

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Turkey is located between the Balkan peninsula region, the Black Sea region and the Mediterranean Sea, and borders the Middle East. Turkey's geographical, located between Europe and Asia, provides Turkey a strategic position because many countries directly border it (Djuyandi, et al., 2021).

For most of the 20th century, Turkey refrained from becoming involved in Middle Eastern affairs, but in recent years, it has departed from this Kemalist tradition, which was based on the ideas of the Republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) took over the government in 2002, Turkey has taken on a leadership role in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and has participated in Arab League conferences. Turkey has also become a major player in the region and has established closer relationships with the Near East countries such as Syria and Israel, as well as Eastern Mediterranean countries such as Greece and Cyprus (Panayiotides, 2018).

Turkey, regarded as a rising middle power in international politics, is known for its confident approach in global politics. During the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the country underwent a transformation in its foreign policy and became a nation with a strong Muslim identity and a conservative democratic ideology. In contrast to its earlier secular stance under Ataturk, the country now places a greater emphasis on religious values in its ruling power (Huda, et al., 2022).

The Turkish government started to promote an "active" and "humanist" foreign policy by embracing all regions as partners with the motto "Peace in the Country, Peace in the World". Turkey aims to prioritize various goals, such as

enhancing regional stability and security, safeguarding the well-being of Turkish nationals, strengthening strategic alliances, expanding trade networks and energy security, and augmenting its soft power diplomatic influence. Furthermore, Turkey is dedicated to collaborating with other countries globally to combat terrorism, enhance global relationships, and actively cooperate in both regional and international organizations (Fitriyanti, 2018).

In order to achieve this active and humanist foreign policy focus, Turkey has opened 15 embassies and one general consulate around the world. Turkey's humanitarian policies are exemplified by actions such as providing shelter to approximately three and a half million Syrian refugees, making it the largest host country for over six million people displaced by the Syrian conflict. Given its geographical proximity to Syria, Turkey is dedicated to resolving the conflict through peaceful means, such as political negotiations based on the United Nations' guidelines. Through the Astana meeting, Turkey is striving to facilitate progress in the stabilization of Syria, including implementing a ceasefire, a memorandum on de-escalation, and fostering mutual trust between opposing parties (Fitriyanti, 2018).

Turkey has a long-standing tradition of providing humanitarian assistance that stems from its history and culture. As a result, Turkey views aiding countries in times of natural disasters, conflict, poverty, and social upheaval as both a humanitarian obligation and a crucial factor in establishing a stable global community. Starting in the mid-1980s with the provision of food aid, Turkey's humanitarian assistance endeavours have gained significant momentum over the past ten years, reaching numerous regions worldwide and increasing in both quantity and quality, encompassing a broad range of activities (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

The primary driving force behind Turkey's recent humanitarian aid efforts has been the humanitarian aspects of the ongoing crises in its neighboring areas, particularly Syria. As the global impact of these crises continues to grow, Turkey's position within the current humanitarian aid system is strengthened (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

By the end of 2020, the United Nations Refugee Agency or The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recognized Turkey as the largest host of refugees globally. Although Turkey takes pride in its eagerness to provide humanitarian aid, it has been noted that this is a key component of the country's approach to humanitarian diplomacy in international relations and an integral part of its foreign policy strategy. (Huda, et al., 2022).

Turkey is situated in a location that connects Europe and Asia, and in recent decades, it has become a destination for many people seeking asylum to escape civil wars and other forms of conflict. These individuals have come from countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Since the start of the Syrian war in 2011, Turkey has become the largest host of Syrian refugees in the world. Currently, there are over 2.7 million Syrian refugees in Turkey. (Baban, et al., 2016). Beginning in March 2011, more than four million people have fled the civil war in Syria and sought refuge in neighboring countries, including Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon. Turkey has been a leading country in accepting Syrian refugees since the early stages of the conflict, following an "open door" policy. This policy ensures that the government respects the principle of non-refoulement and is committed to providing the best possible living conditions and humanitarian assistance for refugees (Koca, 2015).

Based on the total number, only a small proportion living in government-run refugee camps and receiving humanitarian assistance, and the majority, over 2.5 million, are

living in urban areas of the country with limited access to humanitarian assistance. Although Turkey is signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter, the 1951 Convention), it is one among very few states in the world to sustain the geographic limitation clause of the 1951 Convention. What this limitation means is that the Turkish government will only accept legal responsibility to protect refugees coming from Europe. Consequently, so-called non-European refugees are permitted to stay in the country for a limited period and some receive temporary protection status. For Syrians in Turkey, this temporary legal status results in restrictions on their livelihoods, particularly for those living outside of the camps, and places them in perilous conditions of living where they have limited access to regular employment, education, and social and economic support. Due to their precarious status and conditions of living, some Syrians are anticipating resettlement in a third country or repatriation once the war comes to an end, while others are travelling or hoping to travel to Europe in an effort to receive a more secure life, one that leads to permanent residency or full citizenship status (Baban, et al., 2016)

Table 1. Data of Refugees from Syria

Country	Source	Data Date	Population
Türkiye	<i>Government of Turkey</i>	2 February 2023	64.5% 3,500,964
Jordan	<i>UNHCR</i>	31 January 2023	12.2% 661,670
Iraq	<i>UNHCR</i>	31 January 2023	4.8% 259,584
Lebanon	<i>UNHCR</i>	31 December 2022	15.0% 814,715
Egypt	<i>UNHCR</i>	30 November 2022	2.7% 145,157
Other (North Africa)	<i>UNHCR</i>	31 December 2021	0.8% 41,742

Source: UNHCR. (2023, February 02). *Operational Portal Refugee Situations: Syria Regional Refugee Response*. Retrieved February 17, 2023, from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that Turkey is currently hosting the largest refugee population in the world, with approximately almost four million refugees registered. Most of the registered refugees are currently residing in tent and container camps that have been set up in cities near the border. The other remaining refugees are dispersed throughout the country (Koca, 2015).

B. Research Question

Based on the background mentioned, this thesis has one research question:

“How is the implementation of Turkish open door policy to refugees from Syria as humanitarian diplomacy strategy in 2011-2020?”

C. Theoretical Framework

The author aims to gather opinions from experts who are relevant to the topic being studied and to analyze their perspectives. This approach is intended to establish a theoretical foundation that can eventually assist in formulating hypotheses and understanding the problem at hand, who are directly related to the research problem. Based on the research that conducted, the writer uses one theory to answer the research question which are Humanitarian Diplomacy Theory.

I. Humanitarian Diplomacy Theory

Humanitarian diplomacy can simply be interpreted as a peaceful effort to reach an agreement in terms of commitment to universal humanitarian principles. That is the general definition. A more specific definition of international humanitarian organizations define humanitarian diplomacy as "...persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles." From this understanding, it can be concluded that humanitarian diplomacy is related to efforts to persuade parties who have power and authority to pay attention to the interests of weak parties. Weak parties in this case are victims of conflicts, wars, or natural disasters (Muhadi, et al., 2013).

Diplomacy is at the core of relations between nations. Studying international relations is nearly impossible without studying diplomacy. Diplomacy is a word that is very familiar to IR students, considering that initially IR studies were intended to produce diplomats who would represent the country at the international political stage. At least that is the assumption that has developed from the past, even until now. To hone the knowledge and strong instincts of diplomats, international

relations scholars study the history of diplomatic practices of countries around the world. Therefore, they then become familiar with lessons about "the history of European diplomacy", "history of United States diplomacy", "history of Middle East diplomacy", "history of East Asia diplomacy", and so on (Muhadi, et al., 2013).

Diplomacy cannot be separated from foreign policy. There are still many people who equate diplomacy and foreign policy, even though the two are different. If foreign policy talks about policy formulation, including the factors that influence state action, then diplomacy is a strategy for implementing the results of that policy formulation. The notion of diplomacy as a strategy raises its own problems. Many people think that diplomacy is the same as negotiation. Diplomacy can be interpreted through various definitions, one of which is by Adam Watson, who defines diplomacy as, "...negotiation between political entities which acknowledge each other's independence is called diplomacy." (Watson, 1984). The definition of diplomacy as negotiation can also be found in the Oxford English Dictionary which defines diplomacy as, "the conduct of international relations by negotiation."

Throughout history and across various regions, the practice of diplomacy has taken on different forms. It is considered a specialized function performed by individuals in specific roles. Generally, diplomacy can be defined as a peaceful effort to reach a mutual agreement. In terms of conceptual differences, humanitarian diplomacy is distinct from conventional diplomacy. The latter refers to the duties of professional diplomats who represent their governments and work towards achieving their goals. Humanitarian diplomacy, on the other hand, pertains to the work of humanitarian volunteers in conflict or disaster-affected regions (Minear, et al., 2007).

The distinction between conventional diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy lies in their respective goals. The difference can be illustrated by examining how each approach

addresses conflicts and natural disasters. In the case of conflicts, both interstate and intrastate, conventional diplomacy seeks to identify the underlying causes of the conflict and find a solution to resolve it. The mechanisms used to achieve conflict resolution may be bilateral or involve a third party such as mediation or arbitration. In contrast, humanitarian diplomacy is primarily concerned with providing assistance to the victims of the conflict. Humanitarian volunteers do not aim to reconcile the conflicting parties, but rather focus on finding ways to deliver aid to those in need. However, problems may arise when the primary objective of humanitarian diplomacy shifts from providing aid to achieving real conflict resolution, as this responsibility falls outside the scope of the approach (Minear, et al., 2007).

Humanitarian diplomacy is guided by several key principles, including impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Impartiality means that assistance is provided according to the level of need, regardless of any personal or political considerations. Neutrality means that activities are carried out without any political or other foreign agenda, and are not influenced by any particular government or organization. Independence means that humanitarian organizations must have the freedom to operate and make decisions without interference from external sources.

In addition to these principles, study has shown that there are significant differences between traditional diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy. While traditional diplomacy focuses on engaging with national governments, humanitarian agencies must find ways to engage with non-state actors as well, such as local communities and armed groups. As Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi has observed, most humanitarian practitioners do not consider themselves to be diplomats, despite the fact that they must navigate complex political environments in order to deliver aid effectively (Minear, et al., 2007).

Humanitarian diplomacy is a complex and challenging field that involves addressing a range of issues related to protecting civilians in times of crisis. Some of the specific issues that must be addressed include:

1. Assessing the needs of civilians: Humanitarian diplomacy requires an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the needs of civilians who are affected by conflicts, natural disasters, or other crises. This involves assessing the level of need and determining what types of assistance are required to meet those needs.

2. Monitoring changing situations: Humanitarian diplomats must continuously monitor the situation on the ground and adapt their responses as needed. This involves staying informed about changing political, social, and economic conditions and adjusting their strategies accordingly.

3. Ensuring human rights and international humanitarian law: Humanitarian diplomacy involves advocating for the protection of human rights and compliance with international humanitarian law. This may involve engaging with national governments, non-state actors, and other stakeholders to promote respect for these principles.

4. Preventing impunity for offenses against civilians: Humanitarian diplomacy also involves working to prevent impunity for offenses against civilians, such as attacks on civilian populations, sexual violence, and other human rights violations. This may involve supporting legal and judicial mechanisms that hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

Overall, the goal of humanitarian diplomacy is to provide assistance and protection to civilians who are in need, and to promote respect for human rights and international humanitarian law in times of crisis (Minear, et al., 2007).

The government of Turkey has implemented an open door policy as a form of support for refugees who are staying within

Turkey's domestic territory. This policy involves accepting refugees and providing them with temporary protection, access to public services, and provision of camps until they can be permitted to work. The decision to open the border is based on the Geneva Convention of 1951 and its additional protocols of 1967, which Turkey has signed. Technical matters regarding the management of the influx of refugees are regulated by Turkey's national law.

The open door policy implemented by the Turkish government is aimed at providing assistance and protection to refugees who have been displaced from their homes due to conflict, persecution, or other crises. By providing temporary protection, access to public services, and support for basic needs, Turkey is helping to alleviate the suffering of refugees and providing them with a safe haven.

However, the policy also presents significant challenges for the Turkish government, as managing the influx of refugees requires significant resources and coordination. In addition, there are concerns about the conditions in refugee camps and the treatment of refugees in Turkey, including access to basic services, education, and employment opportunities.

Overall, the open door policy implemented by Turkey represents a significant effort to support refugees in need, where these efforts are part of Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy strategy in this case in managing and providing humanitarian assistance and various access needed for Syrian refugees.

Initially, the government of Turkey had refused external assistance for managing the refugee crisis. However, with the increasing number of refugees staying in Turkey, the government has begun to open up to work with other parties. In dealing with refugees, Turkey now works closely with the international community, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Program, and other organizations. In addition, Turkey collaborates with NGOs such as Turkey's Red Crescent.

The collaboration with these organizations has helped Turkey to manage the influx of refugees and provide support for their basic needs. The UNHCR, for example, has provided technical assistance and support for the provision of shelter, basic services, and legal protection for refugees. The World Food Program has supported the provision of food assistance for refugees, while Turkey's Red Crescent has provided medical and humanitarian aid.

Collaboration with the international community and NGOs has also helped to address some of the challenges associated with managing the refugee crisis, including resource constraints, coordination issues, and the need for technical expertise. By working with these organizations, Turkey has been able to improve the quality and effectiveness of its response to the crisis.

Overall, the collaboration between Turkey and the international community and NGOs has played a critical role in managing the refugee crisis and providing support for those in need as part of Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy strategy. However, ongoing efforts will be needed to ensure that refugees continue to receive the assistance and protection they require.

D. Research Argument

Based on the background and theories mentioned above, the writer would like to share several arguments to prove that there are several implementation and impacts of Turkish Open Door Policy as Humanitarian Diplomacy Strategy towards Syrian refugees in Turkey:

- i. Turkey's open-door policy, by providing access to healthcare, education, and shelter for Syrian refugees, not only addresses immediate humanitarian needs but also fosters regional stability by mitigating potential conflicts and contributing to a more secure environment.

- ii. The collaboration between Turkey and international/non-governmental organizations underpins a sustainable approach, showcasing the economic and social benefits of hosting refugees while also enhancing Turkey's soft power on the global stage, thereby influencing its potential membership in the EU.
- iii. Beyond immediate motives, an examination of Turkey's long-term commitment to refugee support reveals the policy's adaptability and potential to positively shape social integration, demonstrating the nation's resilience in maintaining a humanitarian reputation and contributing to broader international cooperation.

E. Research Methods

Research methods is a set of approaches, procedures or techniques in order to gather data or facts for study in order to discover new knowledge or to provide a deeper understanding of a certain topic. This research is using descriptive methods to describe the material. The methods used to collect the data sources were taken from books, scientific journal, reports, online news, and official websites. The data is being collected using the internet which is the modern advanced technology that can help to look for the late and updated information through online. The method that used by the writer will be mentioned such as:

- **Types of Research**

This thesis or research use qualitative research type that explains things that related to relationships, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, ongoing processes and the impact of a certain phenomena.

- **Location of Research**

The location for the research of this article is Turkey as the location of the most Syrian Refugees in the world.

- **Source of Data**

The source of data of this article were mainly obtained from books, scientific journal, reports, online news, and official websites. The author uses the aiming theory to explain a phenomenon why that phenomenon can occur. Analysis made will connect the theories used in writing this research using the method qualitative data analysis.

F. Writing System

In this article, the research systematic writing were divided into 9 parts. These parts were contained background of the issue, research question, theoretical framework, research argument, research objective and benefits, research methods, writing system, as well as outline.

G. Outline

- 1) Chapter 1: Includes a Background, Research Question, Theoretical Framework, Research Argument, Research Objectives and Benefits, Research Methods, Writing System, as well as Systematics of this thesis.
- 2) Chapter 2: Focused on the past experiences of Turkey in responding to the refugee issue from time to time. Moreover, this chapter will show the history of Turkish open door policy, continued with Turkish legal basis of implementing the open door policy both nationally and internationally. Then, the chapter follows with the current situation of refugee in Turkey, including the Turkish humanitarian diplomacy strategy. This starts from accepting the refugees, providing temporary protection, providing camps, and providing access to public services and work opportunities..

- 3) Chapter 3: Explains about the further part of Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy strategy, namely the cooperation between the Turkish government with the International Community, such as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO). This chapter will also explain the actions that have been done to help the Syrian refugees. In this chapter also explains about the domestic and international implications of Turkish Open Door Policy.
- 4) Chapter 4: Contain of conclusion to conclude and close the whole thesis.