

Turkey's Changing Stance on Immigration: An Examination of Foreign Policy Adjustments

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Abstract

Turkey was a closed country to immigrants. However, in 2013, Turkey modified its foreign policy to become an open country for immigration under the Law on Foreigners and International Protection. Even in 2019, Turkey is the country that receives the most refugees. The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of Turkish foreign policy changes on immigration. To analyze it, this study employs Blavoukos and Bourantonis' Foreign Policy Change Concept. This study uses a qualitative approach with an explanatory design. The data analysis technique used in this study begins with data reduction, followed by data presentation, findings, and verification. This study discovered that Turkish foreign policy changed as a result of Turkey's desire to join the European Union, the encouragement of President Abdullah Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan, and the shift in Turkish political culture to Neo-Ottomanism.

Keywords; *Law on Foreigners and International Protection, Turkey Foreign Policy Change, European Union*

1. INTRODUCTION

From 2011 to the present, the Syrian government and opposition factions have been fighting a civil war (Kavakli, 2018). This battle has resulted in a prolonged catastrophe, with about half of Syria's people fleeing to neighboring nations such as Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. Every year, the number of migrants seeking refuge in these three nations increases. According to the data, Turkey was the largest refugee-receiving country from 2014 to 2019. In 2014, Turkey hosted at least 2.1% of all Syrian refugees, or 1,645,000 people (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015). In 2015, Turkey housed 2 million refugees, a major increase over Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan (Canefe, 2016). Ahmet Davutolu, Turkey's Foreign Minister at the time, underlined Turkey's stance on receiving Syrian refugees in a statement that read: "We, in Turkey, open our doors to every Syrian who runs for safety, regardless of religion, sect, or ethnicity; we embrace every Syrian." (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012)

Based on an October 2011 Ministry of Interior resolution, the Turkish government agreed to give protection and support to registered Syrian refugees (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015). The Turkish government has taken several acts towards Syrian refugees, including creating refugee camps, sending sick Syrian refugees to hospitals, and openly accepting Syrian refugees to work in Turkey. This is demonstrated by the fact that around 200,000

Syrian refugees have worked in Turkey, and, according to the Ministry of Health, 35,000 Syrians have given birth in Turkey (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015)

Turkey's actions in allowing refugees contrast with its tradition of welcoming foreigners and immigrants. Even before the establishment of modern Turkey, the Ottoman Empire had a long tradition of welcoming immigrants from many origins (Canefe, 2016). However, after the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1922, there were restrictions on admitting and providing refugee status. Turkey was often restricted to particular groups of people who wanted to relocate or seek shelter in the country. This is reflected in the three periods in the table below:

Table 1: Immigration and Emigration Policies of Turkey.

Period	Dominant type: International migration	Dominant state ideology about migration.
1923-1950/60	Non-Muslim emigration. Muslim and/or Turkish immigration	Nationalism/statism
1960-1980/90	Emigration of labour (Muslims and/or Turkic Nations)	Developmentalism/Liberalism
1990-2010	Immigration of outsiders (non-Muslims and/or non-Turks)	Neo-liberal institutionalism

Source: Ahmet İçduygu (2014).

Turkey published three legislative frameworks that served as the foundation for its refugee and asylum (immigrant) policy during each period. The first phase included two laws: the Law on Activities and Professions of 1932, which contained provisions applicable to Turkish citizens, and the Settlement Law of 1934 (Canefe, 2016). The 1932 law stipulated that foreigners were not qualified for all sorts of jobs in Turkey. The Turkish Settlement Law of 1934 established conditions for and defined Turkish citizenship, as well as the parameters of asylum in Turkey. This rule specified that asylum seekers who arrived in Turkey could be considered for refugee status provided they had a common race (Elitok, 2010). This rule allows Balkans, Albanians, Bosnians, and Tartars to become Turkish citizens directly (Apan, 2021).

The second period, from 1960 to 1980/90, saw refugee admission inspired by the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees with Reservation (İçduygu, 2004). During this time, Turkey provided sanctuary to refugees from Europe because of events there, but it also restricted non-European asylum seekers' right to petition for asylum, commonly known as geographical limitation, to provide temporary protection (Soykan & Şenses, 2018). They could only relocate for a longer amount of time in a third country through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In the third period, Turkey received a large influx of asylum seekers because of hostilities in Iraq, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Rwanda. This prompted Turkey to tighten its refugee handling process by enacting an asylum regulation in 1994 (Law on Refugee and

Asylum Regulation 1994), which became the basis of temporary protection in Turkey, determining refugee status based on Ministry of Interior procedures and then submitting to UNHCR for resettlement in a third country (International Amnesty, 1997). As a result of this regulation in 1996, 72 Iraqi asylum seekers who arrived in Turkey but did not meet Turkey's standards were compelled to return to Iraq, while 66 Iranian asylum seekers were also repatriated to their home country.

In contrast to the restrictions listed above, Turkey established a new policy on April 4, 2013, known as the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) (Yıldırım & Yürür, 2019). LFIP is Turkey's foreign policy that governs the principles and procedures for granting immigrants permission to live and depart Turkey. It is also the foundation for foreigners seeking protection or asylum (Norman, 2020). This rule is consistent with EU refugee protection standards, which guarantee the rights and protection of refugees and migrants entering Turkey (Efe & Jacoby, 2022).

The scope of this policy is defined in two areas: actions and activities involving foreigners or immigrants, both for those seeking to extend their protection and residence permits in Turkey and for anybody entering Turkey (Efe & Jacoby, 2022). The second scope involves execution that is independent of other international accords. This policy applies specifically to people/families seeking international protection, children under the age of 18, and people sponsored by Turkish nationals who go to Turkey for family reunification (Efe & Jacoby, 2022). In addition, this policy governs residence permits for official EU personnel, consulates, and ambassadors, as well as passport permissions.

Regarding the scope of admission of persons in need of international protection, the policy expressly states that such persons will not be returned to their country of origin if there are indications that their return would subject them to inhumane treatment or threats because of their race, religion, or political beliefs (Efe & Jacoby, 2022). Turkey worked with various international organizations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the European Commission (EC), to develop the LFIP (Rachman, 2021). This rule is consistent with EU norms governing the rights and protection of refugees and migrants entering Turkey (ERGENE, 2023). The LFIP reorganizes migration laws that were formerly highly stringent against some types of migrants into norms that prioritize international human rights standards for all refugees, by Turkey's national objectives. (ERGENE, 2023). After 2013, many refugees attempted to enter Turkey, prompting the Turkish government to meet their basic requirements such as housing, food, health care, and other public services. Some of the activities offered by the Turkish government have come at a cost; between April 2011 and November 2014 (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015), Turkey spent \$7.6 billion on Syrian refugees. According to official figures, the United Nations (UN) and European countries provided 246 million USD in help, although this sum was insufficient to meet Turkey's costs (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015).

Aside from the significant costs incurred, Turkey is also facing consequences as a result of its attitude toward receiving Syrian migrants. There are several impacts, namely, First, the impact in terms of social and security, namely the differences in culture, language, and lifestyle between local Turkish people and Syrian refugees, making social integration difficult and frequent bombings from 2015 to 2016, suicide bombings occurred in major Turkish cities such as Istanbul and Ankara, some of these bombings were claimed by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), but it is not certain who was (Orhan & Gündoğar, 2015)

The fundamental issue in this study is that the conditions for allowing immigrants, particularly refugees, changed in 2013, contradicting Turkey's previous policy history and the losses sustained by Turkey. So, it is vital to investigate the elements that influenced Turkey's decision to release the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection policy.

Several past studies have discussed Turkey's refugee policies. The first study, "Kebijakan Turki Dalam Menampung Pengungsi Korban Perang Saudara Suriah Tahun 2011 - 2013 " by Amalia Zatalini Kusuma Putri, found shifts in Turkey's asylum policy for Syrian refugees. Turkey initially implemented geographical limits before adopting the Temporary Protection Regime policy. Turkey's motivation for accepting refugees stems from concerns about state security, regime change in Syria, and ambitions to become a Middle Eastern power (Kusuma Putri et al., 2015). The second research, " Upaya Pemerintah Turki dalam Menanggulangi Pengungsi dari Suriah Tahun 2014-2016 " by Maisyta Syafitri, emphasizes Turkey's enormous costs in providing facilities and services to refugees. The Open Door Policy enables refugees to live, socialize, and work in Turkey. Cooperation with UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, and UNDP includes the development of refugee camps as well as educational initiatives (Syafitri & Pazli, 2017). The final research, "The Syrian Refugee Crisis: The EU-Turkey 'Deal' and Temporary Protection" by Suzan Ilcan et al., examines the 2016 deal between the EU and Turkey. This agreement featured migrant selection and sparked social unrest among Syrian refugees in Turkey, particularly over children's access to education (Rygiel et al., 2016). Alexander Betts, Ali Ali, and Fulya Memişoğlu's fourth desk research, "Politics and the Syrian Refugee Crisis: Exploring Responses in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan," examined three nations' responses, including Turkey. The findings reveal that international and national factors influence refugee response decisions, with public pressure helping to shape refugee acceptance policy. The study "Refugees, xenophobia, and Domestic Conflict: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Turkey" by Getmansky, Sinmazdemir, and Zeitsoff examines how refugee rumors impact Turkish sentiments. The findings indicate that unfavorable rumors, particularly about the treatment of women and children, can impact non-Turks' opinions against welcoming Syrian migrants (Getmansky et al., 2018).

While these five studies provide useful insights into various areas of Turkish refugee policy, none of them particularly address Turkey's foreign policy developments since the Law on Foreigners and International Protection was enacted. This concept of

Turkish foreign policy change within a legal framework necessitates additional research to better understand its impact on Turkey's response to Syrian refugees, particularly in light of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which establishes a new legal foundation for migration and protection policies. As a result, further research on this component of foreign policy can help us better understand the processes at work in Turkey's response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, researchers will use qualitative research methodologies with an explanatory focus. According to Strauss and Corbin, qualitative research focuses on a thorough understanding of the data in situations where statistical or quantitative processes cannot produce the desired findings. The goal of qualitative research is to develop and understand reality, with a focus on processes, events, and authenticity. The explanatory research method utilized in this study employs a previous framework to find correlations between variables and articulate them as hypotheses. The goal of this form of research is to find an explanation for why a specific occurrence or phenomenon occurs.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

International Factors Influencing Turkey's Foreign Policy Change

Power Structure

In the power structure mechanism, Turkey is the primary actor in the international system. In an anarchic international system, Turkey thinks that only the state can ensure its survival. When the power structure in the international system is in a particular state, Turkey will prefer measures that provide positive results for the country while minimizing losses. When defining policy preferences, Turkey typically considers the concept of survival in terms of politics, economy, and ideology to remain stable and credible in international and domestic institutions.

Turkey's National Security Threats

Syria's northern portion borders southern Turkey, where the bulk of the population are Turkish Kurds. The region serves as the basis for the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a Turkish Kurdish guerrilla group. The PKK movement is tough to contain since its base extends into Turkey's neighboring countries. The PKK has received assistance not just from Kurdish groups within Turkey, but also from external parties such as the Soviet Union, Iraqi Kurds, Iranian Kurds, Syrian Kurds, and Syria, all of which seek to destabilize Turkey (Hatem & Dohrmann, 2013). There has been no comprehensive peace pact between Turkey and the PKK. Along with Turkey's engagement in the Syrian conflict, the PKK's actions have increased. In the early days of the Syrian revolution, certain Syrian Kurdish parties joined a coalition of Syrian opposition groups but later departed Click or tap here to enter text.

The shift in attitude happened when Syria implemented a strategy of offering citizenship to ethnic Syrian Kurds and autonomy to the Kurdish enclave in northern Syria. The Syrian Kurds were then free to administer their territory in the north, despite opposition organizations accusing the Syrian Kurds of aiding the present dictatorship. There have been frequent clashes between the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Syrian Kurdish organizations in the region. The Democratic Union Party (PYD), the most dominant Syrian Kurdish faction, is opposed to Turkey's involvement in the Syrian conflict. The PYD, founded in 2003, is a sibling organization of Turkey's PKK movement (Dettmer, 2013). The PYD is the most powerful Syrian Kurdish group, advocating for substantial autonomy in all Kurdish territories (including Kurdish areas in Turkey) while maintaining under state authority (Dettmer, 2013)

The Syrian conflict has created anxiety in the region and its surrounding countries, notably Turkey, particularly about security challenges. Since the beginning of the crisis, Turkey has sought to participate in settling the dispute so that it does not worsen. The degradation of Syria's stability will influence Northern Syria, which is populated by ethnic Syrian Kurds. During the crisis, violent violence extended throughout Syria, including the border areas with Turkey. Turkey is closely monitoring the situation in northern Syria because it is from here that PKK fighters have launched attacks and acts of terror against Turkey.

Turkey has also stationed troops along the Turkish-Syrian border since the establishment of the Syrian Kurdish regional autonomous government. Such instability is typified by periodic military confrontations in Kurdish and other Syrian regions. Since the summer of 2013, there have been over 40 bombs, including suicide bomb assaults (Sholihin & Alfian, 2021). Violence and instability in the north have also boosted the number of refugees fleeing fighting between ethnic Kurds. Turkey sees the Syrian crisis as an indirect threat to its domestic security or stability because of its geographical proximity to Syria and the PKK insurgents, who remain a home problem. Turkey's threat assessment has intensified since the PYD and PKK took control of Syria's Kurdish autonomous territory. Since the PKK's involvement in the Syrian crisis, the number of strikes carried out in Turkey has escalated. The car bombing in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, which is the primary destination for Syrian refugees, on August 20, 2012, is thought to have been carried out by the PKK with the assistance of Syrian intelligence (Sholihin & Alfian, 2021). Turkey blames the PKK because it has enough evidence to investigate the incident. Since the start of its conflict, the PKK has carried out several bombings throughout Turkey (Sholihin & Alfian, 2021). The PKK has easy access to the Syrian Kurdish territory because some of its militia members are ethnic Syrian Kurds.

The International Crisis Group estimates that roughly one-third of PKK fighters are ethnic Syrian Kurds, making it easy for the PKK to operate among Syria's Kurdish community (Sholihin & Alfian, 2021). The PKK can benefit from exploiting Syrian territory to plan and execute strikes in Turkey. It can also conduct military training for its militia without concern for the Syrian regime. The PKK has controlled various locations in

northern Syria, both near the Turkish border and within Turkey. Turkey began a military offensive in July 2012 to reclaim the PKK-held town of Semdinli in Hakkari region. The PKK also kidnapped Turkish MPs in Tunceli province in August and attacked Turkish conscripts in Bingöl province in September of that year.



Figure 1: Map of Turkey and Syria

Source: Map of the World, 2017.

Turkey's foreign policy of welcoming Syrian refugees fleeing armed turmoil is one of the country's security initiatives. When Turkey admits Syrian refugees, Syrian opposition groups will be able to freely enter and exit Turkey to fight Bashar AL-Assad's regime forces (Yetkin, 2014). This is proven by Erdogan's attitude, which outlines three lists of cooperation with rebel groups to combat Bashar Al-Assad's dictatorship, namely (Yetkin, 2014)

1. Turkey is creating a safe zone near the Turkish border for Syrian refugees, but not for Assad loyalists or Free Syrian Army (FSA) combatants. The Republican People's Party (CHP), Turkey's opposition party, reports that one of the refugee camps, Apaydin, is being utilized as a training facility for militants from the Syrian Liberation Army (FSA) and other Syrian factions (Gibárti, 2021).
2. Turkey enforced a no-fly zone in Syrian airspace above the safe zone to safeguard refugees and the FSA (particularly the air force).
3. Turkey also trains opposition fighters who are distinct from those supporting the Assad administration.

Turkey's new approach, as well as its help to Syrian opposition groups, are aimed at toppling the Bashar Al-Assad dictatorship, which is the underlying cause of Syria's conflict. This crisis will have a direct impact on Turkey, Syria's nearest neighbor. Turkey is motivated to change its policy due to the frequent attacks from Syria on Turkish territory, particularly the Syrian refugee camp area. In 2012, the Assad regime attacked the Turkish-Syrian border (Tziarras, 2012), and in 2013, bomb attacks occurred in Reyhanlı, Turkey (Nerlander et al., 2017). Security concerns are one of the causes

motivating Turkey's new policy of assisting opposition groups in its efforts to topple Bashar Al-Assad's regime.

Turkey's image-building efforts during the refugee crisis

Turkey's policy adjustment toward immigrants is one of the country's initiatives to improve its national brand and position itself as a benevolent country in the area, but it cannot be fulfilled without a proper communication plan to support it. During the investigation, the researcher discovered two major frames in the political discourse surrounding the Syrian refugee crisis and Turkey's humanitarian response: Turkey as a benign country and Turkey on the right side.

Turkey is a benevolent country

Turkey has pushed to highlight its involvement in relieving the refugee issue at several international forums. As evidenced by some of Erdogan's comments, Turkey's primary focus is on how the state's beneficent nature drives its commitment to humanitarian help. In his opening speech for the World Humanitarian Summit, an international event Turkey co-organized in Istanbul in 2016, Erdogan stated that Turkey is a major actor in humanitarian aid, actively providing aid to more than 140 countries and hosting more than 3 million Syrian refugees for 6.4 billion dollars, "*Our humanitarian aid has reached \$6.4 billion in 2014*" (Çevik & Sevin, 2017). Similarly, at NATO's 62nd session, Erdogan emphasized Turkey's help to Syrian refugees: "*We have been on the forefront of the Syrian crisis trying to find a solution. Similarly, we have self-sacrificed and hosted over 3 million refugees fleeing from the civil war.*" (Çevik & Sevin, 2017)

Erdogan also addressed Turkey's open-door policy. Since the start of the Syrian conflict, Turkey has maintained an open-door policy and welcomed refugees. At the World Humanitarian Summit Meeting, Erdogan emphasized Turkey's policy: "*I would like to proudly say that as long as the refugee crisis continues, no matter if they're Syrian, Iraqi, or other, we will never close our door to humans and humanity.*" (Çevik & Sevin, 2017) Similarly, Foreign Minister Davutoglu, at the Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting of the 13th Islamic Summit of the OIC, said that: "*the migration crisis is one of the catastrophes triggered by the situation in Syria*" (Çevik & Sevin, 2017)".

Erdogan and Davutoglu's statements sought to portray Turkey as a benevolent country, implying that the problem stemmed from the international community's incompetence and lack of financial help. Some of the remarks emphasize that Europe and the international community should not close their doors to Syrian refugees and follow Turkey's example. Turkey's then-president Abdullah Gul also criticized the international community and international organizations in an interview with The Guardian, stating that: He criticized the international community, particularly the United States and Britain, for being indifferent to the conditions in Syria at the time. Gul stated that the radicalization of civilians by Islamic jihad groups was spreading in Syria and posed a threat to neighboring and European countries, but the international community's

response to the security, humanitarian, and moral challenges posed by the crisis was disappointing, reinforcing his belief that the UN council's performance was shameful (Tisdall, 2013). In a forthright and sometimes angry indictment of Western policies on Syria, Gul argued that Turkey's efforts to mediate at the start of the conflict were not supported and were even impeded by Western countries (Tisdall, 2013). In this scenario, Turkey is attempting to portray itself as a benevolent country, which reflects its support to refugees as well as the reality on the ground.

Turkey is on the right side.

To provide humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees, Turkey framed the issue and positioned it on the correct side. Turkey's message attacks the international aid system, accusing other countries of failing to share the cost. Turkey emphasizes that the primary issues in the global aid system are a lack of prioritization and unequal distribution of humanitarian aid. This Turkish assumption can be found in several speeches delivered by Erdogan: *"...the current aid system is inadequate in responding to emergency humanitarian relief. The weight of this system, which does not provide solutions, rests on a few countries. It is time everyone shoulders equal weight. First of all, we need to restructure the global aid system by putting people in the center (Çevik & Sevin, 2017)."* Additionally, in his closing speech, Erdogan argued: *"We need to share the political, ethical At the NATO Parliamentary Assembly gathering, Erdogan stated, "Turkey has learned to live with these crises daily, and hosting this conference in Turkey should demonstrate that we are not indifferent to the crises that occupy the global scene (Çevik & Sevin, 2017)."* In essence, Turkey criticized the global aid system, creating the impression that Turkey was correct, and proposed a new humanitarian aid paradigm.

European countries and the international community are frequently accused of not sharing the financial burden of dealing with the refugee crisis, or of lying about their potential obligations to offer humanitarian relief. During the UNHCR Summit for Refugees and Migrants, Erdogan stated that the European Union has only contributed 512 million dollars to Turkey, even though Turkey requires more than 12 billion dollars in assistance, in violation of the Union-Turkey agreement signed in March 2016. At the World Humanitarian Summit's opening ceremony, Erdogan stated that the international community is hesitant to contribute to humanitarian crisis relief and that despite this lack of commitment, Turkey's efforts to assist refugees had totaled \$10 billion.

During NATO's 62nd Parliamentary Assembly session in Istanbul, Erdogan addressed the international community, highlighting the truth of Turkey and Europe's anti-refugee stance, saying, *"Unfortunately, the promises that were made to us have been empty promises, and the assistance has been very minimal.[...] When there was an influx of refugees to Europe, European countries panicked. One country said they could take in 100 refugees, another said 200, another said 500 (Çevik & Sevin, 2017).*

In the case of Erdogan's statements, Western nations are not the only ones accused of crime. His rhetorical approach, which is sometimes accompanied by rage, frequently

targets those who disagree with him or his views. Some of the above official remarks describe the challenge as Europe's conflict between realizing its aspirations and demonstrating common humanity (Çevik & Sevin, 2017). Turkey's humanitarian reaction is touted as the solution, and Western countries are encouraged to emulate Turkey's example.

Turkey has played an important diplomatic role in the Syrian issue and has borne a significant weight in the refugee crisis. This provides the country with the required resources to present a brand image that is consistent with Turkey's humanitarian response. The Syrian refugee crisis has changed Turkey's humanitarian and foreign aid infrastructure, making it the most severe financial and political disaster the country has ever faced. Turkey's political elite and governmental institutions have attempted to capitalize on the Syrian refugee crisis to build a brand or image for Turkey. Turkey aims to develop a national brand that is compassionate, humanitarian, moral, and central, deserving of greater international influence.

Turkey's engagement in attempting to mediate the Syrian war with other parties, as well as giving emergency aid to more than three million Syrians seeking asylum in Turkey, helped to shape the image of a kindly nation. Nation branding occurs when three major themes - benign nation, straight side, and worldwide strength - are communicated to the intended audience. In this regard, Turkish public diplomacy has become a political instrument in Turkey, emphasizing the state's role as an active participant in international affairs. In short, this policy change places a significant responsibility on Turkey in terms of assisting Syrian refugees. However, this regulation reform is viewed as a significant opportunity to change Turkey's national brand.

International Organization

Turkey's relationship with the European Union is built on numerous forms of collaboration, including economic, social, political, cultural, and security. The value of trade between the two nations has expanded and is currently surplus since 1995, when Turkey and the European Union launched the Customs Union.

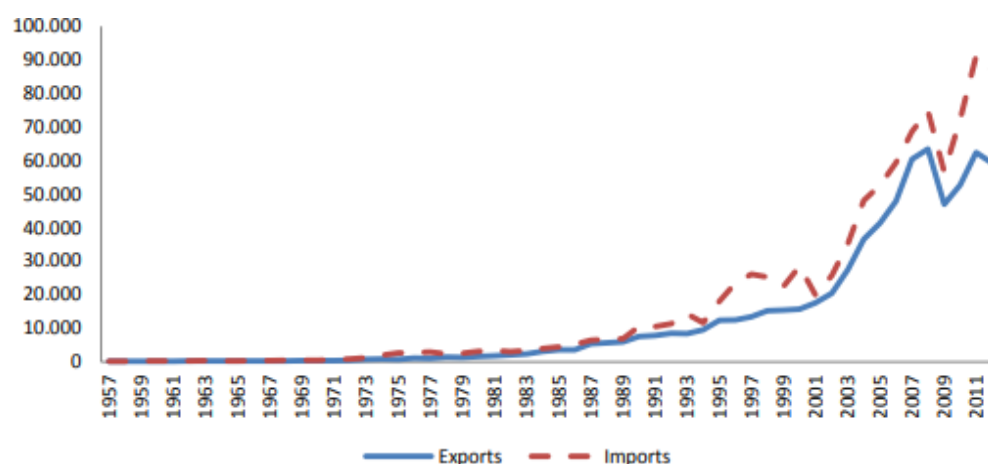


Chart 1 Turkey Trade Chart (1990-2013)

Source: World Bank (2014)

The graph above indicates that economic cooperation between Turkey and the European Union grew significantly beginning in 1987 when the EU was still in its European Community stage. Between 1987 and 2009, Turkey and the European Union benefited from increased export and import connections. In this situation, favorable trade cooperation provides a possibility for Turkey to join the European Union, which it has sought since 1963 when it signed the Ankara Agreement (Modebadze & Mehmet Sayin, 2015). Since then, the Turkish government has taken several measures to incorporate Turkey into the European Economic Community. Turgut Ozal, Turkey's prime minister, officially requested full membership in 1987. At the time, the Turkish leadership was unhappy when the majority of Europeans rejected Turkey's full membership (Modebadze & Mehmet Sayin, 2015). This is because the European Union believes Turkey has not met the Copenhagen Criteria, and the issue of religious freedom for ethnic Kurds is a major problem for Turkey that concerns the European Union (Dijkstra, 2009)

Turkey's domestic difficulties are one of the obstacles and challenges it has in meeting EU expectations. However, Turkey has not given up on achieving its geopolitical goals. This is demonstrated by Turkey's consistent efforts to meet the Copenhagen Criteria. The Justice and Development Party (AKP)-led Turkish government launched a range of economic and political reforms in 2002. Since then, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the party's leader, has implemented policy changes to match the conditions for membership in the EU (Ugur, 2008).

Turkey's initiatives began to receive positive responses from the European Union. This was demonstrated by the fact that in 2004, the EU Commission intended to resume negotiations on Turkey's membership accession process, which had begun in 2005. However, these talks were halted since the EU Commission emphasized the Cyprus issue during Turkey's membership application. The Cyprus issue has been a domestic problem for Turkey since 1960, delaying negotiations for several years (Tocci, 2014).

From 2000 until 2013, Turkey attempted to meet the EU membership criteria, including revising its immigrant and asylum policy since 2000. This was done by the Turkish government to complete the reform of Turkish law in the areas of justice, freedom, and safety. On April 4, 2013, Turkey passed the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which was ratified by the Turkish parliament and supported by President Abdullah Gul. This law established a legal and institutional framework for migration and asylum. It is regarded as a clear demonstration of Turkey's efforts to develop an effective migration management system by EU norms (Elitok, 2018).

When the refugee crisis in Europe erupted in 2015, the European Union began to reopen the door for Turkey to discuss membership on the condition that it kept refugees in Turkey (Elitok, 2018). The movement of refugees to the EU, one of the primary

destinations for refugees and asylum seekers, has resulted in a refugee crisis in several EU countries. Thus, encouraging the European Union to try to make specific policies on this issue, such as the Dublin Convention, the Asylum Directive, and Procedures, to regulate and manage the migration flow and have a comprehensive regulation or solution, the European Union includes EU candidate countries, neighbors, and transit countries that play an important role in the Syrian refugee migration journey. As a candidate country, Turkey is expected to receive a Schengen-area migration and asylum policy, as well as a border control strategy. This might be viewed as one of the "key" possibilities for addressing the issue of illegal migration and the refugee crisis (Vrânceanu et al., 2022).

As a result, changes in Turkey's migration and asylum policies have implications for refugees, immigrants, and Europe as a whole. One of Turkey's most significant obstacles during the Europeanization process is the lack of refugee and asylum seeker legislation and a coherent migration policy, as well as bureaucratic and institutional complications. Europeanization broadly refers to a shift in Turkey's foreign policy influenced by the European Union (Vrânceanu et al., 2022). In this example, Turkey's policy change was motivated by a desire to join the European Union. This program was designed to elicit a positive response from the EU, unlocking the door for Turkey to debate membership concerns that had been delayed for several years.

Furthermore, Turkey's decision to enact a Law on Foreigners and International Protection is motivated by a deal or agreement reached between Turkey and the European Union, which states that if Turkey accepts Syrian refugees, Turkey will receive a variety of material and non-material assistance from the EU. This is demonstrated by the aid that the EU offers to Turkey. In 2016, Turkey and the EU inked an agreement to address refugee difficulties. According to the agreement, Turkey was guaranteed 6 billion euros in financial help, which the Turkish government would use to fund initiatives for Syrian refugees. According to the EU Commission, 3 billion euros have gone into Turkey to pay the expense of teaching half a million Syrian children (Vrânceanu et al., 2022).

The EU Commission voted on Wednesday to make accessible the second installment of 3 billion euros promised in the refugee deal. The Turkish government, on the other hand, declared that they have already received 1.85 billion Euros from the EU (Vrânceanu et al., 2022). Financial assistance from EU funding to Turkey is channeled through initiatives. The aid does not go to the federal treasury. The following are the contents of the agreement between the European Union and Turkey,



Figure 2: Turkey-European Union Agreement

Source: European Parliament, 2019.

When Turkey changes its foreign policy following the provisions of the European Union, it will receive "carrots" or economic and political incentives from the European Union, in this case in the form of reopening Turkey's opportunity to negotiate its membership in the European Union, as well as other incentives such as economic assistance.

Domestic Factors Influencing Turkey's Policy Changes for Immigrants

The Aggregation Function and Policy Entrepreneur's

Abdullah Gul was President of Turkey from 2007 to 2014. In an interview with The Guardian, President Gul highlighted his concern about the refugee problem. He lambasted the US and UK for their indifference to the issue, as well as international organizations such as the UN and the EU (Tisdall, 2013). When asked about the probability of an assault being directed at Turkey, Gul said: (Tisdall, 2013)

"There is no question about this. In fact we have already stated that we have changed the rules of engagement and we have given authority to Turkish armed forces in that respect ... I don't see how much worse it can get, it's already very bad. But let me also say that this is not a bilateral issue between Turkey and Syria. We did not have any conflict with Syria, but when those human rights violations begun to occur and there was massacring of the people of Syria, then it become a matter for mankind, for us all, the international community. It's only by virtue of being a neighbouring country that Turkey is so very much involved. Also from the point of view the fact that we are hosting 500,000 Syrians in Turkey. Two hundred thousand of them live in camps and 300,000 in the cities through their own means" (Tisdall, 2013)

Gul also stated that Turkey has spent \$2 billion (1.25 billion Turkish lira) on Syrian refugees (Tisdall, 2013). He also noted that it is a humanitarian issue, notwithstanding the terrible attitude of some foreign societies. In addition to assisting Syrian refugees, Turkey, through President Gul, attempted to engage with Bashar al-Assad. Gul declared that:

"We talked to Assad because we wanted things to be resolved by peaceful means. That engagement was at all levels, it wasn't just myself, the prime minister, the foreign minister, we all worked very hard and at the time we even faced pressure from our allies because they said this was going on too long and it wasn't going anywhere. This is what I mean about the high rhetoric of the international community at the very beginning. They should have done something to follow up on their rhetoric and this was not done. What we tried to do did not work out and there wasn't much more we could do. I wish Assad had understood what we were telling him. In my very last message to him I said that if things went on as they were, whatever might be done would be too little, too late, and that he should take the initiative and lead the change in his country so the country would not fall to pieces. He read my letter and said it was all very important and good but he did not act on it, he did not do anything. Most certainly, yes, if he had heeded my advice, 100,000 people may not have died and Syria would not have faced so much destruction." (Tisdall, 2013)

The Prime Minister at the time was Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Political leaders' ideas influence foreign policy decisions. Erdogan is the most visible leader in Turkey's foreign policy-making process, as the prime minister is ultimately accountable for foreign policy choices. In addition, Erdogan is charismatic. Erdogan's ideological ideas, shaped by his upbringing, religious education, and Turkish history, have an impact on how foreign policy is developed. Erdogan's autobiography reveals his Islamic roots. He graduated from a high school for priests and preachers and joined the National Salvation Party, which is noted for its religious beliefs. His political views were inspired by his religious education (Gawwad & Mostafa, 2018). When he became mayor of Istanbul in 1996, he declared, *"I am a servant of Islamic law and the imam of Istanbul."* (Gawwad & Mostafa, 2018) Following the split of the Welfare Party, he feared that adopting Erbakan's stance might jeopardize his political future. When he created the AKP in 2001, he attempted to move the party away from its religious roots. He went on to say, *"We are not an Islamic party, but we are democratic Muslims"* (Gawwad & Mostafa, 2018). His political experience shaped his foreign policy perspective. He took an open approach to all countries. Erdogan disputes the notion that Turkey's approach to Arab countries reflects a shift away from the West. He believes that Turkey's major priority is to strengthen connections with Arab countries, particularly Syria. Furthermore, Turkey and Arab countries' common cultural legacy promotes the growth of commercial links, hence supporting a peaceful foreign policy (Gawwad & Mostafa, 2018).

Turkey is a democratic country, and its foreign policy is affected by its leader, in this case, Turkish President Abdullah Gul. Furthermore, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has a religious background and a good image in the Turkish

domestic society, influenced Turkey's policy reforms, resulting in a shift in foreign policy vision from past policy.

Political Culture

The idea of Neo-Ottomanism originated within the AKP government. According to Omer Taspinar's paper "Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism," Neo-Ottomanism is classified into three categories. First, there is a desire to restore Ottoman Turkey's splendor while passing on Islamic ideals both at home and abroad. Neo-Ottomanism is not an ideology that seeks to convert modern Turkey into a state with an Islamic legal system. Rather, Neo-Ottomanism maintains Turkey's moderate and secular Islamic home policies while pursuing a more aggressive foreign policy (Taspinar, 2008).

Second, there is widespread confidence in Turkish foreign policy implementation. Neo-Ottomanism believes that Turkey has the regional capacity to play a vital role in economic, political, and cultural aspects of a broader scope, just as the Ottoman Turkish empire was one of the centers of world culture in its day. Of course, this contradicts Kemalism (Mustafa Kemal's philosophy), which sees Neo-Ottomanism as a threat to Turkey's national interests, particularly its expansion into the Middle East and Central Asia. Where it is recognized that Kemalism is more inclined toward Western nations (Taspinar, 2008).

Third, Neo-Ottomanism seeks to embrace the West in the same way as it embraces the modern Islamic world. According to Omer Taspinar, a Professor at the National War College in the United States, the concept of Neo-Ottomanism is akin to Roman mythology's double-faced god Janus. This might be understood as encountering something contrasting or confronting two opposing opposites (Taspinar, 2008). Furthermore, Turkey's reputation as "the sick man of Europe" is one of the compelling grounds to believe that Turkey is a part of Europe. Neo-Ottomanism seeks to position Turkey as linked to the Islamic world while also demonstrating its openness to Western political ideas and legacies.

Neo-Ottomanism has molded Turkey's goals as a country with regional and global influence. The Erdogan dictatorship seeks to present Turkey as the center of global politics by embracing countries that were formerly under Ottoman Turkish dominion, such as the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. This refers to Davutoglu's statement, which reads, *As in the sixteenth century, when the Ottoman Balkans were rising, we will once again make the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East, together with Turkey, the center of world politics in the future. That is the goal of Turkish foreign policy and we will achieve it.* (Fradkin & Libby, 2013)

Three distinct conceptions of Ottomanism in Ottoman Turkey can be used to analyze and explain Turkey's current foreign policy. These three can be considered a typology of Neo-Ottomanism. First, the idea of Ottoman Turkey as the pinnacle of

civilization, that is, as the heir to an empire with a great cultural history, Turkey feels compelled to promote and maintain this culture for the Turkish people in particular and the international community in general. President Erdogan's remark goes as follows:

"For thousands of years, we have been the carriers of a unique civilization, history and heritage in which we have molded and collated different cultures, different civilizations, along with our own culture. Turkish is not only the communicative language of the people living in these lands. It is also a language of science and at the same time a language of arts and a language of literature.." (Wastnidge, 2019)

Ahmet Davutoglu made a similar statement. He indicated that Turkey will increase its cultural promotion to international audiences, including the establishment of the Yunus Emre Foundation, which specializes in more in-depth studies of Turkish culture. The Yunus Emre Foundation operates in several regions, including Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and North America. This is one manifestation of Neo-Ottomanism (Wastnidge, 2019). According to Davutoglu's announcement, the organization has two major purposes. The primary purpose is to unite Turkish national culture with cultures from different regions of the country. The second purpose is to strengthen Turkey's international cultural influence.

Second, the perception of Ottoman Turkey as an Islamic empire. In this second illustration, there are two alternative perspectives on relating Neo-Ottomanism to Ottoman Turkish-style Islamism: the weak version and the strong version (Ahmadoun, 2014). According to the weak version, Neo-Ottomanism as Islamism is an antidote to Kemalist ideology, which is linked to secularism, nationalism, and westernization. The second image depicts Turkey's foreign policy agenda shifting from Western countries to the Middle East and North Africa. However, this shift does not imply a retreat from the West, but rather rebalancing as a historical responsibility and adapting to current regional priorities. This is supported by the following statement from Erdogan:

Turkey faces the west, but she never turns her back on the east. We cannot remain indifferent to countries with which we have lived for thousands of years. We cannot abandon our brothers to their fates. (Ahmadoun, 2014)

A stronger version sees Neo-Ottomanism today as not balancing the relationship between East and West, but rather turning away from Western values and toward Eastern values. Soner Cagaptay, a Turkish political scientist, believes that Ottoman Turkey was liberal rather than Islamic (Ahmadoun, 2014). The AKP's current foreign policy is more Islamic.

There will be various interpretations of Neo-Ottomanism's identity in Turkish foreign policy. This is due to Neo-Ottomanism's flexibility in different facets, which is consistent with Ottoman Turkey's historical actions. As a result, Turkey's foreign policy priorities have changed with time, from Adnan Menderes, Turgut Ozal, Erbakan, and Erdogan. The Turkish government's policy of embracing Syrian migrants serves as the

incentive for reviving the Neo-Ottoman identity. In this case, Erdogan believes that the policy towards Syrian refugees is the right one because it uses the Turkish identity of Neo-Ottomanism to demonstrate its role in the global arena in a way that is appropriate for the current international dimension, where the political constellation, particularly in the Middle East, is deteriorating. In this case, the Erdogan regime also took the role to help and become a protector of Syrian refugees fleeing from the condemnation of the Syrian conflict (Ahmadoun, 2014). With Islamic values that uphold peace, Turkey welcomes Syrian refugees by opening its borders wide. Since the Syrian conflict erupted in 2011 until now, Erdogan's regime has been committed to continuing to be open to Syrian refugees who come to Turkey.

Furthermore, Turkey's foreign policy is also influenced by the rules that have existed since the Ottoman Empire. This can be seen in the beginning of the influx of refugees to Turkey, most of the refugees who entered were Sunni Muslims, just like the majority of the population in Turkey (Ahmadoun, 2014). Along with the influx of refugees to Turkey, the discourse of "religion-oriented hospitality" developed in Turkey. The hospitality towards refugees is motivated by religious brotherhood (ELİTOK, 2013). The government refers to Syrian refugees as Müslüman kardeşlerimiz (our Muslim brothers and sisters). This is because most of the Syrian population, 60-70 percent, were Sunni Muslims before the conflict (Mannix & Antara, 2018). The atrocities of Bashar Al-Assad's regime against Sunni Muslims forced them to seek refuge in other countries such as Turkey. This implies that Turkey's open-door policy is based on religious equality. In a speech made in Adana in September 2013, Erdogan stated:

"I do not love Kurds for being Kurds. I do not love Arabs for being Arabs. I love them because just like Allah created me, he created them. Sunnis and Alevi are together and siblings. Since 1071 we are one on this soil and we together are Turkey."(Kloos, 2016)

Erdogan's address underscored his motivation for appreciating other communities such as Kurds and Arabs, notably that they share a faith with him because they were created by the same God. He also claimed that he accepts different groups within Islam and regards them as fundamental components of the country, which has a history of Islamic diversity. On another occasion, he also stressed the relationship with Syrian refugees through shared religion, adding, *"For our Syrian brothers who are asking when God's help will come, I want to say: God's help is near" and "You are now in the land of your brothers, so you are in your own home."* (Lazarev & Sharma, 2015)

Turkey's open policy towards Syrian refugees is driven by the religious identity of the policymakers, similar to the period of the Ottoman Turkish Empire where there was a system that saw Muslims as the same nation as them (millet) and also in modern Turkey that only accepts refugees of Turkish descent or ethnic Turks. Based on this, it can be observed that Turkey has not been able to escape the laws that they have long run. This identity influences the way policymakers think about Syrian refugees. Because

of the common identification between the majority of the Turkish population and Syrian refugees, policymakers feel that this policy move is the proper approach.

Socioeconomic Groups

Against the refugee dilemma, numerous interest groups in Turkey provide incentives to the government to continue receiving refugees. Supporting interest groups are business-oriented groups. Some of these interest groups include HURSIAD (Gaziantep Free Industrialist and Businessman), GUNSIAD (Federation of Southern Industrialist and Businessmen), and TUSKON (Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists). HURSIAD chairman Ilker Hasirci stated that the business association welcomes the government's attempts to issue work permits to Syrian refugees. The TUSKON business group also suggested that it would be beneficial for business owners to maximize the number of Syrian refugees working in their fields of expertise. Kasim Fincan, chairman of GUNSIAD, endorsed the Turkish government's work permit for Syrian migrants.(Cristiani, 2015)

The Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş) has expressed disapproval alongside backing from the aforementioned corporate groups. Ergun Atalay, the head of this trade union, criticized the Turkish government for issuing work permits to Syrian refugees, stating that the number of refugees in Turkish territory is already quite high and that granting work permits to refugees would add to Turkey's unemployment rate (Koca, 2016). Some of these corporate groups' support for Turkey's refugee policy adjustment will put indirect pressure on the government to sustain it. Despite resistance from the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş), the government continues to support this strategy and plans to provide work licenses for refugees (Özel, 2014).

4. CONCLUSION

Turkey receives the most refugees compared to neighboring nations like Jordan and Lebanon. From the commencement of its independence until the 2000s, Turkey had a policy of not accepting refugees who were not of Turkish ethnic ancestry, as well as a geographical limitation on non-European refugees. However, since 2013, Turkey has begun to shift its foreign policy toward immigrants.

According to the research findings, Turkey's Law on Foreigners and International Protection, which applies to refugees, is a foreign policy that is an adjustment change, as a result of material sacrifices made by Turkey, specifically the sacrifice of costs incurred to protect Turkey to achieve its international interests. This choice of foreign policy reform is influenced by both international and domestic considerations. International organizations are the most relevant indication of Turkey's immigration policy change since Turkey anticipates incentives from the European Union. If Turkey modifies its foreign policy to be more open to immigration, it will give both political and economic incentives. The European Union's political incentive is the resumption of Turkey's membership negotiations after a long hiatus, while economic incentives include financial help to Turkey to deal with Syrian refugees.

Furthermore, in terms of domestic elements that influence changes in Turkey's foreign policy towards immigrants is the Aggregation Function, especially the encouragement of presidents Abdullah Gul and Recep Tayyip Erdogan who claimed they would receive Syrian refugees with open arms and would give protection.)

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