Chapter 15

Reflecting Turkey's Attitude and Benevolence Towards Syrian Refugees to the World Through Digitalized Public Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

In 2011, Syrians fleeing the civil war in Syria tried to migrate to neighboring countries. While some countries did not accept Syrian refugees, others opened their doors to immigrants. Currently, Turkey is known as the country with the highest number of Syrians. These citizens, who left their countries and homes and migrated to other countries to protect their lives and children, faced different problems in the countries where they settled. Turkish authorities are taking steps to solve these problems. The aid and problem-solving steps taken for Syrian refugees are exhibited to the citizens of other countries through digitalized public diplomacy. In this study, firstly, information about the concept of migration is given and the migration from Syria to Turkey is discussed. Then, two different news published on the website of TRT World news channel were examined through critical discourse analysis to demonstrate how Turkey's attitude and benevolence towards Syrians is reflected to the world through digitalized public diplomacy.

INTRODUCTION

Turkey, which is located in an important region in terms of its geopolitical position, has an immigrant and emigrant structure. Turkey, which has opened its doors to people of many different races, religions and languages for centuries, today has approximately 5 million 506 thousand 304 foreign nationals. The vast majority of these are migrants fleeing the Assad regime in Syria. Syrian citizens who tried to save

their lives due to the bloody attacks of the Assad regime sought refuge in Turkey. Turkey opened its doors to migrants in difficult situations and took them under temporary protection. Some Turkish citizens criticize the authorities for granting Syrian migrants many of the same rights that they grant to their own citizens. The aid provided to migrants, who are often prioritized in hospitals, schools and government offices, also attracts attention. There are citizens who use social media to publicize their criticism, as well as those who support the aid provided to Syrians. However, there are also news websites that try to create a positive perception by presenting Turkey's attitude towards migrants.

The concept of migration is first explained in this study and then information about migration from Syria to Turkey is given. Then, 2 different news published on the website of TRT World news channel were examined through critical discourse analysis to demonstrate how Turkey's attitude and benevolence towards Syrians is reflected to the world through digitalized public diplomacy. The selected news items were determined in accordance with the objective of the study by purposive sampling method. The news articles titled "Syrian refugee children get education in Turkey" and "Syrians living in Turkey to become citizens, Erdogan says" were analyzed.

Concepts, Reasons, and Types of Migration

The history of migration dates back to the existence of humanity. In mass population movements, migrants have sought places where living standards are the most favorable for them. According to Akgür, who defines the concept of migration, which is influenced by many factors, migration is the settlement of a certain segment of the population living in a certain settlement area to another place for various and different reasons (Akgür, 1997, p. 41). According to Bruce and Yearley, migration is the movement of people from one country to another with the intention of staying (Bruce & Yearley, 2006, p. 197). Fichter (1990, p. 154) defines it as "any movement or migration of people through time, physical space or social structures".

The concept of refugee, which is considered within the scope of protection in Turkey, is defined in Article 1 of the United Nations (UN) Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Article 1 of the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees defines refugee as "any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, having no nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (UNHCR). Migration can be caused by many reasons such as political, economic and educational reasons. Migration by people who do not like the living conditions where they live can be either forced or voluntary. Turkey is a country receiving migration as it is seen as an attractive region for citizens of other countries in terms of its climate and geopolitical location. Turkey, which is home to many people from different languages, religions and nationalities, is also known as a country of immigration.

Types of migration are as follows:

1. Internal migration: Internal migration is the movement of a person within a country. In general, migration from villages to cities is called internal migration. Internal migration that does not change the country's population can also be experienced from city to village or from city to city.

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