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Humanitarian Foreign Policy As Soft Power: Türkiye As An Emerging Global Actor

The dynamics of the 21st century's international system have offered Türkiye greater opportunity for maneuver. There has been a noticeable increase in the use of humanitarian diplomacy by Türkiye as an emerging global actor which also contributes to its soft power capacity. This article seeks to examine the key characteristics and implementation areas of growing humanitarianism in Türkiye's foreign policy over the last two decades. By focusing on one instrument of soft power, the article attempts to highlight its significance. Humanitarian aid and development assistance, support for Syrian refugees, peace-building and mediation efforts are examined as implementation areas in Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy.

Keywords: Türkiye's Foreign Policy, Soft Power, Humanitarian Diplomacy, Humanitarian Assistance, Emerging Actor.

Yumuşak Güç Olarak İnsani Dış Politika: Yükselen Küresel Bir Aktör Olarak Türkiye

21. yüzyıldaki uluslararası sistemin dinamikleri Türkiye'ye daha fazla manevra imkanı sunmuştur. Yükselen bir küresel aktör olarak Türkiye'nin insani diplomasi kullanımında, yumuşak güç kapasitesine de katkıda bulunan gözle görülür bir artış olmuştur. Bu makale, son yirmi yılda Türkiye'nin dış politikasında artan insanîyetçiliğin temel özelliklerini ve uygulama alanlarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Makale, yumuşak gücün bir aracına odaklanarak, onun önemini vurgulamaya çalışmaktadır. İnsani yardım ve kalkınma yardımları, Suriyeli mültecilere destek, barışın inşası ve arabuluculuk çabaları Türkiye'nin insani dış politikasının uygulama alanları olarak incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası, Yumuşak Güç, İnsani Diplomasi, İnsani Yardım, Yükselen Güç.

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1. Introduction

It is commonly known that the traditional actors of humanitarianism are the United Nations (UN) agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Yet, humanitarian assistance (HA) and humanitarian diplomacy (HD) also involve the activities of states besides the activities carried out by the international humanitarian organizations and non-state actors. As humanitarianism becomes part of state's foreign policy, states display unilateral, bilateral and multilateral efforts. Today, other than traditional governmental actors such as the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden, there are emerging actors as humanitarian needs have steadily grown globally in the last two decades. This article draws attention to the humanitarianism in Türkiye's foreign policy as an emerging actor. Turkey's growing humanitarianism in foreign policy increases its credibility and attraction abroad thus sponsoring its soft power in international relations.

Türkiye is an early example of an emerging global actor in the post-Cold War period as Bosnia and Somalia were its first humanitarian involvements. It is among the largest donors of HA in international government funding in the last couple of years that largely involves expenditure on hosting Syrian refugees. According to the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2021, p. 50), it contributed 0.98 percent of its gross national income as international HA in 2021. It is puzzling to observe that on the one hand, Türkiye is among the 40 countries having high levels of humanitarian need, with 2,7m people identified as "having in need" (Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, 2021, p. 22) and one of the largest recipients of European HA (Cihangir-Tetik & Müftüleri-Baç, 2021, p. 440); whereas on the other hand, it is a significant humanitarian aid donor.

Focusing on Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy, firstly Türkiye stood by the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their difficult times. Secondly, Türkiye did not stay indifferent to the humanitarian drama that emerged when the civil war in Somalia was combined with hunger and famine, and the Turkish government made many attempts to draw the attention of the international community to the region. Thirdly, since humanitarian crisis in Syria forced half of the population to flee their homes, Türkiye accepted them and became the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. Though there are other emerging actors in HA and HD, the state, which has been one of the most outstanding in recent decades has been Türkiye. In this regard, it is crucial to analyze and to evaluate the key characteristics and implementation areas of Türkiye's humanitarianism in foreign policy as a soft power instrument.

According to Joseph S. Nye (2004), soft power is the ability of a state to impose its influence over other states in international relations through attraction based on culture, political values and policies rather than employing coercive instruments. HD and HA have become important in foreign policies of states over the past two decades and it has been widely used by governments to promote positive images abroad. The dynamics of the 21st century's international system have offered Türkiye greater opportunity for maneuver and there has been a noticeable increase in the use of HD by Türkiye which supports its soft power ability. In this regard, this article seeks to analyze humanitarian foreign policy of Türkiye as soft power, particularly focusing its characteristics and implementation areas.

Existing studies concentrate on Türkiye's humanitarian aid and peace-building efforts in Africa in general and Somalia in particular (Akpınar, 2013; Baird, 2016, Donelli, 2018, 2022; Haşimi, 2014; Özerdem, 2013, Özkan & Orakçı, 2015; Tank, 2013; Thiessen, & Özerdem, 2019; Turhan, 2021; Zengin & Korkmaz, 2019), on humanitarian aid towards Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and Myanmar (Arslan, et al. 2022), on the role of Türkiye's non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) in humanitarianism (Aras & Akpınar, 2015; Bahçecik & Turhan, 2022; Boztaş, 2019; Çelik & İşeri, 2016; Mehmetçik, 2019; Turhan & Bahçecik, 2021); on its humanitarian approach toward Syrian refugees (Gibarti, 2021) and on its diplomatic co-operation for peace-building and mediation efforts (Aras, 2012; Davutoğlu, 2013b). Increasing number of contemporary studies demonstrate that Türkiye is in rise as an emerging actor in humanitarian foreign policy.

In the following section, the article examines the limited literature on emerging global actors in humanitarian foreign policy and attempts to outline similarities in their humanitarian foreign policy practices. Then the key characteristics of Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy are analyzed focusing particularly on the important implementation areas: humanitarian aid and development assistance, support for Syrian refugees, peace-building and mediation efforts. One of the most influential motives in Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy has been strengthening its soft power.

2. Emerging Actors In Humanitarian Foreign Policy

Mostly, traditional governmental actors perform HA in foreign policy such as the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden, yet in recent decades there has been increased involvement of emerging global actors including Turkey, Indonesia, India, China, Brazil, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar. The most common component of HA and HD practiced by these emerging actors has been humanitarian aid. Below the focus will be on humanitarian foreign policy practices by emerging actors.

Indonesia is among emerging actors in humanitarian foreign policy although it is also receiving foreign aid. Its main interests are raising its regional profile, its identity as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and as a Muslim-majority country and appeasing the Muslim population at home. Its humanitarianism is linked to anti-colonialism and cultural values. There is no single entity that holds a monopoly and leads Indonesia's humanitarian engagements, thus both state and non-state actors are engaged such as military and civil society. Leading practices include demonstrating leadership in resolving crises in the ASEAN; supporting interests of the Muslim communities; helping in the Rohingya humanitarian crises in Myanmar; defending interests of the Palestinians; and assisting communities faced with natural disasters (Marzuki & Tiola, 2021; Purnama et al., 2019).

India, similar to Indonesia and Turkey, is on the one hand an aid recipient and on the other hand a humanitarian aid donor. India provides aid to compete with China in certain regions, particularly to build new alliances and to further its trade, energy, and political interests. Its main activities are providing humanitarian aid to Southeast Asian countries, Africa, and Afghanistan. Similar to Indonesia there is no single entity that holds a monopoly and leads India's humanitarian engagements, thus both state and non-state actors are engaged in providing decentralized assistance (Chanana, 2009). Its humanitarian foreign policy is also linked to anti-colonialism and cultural values and involves respect for humanitarian principles and sovereignty of the recipient state.

China's commitment to humanitarian foreign policy has considerably increased since the coming power of Xi Jinping in 2012, reflected with a substantial rise in humanitarian aid (Gong, 2021, p. 238; Lin, 2021, pp. 224-225). China's humanitarian response has mostly been directed towards conflict zones and natural disasters through conflict management and humanitarian aid. South-east Asia has attracted its greater attention, but China (Gong, 2021, p. 245) has also provided assistance for conflicts and natural disasters in different regions such as for 2004 tsunami in Indonesia, 2010 earthquake in Haiti, 2011 refugee crisis in Libya and 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa (Lin, 2021, p. 224). China has emphasized on sovereign equality, non-interference in domestic affairs and non-conditionality in HA and HD (Huang, 2019, p. 5). China has prioritized a state-centric approach bypassing civil society actors in delivering humanitarian

aid (Hirono, 2013, pp. 202-203). Besides humanitarian motivations, China's HA and HD has had two drivers: image-building and economic considerations. In order to secure Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has shown greater commitment to HA to countries located within the route of BRI (Lin, 2021, p. 221).

Brazil has also demonstrated active humanitarian foreign policy since the early 2000s through providing humanitarian aid and accommodating refugees. Religious, historical, and cultural values have largely determined Brazil's humanitarian foreign policy. In this regard, former Portuguese colonies and Latin American countries have constituted the key recipients of Brazil's humanitarian aid (Semrau & Thiele, 2017, p. 287). As Burges (2014, p. 357) points out, the size of Brazil's foreign aid has been modest. Apart from humanitarian concerns, Brazilian policy-makers have also sought to advance their national economic and political interests (Burges, 2014, pp. 355-356) including strengthening of soft power and trade relations (Burges, 2014, p. 368; Semrau & Thiele, 2017, p. 303). In addition, Brazil accommodated an estimated number of 4,6m Venezuelans between 2015 and 2020, becoming the second destination for Venezuelan asylum seekers (Aguiar & Magalhaes, 2020, p. 642).

The UAE is another emerging actor in humanitarian foreign policy. Arabism and Islamism were the two important factors in its policy prior to the twenty-first century (Al-Mezaini, 2017, p. 226), thus it provided humanitarian aid mostly to the Arab states. Since the early 2000s, the UAE has seen HA as an instrument to strengthen both its regional and global position and used HA as a soft power tool to consolidate its image abroad and to reinforce its international influence. By 2004, the UAE organised the first Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference and Exhibition, which has been held every year since then (Krzyszowski, 2022, p. 4). Its humanitarian foreign policy is carried mainly through the Ministry of International Cooperation and Development, the Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation and Dubai Cares. Following the outbreak of the Arab Spring, the UAE prioritized delivering humanitarian aid to Arab countries, which experienced uprisings in order to support stability and to counter the rise of non-state actors such as the Muslim Brotherhood (Al-Mezaini, 2017, pp. 226, 237). By July 2014, the UAE became the first participant to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gaining access to policy dialogue and exchange with the DAC states. This development has highly contributed to the visibility and reputation of its humanitarian activities (Al-Mezaini, 2017, pp. 232-233).

Lastly, Qatar has prioritized providing humanitarian aid to the Arab states, but its recipients are from a wide geography ranging from Cuba to Mozambique and from Haiti to Sri Lanka (Zureik, 2018, pp. 786, 789). In addition to humanitarian motivations, Qatar's commitment to humanitarian foreign policy has largely aimed at strengthening its soft power. Qatar has relied on both official and non-governmental channels in the distribution of humanitarian aid. Official channels include the Qatar Development Fund and the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Barakat et al., 2019, p. 69; Naier, 2021, p. 46). Qatar's humanitarian aid has mostly been concentrated in the fields of health, education and infrastructure. Palestinian territories particularly the Gaza Strip have occupied a special place in Qatar's humanitarian aid flows (Zureik, 2018, p. 791). By April 2016, Qatar became the second participant to the DAC after the UAE.

There are number of similarities among these emerging actors with regard to their humanitarian foreign policy practices. First, none of the above emerging actors is a member of the DAC. Only Turkey has the observer status, and the UAE and Qatar have participant status. While traditional governmental actors have agreed to meet common standards in co-ordinating humanitarian aid within the framework of the DAC, there is lack of common standards among emerging actors on humanitarian foreign policy (Cabral et al., 2014, p. 187). Nevertheless, their humanitarian foreign policy is above all attached to anti-colonialism and cultural values. Secondly, emerging actors respect sovereignty of the recipient states and adopt the principle of non-intervention into recipient states' domestic affairs. Thirdly, emerging actors provide unconditional HA and offer an alternative to existing donors which has weakened bargaining

position of traditional actors (Woods 2008, p. 1206). Fourthly, emerging actors have presented South-South (horizontal) co-operation as a form of win-win co-operation, offering mutual benefits to both sides and an alternative to vertical/hierarchical character of North-South cooperation. Fifthly, geographical proximity has been influential in their approach. In addition, enhancing their economic interests as well as soft power, influence, international reputation, image, and identity have been significant in their practices.

3. Türkiye's Soft Power And Humanitarian Foreign Policy

There have been various reasons for Türkiye's adoption of a humanitarian foreign policy (Altunışık, 2019; Gilley, 2015; Guo, 2020) such as to contribute to regional stability and prosperity as well as to its security and economic position. Here, it would be fair to emphasize that one of the main motives for Türkiye's adoption of a humanitarian foreign policy is strengthening its soft power and expanding its global influence. As global politics have been witnessing various humanitarian crises ranging from natural disasters and pandemics to armed conflicts, Türkiye has sought to develop means to address them. In return, these efforts have contributed to Türkiye's soft power. Furthermore, it has viewed HA and HD as a status symbol and aspired to use it as a diplomatic strategy that allowed it to earn trust and increase its reputation (Donelli, 2017, p. 60). As Türkiye's power and conscience claimed to influence a wide geographical area named as Afro-Eurasia (Davutoğlu, 2013a, p. 866), it desired a reputation as a humanitarian state (Donelli, 2017) and regarded humanitarianism as a foreign policy instrument to establish better relations with other countries, and to strengthen its legitimacy and international image (Altunışık, 2014; 2019).

Humanitarian foreign policy can develop a positive state reputation as a soft power among Muslim countries. In fact, Turkey followed pro-Islamist policy in humanitarian foreign policy (Altunışık, 2019, p. 3; Gilley, 2015, p. 44; Guo, 2020, p. 137; Zengin & Korkmaz, 2019, p. 132). For example, Türkiye's HA toward Arakan Muslims is carried with the aim of becoming a leader in defending global Muslim rights (Altunışık, 2019, p. 3). As another example, Islamic-oriented Turkish humanitarian NGOs such as *Deniz Feneri*, *Insan Hak ve Hürriyetleri İnsani Yardım Vakfı/IHH*, *Cansuyu* and *Yeryüzü Doktorları* started to play a critical role in conflict-ridden geographies (Çelik & Işeri, 2016, p. 434). There are references on religious symbolism and Muslim identity that highlighted being the leader and defender of the Muslim world (Kara & Sözen, 2016, p. 61). Being hope for all oppressed, victims and *ummah* (Islamic community) (TRT News, 2020) in Asia, Africa, Turkestan, Kashmir, Arakan, Yemen, Libya and Syria (AA, 2019) is also underlined.

Türkiye's foreign policy has experienced a transformation in the past two decades. Within this transformation, Türkiye headed to be a soft power. HA and HD, particularly mediation and facilitation efforts in conflicts are its soft power instruments. To support its soft power, it paid high attention to increase its foreign missions. While it has 163 foreign missions in 2002, it has increased the number to 248 by 2020 (Yüzbaşıoğlu, 2020). In fact, in terms of HA, Türkiye aspires to be a pioneer among the emerging states and "voice of the oppressed". In addition, Turkey established the Office of Public Diplomacy in 2010 to promote its soft power. Overall, these soft power instruments have provided Türkiye greater opportunity as an emerging actor in the world politics.

4. Key Characteristics Of Türkiye's Humanitarian Foreign Policy

According to the official discourse, Türkiye has been implementing "an entrepreneurial and humanitarian foreign policy" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA], 2021, Yüzbaşıoğlu, 2020) in the last two decades. The concept of HD was initially mentioned in January 2013 by then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (Davutoğlu, 2013a; MFA, 2013). Since then, Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy has been particularly observed in three implementation areas which are going to be elaborated below: providing humanitarian aid to many different regions (Akpınar, 2013;

Altunışık, 2014; Davutoğlu, 2013a); accommodating Syrian refugees (World Economic Forum, 2016); and mediation efforts and utilization of diplomacy to solve disputes and conflicts particularly in its neighborhood (Altunışık, 2019; Davutoğlu, 2013b). The Turkish government has a comprehensive framework in offering development assistance through state and non-state organizations and interagency cooperation.

According to the official discourse, the key characteristics of Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy are as follows. It is claimed that the Turkish model of humanitarian and development assistance activities are unique because Turkish agencies can act quickly in a centralized manner. They focus on the recipient and try to empower local dynamics and stakeholders; and they speak about humanitarian problems in domestic and international platforms (Anadolu Agency [AA], 2018).

Discourses of the main decision-makers in foreign policy in recent decades reveal other main characteristics of humanitarian foreign policy. Similar to other emerging actors, Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy is related to anti-colonialism and cultural values (AA, 2021). Particularly, Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy includes religious values such as Islamic solidarity and leadership role in the Muslim world (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye [TCCB], 2016). In addition, Türkiye calls for global responsibility sharing (AA, 2021; MFA, 2011; Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency [TIKA], 2016), and presents itself as the guardian of vulnerable and oppressed people everywhere (TIKA, 2020). Furthermore, Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy is presented as a win-win co-operation (AA, 2021) which is similar to the other emerging actors.

It should be noted that Türkiye formally dispatched its first humanitarian assistance program to an African country, Somalia in 1985. Yet, it could not develop its relations in Africa until 2010s, due to insufficient financial power to offer humanitarian assistance (Sıradağ, 2020, p. 524) Furthermore; it should be underlined that in the early 1990s, as much as its power, capacity and abilities allowed, Türkiye made efforts to support Muslims during the Bosnian War, when massacres and crimes against humanity took place. Since 1995, TIKA has carried out a lot of projects in many fields in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the last two decades, Türkiye emerged as a significant humanitarian aid donor. "Turkey's emergency and humanitarian aid fund was around \$3.2 billion in 2015, \$6.4 billion in 2016 and had surpassed \$8 billion in 2017, corresponding to 0.85 percent of the country's national dividend." (TIKA, 2018) These numbers indicate that Türkiye has become one of the leading countries in the provision of humanitarian aid. It has been providing humanitarian aid to a far-reaching geography ranging from the Middle East to Sub-Saharan Africa, from Balkans to Caucasus and Central Asia, from South America to Southern Asia. Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy has provided an alternative to traditional actors of HD (Cihangir-Tetik & Müftüler-Baç, 2021, p.440). First of all, the Turkish government has adhered to the principle of providing unconditional aid similar to the other emerging actors. (Altunışık, 2014, 2019; Directorate of Communications, 2019a; Milliyet, 2018; TCCB, 2019). Secondly, different from traditional actors who prefer to coordinate their delivery of aid through indirect channels due to security risks, Türkiye has directly delivered aid to beneficiaries (Donelli, 2018, p. 66; Tank, 2013). Eliminating the sense of physical distance, Türkiye has been able to strengthen its popularity among the recipient communities. For instance, in the case of Somalia despite widespread insecurity, it has been an active provider of humanitarian aid (Haşimi, 2014, p. 128). As it is pointed out by Cihangir-Tetik & Müftüler-Baç (2021, pp. 439-440), Türkiye's allocation of humanitarian aid in 2017 was only slightly lower than that of the combination of the allocation by the EU institutions and member states which can be regarded as an impressive amount for a middle-income country.

5. Implementation Of Türkiye's Humanitarian Foreign Policy

Humanitarian aid is delivered mainly in co-ordination of the Turkish government and official/quasi-official agencies including the TİKA, Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), the Turkish Red Crescent Society, Turkish Airlines, Directorate for Religious Affairs, and the Housing Development Administration of Türkiye (TOKİ). It should be underlined that TİKA is established in 1992 to provide development assistance to Central Asia and Caucasus and to develop strong collaborative ties especially in the Turkic Republics. TİKA is restructured in 2011 as an autonomous agency under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. TİKA organizes and implements Türkiye's bilateral development co-operation activities with other ministries, NGOs, and the private sector. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Education and other state institutions such as the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*), Red Crescent (*Kızılay*) and Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities play an active role in HD and HA.

By 2020, Türkiye delivered official development assistance (ODA) worth of "USD 8b representing 1.12 per cent of gross national income (GNI)" reflecting "an increase of 1.2 per cent in real terms in volume and a decrease in percent of GNI from 2019" (OECD, 2020). Most of Türkiye's bilateral ODA is allocated to HA. NGOs have also actively contributed to Türkiye's HA. Yet, the Turkish government plays a critical role in shaping the decision-making process in HA and HD (Guo, 2020, p. 123). Nevertheless, there has been close co-ordination between official/quasi-official institutions and civil society agencies in the implementation of humanitarian aid policies. Among civil society agencies involved in humanitarian aid, faith-based organizations have played the leading roles including Humanitarian Aid Foundation-IHH, *Deniz Feneri*, *Cansuyu*, *Kimse Yok mu*, *Yardımlı*, *Yeryüzü Doktorları*, *Dosteli* (Çelik & İşeri, 2016, p. 434; Turhan & Bahçecik, 2021, p. 42). Türkiye in humanitarian activities has prioritized the sectors of education, health, water and water hygiene, shelter, food supplies and other social services (Mehmetçik, 2019, p. 261; [TİKA], 2020).

Prior to the Arab Spring, largest share of Türkiye's humanitarian aid went to the countries facing crisis such as Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon with the aim of not only contributing to reconciliation and stability, but also strengthening Türkiye's international image (Altunışık, 2014, pp. 337, 340). With the outbreak of Arab uprisings and the destabilizing changes and humanitarian crises accommodating them, Türkiye's humanitarian aid increased. There has been an expansion in the recipient states with the inclusion of Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen. In the case of Yemen, the poorest country in the Middle East, known to have been suffering intense humanitarian crisis due to its ongoing civil war, 3100 families have received humanitarian assistance from Turkey in 2021 (TİKA, 2021). There has also been growing humanitarian aid to sub-Saharan Africa including Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Kenya, and Eritrea (Donelli, 2018, pp. 61, 72).

Particularly, Turkish aid agencies have demonstrated an effective mobilization in delivering humanitarian aid in Somalia through offering medical relief and a wide range of services such as providing clean water, clearing rubbish, digging wells and building hospitals (Akpınar, 2013; Baird, 2016; Özerdem, 2013; Özkan & Orakçı, 2015). Türkiye's "humanitarian and development aid to Somalia over the last decade totals more than a billion dollars" (TTCB, 2022). Other than the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, Türkiye has also been active in delivering humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, and the Arakan region in Myanmar. Türkiye has provided "more than \$1.1 billion (TL 19.6 billion) for Afghanistan's development between 2005-2021 focusing on infrastructure, education and health sectors" (Daily Sabah, 2022a). Türkiye has been providing humanitarian aid to Pakistan through the Red Crescent since 2005. When the deadly floods hit Pakistan in 2022, Türkiye mobilized to help the affected. (Daily Sabah, 2022b) In addition, Türkiye has provided the highest amount of humanitarian assistance to refugees in the world particularly to Rohingya refugees (Kamruzzaman 2020). Overall, Türkiye's humanitarian aid program greatly expanded after 2003, particularly increased after the Syrian War (Kavaklı, 2018; p. 624; Mehmetçik, 2019, p. 257). Similar to the DAC donors,

while earlier Türkiye paid more attention to trade relations in providing humanitarian aid, its aid policy changed as Türkiye started to consider historical, cultural and religious ties. In the past several years, Türkiye has also supported international efforts against the spread of COVID-19. With the onset of the coronavirus epidemic, Türkiye sent aid materials, including personal protective equipment, to many countries. Furthermore, since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, Türkiye has delivered humanitarian aid to Ukraine through the coordination of AFAD, relevant institutions, and NGOs (Daily Sabah, 2022c).

Another main topic in implementation of Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy is supporting Syrian refugees. Since humanitarian crisis in Syria forced half of the population to flee their homes, Türkiye started its 'open door policy' to Syrian refugees in 2011. Over time, Türkiye became the country hosting the largest number of refugees in the world. By the end of 2020, while there were about 26,4m refugees in the world, Türkiye hosted 3,7m refugees (United Nations Refugee Agency [UNHCR], 2021a). 3,6m refugees are from Syria which came between 2011 and 2020 (UNHCR, 2021b), and the rest from other nationalities, notably from Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq (International Centre for Migration and Policy Development [ICMPD], 2021).

In the beginning of the crisis within 'open door policy', Syrians were named as "guests and religious brothers" (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research [SETA], 2015; Directorate of Communications, 2019a). Türkiye is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, but Türkiye never fully adopted regulations and in fact, applied the non-refoulement or no return principle only with regard to refugees from Europe. Hence, Türkiye, in theory, was not required to avoid from returning Syrian refugees to Syria. Yet the legal infrastructure in Türkiye is developed as crisis in Syria intensified. In 2014, the Law on Foreigners and International Protection elaborated the main pillars of Türkiye's national asylum system and established the Directorate General of Migration Management as the leading body responsible from policy-making and procedures for all foreigners. Türkiye has considered Syrians as temporary protection status holders (SuTP) based on Temporary Protection Regulation adopted on 22 October 2014 (UNHCR, 2021b); "who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left" (Ministry of Interior, 2021). Türkiye provided basic services such as health, education, security, municipal services, population transactions and banking services to refugees. TİKA, AFAD, and the Turkish Red Crescent provided humanitarian aid. Today, "only 58,782 of SuTP in Türkiye live in camps, whereas the vast majority live in urban areas integrated with the local population" (ICMPD, 2021, p. 3).

According to official discourse while Türkiye is doing its best for humanitarian relief efforts in Syria (Milliyet, 2018), Western countries do not share enough responsibility [TCCB, 2021; Directorate of Communications, 2019a; Directorate of Communications, 2019b). The EU and Türkiye agreed on the 2015 Joint Action Plan and on a new deal in March 2016 to stop the transit possibilities for Syrian refugees to Europe. The humanitarian and legal dimensions as well as success of this co-operation could be a subject of another study. What should be underlined is that the Turkish officials called for more equal and effective burden-sharing within the international community due to social and financial challenges (Gibarti, 2021, p.58). Even though the Turkish state did not support return of Syrian refugees to their homeland for a long time, recently they are searching for a solution so that they can remain in their homelands and the ones who have already travelled to Türkiye to peacefully return and settle in their motherlands (UNHCR, 2019; Directorate of Communications, 2021). Other than, accommodating Syrian refugees, Türkiye has also tried to support Syrian people through its membership to OCHA Donor Support Group. Türkiye is an observer to the DAC, yet member to the OCHA Donor Support Group since 2014. OCHA Türkiye organizes cross-border HA delivered from Türkiye to Syria based on the UN Security Council resolution 2449 (2018, formerly 2165 in 2014). Along with the UN agencies and other partners, Turkish NGOs try to extend support.

Another significant implementation area of Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy is peace-building and mediation efforts. The Turkish government tries to use diplomacy to solve disputes. For example, in 2005 the Alliance of Civilizations project was initiated with Spain that aimed to ease tensions among different cultures. Between the years 2005-07, Türkiye tried to facilitate peace-building between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. In 2010, the Friends of Mediation was launched under the UN framework in a partnership between Türkiye and Finland, bringing together states, international organizations, and NGOs. It was through the Turkish diplomatic efforts in the Balkan Summit of April 2010, where Turkish president hosted his Serbian and Bosnian counterparts in İstanbul, that first normal communication between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina began. Turkey has also led two trilateral reconciliation mechanisms; one between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and another one between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia to facilitate dialogue among the sides and to contribute to stability in the Western Balkans. In 2012, Türkiye hosted the Istanbul Conference on Mediation (Davutoğlu, 2013b). Since the early 2022, Türkiye has been conducting mediation efforts between Ukrainian and Russian delegations as well. Türkiye has paid high attention to neutrality in these diplomatic efforts.

Lastly, Türkiye has hosted international meetings in order to support international norms and to address global humanitarian challenges. For instance, it hosted the fourth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) by May 2011. Furthermore, since 2018, it has been hosting the Technology Bank for LDCs, providing funding and premises for a new institution in Gebze. Achievement of Technology Bank "is highly symbolic, as it responds directly to the 2030 Agenda's principle of leaving no one behind" (UN, 2018). Türkiye also hosted the WHS in 2016.

6. Conclusion

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from this study. First of all, it can be suggested that emerging global actors in humanitarian foreign policy share some common characteristics. For instance, all emerging actors reaffirm their commitment to principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and non-intervention into domestic affairs of the recipient states. In addition, emerging actors have rejected the principle of conditionality in humanitarian aid and development assistance in sharp contrast to the traditional Western donors which have largely embraced conditionality. Lastly, these actors' embracement of HD is related with their growing willingness to play greater roles in addressing global issues. Turkey, as an emerging global actor in humanitarian foreign policy, has adopted these above-mentioned principles as well.

Secondly, Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy has contributed to strengthening its soft power. Türkiye has conducted an active HD in the last two decades trying to co-ordinate its development and humanitarian aid policies. Many positive results have already been achieved by its commitment to humanitarian foreign policy. According to the UN data, Türkiye is the country that hosts the highest number of refugees, particularly the Syrian refugees and provides the greatest humanitarian aid in relation to its national income. In addition, Türkiye is an important donor of humanitarian aid and development assistance to many regions. Furthermore, peace-building and mediation efforts are part of Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy. These increasingly visible humanitarian aspects within Turkish foreign policy have fed its soft power through fostering its image, prestige, and credibility in different regions both among the ruling elites and the public ranging from the Balkans to the Middle East, and from Africa to Latin America. Developing soft power capacity has become more significant for states in contemporary international politics and Türkiye is not an exception. There is increasing awareness among Turkish decision-makers that increased soft power capacity would help achieve the desired outcomes in regional and international politics. Through its active humanitarian foreign policy, Türkiye has sought to increase its attractiveness not only in its neighboring regions but also in other regions to become a more credible actor in international relations.

Thirdly, cultural and religious values have been influential in Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy. "Pro-Islamic humanitarianism" is particularly important to understand Türkiye's identification with vulnerable societies through strong emphasis on Islamic solidarity and willingness to play leadership role in the Muslim world. Fourthly, growing awareness and participation of the Turkish society in humanitarian foreign policy is observed through visible performance of the NGOs, particularly through religious ones in the provision of humanitarian aid. In this regard, both state agencies and NGOs participate in humanitarian foreign affairs. Fifthly, HA in foreign policy has widened to include new regions subject to humanitarian crises such as Africa, Central Asia and Latin America besides Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Palestinian territories and Myanmar. Sixthly, Turkish agencies try to act in a centralized manner, and articulate both in domestic and international platforms about humanitarian problems. Seventhly, in Africa Türkiye's humanitarian foreign policy is linked to conflict resolution and reconstruction efforts, while in the Middle East it is linked to support for democratic transitions following the Arab uprisings. Eighthly, Türkiye prefers to provide bilateral humanitarian aid rather than multilateral humanitarian aid. Lastly, Türkiye has hosted international meetings in order to support international norms and to offer solutions for global humanitarian problems.

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