



The Relationship Between Transnational Networks and Its Member Cities: Turkey*

Ulus-ötesi Ağlar ve Üye Kentler Arasındaki İlişki: Türkiye

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Abstract

Transnational Municipal Networks have taken their place in international relations as policy actors that facilitate cooperation. The fact that cities increase their effectiveness in the field of global politics with the developments accompanying globalization and localization policies has increased the importance of these networks as a structure describing inter-city cooperation. This study aims to evaluate transnational networks from the cities' perspective and provide an explanation of the relationship between the characteristics of member cities and their participation in these networks. To achieve this, we create a new data set by content coding the transnational networks involving Turkish municipalities in terms of their purposes, functions, and memberships, as well as the member municipalities in terms of their population size, level of development, and institutional unit condition. This data set reveals that the institutional structure of municipalities, the level of urban development, and population are significant determinants of transnational network membership. Additionally, the study describes the link between membership structures and the functions of transnational networks. Our findings have significant implications for urban politics research.

Keywords: Transnational networks, Turkish Municipalities, Cities, Diplomacy, Turkey

Öz

Ulus ötesi belediye ağları, iş birliğini kolaylaştıran politika aktörleri olarak uluslararası ilişkilerde yerini almıştır. Küreselleşme ve yerelleşme politikalarına eşlik eden gelişmeler ile birlikte kentlerin küresel siyaset alanında etkinliklerini artırması, bu ağların kentler arası iş birliğini tanımlayan bir yapı olarak önemini artırmıştır. Bu çalışma, ulus ötesi ağları kentlerin bakış açısıyla değerlendirmeyi ve üye kentlerin özellikleri ile bu ağlara katılımları arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bunu başarmak için, Türkiye'de kentlerin (belediyelerin/ kent yönetimlerinin) üye olduğu ulus ötesi ağların amaçları, işlevleri ve üyelikleri; söz konusu üye kentlerin nüfus yönünden büyüklükleri, gelişmişlik düzeyleri ve kurumsal yapıları içerik analizi yoluyla kodlanmış ve kodlama sonucunda yeni bir veri seti oluşturulmuştur. Bu veri seti, belediyelerin kurumsal yapılarının, kentsel gelişme düzeylerinin ve nüfus büyüklüklerinin ulus ötesi ağ üyeliği için önemli belirleyiciler olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Ek olarak, çalışma üyelik yapıları ile ulus ötesi ağların işlevleri arasındaki bağlantıyı açıklamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, kentsel politika araştırmaları için önemli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ulus ötesi ağlar, Türk Belediyeleri, Kentler, Diplomasi, Türkiye

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Introduction

As the number of city dwellers and urban economies grows, large city governments have begun to exert more influence in domestic and international diplomacy and join transnational networks (Dietrichsen and Niekerk, n.d. 4). In accordance with the increasing activity of city governments, the international collaboration domain is also evolving. The multilevel governance approach, which focuses on facilitating relationships between different levels, comes to the fore when addressing many complex problems, which are cross-border problems such as climate change, food scarcity, water shortage, and environmental pollution. The search for solutions to these problems has required the participation of international political actors. Many of the European Union's (EU) programs in the field of sustainability and climate change target cities and regions more than state governments. EU funding is compounded by the need for cities to build management capacity to deliver sustainable programs and encourages cities to build international networks in the urban sustainability policy sector as a means of developing technical knowledge (Pierre, 2019).

Beyond intergovernmental cooperation in the global domain, networks and collaborations involving city governments and the civil sector are gaining importance as a result of the need for local knowledge to solve problems. Counting the number of existing transnational networks is becoming increasingly difficult in the present day. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the number of transnational networks, regional networks, and networks involving different actors and municipalities has been steadily increasing.

Between 1990 and 2000, Twenty-nine percent of active transnational networks involving municipalities were created, while 30 percent were created after 2001. This represents an increase of 43 networks between 2004 and 2014, or more than four per year. This also indicates a growing interest and demand for networking among local authorities (Acuto et al., 2017, p.16). In addition, the increase in the number of these transnational networks has resulted in networks that focus on more specialized topics. The increase in the number of such networks raises concerns that, as duplications and overlaps increase, the ability of networks to shape global policies and represent local interests may be weakened and fragmented, and that complexity and miscommunication issues may arise (Grandi, 2020, p. 13, 14; Acuto et al., 2017, p. 19; Abdullah and Garcia-Chueca, 2020). To concretize these concerns, it is also necessary to identify networks operating in similar thematic areas and to determine the size of the municipalities participating in the networks. However, the development index of network-member cities is intended to support the contention that cities with developed economies are more likely to participate in collaborative networks (Mocca, 2017). In this context, it is crucial that a municipality's number of transnational networks can be evaluated.

What factors influence municipal membership in transnational networks? Does a significant relationship exist between the structure and functions of a transnational municipal network? Even though there are studies on transnational municipal networks in the literature, these studies emphasize the role of these networks as a reflection of multilevel governance in the EU integration process. In international relations literature, emphasis is also placed on the role of transnational networks as "soft power" in shaping global policies. Transnational networks have been studied from the cities' perspective,

particularly in relation to global urban literature, and a small number of studies have also revealed the relationship between networks and the size of their member cities. Municipal network membership determinants have received scant attention in the literature. According to Mocca (2019), there is a need for research on the causal explanation of local unit membership in transnational networks.

This study aims to clarify the connection between the characteristics of networks and the factors that determine membership in these networks. In this regard, the research is supported by the following arguments: Firstly, as the level of institutionalization of municipal management of international relations rises, the number of network memberships will increase. Secondly, the number of network memberships will increase as the level of urban development rises. The development index of member cities is also intended to support the contention that cities with developed economies are more likely to participate in collaborative networks (Mocca, 2017). In this context, it is crucial that the number of transnational networks involving a municipality can also be evaluated. Thirdly, cities with larger populations will have more network memberships than smaller cities. Fourthly, memberships in transnational networks by municipalities are related to national and international policies. Lastly, networks with a predominantly hybrid membership structure focus on thematic issues, whereas networks with an exclusive municipal membership structure focus on political issues.

It is extremely challenging to classify transnational networks involving municipalities that are interconnected in certain areas and to generalize the results. This constraint compelled us to restrict our study to the 98 transnational networks in which Turkey participates and, consequently, to the characteristics of Turkish municipalities. This study has contributed to knowledge in two significant areas. Firstly, it provides an original data set on the membership of municipalities in transnational networks and bridges the literature on transnational networks and urban policy. Secondly, it contributes to the measurement of the relationship between the characteristics of the municipality and the transnational network of which it is a member by revealing the factors that influence the network membership activity of municipalities.

The research is conducted as follows: The first section examines the literature on transnational municipal networks, as well as their role in global governance and the formation of global policies. Following is a description of the data set's creation, data, and methodology. The study continues with the findings section, which includes the results of the relationship between transnational networks and the characteristics of member municipalities and ends with the conclusion and evaluation section, which provides the results of these findings.

Literature Review

City diplomacy refers to the international activities that are carried out by autonomous regions, states and local governments. In a narrower sense, it refers to local governments, mostly municipalities. However, based on the concept of “trans-governmental”, city diplomacy can be defined as “trans/municipal”: the international relations of cities that attempt to establish mutual relations between municipal governments to address particular challenges (Chan, 2016: 141). Transnational municipal networks are efforts to

bring together local government units/cities located across national borders at a global or regional level to achieve common goals. In a broad sense, municipal networks are used as the general name for all interactions that encompass all city diplomatic actions. In this sense, bilateral dialogues between cities and sister cities are also considered municipal network activities. In a narrower sense, municipal networks are a system of relationships through which cities can cooperate to face the challenges of economic development, social protection and environmental sustainability (Fontona, 2017: 17). In studies, transnational networks involving cities are examined from a variety of perspectives. These focal points are highlighted by the following: the activity of networks in question as actors of global governance in the context of multi-level governance, providing space for lobbying and politics, mediating the advocacy of the local agenda in the international domain, and guiding global policies as soft power (Kern and Bulkeley, 2009, p. Bulkeley, 2005; Betsill and Bulkeley, 2004; Acuto, 2013; Niederhafner, 2013; Grandi, 2020; Wang and Amiri, 2019; Feldman, 2012). The highlights also include what it means for a city to be included in these networks, an evaluation of the cities in the context of their publicity strategies, and how being a member of a network impacts the local policies and service areas of member cities in order to determine how the networks address specific thematic issues such as migration, climate change, and the fight against drugs, which stand out for their uncertainty, complexity, and transboundary nature (Acuto and et al., 2017, p. 18; Grandi, 2020: 48; Dougless, 2002; Muraoka and Avellaneda 2021; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004; Niederhafner, 2013). In a small number of studies, transnational networks involving municipalities (Bouteligier, 2013; Wu, 2020; Fünfgeld, 2015) have also been discussed in the context of discussions on democracy and participation. The prevalence of studies on transnational networks, particularly those involving municipalities in relation to climate change (Betsill and Bulkeley, 2004; Kern and Bulkeley, 2009; Toly, 2008; Smeds and Acuto, 2018; Andonova et al., 2009; Gordon, 2013) is attributable to the efforts made to find a solution to the issue at hand. In his study on the city of Gothenburg, Sweden, Pierre (2019) assesses that cities are increasingly using internationalization as a means of capacity building on a range of urban issues, particularly climate change and sustainability.

Global problems require innovative solutions and a diversity of actors, especially when their transnational nature is taken into account. To solve these issues, it is necessary to contribute multiple perspectives in a coordinated way. Transnational networks support the need to regulate the learning process and behavioural differences through the cooperation of various actors. Innovative hybrid organizations that encourage participation and are flexible and effective make collective success on issues that cannot be achieved individually possible; therefore, networks enable the potential to create value and amass vital resources (Weber and Khademan, 2008, p. 334; Gordon, 2013, p. 290; Koppenjan and Klijn, 2004). In this context, municipal transnational networks stand out as polycentric, loosely connected, non-hierarchical, or horizontally functioning cooperation. Kern and Bulkeley (2009) identify three defining characteristics of transnational networks involving local governments in relation to the expansion of the multilevel character of European governance in the context of European integration: the autonomy of member cities and their freedom to enter and exit the network; its non-hierarchical, polycentric, horizontal character; and the direct implementation of decisions made within the network by its

members. In addition to sharing joint projects and best practices, today's transnational municipal networks also participate in and seek to influence international policymaking; that is, they devote additional resources and energy to international lobbying or city diplomacy on a global scale (Swiney, 2020, p. 245).

Gordon (2013, p. 292) explains the conditions that facilitate the establishment of transnational networks involving municipalities as follows: (a) the exposure of cities to the competitive forces of globalization, (b) a strong obligation to seek means to improve local governance capacity and increase the collective voice of local governments in the face of other levels of government, and (c) the declining cost of travel and long-distance communication. Political, economic, and technological forces traditionally associated with contemporary globalization are transforming the international policies of cities as well as their size, significance, and capabilities. In this context, cities are becoming a central driver of economic development expansion and transforming their status and governance capabilities into political objectives (Curtis and Acuto, 2018). The concentration of global challenges in cities has resulted in the formation of international alliances that have significantly expanded with regard to city-specific issues (Abdullah and Garcia-Chuera, 2020, p. 42). Cities offer the possibility of an emerging political community/assemblage that can provide forms of governance that can keep up with the scale and complexity of global challenges by forming transnational networks (Curtis and Acuto, 2018, p. 11, 12; Acuto and Leffel, 2021).

The number of actors participating in transnational networks is growing, and the policies formulated by these networks are becoming increasingly international. In addition, as the variety of actors in municipal networks increases, the influence of city budget constraints and municipal authority declines. Simultaneously, municipalities not adhering to a strategy for the membership process accompany memberships in networks that prioritize recognition, branding, and economic opportunities (Acuto, 2016). As an alternative to state-centric international regimes, multi-actor, multi-level, and non-hierarchical networks are rising to the forefront of the democracy debate (Lemos and Agraval, 2006; Bulkeley, 2005), and the role of the private sector in these networks is discussed. Multi-actor hybrid networks can make decision-making processes more democratic, particularly those involving the civilian population and the scientific community, and increase the sustainability and activity of city diplomacy on a global scale. Particularly, the scientific community will be able to contribute significantly to networks by providing data to local governments and conducting research and policy analyses to achieve sustainable development objectives (Abdullah and Garcia-Chueca, 2020, p. 51-53).

Mocca (2019), who argues that multilevel governance does not appear suited to provide a causal explanation for the membership of local units in transnational municipal networks, suggests examining the causes at the urban level. While international phenomena such as Europeanization and globalization support the establishment of transnational networks involving municipalities by providing more opportunities to build relationships and a forum for the exchange of knowledge and best practices, they cannot explain why municipalities/cities join these networks on their own (Mocca 2019, p. 278). Municipalities are also emerging as a new, increasingly potent actor in the global

distribution of power (Acuto, 2013). Through transnational cooperation networks and economic projects linking regional, national, and international borders, municipalities have emerged as new political actors in cross-border public action (Milani and Riberio, 2011, p. 23; Acuto, et al., 2017, p. 15). Understanding the rationale for cities' participation in transnational municipal networks requires looking at the opportunities that transnational municipal networks provide to their members. Dissemination and sharing of information, especially technical support, the creation of training opportunities, access to finance, and advocacy through networks are the main reasons for cities to join transnational municipal networks. The capacity and resource support it provides to achieve common goals is important (Haupt and Coppola, 2019). Municipalities provide access to new ideas and knowledge, as well as civil, public, and private capital through their networks (Bouteligier, 2013; Niederhafner, 2013; Wang and Amiri, 2019; Abdullah and Garcia-Chueca, 2020). Networks are complementary in terms of resources, experience, and practice (Weber and Khademan, 2008, p. 335-336), and they also demonstrate how municipalities adapt their diplomatic practices to the shifting international order (Klaus, 2020). Butun Bayındır (2021) in his study on three cases from Turkey reveals that the first reason behind participation in transnational municipal networks is the intention to benefit from experiences, knowledge, expertise, innovation, and best practices and the second reason is the intention to benefit from funds and grants. In addition to sharing information and disseminating policy information, ensuring local development as a requirement of inter-city competition also emerges as an important reason for joining a network (Taylor, 2011, p. 68), putting promotion at the forefront of networks. According to the concept of competitive cooperation of networks (Van der Pluij and Melissen, 2007, p. 13), networks involve both competition and cooperation between cities. In their field study on the reasons for membership in transnational municipal networks in six cities from a new institutionalist perspective, Gronnestad and Nielsen (2021) demonstrate that both the rational choice institutional theory and the discursive institutional theory can explain the aforementioned reasons. In the study, it is stated that the rational choice institutional theory is the best explanatory framework, and that membership is viewed as a means of cities to develop and legitimize certain identities.

In terms of shaping global politics, transnational networks, particularly those involving global cities, stand out when viewed in terms of the size of the cities that comprise them. Of C40 member cities, 90% are also members of the Metropolis network, and 99.9% of Metropolis network members are also International Union of Local Governments (UCLG) members (Abdullah and Garcia-Chueca, 2020, p. 49). In this context, it can be stated that while global city governments engage in city diplomacy activities to influence the international policy agenda via the networks in which they participate, smaller and medium-sized city municipalities participate in networks on specific thematic issues to defend their interests, facilitate the provision of local services, and share technical, financial, and informational support in this facilitation. The explanations for the cities of Milan and Turono reveal that transnational municipal networks are appreciated primarily for the symbolic functions they serve, allowing the two municipalities to strengthen their prestige and position in local and/or national policy spaces. In his study assessing Milan and Torino's membership on transnational municipal networks in the context of migration policies, Caponio (2018) assessed that in the case of Torino, participation in transnational

municipal networks represents a resource to be used locally to strengthen relations with local stakeholders, especially banking foundations, while in Milan, membership in transnational municipal networks is used to lobby for national financial resources.

In transnational networks involving municipalities, climate change and sustainable issues stand out as matters of strategic cooperation, particularly in the context of the exchange of best practices in local government public policies (Manfredi-Sanchez, 2021, p. 4-7; Surmacz, 2018: 12; James and Verrest, 2015; Rashidi and Patt, 2018). In the governance of these networks, supporting the performance of the network and shaping global policies by working strategically rather than collaboratively (Wukich, 2014) are top priorities. While discussing the influence of transnational municipal networks on global governance and diplomacy in the context of network secretariats, which are the administrative arms of municipal networks, Lecavalier and Gordon (2020) present the influence of networks on global political decisions, particularly in the field of climate change. Moreover, they argue that issue/theme-specific networks can facilitate interactions between municipalities, as well as distill and reformulate policy actions and best practices pertaining to the themes they prioritize (Lecavalier and Gordon, 2020, p. 17). The fact that cities/municipalities stand out, particularly in the climate change agenda, is closely related to the urbanization rate of the global population, the fact that cities are centers of economic productivity and power, and the fact that they are disaster-prone centers. The relationship between urban actions and global emissions is also significant. To find solutions, a local-scale approach to climate change necessitates local scale and innovation to communicate and collaborate (Gordon, 2013, p. 289). In his field study of 7 German cities¹, Oppowa evaluated that cities prefer ICLEI membership for lobbying activities including mayoral support at the international level, membership in the Energy Cities and EUROCITIES network for lobbying and project cooperation at the technical level, and membership in the Climate Alliance for information exchange, awareness raising and project cooperation (Oppowa, 2015). Bush et al. (2018), in their study on 7 German cities that are members of transnational municipal climate networks, state that the reasons why cities become members of transnational municipal networks are not the services that a network and its infrastructure can provide to cities; the act of joining and becoming a member of a network is more important, and membership is used for domestic policy purposes such as emission reduction targets and institutionalization of climate trajectories.

Transnational network cities/municipalities unite local actors, such as businesses, NGOs, associations, and industry chambers, with national and international actors. Networks between cities/municipalities can also be used to raise awareness about complex and widespread issues, such as the environment, transportation, and health, and provide opportunities to address contemporary urban issues (Dougless, 2002, p. 64).

Methodology

Classifying transnational networks involving municipalities as interconnected in some locations and generalizing the results is extremely difficult. Rather than classifying transnational networks in relation to one another, the purpose of this study is to classify networks in which Turkish municipalities participate based on their purposes, functions,

1 Berlin, Bonn, Freiburg, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Munich, Stuttgart.

and memberships in order to reveal the relationship between the municipalities and the networks. This research answers three main questions:

Question 1: Municipal foreign relations are a learning process that continues over time (Buis, 2009, p. 191). Is there a correlation between the institutionalization of external relations in municipalities and membership in transnational networks?

Question 2: Is there a relationship between the membership structures of transnational networks involving municipalities and the functions of these networks?

The data related to Question 2 are presented in Table 1.

Question 3: a. As the level of development of cities increases, does the number of their memberships in transnational networks also increase?

b. Is there a relationship between the population size of municipalities and memberships in transnational networks?

c. Is the membership of municipalities in transnational networks related to national and international policies?

The data for Question 3/c are presented in Table 1.

Within the scope of the research, these questions were tested through the transnational networks involving Turkish municipalities and the member municipalities of the network. The transnational networks involving Turkish municipalities were identified using documents published by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change. According to the list published by the Ministry, 359 memberships have been established by many municipalities in Turkey in various years. In the list of 139 different transnational networks in total, the number of transnational networks was actually less than 139 due to some networks being rewritten under different names and mergers occurring between networks, and a total of 108 different networks were identified as having been established. Moreover, in the conducted research, it was not possible to access the structures of 10 transnational networks due to their closure, temporary nature and similar reasons. In this context, this study includes 98 transnational networks of municipalities in Turkey (Annex 1).

For the research, data on the structure of transnational networks in terms of how they are distributed according to the applicable classification were gathered by scanning and coding the purpose, memberships, and activities sections of the networks' own websites. Data on international networks is usually taken from the website of the relevant network. In rare cases where websites could not be accessed, access to the relevant data was provided by conducting a general search on the internet about the network. Data were coded through content analysis. The coding was done separately by two authors and compared. The process of content analysis and comparison of the data by the authors was repeated until at least 80 percent agreement was achieved in the coding.

Table 1
Classification of Transnational Networks Involving Turkish Municipalities According to Their Structure

Member Structures	Inter-City Structures
	Hybrid Structures
Functional Types	Structures with Technical Functions
	Structures with Economic Functions
	Structures with Political Functions
	Structures with Hybrid Functions
Purpose(s)	Hybrid purposes
	Local advocacy
	Political dialogue
	Sustainability
	Business associations Based on disadvantaged groups' rights
	Economic development
	Culture-identity-protection
	Security
	Digitalization, technology, innovation and science

Table 1 details the study's coding method and justifications. Membership structures, functional types, and purpose(s) are the three classifications for transnational networks.

Networks of municipalities are "inter-city structures" if they consist only of cities. Networks whose member structures consist exclusively of cities and urban communities are classified as inter-city networks, whereas networks that also include NGOs, the private sector, public institutions and organizations, and other sectoral stakeholders are classified as "hybrid structures". There are four distinct coding schemes for functional structures: "technical", "economic", "political", and "hybrid". Transnational networks with technical objectives are transnational networks whose principal activity is the collection of specialized knowledge. The primary purpose of transnational networks with economic functions is economic and commercial cooperation. Political transnational networks are transnational networks whose primary purpose is political (Dedeoglu, 1998). Transnational networks with hybrid functions are networks with multiple functions. The classification of member municipalities of transnational networks is based on the purposes/types of purposes of these networks, which are categorized under nine titles. This included "hybrid objectives," "local advocacy," "political debate," "sustainability," and "commercial associations", "disadvantaged groups/rights-based cooperation," "economic growth," "culture-identity protection," "security," and "digitization, technology, innovation, and science."

Findings

According to the study's methodology, the research findings are presented in three dimensions. First, the relationship between institutionalization and network memberships in the context of Turkish city diplomacy; second, the classification of the structures of transnational networks involving Turkish municipalities; and third, the classification's results in terms of the purpose/purposes and activities of these networks.

The Relationship between Institutionalization and Membership in Transnational Networks in the Context of Turkish City Diplomacy

Institutionalization of city diplomacy refers to the establishment of a distinct structure or unit for city diplomacy activities within local governments' institutional organization schemes. These structures are directly responsible for the international relations of local governments, and their purpose is to ensure that sufficient qualified personnel execute and coordinate the relevant services of local governments in the international domain (Erdem and Ersavas Kavanoz, 2021, p. 29). According to Milani and Riberio, participation in transnational networks is one of the three most important diplomatic activities conducted by local governments with a formal structure (2011, p. 30). The data on the institutionalization of city diplomacy in cities is essential for associating institutionalization with network membership.

In order to examine the impact of institutionalizing city diplomacy on memberships in transnational networks in Turkey, the effect of establishing a separate "foreign relations unit" within the municipal organizational structure was examined. According to Erdem and Ersavas Kavanoz's study (Kavanoz, 2021, p. 3), 45 municipalities in Turkey have institutionalized city diplomacy; that is, they have a separate foreign relations unit².

Table 2

The Influence of "Institutionalization" on Transnational Network Memberships in Turkish City Diplomacy

Explanation	Nr.	Explanation	Nr.	Explanation	Rate
Municipalities with a Foreign Relations Unit	31	Memberships to Transnational Networks in Municipalities with a Foreign Relations Units	156	Ratio of Membership to Transnational Networks in Municipalities with a Foreign Relations Unit	5.032
Municipalities without a Foreign Relations Unit	110	Memberships to Transnational Networks in Municipalities without a Foreign Relations Unit	181	Rate of Membership to Transnational Networks in Municipalities without a Foreign Relations Unit	1.645

Table 2 compares the transnational memberships of Turkish municipalities with and without a foreign relations unit. Turkey has 141 municipalities with 338 transnational network memberships. Thirty-one of 141 municipalities have a foreign relations unit as part of their organizational structure, making them institutionalized. The remaining 110 towns lack a foreign relations unit. While 31 municipalities with foreign relations units have 156 memberships in transnational networks, 110 municipalities without foreign relations units have 181 memberships. Municipalities with a foreign relations unit are likely to belong to more networks than those without.

In the scope of the research conducted on the institutional structures of all municipalities in Turkey, except for municipalities below the urban level, 45 municipalities established

2 For more detailed information on which municipalities in Turkey have a separate foreign relations unit, see: Erdem, N and Ersavas Kavanoz, S. (2021), "A Research on 'City Diplomacy Management' in Turkey", *Journal of Urban and Environmental Research*, 3(1), 28-49.

foreign relations units in their organizational structures between 1989 and 2020, with a significant number of these units being established in the last decade. Establishing institutional structures within the municipality for city diplomacy efforts is, on the one hand, a necessity due to the volume and complexity of these operations, and, on the other, an indication of the value placed on these endeavors.

Among Turkish cities with an institutionalized structure in the field of city diplomacy, the number of network memberships is greater in municipalities with comparably larger populations and a greater number of institutionalized structure employees. Among the most populous cities in Turkey, Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Gaziantep have distinct institutional frameworks for foreign relations and a relatively large number of employees. In a number of Turkish municipalities, the foreign relations unit is led by a single individual. In addition, the amount of appropriate and qualified personnel is viewed as a crucial factor influencing a variety of activities in these units, such as membership in transnational networks and the number of activities to be conducted within the network. The organizational structures of metropolitan municipalities in Turkey show that there are units called the Department of Foreign Relations or the Directorate of Foreign Relations that deal with these issues. In fact, the Foreign Relations Directorate of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality is comparable in size to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is larger than the foreign ministries of many countries (Akman, 2017: 486-487).

Structure-Based Classification of Transnational Networks Involving Municipalities in Turkey

The following table depicts the structure-based distribution of transnational networks with Turkish municipal members (member structures, period of cooperation, geographic domains, functional categories, purpose/purposes, and number of activities).

Table 3

Classification of Transnational Networks Involving Turkish Municipalities According to Their Structure

Type of Classification	Number	Total	Rate	Total
Member Structures	Inter-City Structures	46	47%	100%
	Hybrid Structures	52	53%	
Functional Types	Structures with Technical Functions	52	53%	100%
	Structures with Economic Functions	4	4%	
	Structures with Political Functions	40	41%	
	Structures with Hybrid Functions	2	2%	
Purpose(s)	Hybrid purposes	3	3%	100%
	Local advocacy	8	8%	
	Political dialogue	40	41%	
	Sustainability	11	11.5%	
	Business associations Based on disadvantaged groups' rights	11	11.5%	
	Economic development	3	3%	
	Culture-identity-protection	16	16%	
	Security	2	2%	
Digitalization, technology, innovation and science	4	4%		

Of the 98 transnational networks comprised of Turkish municipalities, 46 have inter-city membership structures, while 52 have hybrid membership structures.

According to the functional types of the municipalities, 52 of the 98 transnational municipal networks in Turkey have technical purposes, 4 have economic functions, 40 have political roles, and 2 have hybrid functions. The Global Fund for Cities Development (GFCD) serves a financial purpose. The Covenant of Mayors for Peace (www.yereldiplomasi.gov.tr) serves a political purpose, whereas the Cities for Mobility Network (CfM) serves a technical purpose. In conclusion, the Union of Turkish World Municipalities serves a hybrid purpose (economic, political and technical).

Table 4

The Relationship between Membership Structures and Functional Types of Transnational Networks

	Total	Functional Types			
		Technical	Economic	Political	Hybrid
Inter-city Membership	46	19	0	25	2
Hybrid Membership	52	33	4	16	0

Table 4 demonstrates that the majority of hybrid membership networks have technical functions based on the relationship between membership structures and functional types in the classification of transnational networks. Many urban problems, particularly those that can be categorized as complex, necessitate multi-stakeholder accountability for their resolution because they affect multiple sectors and individuals (Head, 2008). The diverse resources that each participant possesses in response to the issue are essential for mobilization because they provide a forum for discussing alternative solutions. Discussion of these multiple potential sources of solutions may yield more fruitful outcomes when determining the best option (Head and Alford, 2015). The participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes regarding issues that affect them (Huxham et al., 2000), even though the balance in power relations between stakeholders is debatable, is essential in the context of democratic debates, depending on the nature of the problem and the affected region.

Based on the relationship between membership structures and functional types in the classification of transnational networks, Table 4 demonstrates that the majority of networks with intercity memberships are political in nature. The resilience of a state is in the reshaping of intergovernmental relations, just as it is for private businesses. A public administration perspective that is more accessible to the public, less bureaucratic, more flexible, more innovative, more entrepreneurial, and more effective has begun to emerge in this context (Weiss, 1995, p. 229). In an effort to influence public policy, advocacy activities have become one of the public administration strategies used to develop participatory processes (Babaoglu, 2016, p. 295). As a response to higher levels of government, local governments favor constructing new advocacy mechanisms for the representation of various rights and interests and engaging in advocacy efforts (Loftis and Kettler, 2015, p. 193-194). The collaborative efforts to amplify and safeguard the voice of the local in the global sphere have a significant impact on the political functions of transnational networks, with inter-city structures taking the lead.

Relationships Between Turkish Municipalities and Transnational Networks

By 2021, 54 provinces, eight municipal unions, a museum affiliated with a municipality, and one corporation in Turkey will have established a total of 359 transnational networks acting in collaboration. There are a total of 141 cooperating municipalities in 54 provinces.

Table 5

Types of Member Municipalities of Transnational Municipal Networks in Turkey and the Number of Acts of Cooperation

	Sub-urban Municipality	District Municipality	City Municipality	Metropolitan District Municipality	Metropolitan Municipality	Total
Number of Municipalities	8	15	21	71	26	141
Number of Acts of Cooperation	8	19	34	119	157	338
Cooperation Per Municipality	1.00	1.26	1.62	1.68	6.03	-

The distribution of Turkish municipalities that are members of transnational networks by municipality type and number of memberships/cooperation is shown in Table 5. Accordingly, out of 141 municipalities, 18 percent are metropolitan municipalities, 50 percent are metropolitan district municipalities, 14 percent are city municipalities, 12 percent are district municipalities and 6 percent are sub-urban municipalities. Additionally, the distribution of Turkish municipalities by type is indicative of their populations. The evaluation of the number of partnerships established by Turkish municipalities that are members of transnational networks within the scope of Table 4's municipality distribution reveals a total of 338 distinct acts of cooperation established by 141 member municipalities. Metropolitan municipalities formed 47 percent of the 338 partnerships, while metropolitan district municipalities formed 35 percent. Eighteen percent of non-metropolitan municipalities demonstrate cooperation. In Turkey, member municipalities of transnational networks are frequently densely populated. There is a correlation between the size of a municipality's population and its participation in transnational networks. Specifically, metropolitan communities appear to have a greater propensity to join networks. Larger municipalities in Turkey are more likely than smaller municipalities to collaborate with transnational networks. It is believed that eight municipalities are members of transnational networks and that each municipality collaborates with only one network. Furthermore, 26 metropolitan municipalities that are part of transnational networks have established a total of 157 affiliations acting in cooperation.

As indicated previously, Turkish municipalities with foreign relations units are more likely to participate in transnational networks. Municipalities with foreign relations units are also among the most populous (metropolitan municipalities). According to the research conducted by Erdem and Ersavaş Kavanoz (2021, p. 39), 18 of the 45 Turkish municipalities with foreign relations units in 2020 were metropolitan municipalities, while the remaining 25 were metropolitan district municipalities. There is one foreign relations unit in each provincial and district municipality. Twenty-seven municipalities have a population of 500,001 or higher.

Table 6

Distribution of Municipalities with Memberships to Transnational Networks in Turkey by Geographical Locations and Human Development Indexes

GEO- GRAPHI- CAL REGIONS	Number of Municipalities	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEXES ³								
		Value			Ranking					
		0.000- 0.499	0.500- 0.799	0.800- 1.000	Be- tween 1-15	Be- tween 16-30	Be- tween 31-45	Be- tween 46-60	Be- tween 61-75	Be- tween 75-81
Eastern Anatolia Region	16	-	14	2	2	2	2	-	2	8
Black Sea Region	24	-	15	9	6	7	6	3	2	-
Mediterranean Region	29	-	5	24	11	14	1	3	-	-
South-eastern Anatolia Region	46	-	46	-	-	-	-	30	12	4
Aegean Region	54	-	9	45	42	3	4	5	-	-
Central Anatolia Region	45	-	18	27	27	2	15	1	-	-
Marmara Region	124	-	13	111	109	7	3	2	3	-

In the relationship between municipalities and memberships in transnational networks, geographical region appears to be as significant as size. Table 6 depicts the geographical distribution of Turkish municipalities that are members of transnational networks. It is observed that Marmara municipalities have the highest number of transnational network memberships. Eastern Anatolia municipalities have established the fewest memberships. Bursa, Kocaeli, Bursa, and Istanbul, which are among the top 15 provinces on the list, are located in the Marmara region, which has a very high human development index score. The majority of municipalities in the Marmara region of Turkey that are members of transnational networks (109/124 in Table 5) are among the top 15 provinces with a “very high” index of human development. In Eastern Anatolia, where the number of collaborations is lowest, the majority of provinces (14/16 in Table 6) with collaborations have a “high” human development index. On the human development index, half of the participating cities (8/16 in Table 6) rank at or near the bottom. Istanbul, with 57 partnerships, and Bursa, with 35 collaborations, are among the Marmara region provinces with the most network memberships. In terms of disparities in regional development, the number of Turkish municipalities that are part of transnational networks is crucial.

In regions with a large number of memberships, the geographic distribution of transnational network memberships is dominated by one or two cities. Istanbul has 57 memberships and Bursa has 35 memberships in the Marmara region, while Izmir has

3 Human Development Index data was obtained from <https://ingev.org/>.

seven memberships in the Aegean region, Gaziantep has 28 memberships in the Southeast region, and Ankara has 23 memberships in the Central Anatolia region. Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Bursa are the most populous metropolitan cities in Turkey, and they are connected to transnational networks. The number of transnational networks in which Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality participates has increased in recent years, according to data from the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change. It should be taken into account that Fatma Sahin, the mayor of Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, chairs two transnational municipal networks: the United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA), the Asian Mayors Forum (AMF)⁴.

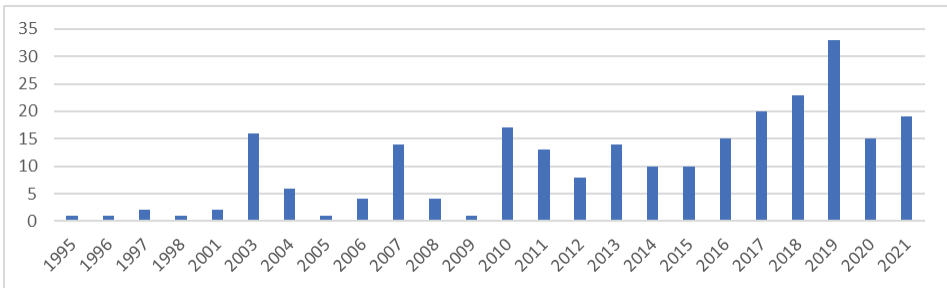


Figure 1. Distribution of Municipalities in Turkey by Years of Membership to Transnational Networks⁵

Figure 1 depicts the distribution of cities according to their years of membership in transnational networks. In the 1990s, Turkish municipalities began to join transnational networks. Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality joined the METROPOLIS network as the first municipality in 1995. Until the 2000s, only Turkish provinces remained members of transnational networks. The number of transnational network memberships increased dramatically in 2003 compared to previous years. This year, smaller administrative units than provinces (district municipalities) also joined the networks. In the process of local government reform in Turkey at the turn of the 21st century, significant progress was made in local governments' international relations. The reform process was concluded between 2004 and 2005, with the EU and the World Bank (WB) playing crucial roles in its conclusion. Prior to the reform, these actors had various demands regarding local governments. One of these demands was that municipalities be allowed to establish relations with foreign and transnational local government organizations (Alici, 2007: 7; Güler, 2003b: 3). In the post-reform period in Turkey, there have been important developments regarding these demands. Article 74 of Law No. 5393 on Municipalities adopted in 2005 directly regulates the transnational relations of municipalities under the title of "relations abroad". In Law No. 5393, joint services and project expenditures with domestic and foreign public and private sectors and NGOs are listed among "municipal expenditures" under Article 60. Similar provisions are regulated for special provincial administrations in Turkey in Articles 43 and 62 of Law No. 5302 on Special Provincial

4 National network of municipalities in Turkey, association.

5 For the memberships to the International Union of Local Governments, Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Regional Organization (UCLG-MEWA) network, the dates of when the memberships were approved by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change are not given.

Administration. The Europeanization process has also been an important factor in the establishment of foreign relations units within the organizational structure of municipalities in Turkey. The Europeanization process is also an important factor in the establishment of foreign relations units within the organizational structure of municipalities in Turkey. The municipalities in Turkey that have foreign relations units have established these units to facilitate participation in EU and other international organizations' projects or access to grants and foreign resources needed for municipal projects, to follow up the activities of the EU and other international organizations, and to organize information and training activities, conferences, seminars and workshops to facilitate the EU harmonization process (Ersavas Kavanoz and Erdem, 2021: 39). The globalization process is a significant impetus for international relations-related activities. Globally, the globalization process makes national borders largely invisible. Local governments in Turkey are placing a greater emphasis on cooperation and partnerships and pursuing greater visibility on the international stage, both in terms of seeking solutions to common issues and bolstering their administrative and financial autonomy.

Conclusion

There is no single classification of municipal networks internationally. Today's municipal networks differ in terms of their objectives, involved parties, and roles. In addition, population size, institutional structure, and level of development may impact the network memberships of cities. In this context, an analysis of transnational networks involving Turkish municipalities and network-affiliated municipalities was conducted. In this context, the study aims to identify the factors that determine the relationship between the transnational networks that include Turkish municipalities and the municipalities that are network members.

The first finding within the scope of the investigation relates to the institutional structure. The vast majority of Turkish cities that are members of transnational networks lack independent foreign relations units and even fewer possess foreign relations units. Moreover, it was demonstrated that the few municipalities with foreign relations units were more likely to be part of transnational networks than the majority of municipalities without such units.

The second finding within the scope of the study relates to the population sizes and levels of development of the network's participating municipalities. In Turkey, the population size corresponds to the type of municipality. The membership of municipalities in transnational networks is significantly influenced by their size. It has been observed that as the population of a municipality rises, the number of memberships in transnational networks rises as well. The rate of institutionalization of foreign relations increases as the population of a municipality grows in Turkey. The degree of urbanization also distinguishes municipalities based on their location. The municipalities in the Marmara region, which has a very high human development index, have the most memberships in transnational networks, according to the findings.

The third finding of the study is that national and international policies influence the participation of Turkish municipalities in transnational networks. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Turkish local government reform process pushed municipalities'

incorporation into transnational networks. Especially in recent years, as a result of the effect of globalization on membership growth, towns have tended to benefit more from collaboration.

The study's final conclusion concerns the relationship between the member structures and functions of transnational networks. Although it is challenging to categorize transnational networks that include municipalities based on their structure and to generalize the results, the findings indicate that the membership structure of transnational networks is related to their activities. Transnational networks with technical functions are networks with hybrid memberships due to the complexity and interconnectedness of the topics they address. In the case of inter-city transnational networks developed by cities and urban communities, it has been observed that inter-city transnational networks are also typically characterized as networks with political functions due to political concerns such as bringing the local voice to the global arena.

Although our study makes a significant contribution to the study of the relationship between transnational municipal networks and the membership decisions of municipalities in those networks, additional research is required to produce more robust findings on the subject. Our findings are based on a single case study: Turkey. Consequently, there may be country-specific influences on our findings. Future research should expand the scope of our data by applying the same categorization scheme to other nations. A truly cross-national analysis would enhance the external validity of our findings and serve as a solid starting point for identifying causal mechanisms. We were unable to interview municipal officials about their motivations for joining transnational municipalities networks due to limited resources. Incorporating in-depth interviews would also increase the scope of our investigation and help us comprehend their decision-making process. Keeping in mind all of these caveats, we believe that our study represents an important first step in the right direction.

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Annex 1

Transnational (Municipal) Network	Abbreviated name	Websites of the network
Union Internationale Des Transports Publics	UITP	https://www.uitp.org/
International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing	ISPRS	https://www.isprs.org/
The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions	IFLA	https://www.ifla.org/
International Council of Museums	ICOM	https://icom.museum/en/
Deutsche Vereinigung Für Wasserwirtschaft, Abwasser Und Abfall	DWA	https://de.dwa.de/de/
The Council of European Municipalities and Regions	CEMR	https://www.ccre.org/
Association of Towns Awarded the Europe Prize	EUROPEPRIZE	https://www.coe.int/
The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe	COE	https://www.coe.int/
World Federation of United and Twinned Towns	FMCU-UTO	https://uia.org/s/or/en
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	OECD	https://www.oecd.org/
Arab Towns Organization	ATO	https://arab.org/
Conseil International Des Organisations De Festivals De Folklore Et D'arts Traditionnels	CIOFF	https://www.cioff.org/
International Water Resources Association	IWRA	https://www.iwra.org/
Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities	OICC	https://www.oicc.org/
Mayors for Peace	–	https://www.mayorsforpeace.org/en/
The Assembly of European Regions	AER	https://aer.eu/
World Association of the Major Metropolises	METROPOLIS	https://www.metropolis.org/
The International Association of Hand Papermakers and Paper Artists	IAPMA	https://www.iapma.info/
The League Of Historical Cities	LHC	https://www.lhc-s.org/
Botanic Gardens Conservation International	BGCI	https://www.bgci.org/
World Health Organization - Healthy Cities Network	–	https://www.who.int/
Phase V (2009-2013) of The WHO European Healthy Cities	–	https://www.who.int/
Phase VII (2019-2024) of The WHO European Healthy Cities	–	https://www.who.int/
The Walled Towns Friendship Circle	WTFC	https://www.europeanwalledtowns.org/
Local Governments for Sustainability	ICLEI	https://iclei.org/
Energy Cities	EC	https://energy-cities.eu/
Medcities	MEDCITIES	https://medcities.org/
	EUROCITIES	https://eurocities.eu/
European Association of Development Agencies	EURADA	https://www.eurada.org/

The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria	EAZA	https://www.eaza.net/
World Academy for Local Government and Democracy	WALD	https://wald.org.tr/
Association Of Cities for Recycling	ACR	https://acrplus.org/en/
Standing Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of Local and Regional Authorities	COPPEM	https://uia.org/
European Network of Training Organizations for Local and Regional Authorities	ENTO	https://ento.org/
Asia Pacific Network of Science and Technology Centers	ASPAC	https://www.aspacnet.org/
Alliance of Euro-Mediterranean Cultural Cities	AVEC	https://uia.org/
European Association for Local Democracy	ALDA	https://www.alda-europe.eu/
L'associazione Cittaslow	CITTASLOW	https://www.cittaslow.it/
The European Association of Historic Towns and Regions	EAHTR	www.historic-towns.org
Eurocities Heritage Europe	_	https://eurocities.eu/
Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe	NALAS	http://www.nalas.eu/
Lighting Urban Community International	LUCI	https://www.luciasociation.org/
Union of Turkish World Municipalities	TDBB	https://www.tdbb.org.tr/
Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative	EMI	https://emi-megacities.org/
İslam İşbirliği Diyalog ve İşbirliği Gençlik Forumu	ICYF-DC	https://www.icyforum.org/
International Union of Local Authorities Section for the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Region	UCLG-MEWA	https://uclg-mewa.org/
European Coalition of Cities against Racism	ECCAR	https://www.eccar.info/en
Creative Cities Network	_	https://en.unesco.org/
European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities	EASPD	https://www.easpd.eu/
European Destination of Excellence	EDEN	https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/
European Network of Living Labs	ENoLL	https://enoll.org/
The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation	EGTC	http://www.egtctritia.eu/
The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life	_	https://charter-equality.eu/the-charter/
The European Network for Accessible Tourism	ENAT	https://www.accessibletourism.org/
The North Africa and Middle East Science Centers Network	NAMES	https://www.namesnetwork.org/
Cities For Mobility	CfM	https://www.cities-for-mobility.net/
Delice Network	DELICE	https://www.delice-network.com/
Avrupa Akdeniz Zirvesi	_	https://www.mfa.gov.tr/akdeniz-icin-birlik.tr.mfa
Covenant of Mayors	CoMO	https://eu-mayors.ec.europa.eu/en/home

Global Fund for Cities Development	FMDV	https://www.financeyourcities.org/
International Federation of Parks and Recreation Administration	IFPRA	https://uia.org/s/or/en/
Global Design Cities Organization	GDCO	https://globaldesigningcities.org/
Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate&Energy	Covenant of Mayors	https://eu-mayors.ec.europa.eu/en/home
Akıllı Ulaşım Sistemleri Derneği	AUSDER	https://austurkiye.org.tr/
Rotta Dı Aenea Association	–	https://www.aeneasroute.org/en/
Euromed Summit	EUROMED	https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events
United Local Authorities for Peace	ULAP	https://www.ulap.net.ph/
The WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities (the Network)	GAFC	https://globalcitieshub.org/
Glocal Forum	GF	-
The Association For International Sport for All	TAFISA	http://tafisa.org/
Local Authorities Partnership Programme in The Mediterranean	MED-PACT	https://med.ucf.edu/global-health/med-pact/
Asian Mayors Forum	AMF	https://www.mayors.asia/
European Union European Capitals Conference	–	https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/culture-in-cities-and-regions/designated-capitals-of-culture
European Social Network	ESN	https://www.esn-eu.org/
European Walled Towns	EWT	www.europeanwalledtowns.org
World e-Governments Organization	WEGO	https://seoulsolution.kr/en/content/world-e-government-organization-wego
World Conference on Transport Research Society	WCTRS	https://wctrs-society.com/
The Co-Mayors of İpekyolu Municipality	–	-
Black Sea Capitals Association	BSCA	-
Inter-City Intangible Cultural Cooperation Network	ICCN	https://www.iccnheritage.org/
Cities4Forests	Cities4Forests	https://cities4forests.com/
TELECITIES	TELECITIES	-
The International Sport and Culture Association	ISCA	https://www.isca.org/
Agricity	AGRICITY	https://www.agricities.com/
Creative Cities Network	UCCN	https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home
The World Union of Wholesale Markets	WUWM	https://wuwm.org/
The World Administrative Cities Association	WACA	-
International Planetarium Society	IPS	https://www.ips-planetarium.org/
European Cities Against Drugs	ECAD	https://www.ecad.net/
Centrum Für Internationale Migration Undentwicklung	CIM	https://www.cimonline.de/de/html/index.html
Rainbow Cities Network	RCN	https://www.rainbowcities.com/
Secure Network Society	–	-
European Youth Capital	EYC	https://www.youthforum.org/topics/youthcapital

The European Network of Science Centers and Museums	ECSİTE	https://www.ecsite.eu/
European Museum Forum	EMF	https://www.europeanforum.museum/en/
Global City Indicators Facility	GCIF	https://www.iso.org/organization/660833.html
International Conference on Localization and Emerging Technologies	ICLET	https://conference.iium.edu.my/iclet2023/
Culinary Heritage	–	https://www.culinaryheritage.net/

