

*Article*

# Mass Migration and Images of State Power: Turkey's Claim to the Status of a Responsible Rising Power

Juliette Tolay

School of Public Affairs, Penn State Harrisburg

[jtolay@psu.edu](mailto:jtolay@psu.edu)

## Abstract

This article investigates the symbolic role that mass migration can have on the power status of the hosting country. It posits that receiving large number of refugees can either enhance the perceived power of the host by creating the image of a strong state that attracts these populations for all it has to offer; or weaken perceived power by generating the image of a weak state unable to control its borders. By using the case of Turkey's reception of millions of Syrian refugees since 2011, this article argues that the Turkish government is careful to use the refugees as a means to craft an image of responsible power, however such an effort can be undermined by other material and strategic advantages sought by the Turkish government, which challenges the credibility of Turkey's generosity and responsibility as a rising power.

## Keywords

Turkey, Mass Migration, Syrian Refugees, Power Status, Responsibility, Virtuous Power, Instrumentalisation

## Introduction

The international system is in constant flux, with eras of relative stability and eras of more changes. As powers rise and fall, the community of state need to recognize the changing reality. Such recognition is based, dialectically, on both actual *capabilities* to wield power or influence and the *perception* of a new power status (Jones 2014, p.602). While weakening states may have an interest in delaying the perception and recognition of their dwindling power, rising states seek to have their new status recognized and are often quick to claim discursively their rising power. To do so, they start signaling their claimed higher power status by behaving according to a set of standards and expectations associated with this new power status. This article argues that Turkey, as a rising power, is using mass migration, in particular its hosting of millions of Syrian refugees, as a means to

display an image of power and responsibility, in order to gain recognition of its new status as a “regional power”.

Two concomitant facts are indeed largely undisputed. Turkey has taken on the responsibility to host a large share of Syrian refugees, who constitute the largest humanitarian refugees crisis since the end of the second World War (Kirisçi 2014). Turkey is also a rising power, whose status in the international power hierarchy has changed tremendously since the end of the Cold War: both empirical facts and Turkish government self-perception confirm this general trend (Oguzlu & Parlar Dal 2013; Cagaptay 2013; Öniş & Kutlay 2016). What is less clear, however, is the relationship between Turkey’s Syrian refugee population and Turkey’s power status.

While both the literature on immigration and on foreign policy are largely silent on the connection between movement of population and power status, this article advances that, in the 21st century, mass migration can impress marking images challenging common perceptions regarding states’ strength. More specifically, it questions the concept of state responsibilities as well as the relevance of international borders. On the originating end of mass migration, the country of departure is usually suffering from a hindering image: the country is seen as unable to provide a hopeful and satisfying future, and its citizens are choosing or constrained to seek better opportunities or even bare protection abroad. But on the receiving end, the country of destination can fall on either side of two distinct and conflicting images. One is an image of power: a strong state, that attracts populations for all it has to offer, from protection to liberties and economic opportunities. The other is an image of powerlessness: a weak state unable to control its own border, passive victim of an overflow of individuals who came here by lack of choice.

The present article argues that Turkey is currently engaged in a discursive battle to ensure that it is exulting a powerful and positive image of itself, and not the weak alternative. It is therefore an experimental exercise in understanding how the government of Turkey conceives of the relationship between power status and mass migration, and then evaluate this discourse by looking both at empirical data and the normative arguments contained in some of the statements. It will also look at the core contradictions of the discourse and the limits of Turkey’s claim. Accordingly, this article does not focus so much on Turkey’s objective and material trajectory as a rising power, as it is on the discursive claim made by Turkey to be recognized as a power because of the responsibilities it is already (and voluntarily) carrying.

## **The Politics of Immigration, Immigration Policy, Foreign Policy and (Soft) Power**

When looking at the relationship between power status and migration, it is difficult to identify a relevant literature. Political science was a latecomer to the study of migration, movement of population and human mobility (Hollifield 2013). But even then, most of the focus has been domestic, looking either at immigration as a public policy, or looking at the domestic political components of the issue of immigration. Immigration and foreign policy became a topic of study with the early works of Mitchell and Teitelbaum: they have highlighted how foreign policy affects international migration (i.e. a military intervention triggers mass migration) and how past migrations impact foreign policy (i.e. how population of foreign origins play a role in the complex foreign policy decision making) (Teitelbaum 1984; Mitchell 1989). But the insight that has attracted the most subsequent attention from the scholarly community is the extent to which international migrations can be used instrumentally as tools of foreign policy (Teitelbaum 1984, p.437-439).

This particular aspect has been developed most comprehensively by the masterful works of Kelly Greenhill: Greenhill also focuses on the instrumentalization of migration for foreign policy purpose, in particular when migration flows are engineered purposefully to pursue certain political goals. She calls this phenomenon “strategic engineered migration,” and within this category, she distinguishes between “dispossessive engineered migration” (“in which the principal objective is the appropriation of the territory or property of another group or groups), “exportive engineered migration” (“migrations engineered either to fortify a domestic political position or to discomfit or destabilize foreign government(s)”), “militarized engineered migrations” (“those conducted, usually during armed conflict, to gain military advantage against an adversary (...) or to enhance one’s own force structure, via the acquisition of additional personnel or resources”) and “coercive engineered migration,” which is the real focus of her work. “Coercive engineered migrations” are cross-border population movements, that are created intentionally in order to coerce another state into providing specific advantages (whether political, military or economic) (Greenhill 2010, p.13-14). Out of the 56 main cases covered in Greenhill analysis (from the period 1953-2010), she found that challengers (state that exercise coercive engineered migration) achieved their foreign policy objective by employing migration as a tool in 73 percent of the cases, which is a high rate of success.

Greenhill herself mentions Turkey in her work. Two of her cases feature Turkey as a challenger/coercer: in 1991, when Turkey used the cards of Iraqi refugees to pressure the United States to create a safe heaven and no-fly zone in Northern Iraq (p. 316-317); and in 1998, when Turkey may have used asylum of its

own citizens as a means to influence Italy's support of Turkey's EU bid (p.323). While the first case was a success according to Greenhill's analysis, the second was however, indeterminate. More recently, Greenhill has also mentioned Turkey's discourse pressuring European countries in the midst of the 2015 refugee crisis as an additional case, proven successful given the subsequent deal reached between the EU and Turkey in November 2015 and March 2016 (Greenhill 2015). Other researchers have delved deeper in Turkey's nexus between foreign policy and immigration. In a previous work, I had provided a historical background to that relationship going back to how foreign policy considerations had impacted some decisions regarding movements of population from the beginning of the Turkish republic until the 21st century. That work also provided a narrative as to how, among other things, changes in foreign policy priorities under the AKP government could explain the changes in migration policy that were brewing in 2009-2011 (Tolay 2012). Other works have covered more specific issues of Turkish foreign policy, such as the 1991 refugee crisis (Kirisci 1994), visa policies (Aygül 2014), or the role played by Albanians in Turkey on Turkish policies towards the Balkans (Özgür Baklacioğlu, 2013). Finally, Ela Gökalp-Aras and Zeynep Şahin Mencütek (2015, 2016), as well as Gökay Özerim, have looked at ways to explain Turkey's policy towards Syrian refugees in the light of its foreign policy goals towards Syria and the European Union (EU).

Studies of the instrumental role that migration and migration policies play in foreign policy are very important. However, that relationship tends to be looked at in strategic terms and focuses on specific material gains to be drawn. Rather, the present analysis is interested in a more diffuse form of instrumental use of migration, one that serves as a way to signal where a state stands in the power hierarchy of states. What is therefore missing from these analyses is an understanding of the relationship between state power and migration, and more specifically, how a state's attitudes (policies and/or discourses) towards migration affect the external perception of its power status. While there is a flourishing literature on "rising" or "emerging" power (in connection to the concepts of "regional" or "middle"), the idea of "status-seeking" i.e. using means to gain recognition of a higher power status during the "rise," is often referred to without much considerations for the actual mechanisms that underlie it (Welch Larson & Shevkenko 2010). The existing scholarship on public diplomacy, branding and soft power has highlighted the importance of intangible and discursive assets for a state to exist as a power: material and objective power need to exist alongside subjective and inter-relational power. In other words, reputation matters (van Ham 2001). However, within this literature, only scant references have been made on the role played by immigration or immigration policies. Joseph Nye himself, who coined the concept of "soft power," has defended the idea that immigration strengthens a state's power, as is illustrated in the case of the United States. Not only does immigration brings

economic and demographic advantages, but

*“equally important are immigration’s benefits for America’s soft power. The fact that people want to come to the US enhances its appeal, and immigrants’ upward mobility is attractive to people in other countries. The US is a magnet, and many people can envisage themselves as Americans, in part because so many successful Americans look like them. Moreover, connections between immigrants and their families and friends back home help to convey accurate and positive information about the US. Likewise, because the presence of many cultures creates avenues of connection with other countries, it helps to broaden Americans’ attitudes and views of the world in an era of globalization. Rather than diluting hard and soft power, immigration enhances both.” (Nye 2012)*

In a similar vein, Kemal Kirişçi has explored the idea that a liberal visa policy can help build up “soft power” by incorporating new zones into “security community.” He argues that the abolishment of borders within the European Union has strengthened the union’s soft power, but that it could be enhanced further if an external “friendlier” visa regime is put in place (Kirişçi 2005, p. 363). Besides these positive associations, Jan Melissen has mentioned a negative case: an announcement in 2004 by the Dutch Ministry of Justice regarding the expulsion of 26,000 asylum seekers did wield “negative branding” and hurt the reputation of the Netherlands (Melissen 2005, p. 11).

Of particular importance for the argument presented here is an article by Oktav and Çelikaksoy, who had looked at the relationship between the Syrian refugee challenge and Turkey’s quest for normative power. They had found that Turkey’s policy towards Syrian refugees had important flaws that challenged Turkey’s ability to be seen as fully benevolent (Oktav & Çelikaksoy 2015). The current analysis builds on their approach and adds that Syrian refugees do not only hinder the normative claim, but are also used instrumentally as a means to - tentatively - portray an image of virtue and power.

Accordingly, this article posits that in the case of mass movement of population, the state on the receiving end can be projecting either of two images. One is an image of “positive branding”, enhancing reputation and soft power, as a strong, powerful state, a magnet, which can actively provide a safe heaven for individuals in search of protection and a brighter future. It attracts populations for all it has to offer, from protection to liberties and economic opportunities; and it has the capabilities to afford these arrivals. The other is more an image of weakness, hence “negative branding” and lower power status, where the state lacks the capabilities to control its porous border and ends up appearing as a passive victim of the circumstances: individuals come there by lack of choice. Similar images of distressed population can be seen on either side of the border, giving the perception of the

continuation of the conflict in the host country. It is important to notice that in both cases, the policies of the receiving state may be the same (i.e. receiving the refugees), however the way it is portrayed by different stakeholders may generate these contrasting images. Which of these two images is prevalent when external actors perceive Syrian refugee populations in Turkey?

### **Turkey and Syrian Refugees: Acts and Discourses**

In order to understand the potential impact of the Syrian refugees crisis on Turkey's power status, it is necessary to first analyze the policy choices adopted by Turkish leaders. In the Spring of 2011, as the popular demonstrations in Syria evolved into a full-fledged military conflict, and the first Syrians started to leave Syria for neighboring countries, Turkey adopted an "open-door" policy, meaning that it was providing access to Turkish territory to any individual coming from Syria, even in the absence of required documentation (identification, passport, visa, etc.). This initial choice of open door policy, in the context of little numbers of refugees and the then-expectation of a swift return upon the imminent end of the conflict, is not particularly remarkable in itself: both Jordan and Lebanon adopted similar policies at the time. More surprising however, is the continuous commitment of the Turkish government for the open-door policy, despite, the exponential increase in the number of refugees (from a few thousands in 2011 to close to 3 millions in late 2016) (Kirişçi 2014). Jordan and Lebanon have indeed abandoned their open-border policy. And in Europe, countries that had once prided themselves in opening their arms to refugees, mainly Sweden and Germany, had to increasingly put limits to refugees' entrance into their territory once the numbers started to grow.

In addition to the open-door policy, Turkey invested massively in its role as host, initially mainly by setting up a number of camps alongside the Turkish-Syria border. These camps have been appraised very positively by the international community for the level of amenities and comfort it provides to refugees. But the camps would soon prove insufficient given the growing numbers (by 2016, only 1 out of 10 Syrian refugee lives in a camp), but "urban" refugees could still count on some of the benefits included in the status of "temporary protection" granted to them in Fall 2011, and officialized in 2014 with the implementation of the new Law on Foreigners and International Protection. Under this status, Syrian refugees have access to free healthcare, free education, to the Turkish labor market (since January 2016) and to additional monetary or in-kind assistance provided by local and international NGOs. Overall, the Turkish government claims to have spent an impressive 10 billion dollars to accommodate Syrian refugees, a number that can be doubled if contributions by Turkish organizations and local authorities are added (Cetingulec 2016).

This overall approach, far from being perfect - there are indeed serious concerns regarding the limitations of temporary protection - can nevertheless be qualified as generous towards the Syrian population, especially if compared to the efforts done by other neighboring countries, or by other powerful countries. Different explanations have been proposed to shed light on this generous Turkish approach towards refugees. Some have advanced a value-based approach, indicating that the Turkish leadership truly care about the fate of Syrian refugees: both proponents of a cultural/religious argument (the Islamo-conservative values of the AKP leadership) and of a socialization argument (the adoptions of liberal values as expressed in European and international human and refugee rights instruments) are in this category. Another set of explanations is instrumental, and emphasizes the willingness of the Turkish government to gain material advantages from this Syrian refugee policy: arguments have been advanced that the AKP government has used Syrian refugees as a trump card to secure its voice in the design of the post-conflict Syria, or to pressure the EU into leniency towards Turkey, or even (although more speculative as an assertion) to create a pro-AKP population within Turkey (who may eventually become voters if naturalized). Often mentioned, but never fully analyzed, is also an alternative - or complementing explanation - regarding Turkey's intention to wield a prestigious image of a strong, responsible, benevolent, reputable and "virtuous" Turkey. There is indeed evidence that early motivation to put in place a comprehensive policy of welcoming Syrian refugees was to avoid the public diplomacy disaster of 1991, when the mismanagement of Iraqi refugees had led to strong international criticisms and had traumatized the then Turkish authorities. This would also explain why initially, Turkey wanted to handle the Syrian refugee crisis on its own, without the intervention of the international community, in order to both prove its ability to be successful on its own, but also to shield itself from the potentially critical scrutiny of external observers. But hearing from Turkish rhetoric, there seems to be more to the explanation that goes beyond saving face. Indeed, state officials have articulated that Turkey may not have been able to handle the refugee situation in 1991, but now that it has risen, it can.

By paying attention to the discursive tropes used by different Turkish leaders and high-level state officials, one can detect the intention to portray Turkey as powerful, responsible and virtuous. "Turkey the virtuous" is a discourse often heard. It was first articulated by Abdullah Gül when he was president:

*"What matters is not to become a world power. What matters is for a country to have its own standards raised to the highest possible point, enabling the state to provide its citizens with prosperity and happiness [...]. [Then] you become an inspiration for [other countries]. And once that happens, what matters is to combine your hard and soft power and translate it into virtuous power - for your*

*immediate environment, for your region, and for the whole world.” (Gul in Tepperman 2013, p. 7)*

As this “virtuous power” becomes an inspiration, it also becomes attractive to foreigners who will be embraced by that state. Turkey, in this case, is then interested in providing humanitarian assistance to aspiring populations (Gilley 2015) or to welcome them unto its own territory, hence acting as a “savior.” As Ahmet Davutoglu, then Prime Minister, stated: “As an island of stability, Turkey has become a sanctuary for people escaping from terrorism and violence in the region” (in Lepeska 2015). By doing so, the AKP government engages in public diplomacy, by displaying a transnational discourse that goes beyond a domestic public, and also talks to an international audience.

However, this discourse does not simply elevate Turkey’s responsible power in an empty power hierarchy, rather it situates Turkey in relative terms to the traditional powerful actors, in particular “Europe” or the “West”. Ibrahim Kalin, the Presidential Press Secretary, affirmed on Twitter: “Turkey is not the world’s richest country but the largest refugee hosting country. Carrying the burden of humanity” (Kalin 2016a). Or, quoting President Erdogan: “The West may not admit refugees. We will continue to welcome them. Because we are human beings... #ErdoganVoiceoftheOppressed” (Kalin 2016b). So not only is Turkey doing the works expected of responsible powerful actors, it is also doing it better than them. I had identified this thought mechanism in a previous work on “critical Europeanization,” whereby Turkish actors find pride in advancing that they are “more Europeans than the Europeans” (Tolay 2011). Given the EU fall out of favor over the last couple of years in Turkey, the normative referent “European” may have switched to a more neutral referent (“virtuous”) but the (post-colonial) thought mechanism is the same: there is a need to value oneself in relative terms where the imaginary referent remains the powerful West.

Hence implicitly, Turkish leaders have articulated a narrative whereby there is an assumed relationship between the reception of large numbers of refugees and being a responsible power. What exactly is that relationship and the rationale behind?

### **The Empirical Argument: a Link Between Power Status and Mass Immigration?**

The Turkish discourse surrounding refugees and state power rests on the common assumption that “great powers involves great responsibility,” in this case, the great responsibility is to host large numbers of refugees. This argument can be understood, and hence evaluated, both at an empirical and normative level.

To what extent do powerful nations actually receive and host large number of refugees? Data from the UNHCR for the end of 2015 shows the following list of

major refugee-hosting countries in 2015 (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Top ten refugee hosting countries in 2015 (UNHCR 2016 - data excludes Palestinian refugees)

1. Turkey	2. Pakistan
3. Lebanon	4. Islamic Republic of Iran
5. Jordan	6. Kenya
7. Uganda	8. Democratic Republic of Congo
9. Chad	10. Ethiopia

None of the traditional great powers appear on that list. If we look at aggregate data between 2000 and 2014, the list is as follows (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Top ten refugee hosting countries in between 2000 and 2014 (UNHCR 2015 - data excludes Palestinian refugees)

1. Turkey	2. Lebanon
3. United States	4. Jordan
5. Ethiopia	6. Kenya
7. Uganda	8. Chad
9. Sudan	10. Canada

And looking at benchmark years since the creation of the Geneva Convention on Refugees in 1951 (1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010), only five countries systematically ranked each year among the top ten. They are: the United States, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and Syria (Migration Policy Institute 2015 - data includes Palestinian refugees). In these lists, only the United States, as well as Germany to a lesser extent, could apply to the status of great power. Other great powers, such as China or Russia, France or the United Kingdom appear only in more extended versions of these lists. Rather, receiving refugees seem to be more the purview of relatively weak countries, whose commonality seems to be their geographic proximity with countries of origin. The United States may actually be an exception to this. This quick overview of the data seem to challenge the assumption that powerful countries should be more open to refugees.

### **The Normative Argument: a Challenging Connection Between Power and Norms**

But even if powerful countries are not more likely to hosts large refugee population, it may still be the case that a normative argument can be made, namely that

powerful countries *should* admit more refugees. The rationale here is that powerful countries have the capabilities to admit refugees, in particular the economic resources necessary to accommodate these new populations and eventually integrate them into the labor market, maybe even the security/bureaucratic capabilities to manage the incoming of this new population in an orderly manner.

However, having the capabilities to do something is not sufficient to call for an obligation or an ethical call to do it. Expecting that powerful state should do something is based on the assumption that there is a commonly shared norm regarding the need to address the demands of refugee populations. It is based on the assumption that powerful states should not solely look to keep and expand their powers, but also have a duty to look out for the common good and other altruistic goals. While it can be argued that this is indeed the (partial) practice and expectation of the current international order, it should also be recognized that this is the result of the current “liberal” international order, that has been socially constructed by the dominant liberal powers of the 19th and 20th century. This is not to say that welcoming refugee populations is necessarily a liberal norm but rather that the idea of a responsible great power and the content of these duties have been articulated around international liberal norms (Brown 2004, Jones 2014). For instance, there is evidence that China, as the latest power joining the club of “great power” is being “schooled” or “socialized” by other powers into taking a responsible role in the world: China is indeed facing a set of expectations regarding its behavior on many issues, from its role in the world trade and financial system to its involvement in humanitarian situations such as Darfur (Loke 2016). The centrality of the liberal norm in the definition of great power responsibility may also explain why the US, as the quintessential liberal power, is a power that has prioritized the welcoming of refugees. The same can be said for other European countries. However, the same liberal values also present unique challenges to liberal states, which face contradictory demands regarding humanitarian migrations. This issue was termed as the “liberal paradox” of migration policies and it also explains the inconsistent approach (including both inclusive and exclusive elements) towards migration of powerful liberal states (Hampshire 2013).

In any case, these liberal norms create a challenge for Turkey. Even as the AKP leadership tries to present an alternative to the current liberal order where it plays a peripheral role, in practice, rather than replacing it, it simply adopts it by placing itself at the center of it. But more fundamentally problematic for the Turkish government is the fact that the normative aspect of the normative argument (a power ought to be responsible, hence welcoming to refugees) may actually hurt Turkish call for recognition. First, claiming that a powerful state should be responsible does not necessarily call for the reciprocal argument: that a responsible state should be powerful (or recognized as such). There are many states in the in-

ternational system, with “principled foreign policy,” but relatively small power capabilities, who may have gained respect by other powerful states as a result of their benevolent approach, but not necessarily influence. And as shown in the previous section, there is no evidence that the countries that host the most refugees are consequently being perceived as responsible *powers*. It is therefore unclear that upon demonstrating to be a responsible state, said state would be consequently deemed more powerful.

Second, claiming that powerful state ought to behave responsibly towards refugees is a “liberal” normative argument that does not coexist well with other pragmatic or strategic considerations.

In the words of then President Gül further discussing his understanding of a “virtuous power”:

*“A virtuous power is a power that is not ambitious or expansionist in any sense. On the contrary, it is a power where the priority lies with safeguarding the human rights and interests of all human beings in a manner that also entails the provision of aid to those in need without expecting anything in return. That’s what I mean by virtuous power: a power that knows what’s wrong and what’s right and that is also powerful enough to stand behind what’s right.” (Gul in Tepperman 2013, p. 7)*

Gül himself highlights the need to separate “power” from “virtue.” Expansion or ambition does not have its place in the foreign policy of a virtuous power. Material gains would be seen with suspicion, as the possible evidence of the use of a “virtuous” cover to pursue more traditional power grabbing goals.

In that context, the instrumental use of the AKP government of Syrian refugees, that may be working concomitantly with the praiseworthy and generous goal of welcoming refugees, in practice, risks annihilating the process of building an image of being a rising and responsible power. The early goal, by the AKP administration, to use Syrian refugees as a means to assert Turkey in the resolution of the Syrian conflict and, in Ahmet Davutoglu’s words, to “be in the center of the table where the new global order is formed” (Harte 2012/2013 p.29, see also Gökalp-Aras & Şahin Mencütek 2016), reflects on a strategic rather than a humanitarian goal. While such a strategy may help building political capital, it does not contribute to the image of a reputable rising power.

In addition, the deal struck with the EU in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016, is illustrating in even sharper terms the instrumental role played by refugees in Turkish foreign policy. By using the refugee crisis as opportunistic leverage to extract unrelated benefits from the EU (the promise of visa liberalization and the restart of the EU membership accession process), Turkey undermines its parallel discourse

of being the savior of refugees and defender of their basic human rights. Not only does it raise doubts regarding its motives all along, but it also displays an image of powerlessness. Using movement of population as a (veiled) threat to obtain other goals is a (common) tool of foreign policy use mostly by weaker powers to influence stronger powers. Greenhill had shown that, in 49 out of her 56 cases, coercive migration was indeed a “weapon of the weak” trying to challenge a stronger state (Greenhill 2010, p. 32). While this foreign policy tool might be efficient in reaching its goal, as demonstrated by Greenhill and the EU-Turkey deal, it does not help communicate an overall image of power.

### **Conclusion**

This exploratory article explored the idea that the act of receiving mass movement of population (such as a mass influx of refugees) can play a role in the way the power of a state is perceived abroad. The intention of this article was to show whether the mass influx of Syrians into Turkey contributed to Turkey’s image of a rising power. The main finding of this short analysis is that mass migration can project two different images of power, and hence could either enhance or weaken a state’s power status. While discursively, the Turkish leadership is really careful to craft an image of powerfulness out of the arrival and management of millions of Syrian refugees, in practice it is walking a fine line, especially when other strategic foreign policy decisions are made that discredit this message of Turkey as a “virtuous” power, and may actually reflect on Turkey’s lack of power. If that is the case, Turkey remains seen solely as a weak neighbor, who inherited a spreading humanitarian disaster. Such an image is far off Turkey’s *rêve de grandeur*.

Power status is a social construct, an “image” that is agreed upon explicitly or implicitly by the different actors composing the community of states. While this article shows that Turkey is using its welcoming of Syrian refugees as a way to claim a great(er) power status, it remains to be seen whether this claim is being acknowledged and recognized by external actors. Preliminary evidence seems mixed with a number of Western state officials and other prominent civil actors praising Turkey for its efforts with Syrian refugees, but also a number of more critical coverage of the conditions of Syrian refugees in Turkey. Even the praiseful comments done towards Turkey can seem paternalist at times, and/or a meager consolation for Turkey to gain good press in lieu of aid to help the refugees. It is therefore unclear whether the efforts put towards Syrian refugees is making Turkey more powerful, but it is clear that the AKP leadership will continue using Syrian refugees as an argument to raise Turkey’s power status. Behaving like a responsible power can help gain recognition of its rise as a power, but such recognition is done holistically, based on a wide range of issues beyond the welcoming of mass migration, and Turkey needs to behave consistently on all these aspects, including on democratic norms. At least this is the case with the current liberal

world order and until non-liberal powers rise to dominance or current liberal powers loose their commitment to liberal values.

### **Bio**

Juliette Tolay is an assistant professor of Political Science at the School of Public Affairs in Penn State Harrisburg. She is an expert on asylum and migration, public attitudes and foreign policy. Her research and publications focus on Europe, Turkey and the Middle East. She is a former fellow at the Transatlantic Academy (situated at the German Marshall Fund) where she conducted research on Turkish foreign policy and co-authored the book: "Turkey and Its Neighbors: Foreign Relation in Transition," Lynne Rienner, 2011. Dr. Tolay is the 2010 recipient of the first prize of the Sakip Sabanci International Research Award for a paper on multiculturalism in Turkey. Dr. Tolay received her Ph.D. in Global Governance from the University of Delaware, with a thesis on the Turkish political culture on immigration called: "Turkey's Worldviews: Toward a Comparative Political Theory of Migration." Dr. Tolay also studied at Sciences Po in Paris, at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris, and in Galatasaray Üniversitesi in Istanbul.

### **References**

- Aygül, C 2014, 'Locating Change in Turkish Foreign Policy: Visa Policies of the Justice and Development Party in the 2000s', *Turkish Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 402-418.
- Brown, C 2004, 'Do Great Powers Have Great Responsibilities? Great Powers and Moral Agency', *Global Society*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 5-19.
- Cagaptay, S 2013, 'Defining Turkish Power: Turkey as a Rising Power Embedded in the Western International System', *Turkish Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 797-811.
- Cetingulec, M 2016, 'How did Ankara's spending on Syrian refugees jump to \$25 billion?', *Al Monitor*, September 30, Retrieved on December 9, 2016 <<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/09/turkey-syria-refugees-mind-blogging-increase-expenses.html>>
- Gilley, B 2015, 'Turkey, Middle Powers, and the New Humanitarianism', *Perception*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 37-58.
- Gökalp Aras, NE & Şahin Mencütek, S 2015, 'The international migration and foreign policy nexus: the case of Syrian refugee crisis and Turkey', *Migration Letters*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 193-208.
- Gökalp Aras, NE & Şahin Mencütek, S 2016, 'From assertive to opportunist usage of mass migration for foreign and asylum policy: Turkey's response to the refugees from Syria', in Sirkeci I & Pusch B (eds), *Turkish Migration Policy*,

- Transnational Press, London.
- Greenhill, KM 2010. *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Greenhill, KM 2015. 'Demographic Bombing: People as Weapons in Syria and Beyond', *Foreign Affairs*, December 17, 2015.
- Hampshire, J 2013. *The Politics of Migration: Contradictions of the Liberal State*, Polity, Cambridge.
- Harte, J 2012/2013. 'Turkey Shocks Africa', *World Policy Journal*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 27-38.
- Hollifield, JF 2013, 'The Politics of International Migration: How Can We "Bring the State Back in"?' in Brettell CB & Hollifield JF (Eds), *Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines*, pp. 227-288.
- Jones, C 2014, 'Constructing great powers: China's status in a socially constructed plurality', *International Politics*, vol. 51, no. 5, pp. 597-618.
- Kalin, I 2016a, 'Turkey is not the world's richest country but the largest refugee hosting country. Carrying the burden of humanity', ikalin1, Twitter, 20 September, Retrieved December 9, 2016 < <https://twitter.com/ikalin1/status/778325744514727938>>
- Kalin, I 2016b, 'Pres. Erdogan: The West may not admit refugees. We will continue to welcome them. Because we are human beings... #ErdoganVoiceofTheOppressed', ikalin1, Twitter, 20 September, Retrieved December 9, 2016 < <https://twitter.com/ikalin1/status/778320195144257537>>
- Kirisçi, K 1994, 'Provide Comfort or Trouble: Operation Provide Comfort and Turkish Foreign Policy', *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 227-253.
- Kirisçi, K 2005, 'A Friendlier Schengen Visa System as a Tool of "Soft Power": The Experience of Turkey', *European Journal of Migration and Law*, no.7, pp. 343-367.
- Kirisçi, K 2014, 'Syrian Refuges and Turkey's Challenges: Going beyond Hospitality', Brookings, Washington.
- Lepeska, D 2015, 'The AKP's Golden Opportunity, Erdogan's Victory and Turkey's Open-Door Policy', *Foreign Affairs*, November 2, 2015.
- Loke, B 2016, 'Unpacking the politics of great power responsibility: Nationalist and Maoist China in international order-building', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 847-871.
- Melissen, Jan 2005, 'Wielding Soft Power: The New Public Diplomacy', *Clingendael Diplomacy Papers*, no. 2, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, The Hague.
- Mitchell, C 1989, 'International migration, international relations and foreign

- policy', *International Migration Review*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 681-708.
- Nye, JS 2012, 'Immigration and American Power', Project Syndicate, December 10, 2012, Retrieved December 9, 2016 <<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/obama-needs-immigration-reform-to-maintain-america-s-strength-by-joseph-s--nye>>
- Oğuzlu, T & Emel Parlar Dal 2013, 'Decoding Turkey's Rise: An Introduction', *Turkish Studies*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 617-636.
- Oktav, ÖZ & Çelikaksoy, A 2015, 'The Syrian refugee challenge and Turkey's quest for a normative power in the Middle East', *International Journal*, vol. 70, no. 3, pp. 408-420.
- Öniş, Z & Kutlay, M 2016, 'The dynamics of emerging middle-power influence in regional and global governance: the paradoxical case of Turkey', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Retrieved December 9, 2016, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2016.1183586>>
- Özerim, G forthcoming, 'Stretching, opening or sealing the borders: Turkish foreign policy conceptions and their reflections on migration, asylum and visa policies', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*.
- Özgür Baklacioğlu, N 2013, 'The Role of the Albanian Associations in the Turkey's Foreign Policy in the Balkans', in Pettifer J (eds), *Albania and the Balkans: Essays in Honour of Sir Reginald Hibbert*, pp. 76-93, Elbow Publishing, London.
- Teitelbaum, MS 1984, 'Immigration, refugees, and foreign policy', *International Organization*, vol. 38 no. 3, pp. 429-450.
- Tepperman, J 2013, 'Turkey's Moment, A Conversation With Abdullah Gul', *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2013, pp. 2-7.
- Tolay, J 2012a, 'Coming and Going: Migration and Changes in Turkish Foreign Policy' in Linden RH et al. (eds.) *Turkey and Its Neighbors: Foreign Relations in Transition*, Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Tolay, J 2012b, 'Turkey's "Critical Europeanization": Evidence from Turkey's Immigration Policies', in Paçacı Elitok, S & Straubhaar, T (eds), *Turkey, Migration and the EU: Potentials, Challenges and Opportunities*, pp. 39-61, Hamburg University Press.
- UNHCR 2015, *UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2014*, Last retrieved on December 9, 2016 <<http://www.unhcr.org/56655f4e0.pdf>>
- UNHCR 2016, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015*, Last retrieved on December 9, 2016 <<http://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7.pdf>>
- van Ham, P 2001, 'The Rise of the Brand State: The Postmodern Politics of Image and Reputation', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2001, pp. 1-6.
- Welch Larson, D & Shevchenko 2010, 'Status Seekers: Chinese and Russia Responses to U.S. Primacy', *International Security*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 63-95.