to common problems. States tend to cooperate in this process for mutually beneficial arrangements; they seek to manipulate unwanted migration flows or use their influence on the diaspora to gain political or economic benefits.⁴³

⁴⁰ Rinus Penninx, *Integration of Migrants: Economic, Social, Cultural and Political Dimensions*, in Miroslav Macura, Alphonse L. MacDonald, Werner Haug (Eds.), *The New Demographic Regime: Population Challenges and Policy Responses*, Geneva: United Nations Publication, 2005: pp. 137-152.

⁴¹ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior, *Turkey: Temporary Protection Regulation*, 22nd October 2014, at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/56572fd74.html> (Accessed on 03.09.2022).

⁴² Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior, *Law on Foreigners and International Protection No. 6458*, 4th April 2013, at <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuatmetin/1.5.6458.pdf> (Accessed on 04.09.2022).

⁴³ Kelly M. Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration. Forced Displacement, Coercion and For-*

In light of these assumptions, two dominant mechanisms stand out in Türkiye-EU relations. The first is the asymmetric conditionality operating from the top down, based on Türkiye's fulfilment of the criteria imposed by the EU for long-term full membership. This mechanism has gradually lost its function over time. The second is the bargaining-based migration diplomacy to gain an advantage in a specific issue. This is the mechanism with high functionality in the current situation, and the EU is open to short-term concessions in the face of the migration diplomacy pursued by Türkiye.

Indeed, the current Türkiye-EU relations are a perfect example of the use of migration diplomacy in international relations. In this regard, Türkiye's relations with the EU have developed within the context of an internal and external identity dilemma. In this respect, Türkiye's EU harmonization efforts have evolved from the perspective of full membership to an international bargain involving migration diplomacy. In other words, Türkiye no longer bases its relations with the EU on the goal of full membership, but on gaining advantages through its migration diplomacy. The negotiation process of the readmission agreement between the EU and Türkiye is the most concrete example proving that Türkiye is striving to gain an advantage in bilateral relations through its migration diplomacy.⁴⁴

In this regard, the first migration diplomacy that Türkiye pursued against the EU was shaped in a form commonly referred to as visa diplomacy, which linked visa regulations to political or economic gains.⁴⁵ Similarly, Türkiye successfully used and continues to use its migration diplomacy to particularly gain concessions from the EU on visa liberalization and the revitalization of accession negotiations in general, using periodic and contextual changes to its advantage. The EU, on the other hand, has to strive to limit the issues with short-term consequences in its policies on migration governance to temporary concessions.

Therefore, Türkiye started to negotiate visa liberalization for Turkish citizens through migration diplomacy after 2010, instead of continuing to take steps for full EU membership, ending up signing the readmission agreement. During

eign Policy, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2010; Gerasimos Tsourapas, *Migration Diplomacy in the Global South: Cooperation, Coercion and Issue Linkage in Gaddafi's Libya*, in "Third World Quarterly", Vol. 38, 2017, No. 10, pp. 2367-2385.

⁴⁴ Ahmet İçduygu, Damla B. Aksel, *Two-to-Tango in Migration Diplomacy: Negotiating Readmission Agreement between the EU and Turkey*, in "European Journal of Migration and Law", Vol. 16, 2014, No. 3, pp. 337-363.

⁴⁵ Meral Açıkgöz, *Turkey's Visa Policy: A Migration-Mobility Nexus*, in "Turkish Policy Quarterly", Vol. 14, 2015, No. 2, pp. 97-107.

those years, Türkiye applied its migration diplomacy in a cooperative rather than coercive manner against the other party. In 2012, the migration mobility that emerged as a result of the Arab Spring and the civil war in Syria strengthened Türkiye's position in migration diplomacy towards the EU and made it convenient to adopt compelling migration diplomacy. Hence, Türkiye reached an agreement in principle for visa liberalization for Turkish citizens to pass the EU borders in response to signing the readmission agreement after a long negotiation process.

Türkiye fulfilled the requirements of this readmission agreement, which reduced the number of migrants using the Balkan route. Schengen visa for Turkish citizens was expected to be lifted by the end of June 2016. However, the EU did not fulfil its obligations arising from the agreement and did not eliminate the Schengen visa for Turkish citizens. Nevertheless, the fact that Türkiye is still fulfilling the requirements of the agreement increases its prestige in international relations. For the EU, the possibility of Türkiye's unilateral withdrawal from the agreement is worrying and is a factor that weakens the EU's position in this context.

On the one hand, Türkiye shapes the regulations in migration policies according to its needs, on the other hand, the country complies with the decisions made in the negotiations using migration diplomacy in foreign policy, thus increasing its prestige in the international arena as an actor that fulfils its responsibilities. By continuing to maintain relations with the EU, which is the party that does not fulfil its responsibilities arising from the negotiations, Türkiye also reinforces the prestige it has gained in the normative sense. On the other hand, the EU did not fulfil the following commitments: to provide visa exemption to Turkish citizens on their travels to the Schengen area after 2016, to increase the aid for Syrians under temporary protection in Türkiye to 3 billion Euros, to open new chapters in the accession negotiations and to invite Türkiye to the EU Summits as in the past.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the results of the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War forced the EU to cooperate with Türkiye, and naturally, migration diplomacy became the determining factor in the political relations between Türkiye and the EU. The parties succeeded in replacing the long-term goal of full membership with shorter-term goals, especially visa liberalization. In this sense, migration diplomacy towards the EU has signalled that it is a highly flexible diplomacy method to meet Türkiye's political needs and gain advantages.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy*, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/questions.en.mfa> (Accessed on 20.10.2022).

⁴⁷ Birce Demiryontar, *Accession Conditionality, and Migration Diplomacy: Turkey's Dual*

Notwithstanding that, the increasing securitization of the migration issue threatens the future of the Schengen Agreement and raises the possibility that EU member states will move away from democracy by strengthening populist right-wing parties in Europe. This situation consolidates the position of non-EU neighbours in diplomatic terms. Evaluating the relations with Türkiye in this context, it is possible to say that possible future negotiations concerning migration diplomacy on particular issues — not asymmetrically but based on the principle of conditionality – will gain force and become a norm in Türkiye-EU relations.⁴⁸

In this respect, the transition from migration policies to migration diplomacy and the process of Türkiye's becoming a target country for immigration are directly related to each other and these developments intersect in time. Türkiye's reputation as a target country for immigration, which became particularly evident after the migration movements arising from the Syrian Civil War, made it necessary to develop a general and valid policy on the issue of migration. For this reason, policymakers in Türkiye have used migration diplomacy as a tool of national interest and soft power, which they are convinced will benefit the country's economic and political interests beyond migration policy.⁴⁹

For Türkiye, another application area of migration diplomacy other than relations with the EU occurred with the beginning of using diasporas as a tool, as well. Indeed, as active participants in domestic politics, diasporas can affect the foreign policy of the country they are in, as well as the transnational representatives of the policies developed in their homeland.

After the great migration in the 1960s, the total population of Turks living abroad now exceeds 6.5 million, of which about 5.5 million live in Western Europe.⁵⁰ These migration movements have led to the establishment of a permanent Turkish diaspora in Europe, while the political activity of the Turkish diaspora in Europe has always been a sensitive issue. Relations between many European Union member states and Türkiye have deteriorated significantly in recent

Identity in Migration Policy Negotiations with the EU, in "European Politics and Society", Vol. 22, 2021, No. 1, pp. 88-103.

⁴⁸ Şebnem Köşer Akçapar, *International Migration, and Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities in the 21st Century*, in "Perceptions", Vol. 22, 2017, No. 4, p. 1-34.

⁴⁹ Ahmet İçduygu, *Turkey's Migration Transition and Its Implications for the Euro-Turkish Transnational Space*, in Meltem Müftüler Baç, Senem Aydın Duzgit, Daniela Huber et al. (Eds.), *Global Turkey in Europe II: Energy, Migration, Civil Society and Citizenship Issues in Turkey-EU Relations*, Rome, Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2014, pp. 81-106.

⁵⁰ Republic of Türkiye, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Turkish Citizens Living Abroad*, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-expatriate-turkish-citizens.en.mfa> (Accessed on 18.10.2022).

years. Türkiye's mobilization of Turks in Europe in recent years has significantly increased interest in the Turkish diaspora and its interactions with European society and politics. Large parts of the Eurocentric Turkish diaspora continue to define themselves primarily as Turks, not as full members of the societies they live in. This situation has caused the Turkish diaspora to be carefully followed in the countries where they reside since Türkiye has recently made these groups a tool of migration diplomacy.⁵¹

Migration diplomacy in the context of using the diaspora as a tool was tested by preventing the election campaign activities of politicians from the Turkish government in Europe before the referendum held in Türkiye in April 2017. The referendum in question coincided with the Dutch general elections. The Turkish authorities' attempts to hold a political meeting in the Netherlands were blocked, the landing of the Turkish Foreign Minister's plane was cancelled, and the Turkish Minister of Family and Social Policies was forcibly deported. In the face of this situation, the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands took a stand in an attempt to affect the domestic politics in this country and set an example for the kind of migration diplomacy that Türkiye has created through the diasporas. Similar problems were experienced in Germany and Austria on the same issue, and the crisis experienced as a result of Türkiye's harsh reaction to the attitude of those countries brought the bilateral relations to the point of deterioration.⁵²

In this line, since the Turkish diaspora in Europe has inseparable ties with Türkiye and impacts the domestic politics of the country they reside in, their destination countries see them as a problem today, as it was in the past. Considering that Türkiye's relations with some groups such as Christian Democrats and far-right groups in some EU member states such as Germany and Austria have reached the lowest point in history due to its migration diplomacy practised through the diaspora, it can be argued that the use of diaspora as a migration diplomacy tool may potentially lead to tension or cooperation in the diplomatic relations.⁵³

⁵¹ Max Hoffman, Alan Makovsky, Michael Werz, *The Turkish Diaspora in Europe*, Center for American Progress, December 2020, <https://feps-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/turkishdiaspora-report-final.pdf> (Accessed on 18.10.2022).

⁵² BBC, *Turkey referendum: Erdogan rallies not welcome in Austria*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39105683>, 27th February 2017; BBC, *Turkey rallies row: Germany and the Netherlands harden stance*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39251216>, 12th March 2017; BBC, *Turkey 'detached from reality' - EU's Donald Tusk*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39278131>, 15th March 2017 (Accessed on 04.09.2022).

⁵³ Roger Putnam, *Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games*, in "In-

Defined as a functional tool for the solution of diplomatic problems and as government activities to inform and influence foreign peoples, the concept of public diplomacy is closely related to the concept of soft power, and Türkiye places history, culture, and humanitarian aid at the centre of its soft power. Türkiye's perception of soft power is shaped by religious sentiments in the Middle East and the Balkans, and by nationalist sentiments in European countries where the Turkish diaspora is densely populated. In this regard, along with the current developments in international relations, soft power should also be taken into account in terms of migration diplomacy. The phenomenon of migration is an issue that has the effect of transcending countries and societies. Improving immigrant relations is accepted as a global responsibility and a prerequisite of relations between countries and societies. In this context, it is possible to evaluate migration diplomacy from the perspective of public diplomacy.⁵⁴

On the other hand, public diplomacy, which can be defined as the communication of countries with foreign peoples, is also an integral part of international relations. Considering the issue of Syrians in Türkiye only as a national and international policy issue would mean ignoring the perspective of public diplomacy. Türkiye provides extensive humanitarian aid and hosts a vast number of immigrants, and this can be counted as a concrete example of the competent use of public diplomacy. The friendship established and the positive perceptions created with foreign peoples offer new opportunities as a facilitating factor for Türkiye to realize its foreign policy goals and to increase its international effectiveness.

In this sense, Türkiye's activities to help immigrants, build communication with these people and reflect this communication to the public constitute Türkiye's migration diplomacy. Indeed, immigrants, who are the most important actors in migration diplomacy, create new opportunities for public diplomacy policies with Türkiye's close circle, although they create some problems for Türkiye as in every country. Türkiye takes genuine attempts to establish good relations with these people and help them increase the country's prestige in the eyes of the international community, as well.

Generally accepted as one of the new aspects of classical diplomacy, public diplomacy and migration diplomacy require tackling different dimensions of

ternational Organization", Vol. 42, 1988, No. 3, pp. 427-460.

⁵⁴ Joseph Nye, *Yumuşak Güç* [Soft Power], İstanbul, Elips Kitap, 2005, p. 8.; Abdülkadir Varoğlu, *Kamu Diplomasisinde Kavramsal ve Kuramsal Süreç* [Conceptual and Theoretical Process in Public Diplomacy], in Ahmet Yalçınkaya Yeşim Özgen (Eds.), *Kamu Diplomasisi* [Public Diplomacy], İstanbul, Bahçeşehir University Publishing, 2013, p. 1.; Sait Yılmaz, *Akıllı Güç* [Smart Power], İstanbul, Kum Saati Publishing, 2012, p. 222.

international relations ranging from cultural, social, and economic fields. This also entails understanding the impact of public behaviours on the formation and execution of foreign policies.⁵⁵ Migration diplomacy, as a sub-branch of public diplomacy, is associated with the field of international relations outside of traditional diplomacy as it includes influencing the opinions of the public of other countries, and developing relations with similar private groups like diasporas and civil societies in foreign countries. Migration diplomacy also covers the inclusion of these groups in the foreign policy-making process, and cultural interactions between communities.⁵⁶

In the context of public diplomacy, immigrants and diasporas indicate the interpersonal and intercultural communication side of migration diplomacy. In addition, they constitute the cultural transfer between different nations.⁵⁷ Population movements lead to the formation of new communication and relationship channels between societies as well. In this sense, migrant masses have played an important representative role in international and intercultural communication throughout the history of humanity. As a result, states have found themselves obliged to develop various forms of relations with groups that have migrated to their countries or from their homeland to other countries.

Following the refugee crisis caused by the Syrian Civil War, Turkey has also attempted to control its political and cultural communication impulses. The masses coming from Syria are continuing to establish real-time interactions and developing relations with the Turkish people and representatives of public institutions and organizations on different platforms in many cities of Türkiye. These relations mediate the transfer of culture and value between the two societies, and the formation of perceptions.⁵⁸

While the necessity of forming policies against migration movements expresses a responsibility for countries in terms of international law, it is also a

⁵⁵ Vedat Demir, *Kamu Diplomasisi ve Yumuşak Güç* [Public Diplomacy and Soft Power], İstanbul, Beta Publishing, 2012, p. 6.

⁵⁶ Gyorgy Szondi, *Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding: Conceptual Similarities and Differences*, in "Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael'", October 2008, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase*, in Nancy Snow, Philip M. Taylor (Eds.), *Handbook of Public Diplomacy*, New York, Routledge, 2008, p. 19-24.

⁵⁸ Seong-Hun Yun, Elizabeth L. Toth, *Future Sociological Public Diplomacy and the Role of Public Relations: Evolution of Public Diplomacy*, in "American Behavioral Scientist", Vol. 53, 2009, No. 4, p. 500.

requirement of humanitarian and social sensitivity in the context of public diplomacy. Especially recently, Türkiye has been following a sincere and stable roadmap in fulfilling the requirements of this responsibility. By leading the preparation and coordination of public diplomacy strategies in general and migration diplomacy in particular, state institutions have enabled Türkiye to increase its prestige and negotiation power in the international community.

CONCLUSIONS

In recent years, states have been using migration diplomacy as a foreign policy-making process. While migration movements oblige countries to establish a permanent and flexible migration policy, these movements also encourage them to use migration diplomacy both to gain bargaining power in foreign policy processes and to include immigrant groups in these processes when evaluated from the perspective of public diplomacy.

Throughout history, Türkiye has succeeded in developing a migration diplomacy framework that transcends migration policies related to migration movements. It can be said that this development is closely related to Türkiye's becoming a destination country for migrant waves. Türkiye has internalized this new image and is currently using it to gain national interest and increase its soft power in foreign policy.

Relations with the EU, diasporas in EU member states, and immigrants from Syria are the three most important areas in which Türkiye employs migration diplomacy in foreign policy. In this context, it can be argued that Türkiye uses migration diplomacy effectively against both the West and its inner circle.

Migration diplomacy in Türkiye-EU relations works in favour of Türkiye, which seeks to gain national interest through negotiations over short-term problems. Therefore, Türkiye saved itself from the asymmetric relationship with the EU for full membership. In other words, Türkiye is no longer accepting the imposition to fulfil the requirements of full membership, while it has strengthened its position against the EU. In addition, while the EU does not fulfil its promises towards Türkiye, the fact that Türkiye fulfils its responsibilities arising from negotiations strengthens the international community's view on the issue in favour of Türkiye.

Türkiye's use of migration diplomacy against EU member states has become evident in countries where the Turkish diaspora is concentrated. The inclusion of diasporas in the domestic and foreign policy processes of both Türkiye and the countries they live in has shown that such migration diplomacy in interstate relations has great potential in terms of cooperation or conflict in bilateral

relations. In the case of Türkiye, it strengthens its ties with Turks living abroad by effectively using its public diplomacy skills. It is possible to indicate that examples of migration diplomacy in this sense will be encountered soon in European countries where the diaspora is dense.

Immigrants from Syria have contributed to transforming Türkiye's migration policies and achieving a consistent perception of migration diplomacy. It is possible for those coming from Syria to be the subject of migration diplomacy in two ways: the first is to benefit from them in bargains with the EU. The second is in the context of migration diplomacy, which is implemented from the perspective of public diplomacy or to develop Türkiye's relations with its neighbouring countries with whom it has historical ties. Türkiye manages both effectively.

In summary, all these developments reveal that Türkiye has succeeded in creating new opportunities in foreign policy by starting to use migration diplomacy as a tool. The bargaining power in the negotiations with the West has gained momentum in favour of Türkiye. Besides, Türkiye has intensified its relations with the diasporas and the neighbouring countries with historical ties, contributing to the increased soft power of Türkiye in international relations.

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