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** The surnames are listed in alphabetical order.*

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Rethinking Key Drivers of Turkey's Immigration Policies in the Wake of the 2016 Turkey -European Union Immigration Deal

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ABSTRACT

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Turkey's immigration policies have experienced several changes over the last century. The 2016 agreement between Turkey and the European Union has not only had a significant impact on how Turkey and the European Union deal with asylum seekers, but also revived the debate on the EU's externalisation of immigration issues. This study aims to examine the impact of the agreement on Turkey's immigration policymaking process. It identifies that while the European Union may seek to externalise immigration by entering into agreements with third-party states, Turkey's immigration policies are largely influenced by a complex balance of domestic, regional, and political interest.

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Introduction

The spring of 2015 marked an important turning point in the EU's approach to migration as the number of migrants heading to Europe increased significantly (Banulescu-Bogdan and Fratzke, 2015; Collet, 2016). The continent was not only facing a massive influx of migrants from Africa, Afghanistan, and Kosovo, but the Syrian civil war also had a devastating impact on the people forcing millions to flee the country. With over 11 million people displaced, making it one of the highest cases in recent history, the majority of the externally displaced persons have settled in Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan, and a sizable number have set their eye on Europe (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016; Şimşek, 2017: 161).

However, Turkey continues to host the largest proportion of Syrians migrants. By May of 2018, Turkey was hosting 3,589,384 Syrians under temporary protection (Üstübcü, 2019), a number higher than the population of several European countries including Slovenia and Lithuania. This huge population of Syrians brought Turkey into the spotlight as a key regional and global actor regarding international migration. Importantly, the geographical position of Turkey at the crossroads between Europe, the Middle East, Asia and parts of Africa increases its significance in the migration context (İçduygu, 2003: 7).

It is partly due to this geographical significance that on March 18, 2016, the EU signed a deal with Turkey to help the Union address the problem of irregular migrants who were making their way to the continent through the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea routes. Brussels was confident that the deal was a significant step towards helping Europe regain control of its sovereign territories by controlling who can and cannot enter its

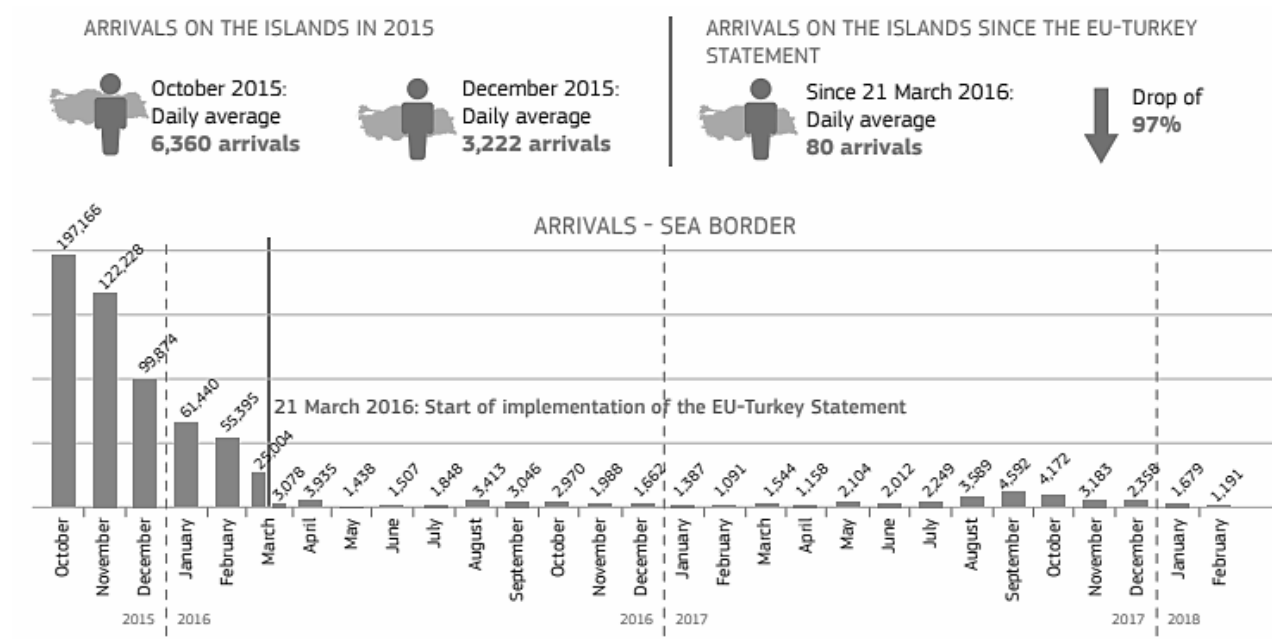
member states. Indeed, the overwhelming support to this deal can be traced to a speech made by Donald Tusk, who mentioned that the days of 'irregular migrations to Europe are over' (Haferlach and Kurban, 2017: 85). Further, proponents of this deal argue that the involvement of Turkey to help the EU with the migration issue was a response to an imminent refugee crisis particularly in Greece which had become a big target destination of migrants from Africa, and Middle East. Others have also argued that growing discomfort among the EU member states regarding the burden of hosting migrants in their countries was not only sparking nationalistic feeling and rise of populist parties, but the very unity of EU was being tested with treats to abolish the Schengen zone becoming more visible. For the supporters of the deal, this meant that urgent measures needed to be taken and the agreement with Turkey was worth it.

On the other hand, some were sceptical about the deal. Aurélie Ponthieu in an interview with Doctors without Borders (2016), asserted that the deal was a clear indication that EU leaders had lost touch with reality. He particularly expresses the concern that the humanitarian aspect of migration would be lost if the policymakers continue to look at the migrants as numbers and allow one migrant to head to Europe in place of another who has been returned (Ponthieu, personal communication, 18 March 2016). Gogou (2017) a critic of the deal, describes 2016, the year EU and Turkey signed the agreement, as 'Europe's year of shame.' He mentions that the deal had not only left many migrants, the majority of whom are children and women stranded in Greece under inhumane conditions but also the number of refugees who had made their way to Europe under the deal was a paltry 12,476 while over 3 million migrants remained in Turkey by 2018. In other words, it would be simplistic for the EU to consider the deal success as a result of reduced numbers of migrants entering Europe while neglecting the challenges that Turkey and the burgeoning migrants were facing.

Nonetheless, on paper, the deal has been praised for its theoretical prospects, with some leaders from the EU arguing that it is worth emulating in other parts of the world. Although the agreement was more of a political gesture than a legal process, making it a non-binding agreement, it is worth mentioning that at the time, it was seen as an important step towards putting a stop to the unregulated entry of migrants to Europe. In the deal, *"For every Syrian refugee being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian will be resettled to the EU taking into account the UN Vulnerability Criteria,"* (European Commission, November 2015; Staromiejski, 2018: 2). Three billion Euros were to be given to Turkey in the short run, while another three billion would be added at a later stage (Kristin, 2016: 1). Similarly, Turkey was granted a *'safe third country for refugees'* status meaning the principle of refoulement would not apply to those sent back to Turkey (European Commission, November 2015; Roman, 2016: 7). The EU also pledged to re-energize the accession process of Turkey to the Union by putting in place a structured and more frequent dialogue and facilitating the lifting of visa requirements for Turkish citizens within the Schengen region by October of 2016 (Koenig and Walter, 2017). The general experience of how migrants were supposed to move to Europe was expected to improve under this deal. This article will begin by re-examining the status of the immigration deal between Turkey and Europe then using the concept of externalisation to examine whether Turkey -EU agreement is a top-down approach where the EU influences Turkey's immigration policies. The paper will then discuss some of the main drivers of Turkey's immigration policies.

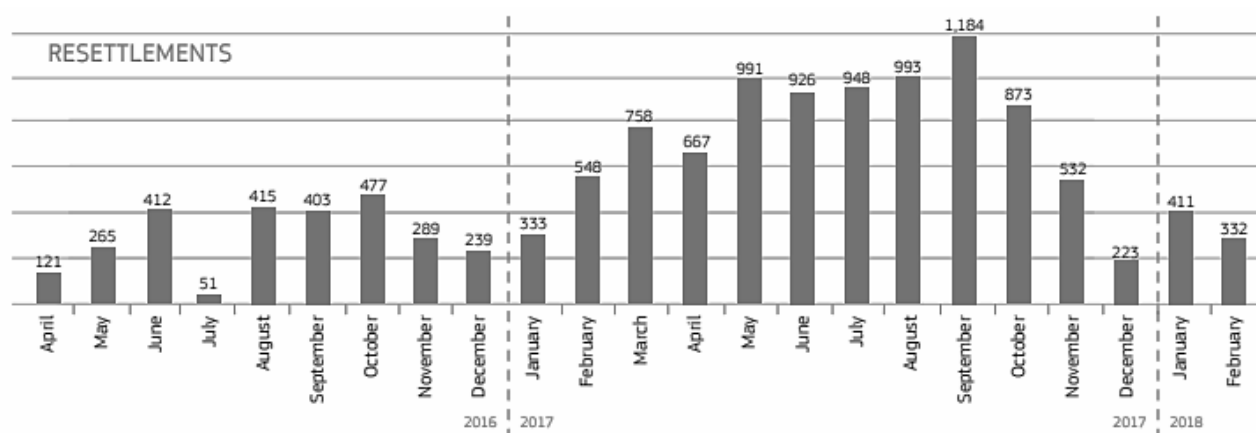
Status of the Deal between 2016 and 2019

According to the European Commission, the deal has had a tremendous impact on migration in the region. In a report produced in April 2018, irregular migration from Turkey to Europe had declined by 97% compared to 2015 (see figure 1). The number of people who died while attempting the dangerous journey through the sea to Europe has also declined according to the report (European Commission, April 2018). By the end of 2017, the European Commission states that it had paid the three billion Euros mentioned in the deal to Turkey to facilitate the hosting of the refugees. Of the three billion, two billion was contributed by member states, while one billion was derived from the Union's budget. The money was directed to projects that improved the conditions of the refugees such as municipal infrastructure, education, socio-economic support and health (European Commission, April 2018). The second batch of the contribution is also being mobilised to improve the conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey further.

Figure 1: Showing the number of migrants crossing from Turkey to Europe between 2015 and 2018

Source: The European Commission Report, April 2018

As a result of the deal, the daily average of irregular crossings from Turkey to the Greek Aegean Islands declined from 1794 in 2016 to 80 in 2017 (European Commission, 2018: 46). However, Fröhlich (2017) regards this decline as an “illusion” since deal insignificantly contributed to the decline of unregistered, irregular migration as more than 600,000 people reached Europe through clandestine means but whether these numbers constituted Syrian migrants is not spelt out. According to data from the EU Commission Report, by the end of 2018, roughly 12, 476 migrants had been successfully resettled in Europe (see figure 2)

Figure 2: Showing the number of refugees resettled in Europe between 2016 and 2018

Source: The European Commission Report, April 2018

Turkey, on the other hand, is providing the necessary support to curb the movement of refugees to Europe (European Commission, 2016). Turkish authorities in cooperation with others have dealt a blow to the business-like activities of human smugglers who were responsible for facilitating the crossing of over 10,000 migrants a day from Turkey. As of 2018, the number had reduced to about 85 migrants per day crossing to Europe, and the number of deaths had decreased to 1 out of 55 people trying to cross the sea in 2016 (Priyanka Jan. 23, 2018). Also, host communities and the government of Turkey have continued to offer support to the refugees in different capacities. Indeed, with the unforeseen prospect of the situation in Syria, the Turkish government has changed its strategy from handling the refugees as 'guests' to making efforts towards integration (Şimşek, 2017: 166).

The Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) was responsible for registering and relocating refugees from the border to one of the 26 refugee camps in Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Osmaniye, Kahramanmaraş, Malatya, Kilis, Mardin, Hatay, Şanlıurfa and Adana (AFAD, 2017). Thanks to the efforts by both the EU and Turkey, over 600,000 Syrian children are getting an education from either public or private schools in Turkey. Among them, 45,000 are taking catch up classes to fill the gap created by the years they spent out of school. Projects to construct one hundred seventy-five schools to meet the infrastructure needs of the migrant students are ongoing, while 220,000 young Syrians have been vaccinated and 720,000 adults received free medical care. Monthly cash transfers continue to be sent to approximately 1,200,000 Syrians to subsidise their daily needs (around 120 TL) (European Commission, 2018).

According to the European Commission, 12,469 asylum seekers have voluntarily agreed to return to Turkey from the mainland and the island of Greece. Although this reflects a good number, between 2016 and 2018, only 2164 migrants have been returned to Turkey from Greece. This slow progress has been blamed on the insufficient pre-return detention and processing process in Greece and the high number of applications pending. Apart from the concerns raised about the efficiency of the deal. The agreement between the EU and Turkey has also been challenged in court. A petition filed by Afghanistan and Pakistani asylum seekers to have the General court declare the agreement null and void proceeded to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) for appeal as the petitioners did not get a favourable ruling at the General court thus setting the stage for a prolonged legal battle. According to the petitioners, the agreement was in contravention of the principle against collective expulsion and non-refoulement (Carrera, den Hertog, and Stefan, 2017: 1).

Although the court ruled that it lacked the jurisdiction to decide on the matter, it did observe that the deal did not live up to the legal processes and expectations of international treaties. The defendants in the case claimed that the agreement with Turkey was concluded by individual member states and not as a union; this argument was perhaps the most substantial reason why the CJEU concluded that it lacked jurisdiction on the matter. However, critics of this argument further question the legality of EU member states to act individually on such an important issue. The EU's procedures to conduct and instruments of policy and law-making within the Union are spelt in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Art. 2(2) of the TFEU states that when matters of shared competence such as justice, freedom and security arise, the EU has more prominence to exercise its jurisdiction on the subject, and member states can only respond if the Union has not intervened (Art. 4(2)(j) TFEU).

Turkey has also, during the three years of the deal, raised its concerns over the level of honesty by the EU member states on their commitment to the deal. The slow disbursement of resources by the EU led to concerns and even threats to walk out of the agreement by the Turks. Also, the utterances such as the ones by French President Emmanuel Macron over a possible 'partnership/cooperation' with Turkey instead of granting full membership have been criticised by EU Minister Ömer Çelik. Speaking to Reuters in an interview, Mr Çelik emphasised that Turkey had no obligation to hold on to the refugee deal if anything less than a discussion of Turkey's full membership into the Union was granted (Karadeniz and Coskun, January 3, 2018). While the financial aspect of the deal had been fulfilled, other parts of the deal have not materialised. For example, Turkey's EU minister states that "*no new chapters had been opened in Turkey's EU accession efforts and there had been no development on expanding a Turkish-EU customs deal*" (Karadeniz and Coskun, January 3, 2018). The short-term visa waiver for Turkish citizens intending to travel to Europe has equally not been fulfilled yet it was a critical part of the deal. The EU claims they have not met the visa pledge due to what they term as 'controversial' anti-terrorism laws being enforced by Ankara. Such an explanation was given that Turkey is already shouldering its burden of the deal only confirms President

Erdogan's concerns over the honesty of the EU member states (Mortimer, July 26, 2016). While Turkey's migration laws may be pegged on the EU deal, it is important to mention that Ankara's approach goes beyond the EU deal and is significantly influenced by among other issues international, regional and domestic factors. Below I will examine the concept of externalisation of EU immigration policies and the extent to which it affects Turkey's foreign policy.

Externalisation of EU Immigration Policy

The Arab Spring revolts since 2011 have led to significant changes in the immigration policies and practice of the EU. One approach that has become predominant is the attempt to deal with migrants attempting to reach Europe using third countries as a cushion. This pushed the EU to renew the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) policy that was adopted in 2005 and also the adoption of the 'EU Action on Migratory Pressures- A Strategic Response' to provide guidelines on how the Union will cooperate with the countries where migrants originate from, settle or transit through to Europe (European Commission, 2011; Council of the EU, 8714/1/12 REV 1, 2012). While this strategy is not new and can be traced back to the fall of the Berlin wall that saw EU member states begin to harmonise migration policies and later in 1999 when the Amsterdam Treaty was implemented (Uğur, 2011, 965-6; Memişoğlu, 2014), it is, however, the intense nature of the EU's commitment to work with third parties after the year 2000 that continue to raise eyebrows over impact EU's actions as 'externalisation of immigration policies' on the third country (Boswell, 2003; Lavenex, 2006; Ress, 2008; Bennett, (2018).

Such cooperation has social, political, and economic ramifications that cannot be overlooked. For example, the success of these externalisation efforts is pegged on the willingness and commitment of the third countries to work closely with the Union. This creates a new level of integration between the EU and third countries at least to the extent that they are working towards curbing the flow of irregular migrants to Europe. Indeed, the signing of readmission agreements in the 1990s with third countries in Eastern and Central Europe can be seen not only as an externalisation policy but as an instrument the Union was using to get the support of third countries in dealing with migration (Lavenex, 2006: 330). From this dimension, however, there are some integration theorists interpret this as an EU effort to enforce policies on other states (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2014: 26-29). Such analysis ignores the interest of the third countries particularly those that push them to work with the EU.

Relative to the externalisation efforts of the EU with other countries such as Libya and Niger, the case of Turkey is somewhat unique due to the proximity of Turkey to Europe and the complexities involved in asylum and migration-related bargaining, with the expectation of arriving at reciprocally rewarding solutions. Nevertheless, the majority of the existing literature appears to look at how Turkey handles immigration from an external perspective. In other words, the dominant narrative in most of the existing literature is the position of Turkey in the deal (Hess and Karakayali 2007; Kirisci 2007; Hess 2010; Wissink, Düvell and van Eerdewijk, 2013; İçduygu 2007, 2011, 2014). Worth noting, March 18, 2016, EU -Turkey Deal (Statement) was not the first time these two actors were looking at how they can cooperate to manage the refugee crisis in the region. It was merely a reopening of Turkey's significant role in maintaining international migration that began earlier in the 1990s when it has been continuously cooperating with the EU (İçduygu and Kirisci 2009; Heck, and Hess, 2017: 38; Özçürümez and Senses 2011). The EU -Turkey Deal can be interpreted based on the externalisation framework as a case of an EU-driven top-down process.

The importance of Turkey in regulating the flow of migrants to Europe has not escaped the attention of EU member states. For example, as the EU faced huge migration in the early 2000s, Turkey was seen as an important transit route that could also help reduce the flow of migrants. During the Seville Summit in 2002, the need to regulate the number of migrants coming to Europe through Turkey was raised and the UK even proposed that the Union should consider putting sanctions on Turkey if Ankara failed to adopt stricter immigration rules (Hess and Karakayali 2007: 36). Whether such threats or incentives provided in the EU -Turkey Deal could have shaped Turkey's immigration policies is open to debate. Kirişçi (2007: 8) opines that in most cases, Ankara has enjoyed greater autonomy in formulating its immigration policies as such one can argue that Turkey's border policies are a hybrid product of its national interest, regional factors, and its international obligations.

Drivers of Turkey's Immigration Policies

To better understand this complex border regime formulation, one needs to revisit Turkey's previous practices on the same matter. It is important to note that immigration has been an essential aspect of Turkey's socio-economic, political, and cultural goals since the Ottoman Empire. There are four significant milestones in Turkey's immigration policies since the early 20th Century. These can be discussed under four broad periods namely between 1923 to 1950s, 1950s to 1980s, 1980s to early 2000s and post-2000s. These periods experienced an adoption of crucial immigration laws and policies that help to shed light on some of the drivers of Turkey's immigration policies.

Of relevance to this paper is the period after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic in 1923. Starting from these early years, policymakers were concerned with the construction of Turkish identity, and this ambitious project found its way into its immigration policies. Some would argue that this could be a continuation of efforts that begun in the early 1900s to homogenise the population where Muslim -Turks were migrating to Anatolia from the Balkans while non-Muslim Greeks and Armenians were leaving (İçduygu and Aksel, 2013: 170 -171). The two-way state-led immigration that began in the late 1800s (with the establishment of the *Muhacirin Komisyon Alisi* in 1872 (later was changed to *Aşair ve Muhacirin Müdüriyet-i Umumiyesi*)) and the early years of the new republican era perhaps symbolise the first efforts of cooperation between Turkey and other countries on immigration issues since there were reciprocal agreements with Greece (1923) and Bulgaria (1913).

Between 1923 and 1950, fundamental institution and laws such as Law 2510/1934 Settlement Act (1934) of the Ministry of Population Exchange, Turkish Citizenship Law (1928), the Constitution (1924), the and the Development and Settlement (1923) were adopted to meet the immigration needs (İçduygu and Aksel, 2013: 173). Apart from the construction of Turkish identity, these immigration laws targeted the post-World War I economic reconstruction of Turkey. The impact of immigration policies between 1923 and 1950s had a positive result on the modernisation efforts but also led to a massive decline in the number of non-Muslims living in Turkey. In 1927, non-Muslims were around 19%, dropping to 3% by 1928 and 1% in the following years (İçduygu, Toktas and Ali, 2008: 362; İçduygu and Sert, 2015).

Issues such as unemployment, rapid industrialisation, and labour shortages in other parts of the world saw massive emigration of Turks to other countries thus transforming the previous status as a destination country to a country of origin and later transit for migrants (İçduygu, 2004: 89). More important, it is in this period that Turkey entered to global immigration sphere with the ratification of the UN Convention on Refugees in 1951 and the protocol and asylum seekers and refugees in 1967. In 1961 the adoption of Turkish Employment Service, an agreement between Turkey and European countries reflecting classical core-periphery theory, ended up with the migration of over 800,000 Turks to Europe (Castles, 2008; Ottaviano and Thisse, 2002). 81 % of them migrated to Germany, (649, 000), 7 % went to France (56,000), 5 % migrated to Austria (37,000) and Netherlands received 3 % around 25,000. These migrants remitted over US \$1.9 billion annually to Turkey making the economic interest of migration policy a reality (İçduygu, 2005; Sirkeci, Cohen and Yazgan, 2012; Straubhaar, 1986).

The migration patterns witnessed from the beginning of 1980 are of significant relevance in Turkey's migration framework. For the first time over a century, migrants who were neither Muslims nor Turks begun coming from neighbouring and distant countries of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (İçduygu and Aksel, 2013: 174) Turkey started to be seen as an essential bridge to migrate to Europe on the one hand. On the other hand, Turkey's domestic interests, particularly integration into the liberal global economy, became an important driver in adopting a seemingly open-door policy. That was reflected in her foreign policies. For example, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Turgut Özal, trying to promote local trade and investment, liberalised the visa policies towards many countries, particularly to the former Soviet Union states, the Middle East and the Balkans (Genç, 2015: 535; Kirisci, 2002, 2005: 351).

Regional factors also played a crucial role in shaping the migration patterns and policies in the 1980s and 1990s. The Gulf crisis, draconian laws against minorities in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran, as well as the spill-over effects of the Iran -Iraq war, displaced hundreds if not thousands of people who sought safe territories to settle. Turkey's geostrategic location made it a passage point for migrants. Critically, despite the increased mobility of foreigners to and through Turkey, the law remained ridged on persons who were non-Muslims and non-Turkish. It was until the adoption of the 1994 Asylum Regulation that such migrants were

considered as regular (Kırisci, 1996; Soykan, 2010: 3-12; Suter, 2013). With regard to Turkish citizens who had migrated to Europe, the government made several reforms in its immigration laws to facilitate further participation of Turks living abroad in their domestic issues. Key among them was the adoption of the Blue card in 2009 for the Turks abroad replacing the pink card (Mencutek, and Baser, 2018: 88 -92).

The government of Turkey had to adopt further changes to its immigration laws after the year 2000 as more regular and irregular migrants come to and through Turkey making the issue of migration an important theme in Turkey's accession to the EU (Özçürümez and Yetkin, 2014; Kirişçi 2005). Concerns have been raised over the declining effectiveness of past migration laws and policies which were keen on maintaining Turkey as a homogeneous society. International developments such as globalisation and the end of the Cold War have shaped migration and Turkey's experience. However, even more importantly, it is how the government is responding to these new developments. For example, these factors have influenced how Ankara relates not only to the EU but also with other countries on matters of immigration. Indeed, these relations predate the 2016 deal and will continue even after the deal is over (Heck and Hess, 2017: 39-40).

On the part of its interest to join the EU, Turkey has made significant immigration reforms and enacted a series of laws to be compatible with the Schengen acquis requirements (Kirişçi 2007: 8; Tolay 2012: 40). These reforms have brought fundamental changes in how Turkey handles naturalisation and issuing of work permits to migrants. As early as 2004, the Interior Ministry established the migration regime of Turkey similarly got a boost with the adoption of the Palermo Protocol, which further empowered government agencies' involvement into the deportation and countering human trafficking with the necessary facilities and equipment (Heck and Hess, 2017: 41). The government also adopted the Integrated Border Management (IBM) Strategy which is a more efficient approach of managing borders through an integrated border system (Haase and Obergfell, 2013: 35). This new framework is important in supporting the activities of the newly established institutions such as Directorate of Project Implementation on Integrated Border Management which later transformed to be the Bureau for Border Management in 2012 (Sert, 2013: 177).

As mentioned above, beyond the relations and cooperation with the EU, other factors have similarly shaped Turkey's migration to a large extent. Turkey's restrictive visa policies were reviewed in 2005 to enable more applicants from Africa and the Middle East to move to Turkey. This was explicitly influenced by Ankara's desire to boost investment and trade as well as increase relations with non-western states as it revamped its foreign policy (Börzel and Soyaltin, 2012: 14; Genç, 2015: 536; Açıkgöz, 2015: 102; Aksel and Danış, 2014). By 2005 Turkey had made its desire to play a more significant role in international and regional affairs and mobility. Strengthening relations with countries in the south was an important component of the strategy. Turkey's proactive foreign policy after 2002 can, therefore, be a good impetus in understanding its immigration policies.

When it comes to the question of Syrian migrants, which is perhaps the primary driver for the Turkey-EU deal, then one needs to look at the previous immigration relations between Ankara and Damascus. In 2009, the two countries agreed to allow their citizens to visit each other without the requirement of a visa. This agreement, also referred to as the Şamgen, was supposed to be expanded to include Iraq and Iran in an initiative similar to the European Schengen zone (Özler, 2013: 52; Aras and Zeynep, 2015: 199). While the inclusion of Iran and Iraq in the Şamgen project would have significant benefits for Turkey in terms of increased tourism, the same would have serious implications to Turkey -EU immigration agreements since the bloc had placed Iran and Iraq on its immigration watchlist (Haase and Obergfell, 2013: 6).

Apart from the Şamgen project that has raised concerns among the EU member states, Turkey has maintained geographical limitations on its asylum and refugee policies despite the signatory state to the 1967 Protocol and UN's 1951 Geneva Convention. This limitation has affected non-European asylum and refugee status seekers since the government considers European applicants as potential convention refugees (Brewer and Yüksek, 2009: 650). This has left the process of becoming a refugee for non-European citizens in Turkey a responsibility of the UNHCR, which is a significant cause of concern for the EU which has used this issue as a bargaining chip in Turkey's EU process (Council of Ministers of the EU 2001, 21-22).

Adopting geographical limitation on the UN convention and the protocol is primarily based on Turkey's domestic interests. Clearly, despite the pressure from the EU to repeal this clause, Ankara appears to be unshaken. The argument fronted by policymakers in Turkey is equally legitimate from a domestic point of view. The emphasis that without such limitations, Turkey can be overwhelmed with the burden of refugees

given that its geographical location, relative peace, and rapid economic growth can make it a good choice as a 'country of first reception' for many migrants whose refugee applications have been rejected in Europe. Kirişçi (2012: 75) opines that this is equally a good strategy for Turkey as it continues to hold its line until it is officially accepted as a full EU member state. This explains why it took more than ten years since the reopening of Turkey's EU accession for the readmission agreement to be signed in 2013 and reopening discussions for visa liberalisation for Turkish citizens (Kirişçi, 2014).

Nonetheless, the Syrian civil war that broke out in 2011 came at a time when Turkey was making changes to its immigration policies, partly to make it in conformity with its EU membership goals and with its domestic and foreign policy ambitions. More specifically, the Syrian civil war had a greater impact on the immigration reforms in Turkey. This has to do with the proximity of Turkey to Syria and the cross-border relations between the Syrian people and the Turks. This, therefore, emphasises the argument that Turkey's foreign policy is driven by different internal and external considerations and events.

Findings and Analysis

The deal between Turkey and the EU has had a critical impact on the three actors involved (Turkey, the EU, and migrants). While for some, it is a tale of success; for the others, it has been a story of disappointment and shattered dreams. The theme of betrayal and unfulfilled promises are equally prominent in the whole process. As the EU finalise the payment of the second batch of the 3 billion Euros to Turkey in March 2018, the embattled EU leaders expressed confidence in the deal, stating that it had succeeded in reducing the number of illegal immigrants to manageable levels. However, there were complaints about how the two billion Euros supposed to be contributed by the member states were supposed to be obtained. Although this challenge was overcome, it had devastating consequences as the delayed payments placed more pressure on Turkey to handle the refugees without much support from outside. When the payments were made, refugees were able to get more social and economic facilities which improved their standard of living in Turkey. Such support has not only physical impact but also a substantial psychological impact on the recipients.

For those caught in the middle of their journey to Europe have perhaps paid the heaviest price. The cost of human suffering, particularly in Greece, where refugees were stuck awaiting processing. Inadequate facilities and personnel hampered the process leaving thousands of people to live in difficult conditions. The perceived cracks in the system did little to reduce the pressure on leaders in Europe who had to deal with growing discontent over their failure to solve the migration issue effectively. Indeed, this allowed far-right populist parties to capitalise on the emotions of the citizens and some won the elections in their respective countries. The Brexit referendum is one of the processes in which migration played a crucial role in shaping voter opinion. Major political parties in Germany and Italy faced shocking defeats partly due to immigration policies that opponents managed to capitalise on while immigration dominated election campaigns in Hungary.

Apart from the inhumane nature of the practices brought forth by the deal as well as the rise of far-right parties in Europe, critics of the deal argue that it was a short-term alternative that could hardly be sustained financially and technically in the long run. They point out that the deal is counterproductive and does not offer a permanent solution to immigration problems, yet it did cost much money. The argument here is that immigrants to have alternative means to reach Europe and therefore, the Union may be forced to dig deeper into its pockets in the long run. Others have cited that such a deal threatens to commercialise immigration and may affect states' responsibility to international norms and obligations in helping people facing persecution and other dangerous vices.

For Turkey, the continued success in integrating the refugees in different cities discount allegations made by critics that Turkey could not be a safe third country as the country's international reputation and respect have increased. That said, the capacity to continue taking in refugees can only go to a certain extent. Already, Turkey is home to over 3.5 million refugees, and adding more will stretch Ankara's ability to sustain these efforts. According to reports by the Turkish government, approximately 30 billion Euros have been contributed by its exchequer towards the refugees. The impact of spending 30 billion Euros on refugees at a time when the Turkish economy is facing uncertainty with the decline of the rapid decline of the Turkish Lira between 2018 and 2019 has had political consequences too. The ruling party has suffered surprising defeats in local government elections losing control of the capital Ankara and Istanbul, which has been attributed to growing anti-immigration sentiments among the locals. Noteworthy, many Syrians have illegally made their

way to cities and towns across Turkey and are living in rented apartments and competing with the locals for jobs raising concerns over the declining wage limits as the refugees are willing to work for much less. Besides, the situation also denies migrants the right to claim their social benefits. Some concerns have been that most of the highly skilled refugees already found their way out of Turkey leaving those with low -skills. This means that in the long -run, government expenditure on social welfare will have to increase.

Even though Turkey has gained renewed attention as an important actor with regards to international migration, the country has incurred substantial financial costs with little support from the international actors. This situation, coupled with the domestic challenges like the declining Lira and shifting public opinions towards Syrian migrants, has prompted Ankara to opt for the establishment of Safe Zone in northern Syria. If implemented, the Safe Zone would stretch for 30 kilometres into Syria and another 480 kilometres along the Turkish-Syrian border, where between 1-2 million Syrians will be relocated.

Interestingly, the concept of the safe zone has received massive criticism from international actors citing infringements of territorial integrity as well as infringement of migrants' rights resulting in a temporary halt of the operation. However, Ankara holds a contrary opinion with regard to its objective. According to President Erdoğan, in a presentation to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019, the region is predominantly occupied by People Protection Unit (YPG), a group supported by the United States, with strong links to PKK, a group that the EU, the United States and Ankara consider to be a terrorist group. Therefore, creating the zone would push YPG further from Turkish borders thus eliminating potential security threats along the border and securing a haven for the Syrian migrants.

The critics have, however, questioned the unilateral approach adopted by Ankara and more questions had been raised with regards to Ankara's ability to unilaterally finance such an ambitious project that would include 140 villages, schools, mosques and hospitals following its domestic economic challenges. Perhaps Turkey is expressing its frustrations with the deal, and its move is a clarion call for more responsibility and burden-sharing in relation to the management of international migration that would secure the future of Syrians in Turkey.

Conclusion

Revisiting the Turkey-EU immigration deal has only opened up more questions than answers. Is it time for the two actors to review the terms of the agreement? Should there be efforts to find long term solutions now that the pressure has significantly declined? Should the EU live up to its promises of giving Turkish citizens short-term visa liberalisation and open talks on the customs union? These are some issues of significant importance that need to be addressed if the deal is to benefit both parties. Questions need to be asked whether it is prudent to involve a third country to help with hosting some of the refugees if the numbers in Turkey will become unsustainable. Questions have already been raised on whether the deal is worsening or strengthening EU-Turkey relations following Ankara's ambition of establishing a safe zone in northern Syria, an idea that is strongly opposed by the EU and the United States.

Consequently, the dilemma lies in how to re-establish a more peaceful Syria to ensure the voluntary repatriation of Syrian migrants since it is evident that the people of Syria are not merely migrating because they wish to, but circumstances have led them to this situation. Otherwise, even when there was free visa entry with Turkey, the majority of them stayed in Syria. So perhaps a peaceful Syria will be a better long-term objective, but efforts need to begin now.

It has been established that Turkey has had to adjust its migration policies and laws in response to domestic and international events. This flexibility is crucial in understanding why Ankara, irrespective of the shortcoming with the EU deal, has continued to fulfil its obligations. As a country, the Syrian crisis that began in 2011 is not the only event that policymakers have had to deal with the massive migration of people to, from, and through Turkey. Incidences such as the Istanbul Riots on 6-7 September 1955 (Güven, 2011), the establishment of the state of Israel and consequent movement of Jews from Anatolia to Israel (Neyzi, 2005), the 1963-1964 crisis that led to the exodus of people of Rum origin from Istanbul (Tansuğ, 2018), 1974 Cyprus events, the arrival of Turks from Europe, and the exist of Armenians and Greeks as some of the significant migration incidences that Turkey has had to deal with over the years. There are some important observations to be made on the EU -Turkey deal.

Europe appears to be the biggest beneficiary of the deal and not Turkey, as many may argue. Europe's goal was to keep refugees away from the continent which they are succeeding while Turkey has not only failed to get the visa liberalised; it has had to spend ten times more money on the refugees by itself. While the money given to the refugees (\$31/€25) has had a decent impact on their lives, the current inflation in the country is making their lives more difficult. Where Turkey has not gained from, it has benefited elsewhere. The state has received tremendous praise and recognition for its efforts to help the Syrian people when in need. My emphasis on this paper is that on the one hand, the deal has had an impact in the region, but not so much so to affect Turkey's immigration policies and approach as these are highly influenced by other regional, domestic and international factors.

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