Instrumentalization of Migration and Political Leadership: Comparative Cases of Egypt and Turkey

استغلال الهجرة والقيادة السياسية: حالات مقارنة بين مصر وتركيا

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Abstract:

There is an increased interest in analysing how state and non-state actors manipulate migration and refugees as a leverage to get certain concessions from other international actors or as an instrument to achieve their goals. Terms as weaponization of migration (WoM), coercive engineered migration (CEM), migration diplomacy, and instrumentalization of migration (IoM) partially illustrate this interest. After briefly reviewing the existing main theoretical contributions on terms and patterns of utilization of migration in literature, the authors develop a typology of soft versus hard forms of IoM as a more intuitive, inclusive and expansive categorization. This typology combines three basic criteria of extent of utilizer's responsibility, tangibility and multiplicity of goals and finally nature of tactics and strategies. The article compares the Egyptian and Turkish cases to illustrate the differences between the two countries in instrumentalizing the Syrian refugees' crisis in their relations with the EU.

Moving beyond description to explanation, the article then focuses on utilizer's political leadership as a plausible, yet surprisingly understudied, variable and addresses its possible impact on the state's decision on how to instrumentalize migration. Events of Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) database show how Turkish and Egyptian leaders differ in their cooperative and conflictual behaviours. This preliminary application of congruence analysis and plausibility probe aims to highlight how different leadership styles affect the patterns of externally utilizing the refugees' crises.

Keywords: Egypt, Turkey, Instrumentalization of Migration, Weaponization of Migration, migration diplomacy, Political Leadership, event data analysis

المستخلص:

يتزايد الاهتمام بتحليل كيفية تلاعب الجهات الفاعلة الحكومية وغير الحكومية بالهجرة واللاجئين كوسيلة ضغط للحصول على تنازلات من جهات دولية أخرى، أو كأداة لتحقيق أهدافها. وتُوضح مصطلحات مثل تسليح الهجرة (WoM)، والهجرة المُهندسة القسرية(CEM) ، ودبلوماسية الهجرة، واستغلال الهجرة (IoM) هذا الاهتمام جزئيًا. بعد استعراض موجز للمساهمات النظرية الرئيسية الموجودة حول مصطلحات وأنماط استغلال الهجرة في الأدبيات، وضع المؤلفون تصنيفًا للأشكال الناعمة مقابل الصلبة لاستغلال الهجرة (IoM) كتصنيف أكثر بديهية وشمولية واتساعًا. يجمع هذا التصنيف ثلاثة معايير أساسية: مدى مسؤولية المستخدم، وملموسية الأهداف وتعددها، وأخيرًا طبيعة التكتيكات والاستراتيجيات. تُقارن المقالة الحالتين المصرية والتركية لتوضيح الاختلافات بين البلدين في استغلال أزمة اللاجئين السوريين في علاقاتهما مع الاتحاد الأوروبي. يتجاوز المقال الوصف إلى الشرح، إذ يركز على القيادة السياسية للمستفيد كمتغير معقول، وإن كان غير مدروس بشكل كافٍ على نحوٍ مثير للدهشة، ويتناول تأثيرها المحتمل على قرار الدولة بشأن كيفية استغلال الهجرة. تُظهر أحداث قاعدة بيانات نظام الإنذار المبكر المتكامل للأزمات (ICEWS) اختلاف القادة الأتراك والمصريين في سلوكياتهم التعاونية والصراعية. يهدف هذا التطبيق الأولي لتحليل التطابق واختبار المعقولية إلى تسليط الضوء على كيفية تأثير أساليب القيادة المختلفة على أنماط الاستغلال الخارجي لأزمات اللاجئين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مصر، تركيا، استغلال الهجرة، تسليح الهجرة، دبلوماسية الهجرة، القيادة السياسية، تحليل بيانات الأحداث.

Introduction:

The rise of refugee crises and their instrumentalization necessitates a systematic review and synthesis of the different typologies in the literature regarding how actors use refugees or migrants[1] to serve their interests. In this regard, this paper has two main aims: The first aim, addressed in sections one and two, is to critically review the existing literature to develop a more comprehensive terminology and typology for how international actors use migration to achieve their goals, distinguishing between softer

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[1] This paper analyses the instrumentalization of forced migration and refugees in particular. While the authors acknowledge the definitional and legal differences between migrants and refugees (UNHCR, 2006), the dual use of these terms is justified by the partial generatability of discussed strategies and the practical difficulties in distinguishing between migrants and refugees in the Egyptian context (Aziz, 2017: 4).

and harder forms of instrumentalization of migration (IoM). The second aim, addressed in section three, is to highlight the significance of leadership as an important, yet under-examined, variable influencing states' practices of IoM. Without neglecting the possible effects of other factors, the authors hypothesize that more assertive or conflictual leaders tend to employ harder or more offensive patterns of IoM, while the more cooperative leaders tend to adopt softer forms of IoM.

This paper applies the congruence method and plausibility probe to assess a theory's relevance to a specific case. Unlike process tracing, congruence method does not establish direct causal links but offers preliminary insights for theory exploration and refinement (George and Bennett, 2005:111,182) Plausibility probe includes "illustrative" case studies providing an intermediary step between hypothesis generation and hypothesis testing (Levy,2008:10). Accordingly, the paper comparatively examines the cases of Egyptian and Turkish IoM targeting the EU, focusing mainly on the Syrian refugee crisis to illustrate the applicability of the suggested typology and the possible effects of variations in leadership patterns. The behavioral profiling of the Egyptian and Turkish leaders is based on the event data bank of the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS)[2].

Section One: Literature Review of Terminologies and Patterns:

This section first provides a brief overview of some of the recent concepts developed to analyze external employment of migration. The authors argue for using "instrumentalization of migration" as a less biased, more inclusive and developable concept compared with other salient security/strategic and diplomatic-based concepts. The second part reviews existing categorizations of how states utilize migration.

A- Instrumentalization of Migration (IoM): Definition and related concepts:

Recent works express growing interest in cases of external manipulation of irregular migrants and refugees. This focus was not only due to escalation of conflicts and forced migration crises, but also partly represented continuation and reflection of increasing EU externalization of migration and transferring responsibility of managing migration issues to actors outside the EU before reaching its borders. As externalization became the new normal, this led to gradual empowerment and increasing leverage of outside actors (Laube, 2021; Aras, 2021; Cassarino, 2021:91-95). It became common

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[2] Both authors collaborated throughout the paper, with the first author leading the initial section of literature review and the second author handling the final event data analysis subsection. The second section and remaining parts were co-authored.

to witness cases of states utilizing their status in hosting relatively large stocks of refugees and (potential) migrants to influence other state' behaviours or obtain certain gains and concessions. A series of security, economic and political concepts emerged to analyze this phenomenon.

Scholars have introduced concepts such as "weaponization of migration" (WoM), "coercive engineered migration" (CEM) (Greenhill, 2008:6-10; 2010; 2016a; Steger, 2017), "migration diplomacy" (Tsourapas, 2017: 2370-71; Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019: 115-117), and "refugee rentierism or commodification" (Tsourapas, 2019; Freier et al., 2021; Tsourapas, 2021) to analyze different aspects of utilizing or manipulating the migration crises .

Many of these terms indicate an increasing emphasis on the cases in which countries apply coercive policies entailing mainly a clear and open threat to flood the borders of destination countries with masses of refugees (Du Perron de Revel, 2022; Greenhill, 2010, 2016a, 2016b). This, however, does not negate the existence of other cases where the host countries could pursue more cooperative policies or migration diplomacy towards the target actors to secure their interests (Tsourapas, 2017:2371, 2019: 466).

Recently, the EU has referred to the concept of **'instrumentalization of (irregular) migration' (IoM)**, considering it among 'threats that undermine EU security along our southern and eastern borders and beyond' (Council of the European Union, 2022). The EU defined it as 'the increasing role of state actors in artificially creating and facilitating irregular migration, using migratory flows as a tool for political purposes to destabilize the European Union or its member states' (European Commission, 2021). While less "securitized", this definition of instrumentalization is akin to Greenhill's identification of migrants and refugees as "instruments of statecraft in myriad [or hybrid] wars" (Greenhill, 2004: 26).

Beyond this quite limited and relatively negative definition, other researchers have defined IoM more broadly to examine how states manipulate migration movements (including forced migration) to secure certain political, economic, and other interests or concessions from other actors (states, regional or international organizations) within belligerent, negotiation, or hybrid scenarios. Additionally, literature focuses on calibrating the responses of the target countries or parties, especially the European Union (Heinikoski, 2022; Ho and Wijnkoop, 2022; Cassarino, 2021).

Without undervaluing the important contributions of other concepts, the authors argue that this broader definition of IoM offers both normative and analytical advantages. **Normatively**, IoM avoids the biased, securitized, and negative connotations of terms like "weaponization" or "strategic engineering" of migration, as

well as the implicitly positive connotations of "migration diplomacy". While Marder suggests "migration whipping" to highlight the misuse of migrants and encourage humane responses from the targeted parties (Marder, 2018:586), this metaphor risks demonizing the users and glorifying the targets. Although "instrumentalization" also implies the dehumanized degrading use of migrants as tools (Kaufmann, 2011), it provides a more balanced foundation for condemning such practices without legitimizing violent or securitized defensive responses typically associated with "weaponization" (Marder 2018, 577-78, 583).

Analytically, IoM offers a more inclusive framework than its counterparts. Unlike 'migration diplomacy,' which is primarily state-centric (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019:116-117), IoM encompasses a broader range of state and non-state actors. This inclusivity is crucial given the increasing role of non-state actors, such as terrorist and violent groups, in exploiting migration crises to secure gains or prompt international interventions (Greenhill, 2016b, 320; Freier et al., 2021). The growing influence of these actors, particularly in the Middle East and southern Mediterranean, and declining state sovereignty highlight the need for analytical frameworks that account for diverse entities, given their unique capacities and the complexities of attributing international responsibility for their actions (BalaEddy,2024).

While evolving diplomacy concepts integrate more dimensions and non-state actors (Malit & Tsourapas,2021), IoM stands out by its broader incorporation of both domestic and external strategies. IoM also includes not only cooperative and coercive approaches but also unilateral or brute force ones. The latter, unlike traditional diplomacy, are less concerned with other entities' responses. Greenhill highlights these approaches in her categorization of dispossessive, exportive, and militarized strategically engineered migrations (SEM) (Greenhill,2010: 28).

However, compared to SEM, IoM does not necessarily imply long-term planning, comprehensive measures, or precise control capacities associated with 'engineered strategies'. This is important given Greenhill's emphasis on the inherent difficulties in fully controlling migration flows, especially by weaker actors (as primary suspects) supposedly lacking such 'strategical' capacities (Greenhill, 2008:10-11). Migration is not necessarily utilized as a comprehensive strategy but rather as one of the arsenals of instruments available for a given state or actor to achieve its objectives.

Furthermore, IoM can enrich the existing literature by integrating the use of migration within the broader discourse on (foreign) policy instruments, their patterns, and the conditions or causes of their use and effectiveness. In the following sections, based on reviewing existing typologies of how states utilize migration, the authors

propose advancing this integration by focusing on the soft and hard categorization of migration instrumentalization.

B. How previous literature investigated patterns of utilization of migration:

The review of previous literature reveals the development of various categorizations of migration utilization based on different criteria such as actor's position, responsibility, goals, and strategies. One of the earliest categorizations is differentiating the a*ctor's position in the migration network as a sending, transit or receiving country* (Teitelbaum, 1984: 447; Jacobsen, 1996: 664-5; Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019:118-119). Another criterion is *the actor's responsibility in generating (forced) migration flows as direct generators, indirect agent provocateurs, or mere opportunists* (Greenhill, 2010: 23,45; Greenhill, 2016b: 321).

Concerning the utilizers' motivations or objectives, most literature refers to several types of goals that states tend to obtain including economic, political, military and even territorial gains. Greenhill suggested four basic types of strategically engineered migration including the [political] exportive form (to expel political dissidents or destabilize other adversary governments), the dispossessive form (to control territory or property of another group or groups), the militarized form (to obtain military advantage against opponents for instance by disrupting their command and control, or logistics), and lastly the coercive form (to induce political, economic and/or military concessions from targets) (Greenhill, 2010:27- 28). Steger expanded this quadrable typology by adding three other variants of economic, political, and fifth column strategies to increase economic revenues, enhance political legitimacy and ideological influence, and facilitate political infiltration of other societies (Steger,2017:6-7;30-37; 42-44). Adopting a more inclusive and expandable approach, Tsourapas and others highlighted "issue linkage" strategies where utilizers tend to link migration to other security, economic, political or even cultural and symbolic issues whether in cooperative or coercive contexts (Tsourapas, 2017: 2367-71; Adamson & Tsourapas, 2019: 120-121; Cassarino, 2021:93).

Another main criterion is type of strategies or techniques and whether they are cooperative or confrontational. Focusing mainly on coercive engineered migration, Greenhill (2010) proposes two distinct, yet non-mutually exclusive, pathways or strategies termed as "capacity swamping and political agitation". The first aims to overwhelm the target's physical and/or economic capacity to cope with a sudden surge of mass migration crisis if the target did not respond to certain demands. Political agitation manipulates the target's legitimacy crises and internal political divisions regarding bearing the burden of the refugees' influx (Greenhill, 2010: 53).

Broadening the scope of strategies, Tsourapas and others distinguish between coercive and cooperative migration diplomacy or what he sometimes terms blackmailing and backscratching strategies with application on cases such as Libya, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Belarus against the EU (Tsourapas, 2017: 2372-77; Tsourapas, 2019; Tsourapas and Zartaloudis, 2022; Adamson & Tsourapas, 2019: 121-124; Du Perron de Revel, 2022: 14).

Similarly, Ho and Wijnkoop (2022) differentiate among belligerent, negotiation and hybrid scenarios as basic forms of IoM. The first entails a clear malign intent deliberately directing migration flows to destabilize target states. In "negotiation or third country management scenarios", actors exert diplomatic pressure or coercion to achieve their goals within international negotiations. The hybrid scenarios refer to perpetrators partially aiming to destabilize the target without overt threats or escalation to avoid triggering particular countervailing measures (Ho & Wijnkoop, 2022:2).

The last classification avoids conflating all forms of IoM with belligerence, but it does not fully utilize the metaphoric potentials of the concept of "instrumentalization" to connect IoM with the extensive literature on foreign policy instruments and their classifications. This goal can be achieved in part by differentiating between harder and softer forms of IoM proposed in the suggested analytical framework.

Section Two: Analytical Framework for Soft and Hard IoM : Comparing Egypt and Turkey

Building on previous categorizations, the authors propose a refined, multi-dimensional typology inspired by Joseph Nye's distinction between soft and hard power. Soft power is primarily characterized by intangible resources, as well as more immaterial and co-optive strategies or power behaviours (Nye,2004:6-15; 2011:83-94).

Synthesizing these research trends, soft versus hard patterns of IoM are categorized based on three dimensions: a) the utilizer's tangible responsibility in generating the migration crisis, b) the tangibility and multiplicity of goals, and c) the materiality and co-optiveness or offensiveness of adopted behaviours and strategies. Accordingly, the typology depicts a continuum where actors range from cooperative/soft to offensive/hard forms of migration instrumentalization (See Table 1).

Table 1. Soft/Cooperative versus Hard/Offensive patterns of IoM

Criteria	More Cooperative/ Soft Instrumentalization	More Offensive Hard Instrumentalization
Responsibility in generating the refugees' flows	Opportunists	Generators, Agent Provocateurs
Tangibility and Multiplicity of goals	More Milieu Goals	More Possessive Goals
Power Behaviors and adopted Strategies	Cooperative Framing and reputational behaviors	Explicit Alters' negative framing and shaming strategies
	Implicit (discursive) Deterrence	Explicit (tangible) Deterrence
	(semi-)cooperative persuasion: Backscratching and Implicit Blackmail (less publicly revealed, less threatening mode, focus on co-operation possibilities)	More Explicit Coercive Blackmail: Direct, Quasi/Explicit immediate threat, related more to actual movement of refugees to the target state's borders
	Indirect/Implicit threat (i.e.: reference to or warning against mid/long term threats related to the existence of the refugees in the host state and how they may affect the target security or interests).	Attrition, destruction and forceful unilateral acquisition of territory and resources

Turkish and Egyptian cases are selected to briefly illustrate this typology due to considerations of typicality, diversity, and strategic importance (Gerring,2017: 42-43;56-62). In terms of typicality and diversity, Turkey is often cited as a typical case of coercive IoM against the EU (İşleyen & Karadağ, 2023; Ho & Wijnkoop, 2022; Tsourapas, 2019). Egypt is cited as adopting a less confrontational mode based on more reactive and ambivalent forms of IoM in relations with the EU (Koch, Weber, & Werenfels, 2018; Norman, 2017; Roll,2018; Völkel, 2022). This diversity raises interest in the applicability of the proposed framework to systematically describe and analyze these differences.

Regarding strategic importance, Egypt and Turkey are the largest non-EU Mediterranean countries in terms of population (110 million and 85 million respectively) (UN, 2022). Both countries are significant as source, host and transit countries especially given their young and diverse demographics associated with political and economic pressures in both countries. Turkey hosts about 5.1 million foreign nationals, including 3.8 million seeking international protection, with Syrian refugees increasing from 500,000 in 2013 to 3.3 million in 2023 (IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM),2023:1; UNCHR, 2024). Egypt hosts approximately 575,000

registered refugees and asylum-seekers, primarily Sudanese and Syrians (300,000 and 156,000 consecutively) (UNCHR, 2024: 1–2). Governmental and other international estimates suggest higher total migrant and refugee population of around 9 million, including about 4 million Sudanese, 1.5 million Syrians, and 1 million Yemenis and Libyans each (State Information Service, 2024; International Organization of Migration (IOM), 2023). The disparity in estimates is due to Egypt's reliance on the UNHCR refugee status determination (RSD), leading to possible underreporting of those not registered with the UNHCR or whose applications were denied (De Bel-Air, 2016:2-7; UNHCR, 2021; Aziz, 2017:3; Zohry, 2003:9). Egypt also serves as a transit country, with many migrants using smuggling networks through the Egypt-Libya-Italy route to reach Europe (IOM, 2020:4). Additionally, economic hardships and high unemployment since the 1990s have driven increased irregular migration of Egyptian youth via dangerous routes (Ayoub & Khallaf, 2014:16).

Accordingly, the Egyptian and Turkish cases can help illustrate the applicability of the proposed framework to systematically highlight the differences between the IoM patterns based on the identified criteria.

A- Extent and tangibility of Utilizer's responsibility:

This dimension focuses on the extent to which the utilizer is responsible for generating or creating the migration crisis. Greenhill identifies three types: **'generators'**, **'agent provocateurs'**, and **'opportunists'**. Generators are directly responsible for creating or threatening mass migration movements to secure concessions or demands, such as Fidel Castro pressuring the US by opening Cuban ports or Idi Amin threatening to deport Asians to pressure the UK for military aid (Greenhill, 2010: 23; Greenhill, 2016b: 321). Agent provocateurs indirectly contribute to migration crisis through deliberate acts influencing other actors' behavior to generate outflows. Opportunists exploit existing migration crises without initiating them. The first two align more with the offensive/hard IoM, while the latter inclines towards cooperative/soft utilization.

Although Turkey was not the primary generator of the Syrian refugees' crisis, its role exceeds that of a mere 'opportunist' or passive neighbour, fitting more as an 'agent provocateur' or "secondary generator". Due to its geographical proximity, structural capabilities, and strategic (mis)calculations, Turkey performed a 'necessary' role in prolonging and escalating the Syrian conflict, thus exacerbating the refugee crisis. Turkish provided a safe haven, military and logistical support for the Syrian opposition, threatened and executed military interventions, and controversially facilitated the influx of Sunni Islamic militants through its borders (Ilgıt & Davis, 2013; Uslu, 2016). While not necessarily intended, the repercussions of these Turkish roles

cannot be underestimated particularly considering how it would have been nearly impossible for any other Syrian neighbouring country to play a similar role[3].

Focusing more directly on Turkish approach to refugees, Turkey initially expected a swift conclusion to the Syrian uprisings with the Assad regime replaced by a Sunni Islamist elite. This led to an "open door" policy, signalling readiness to accept Syrian refugees who were anticipated to return quickly and bolster Turkish influence in the post-Assad era. While seemingly humanitarian, the promotion of this Turkish open-door policy, regardless of its actual limitations, can be argued to have indirectly influenced the strategic calculations of Syrian opposition in their escalation against Assad's regime by offering a possible sanctuary or safe refuge. As the conflict escalated and prolonged, the influx of Syrian refugees into Turkey increased, imposing economic, social, and security burdens (Oktav and Çelikaksoy, 2015: 414–5; Okyay, 2017: 830; Şahin Mencütek et al., 2020; Steger, 2017: 35).

Accordingly, Turkey acted as a mixture of a "secondary generator" and "agent provocateur" using the refugee crisis to gain leverage against the EU. This included explicit threats and reports of Turkish authorities orchestrating or encouraging refugees to gather at European borders (Jennequin, 2020: 1; İşleyen & Karadağ, 2023: 457-6,480-8). Turkey was not simply utilizing pre-existing opportunities but rather creating or at least secondarily generating refugee crisis.

Conversely, Egypt aligns more with the "opportunistic" type. During President Morsi's regime, Syrian refugees were welcomed with flexible visa regulations and active Egyptian involvement against Al-Assad was raised. However, after El-Sisi took office, Egypt adopted a more cautious pro-stability stance and the visa policy tightened due to suspected links between Syrian refugees and the Muslim Brotherhood. Initially, Egypt's manipulation of the refugee issue focused on internal security concerns. As the regime stabilized, Egypt began leveraging the refugee situation to generate economic gains through strategically reacting to the EU offers of cooperation (Koch, Weber, & Werenfels, 2018: 66-69; Sika, 2015: 149).

B- Tangibility and Multiplicity of goals:

The paper suggests categorizing IoM goals into those of milieu and possession. The latter involves competing for limited resources and is more specific and concrete, such as acquiring territory, obtaining economic benefits such as loans or tariff

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[3] This can be justified due to either lack of will (Iraqi government with its Iranian- Shiite connections), lack of credibility (the case of Israel that would delegitimize any opposition against the Syrian regime), or lack of power (the cases of Lebanon and Jordan).

preferences, or gaining membership in prestigious international institutions (Tocci, 2007: 4; Wolfers, 1962: 67- 80). On the other hand, milieu goals are less about competing for material possessions and more about altering the surrounding environment, such as enhancing a state's image, establishing international institutions, or promoting international laws (Nye, 2011: 16). These goals may involve using migration diplomacy to strengthen public diplomacy and promote soft power by accepting refugees from adversaries, exporting skilled migrants, or utilizing academic exchange programs and humanitarian relief missions as forms of temporary migration (Tsourapas, 2018; Adamson & Tsourapas, 2019:121).

Both types of goals do not need to be mutually exclusive. States may pursue possession and milieu goals simultaneously and interactively. The suggested typology focuses on the relative weight of these goals to indicate the nature of IoM. Milieu goals are closer to cooperative migration utilization, while possession goals are aligned with harder utilization.

The 2016 EU-Turkey deal exemplifies Turkish pursuit of possession goals, including material gains and EU access. Turkey agreed to host new migrants and prevent illegal crossings in exchange for €6 billion in financial aid, accelerated EU accession processes, and visa liberalization (European Council, 2016; Aras, 2021:31-3; Greenhill, 2016b: 328; Jennequin, 2020: 1). Additionally, the deal designated Turkey as a "safe country" for refugees enhancing its reputation and shielding it from European pressures regarding rising authoritarianism (Tsourapas, 2019: 475; Elitok, 2019: 11; Greenhill, 2016b: 328). Turkey also used refugees for 'hard' military and territorial goals as seen in Erdogan's 2019 threats against the EU during 'Operation Peace Spring'. Erdogan explicitly threatened EU that "Hey EU, wake up. I say it again: If you try to frame our operation as an invasion, our task is simple – we will open the doors and send 3.6 million migrants to you" (Wheeldon, 2019).

Egypt, by contrast, pursues more implicit and less ambitious goals. Egypt sought cooperation with the EU for economic and social development, legal migration channels, and reduced external political pressure (Cassarino, 2021: 93; Roll, 2018: 58-62). EU-Egypt relations have long encompassed stricter migration control in exchange for economic and financial support (EU/Egypt Association Agreement, 2004; EU/Egypt Action Plan, 2007: 24; The Association Council, 2017: 8). The post-2011 Arab revolts increased the significance of this exchange, as the increasing instability in the Arab region made Egypt a critical partner for the EU in managing migration flows (Abdel Fattah & Fakhry, 2021; Achrainer & Pace, 2023; Schwarz, 2024). As President of the European Commission, von der Leyen, put it "we continue to count on Egypt's full dedication to control illegal migration from border management to anti-

smuggling and return." (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2024). This has been recently exemplified by the 2024 Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership, which included €7.4 billion in financial and investment support, with €200 million for migration management (Delegation of the EU to Egypt, 2024).

C- Power behaviors and Strategies:

Building on previous research on the utilization of migration and the soft/hard power spectrum, the authors present a categorization of six types of IoM power behaviors or strategies. These categories express a gradual transition from softer to harder power forms based on increasing tangibility, offensiveness, and unilaterality of power behaviors:

(1) **Communicative Persuasion:** Similar to Habermas's communicative power, this ideal type aims for 'collective agreement' through rational discourse, facilitating 'genuine' interactions to reach a "reasoned consensus" without threats or incentives, to achieve power "with" not "over" others. This requires recognizing all parties as equals and legitimizing a common system of norms (O'Mahony, 2010: 53-73; Risse, 2000: 10). Despite many international and EU dialogues claiming to target such consensus, power structures often lead the powerful parties to impose their own norms (Cassarino, 2021: 92).

(2) **Reputational, Framing and Shaming Strategies:** These strategies exert pressure on the highly-valued reputational status of targeted parties without necessarily resorting to direct material threats. They have a relative multiplier effect by enhancing the utilizer's own reputation and delegitimizing the targets by exposing their irresponsibility, double standards, and hypocrisy (Greenhill, 2010: 52; Hafner-Burton, 2008: 689; Tingley & Tomz, 2021: 5). Utilizers often use these strategies through discursive framing, highlighting their burdens of hosting refugees and signalling the need for international support from complicit or responsibility-shirking parties, thereby augmenting other semi-cooperative and coercive strategies (Freier et al., 2021).

(3) **(Semi-)Cooperative Negotiation Strategies**: These strategies resemble backscratching and cooperative migration diplomacy, or "negotiation scenarios" of instrumentalization. The actor does not openly threaten the target parties but seeks benefits through cooperation and coordination, emphasizing positive-sum gains for all parties (Tsourapas, 2019: 468; Adamson & Tsourapas, 2019: 121-124). This category also includes "migration rentierism" and "commodification," where migrants are used as sources of remittances, taxes,

inexpensive labor, or as bargaining chips for increasing international aid and donations (Tsourapas, 2019; Freier et al., 2021; Tsourapas, 2021b; Steger, 2017: 30-35). The actor may adopt proactive or reactive approaches towards cooperation with the targets (Koch, Weber, & Werenfels, 2018).

(4) **Deterrence and prevention:** These strategies aim to dissuade or prevent target's unwanted actions, using implicit or explicit threats ranging from discursive to actual demonstrations of limited migration flows as a form of hybrid deterrence (Mazar, 2018). The restricted actions can relate to domestic political interests (e.g., non-interference in internal affairs, criticism of human rights violations, electoral fraud) or harder economic or military objectives (e.g., deterring delegitimization of military interventions).

(5) **Coercion and blackmail:** This strategy involves clear threats to harm the target unless specific actions are taken. Threats could include, for example, loosening border controls by the host state to allow more inflows reaching the target state's borders without overwhelming them. Often, the demands or concessions are related to achieving possession goals, such as securing economic and trade benefits, gaining support for certain behaviors or actions against adversaries, or accessing regional or international arrangements or organizations (Tsourapas, 2019; Tsourapas and Zartaloudis, 2022). The severity of coercion varies based on the tangibility, explicitness, and degree of the threats. Coercion can also take softer forms like "rhetorical coercion" or "discursive entrapment," although these forms typically accompany and legitimize harder forms of coercion (Mattern, 2007: 107-119).

(6) **forceful unilateral behaviors:** These behaviors involve using actual flows of mass migration to unilaterally dictate terms, including territorial acquisition, resource deprivation, and overburdening target's resources. This category includes Greenhill's dispossessive, exportive, and militarized engineered migrations (Greenhill, 2010: 27-28). It also encompasses using migrants to infiltrate, justify interventions, or even occupation under the guise of humanitarian intervention or migrants' R2P (Steger, 2017: 35-43; Kul, 2022; Panebianco & Fontana, 2018). State can even create or increase its associated migrants and diaspora via strategies as Russian "Passportization" in South Ossetia and Crimea (Steger,2017:43). In most of these cases, the targeted party is relatively sidelined or deprived of its agency, and treated as an object of intervention or even destruction by the utilizer.

These categories reflect a spectrum from softer, cooperative to harder, offensive strategies, as indicated in figure (1). However, there is no necessity of

gradualism, uni-directionality or exclusiveness in employing these behaviors and strategies. States may use these behaviors simultaneously or in hybrid forms, combining soft and hard power strategically according to context to maximize success, akin to smart power (Nye, 2011: 207-209).
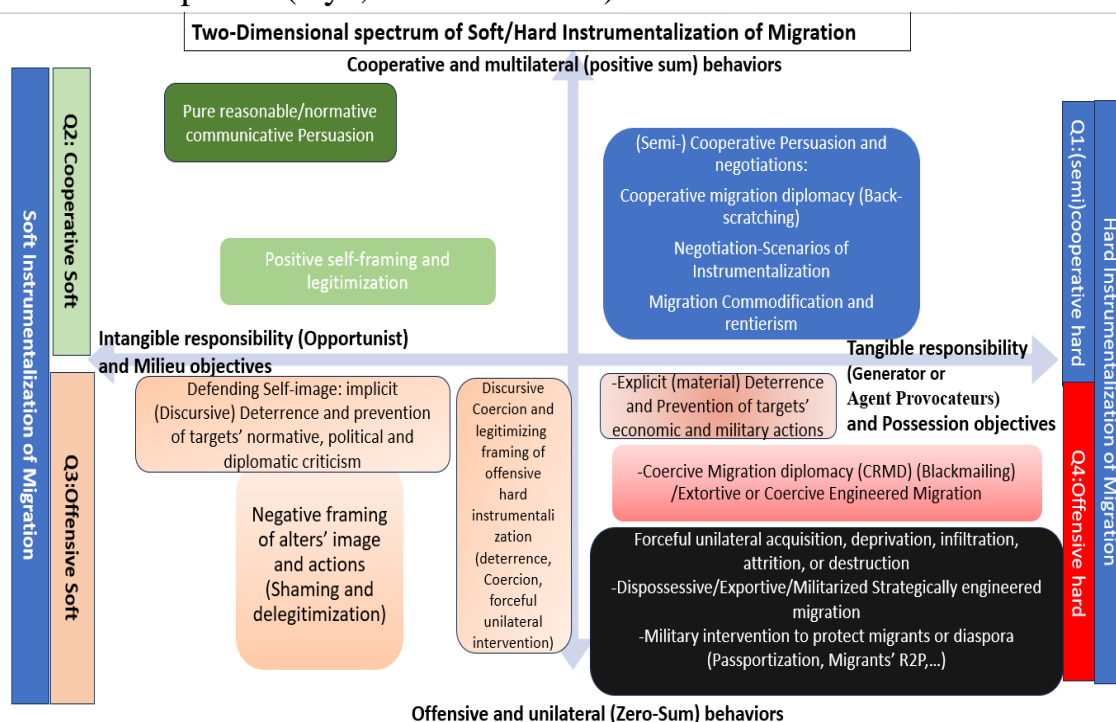

Figure (1): Two-dimensional spectrum of soft versus hard patterns of IoM

In terms of strategies, Turkey employed a diverse array of the typology. Regrading reputation strategies, Turkey went beyond enhancing its image to tarnishing others'. Turkey promoted its image as a global power with a longstanding heritage of supporting refugees, emphasizing its Ottoman history, implementing an 'open door policy,' hosting the largest number of refugees, emerging as a major donor state, and carrying out innovative mass-relief projects as "container cities"(Cevik & Sevin, 2017; Jennequin,2020:2,4-5). On the other hand, Turkey used an explicit naming and shaming strategy to expose the EU's hypocrisy and limited assistance compared to Turkey's higher costs in hosting Syrian refugees (İrdem and Raychev, 2021: 249). Turkey also employed "spectacularization" or visual-discursive framing to emphasize "the spectacle of Greek/EU brutality vis-à-vis that of Turkey's humanitarianism" (İşleyen & Karadağ, 2023:488).

Additionally, Turkey developed a coercive strategy, threatening to flood the EU with Syrian refugees unless the EU met its commitments from the 2016 deal. This was explicitly expressed by Turkish officials, especially president Erdogan, who threatened to *'open the doors to Greece and Bulgaria anytime and put the refugees on buses unless the Turkish demands are met'* (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019: 114; Greenhill,

2016b: 325; Jennequin, 2020: 4-7; Okyay and Cristiani, 2016). In early 2020, Turkey actually moved some refugees towards the Greek border to pressure the EU (Lefteris and Bulent Usta, 2020).

Moreover, Turkey used the refugee card to deter EU opposition to its military actions in northern Syria, mixing deterrence, coercion, unilateral territorial acquisition, and demographic changes under the guise of creating 'safe' or 'buffer' zones for repatriating Syrian refugees, serving its security and geopolitical interests (Demiryontar & İçduygu, 2023; Sahin Mencutek, 2023).

While Egypt also employs various strategies towards the EU, they are less coherent, explicit and threatening than Turkey's. Egypt, focused on subtle shaming, without explicitly naming any party, highlighting its ethical approach to hosting millions of refugees without confining them to camps and encouraging integration, while emphasizing its economic challenges and lack of external support. This indirectly embarrassed European partners for avoiding the refugee burden while criticizing Egypt's human rights records. Additionally, the Egyptian discourse reminded European partners of Egypt's serious efforts in curbing illegal migration (Egyptian Presidency, 2019). Egyptian President El-Sisi has repeatedly emphasized this framing:

> ' I cannot help but pointing out that we have never failed to *fulfill our humanitarian duty to take in about six million migrants and refugees fleeing wars, political crises and difficult economic conditions. Egypt currently hosts them on its land and among its people; they enjoy all the services the state provides for Egyptians, without any significant aid or support from our international partners despite the importance they attach to the rights of these migrants'. (Egyptian Presidency, 2020)*

Unlike explicit Turkish blackmail strategies against the EU, previous research based on interviews with diplomats in Berlin (2016-17) indicated that Egypt posed implicit threats using the refugee card mainly behind closed doors. These strategies are linked to Egypt's success in securing a $12bn IMF loan in November 2016, supported by European partners without political conditions on human rights or governance. In return, Egypt tightened control over its maritime borders to reduce irregular migration to the EU (Roll, 2018: 64).

In summary, Turkey and Egypt adopted different strategies to pressure the EU. Egypt's strategies reflect a mix of cooperative soft and (semi)cooperative hard approaches (mainly fitting into Quadrants 1 and 2 in fig.1). Turkey's strategies fit into Quadrants 3 and 4, reflecting a mix of offensive soft and offensive hard approaches. Table 2 summarizes the basic differences between Egypt and Turkey's IoM.

Table 2. Comparing Egyptian and Turkish patterns of migration instrumentalization

	Egypt	**Turkey**
Responsibility in generating the refugees' flows	Opportunists	Agent Provocateurs 'Secondary' Generator
Types and Multiplicity of goals	Possessive • Economic assistance (mostly indirectly within broader cooperative arrangements) • More legal channels for Egyptian labor migration Milieu • Working through multilateral institutions to dissolve the Syrian conflict and the related Syrian refugees' crisis • Refraining from political criticism and conditionality	Possessive • Direct Economic assistance for migrants and refugees • Accelerating access to the European Union • Obtaining increased benefits regrading visa free entry • Requesting logistic and military support for Turkish military interventions Milieu • Increased role of the international community against authoritarian regimes including military intervention. • Refraining from political criticism and conditionality
Strategy adopted	• Cooperative Framing • Backscratching • Implicit Deterrence • Indirect/Implicit Blackmail (less publicly revealed, less threatening mode)	• Conflictual Framing • Backscratching • Explicit Deterrence • Direct/Explicit Blackmail/Coercive (more publicly and threatening mode)

	Egypt	Turkey
		• Attrition, destruction and forceful unilateral acquisition

Section Three: Leadership Patterns and Instrumentalization of Migration:

Beyond categorizing IoM, this section highlights political leadership as a crucial yet underexamined variable in explaining variations in IoM forms. While not ideally expressing a most similar design, comparing Egypt and Turkey provides an avenue to examine if leadership patterns matter. Event-data analysis is used to compare the behavioral profiles of Erdogan and El-Sisi to see if they align with their forms of IoM.

A- Explanatory variables of IoM and political leadership: Leadership significance in Egypt and Turkey:

One of the main questions that remains unresolved in the existing theorisations of refugees and migrants' policy making is why do some states or actors have more aggressive foreign policy behavior, while others develop strategies of policy coordination rather than coercion or confrontation? (Tsourapas, 2021a:33). The following subsections summarize the explanatory variables of IoM, highlights the underexplored importance of political leadership, and its significance in the cases of Egypt and Turkey

(A-1) Mapping the Explanatory Variables of IoM:

While not claiming to cover all existing literature comprehensively, a brief review of key works reveals various factors influencing the preference for and success of harder or softer IoM, including characteristics of targeted parties, the utilizing actors, and immigrants themselves.

Regarding the targeted parties, explanatory factors include their liberal democratic nature, which creates vulnerability due to "liberal paradox" and limits their ability to act, especially in cases of internal divisions between pro- and anti-migration camps or coalitions, contextualized within normative and institutional liberalism (Hollifield, 2004; Greenhill, 2010: 37-52, 56-65). This vulnerability is amplified by hypocrisy costs and symbolic reputational or audience cost caused by disparity between moral commitments and actual policies (Greenhill, 2010:52). Other factors include prior affinity or hostility towards refugee groups (Greenhill,2016: 71-72), migration externalization by target parties (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2019:121), and

regional integration levels and migration regimes. The latter can help member states manage the liberal paradox by distributing roles between the regional and national authorities (Hollifield, 2004:903). However, the EU's self-proclaimed normative power status adds an additional layer to the liberal paradox, increasing vulnerability. Nevertheless, these "liberal" effects on the target side are diluted by the rise of illiberal tendencies and stricter migration politics across different political regimes, partly driven by migration dynamics themselves (Natter & Thiollet, 2022).

Regarding the utilizing actors, explanatory factors include the illiberal or rogue nature of their regimes, which reduces domestic pressures and international audience costs, creating an "illiberal paradox.". This paradox increases policy choices, enabling both softer and harder forms of IoM with relatively less vulnerability (Hollifield, 2004: 893; Greenhill, 2008: 16; Greenhill, 2010: 65; Natter, 2024: 689-91).

Another factor is the relative weakness of the utilizer and limited leverage against targeted parties. IoM is a "cost-effective policy tool" (Greenhill, 2008: 17), but harder IoM is typically a last resort due to difficulties in controlling flows and potential negative repercussions (Greenhill, 2010: 269). However, lacking traditional influence may lead actors to use harder IoM to convince targets of the credibility and potency of the migration crisis and its costs (Greenhill, 2008: 13-15). Inferior military capability does not deter utilizers, as military retaliation by targets is rarely feasible (Greenhill, 2008: 11). This relative weakness of utilizers does not negate the necessity of having reasonable overall power resources to enable the utilizer to partly control migration flows and effectively use different tools to instrumentalize migration (Adamson and Tsourapas, 2019:116). Although not necessarily determinantal, the utilizer's geographical proximity to targets enhances his structural capabilities and increases the likelihood of initiation and success of (harder) IoM (Greenhill,2016a :66-70; Ho & Wijnkoop, 2022:17).

Another utilizer-related factor is his willingness or high motivation and resolution, which can stem from existence of high-stake goals or linkage possibilities to other pending issues or regional ambitions, or increasing political-economic pressures, or worsening situations linked to migration crises in real or politicized manners (Greenhill,2016a:269; Şahin-Mencütek & Tsourapas, 2023:1-5; Jones, 2021: vi, 62-72). These pressures can also result from prior actions taken by target parties, such as sanctions, embargoes, or diplomatic pressure, even before any migration outflow occurs (Greenhill, 2008: 11).

Other factors include the utilizer's perception of third parties as either a limiting international audience or as favorable potential external interveners motivated by migration crises, encouraging the generation or provocation of such crises (Greenhill,

2008: 15-16). Third parties can also influence IoM patterns through diffusion, demonstration, learning, and cooperation in migration utilization (Freier et al., 2021).

With regards to migration and migrants' characteristics, the real or threatened size of migrant outflow is as an important factor that increases the stress on the targeted parties, although not necessarily determinantal (Greenhill,2016:66-70). The cooperation or responsiveness of the migrants themselves with the utilizer significantly affects the success or failure of coercive migration diplomacy (Greenhill,2008:11; 2016:270).

Based on the previous brief analysis, the following table provides a partial mapping of the multiple potential explanatory variables.

Table 3 : Factors Influencing Harder or Softer Forms of Instrumentalization of Migration

Category	Factors Leading to Harder IoM	Factors Leading to Softer IoM
Targeted Parties	- Liberal democratic nature (exposed to "liberal paradox")	- Strong regional integration and migration regimes
	- Internal divisions on migration policy - Hypocrisy and reputational costs from liberal commitments	- Illiberal or restrictive migration policies reducing hypocrisy costs
	-Contradictory migration externalization policies increasing vulnerability.	- Effective migration externalization policies reducing vulnerability
	- Prior hostility towards refugee groups	- Prior affinity towards refugee groups
	- Low regional integration and fragmented migration regimes	- Strong ability to absorb or control migration flows
Utilizing Actors	- Illiberal or rogue regime (low domestic/international costs)	- Regime with international constraints and audience costs
	- Limited leverage and traditional influence over targets	- Strong diplomatic alternatives available
	- Inferior military capability but credible coercion threat	- High dependence on target for economic or political support
	- High motivation due to political/economic pressures	- Low-stakes interests in migration-related issues
	- Geographical proximity to target	- Geographical distance from target reducing leverage
	- Prior tensions with target (sanctions, embargoes, etc.)	- Cooperative or neutral relations with target parties
	- Favorable perception of third parties as potential allies	- Restrictive third-party interventions limiting escalation

	- Large-scale or threatened outflows increasing pressure	- Manageable migration flows reducing stress on targets
Migration & Migrants	- Migrant cooperation with the utilizer	- Migrant resistance to manipulation or coercion

It is worth noting that studies usually assert complex causality, with no single factor being a necessary or sufficient condition for IoM adoption or success. However, specific combinations might be underlined, such as Greenhill's focus on the liberal paradox and hypocrisy cost (2016a: 41-65), or Tsourapas's focus on the utilizer-elite's belief in their state's geopolitical importance versus the proximate target state alongside hosting a significant number of refugees (2019:476).

(A-2) Political Leadership in IoM: Underexplored Significance in Egypt and Turkey

Consistent with previous research, this study does not assume that leadership alone determines IoM or foreign policy. Instead, It argues that leadership matters and should be analyzed alongside structural and institutional factors (Çuhadar, Kaarbo, Kesgin, & Özkeçeci-Taner, 2021:1-4). **Emphasis on leadership is driven by theoretical and case-specific considerations**. **Theoretically**, the previous review reveals more focus on structural and institutional factors, while relatively under-examining the individual level of political leadership or "who" exerts influence within the utilizing actors (Sabchev, 2022:306-7; Amit, Riss, & Popper, 2016:372; Koch, Weber, & Werenfels, 2018:68-71).

Leadership significance intensifies in IoM cases, typically initiated by less powerful and less democratic actors, where leaders play central roles due to weaker institutional constraints (Greenhill, 2010: 37). This role increases in IoM due to its association with migration crises and strategic interactions with more powerful targets, where leaders' personalities, styles, beliefs, and cognition become crucial (Lantis & Beasley, 2017: 9-10; Preston, 2010: 2-3).

With regards to case-specific considerations, leadership can better explain variations in Egyptian and Turkish IoM patterns. In both cases, leadership centrality increases due to the less democratic nature of both regimes, the historical central role of presidents in Egypt, the increasing presidentialization in Turkey, and the dramatic ways of assuming power for both leaders within highly polarized contexts(Preston, 2010: 2-3; Wajner, Taş, Priego-Moreno, & Essa, 2023:175-177).

Further analysis of leadership is necessary, given the partially inadequate or contradictory effects of other factors. As EU-related factors are nearly identical, this shifts the focus to utilizer- and migrant-related variables. Compared to Turkey, Egypt's more centralized political structure, economic challenges, and weaker alignment with

EU policies are assumed to contribute to a more coercive IoM approach. Nevertheless, these same variables may also partially explain Egypt's adoption of less confrontational refugee strategies, following the logic of the "illiberal paradox". Conversely, Turkey's more resolute and assertive IoM can be attributed to a more active domestic opposition, the politicized contestation of refugee issues, electoral pressures, and the presence of more "linkable" issues stemming from Turkey's historical aspirations for EU membership (Völkel, 2022; İrdem and Raychev, 2021).

Larger refugee numbers and geographical proximity might explain Turkish harder IoM, but Greenhill's analysis of 60 cases shows neither is decisive for coercive migration initiation or success (Greenhill, 2010: 66-70). Geography is an important but not determinantal factor, as the utilizers can challenge geographic barriers and migrants are inherently mobile (Ho & Wijnkoop, 2022:17). Additionally, the disparity between numbers of refugees in Egypt and Turkey should not be over-estimated, considering the differences in the nature and efficiency of refugee registration systems in both countries as mentioned before.

Accordingly, based on these theoretical and case-specific considerations, the study focuses on leadership in Egypt and Turkey as a key explanatory variable of migration utilization, without discounting other factors. We hypothesize that the contentious or cooperative patterns of political leadership significantly influence the hardness or softness of IoM strategies.

B-Event-data based profiling of Leaders' Behavioral Patterns: Comparing El-Sisi and Erdogan

There are several assessment-at-a-distance techniques to analyze and classify different characteristics of leaders' styles, traits, psychological profiles, biases, world views, and decision taking rules (Hermann & Hagan, 1998:135-137; Preston, 2010; Lantis & Beasley, 2017:9-10). As a preliminary explorative analysis of how leadership affects IoM, this paper proposes utilizing event databases to profile leaders' behavioral patterns. This represents a novel application of event data analysis, expanding its established use in international relations and foreign policy studies (Schrodt, 1995; Potter, 2010).

The authors employ the real-time and fully automated Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) database of political events. The following sections briefly describe the ICEWS and clarify the reasons and methods for using it to profile the chosen leaders.

(B-1) The ICEWS Dataset and Profiling of Leaders:

The ICEWS was developed by Lockheed Martin for the U.S. Department of Defense beginning in 2007, with the aim of providing real-time and historical data to forecast political crises and instabilities (O'Brien, 2010). As one of the very-large-n machine coded event datasets, ICEWS includes over 25 million political events worldwide, covering the period from January 1, 1995 to mid-2022 (Boschee et al., 2023). It was first released to the public in 2015, with regular weekly updates continuing until 2023. The publicly accessible dataset, available via the Harvard Dataverse, spans from 1995 through 2023 (Boschee et al., 2023; Raleigh & Kishi, 2023: 553–554).

In terms of **sources**, ICEWS draws on near real-time information from more than 100 data providers and approximately 250 international and regional newsfeeds (Lockheed Martin, 2025). This extensive sourcing helps partially mitigate common critiques of event datasets being overly reliant on Western media by incorporating hundreds of local sources, with each event linked to its original source. For example, while the list of publishers for Turkish and Egyptian events is heavily dominated by global outlets (such as Reuters, Xinhua News Agency, Agence France-Presse, and the Associated Press), it still includes some representation from regional and local sources (such as Anadolu News Agency, Turkish Daily News, Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, Al-Ahram, El-Akhbar, El-Watan, and Al-Bawaba News).

With respect to **actors**, ICEWS is notable for its comprehensive primary actor dictionary, which contains over 100,000 political actors. These include not only source and target states, but also a wide range of substate and transnational entities, enhancing the dataset's global coverage. Actor categories encompass chief executives, parliamentarians, police forces, military units, rebel groups, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among others (Boschee et al., 2015; Raleigh & Kishi, 2023: 554–555; Schrodt, 2012b: 2). This extended taxonomy enables researchers to identify and analyze leader-specific events, including those involving figures such as Erdogan and El-Sisi, and to trace their interactions with a wide array of domestic and international actors.

Regarding **events**, ICEWS employs a modified version of the Conflict and Mediation Event Observations (CAMEO) taxonomy. Developed by the University of Kansas, CAMEO builds on earlier frameworks such as the World Event/Interaction Survey (WEIS) and provides a more detailed and standardized structure for coding political interactions between actors (e.g., states, organizations, individuals). The taxonomy features a hierarchical structure of over 300 event types, grouped into 20 root categories that capture a broad spectrum of conflictual and cooperative behavior. These root categories include event types such as "Make public statement," "Appeal,"

"Express intent to cooperate," "Consult," "Engage in diplomatic or material cooperation," "Provide aid," "Yield," "Protest," "Reduce relations," and "Fight." Each category is further subdivided into more specific actions. For instance, under "Provide aid," the dataset distinguishes between "Provide economic aid," "Provide military aid," "Provide humanitarian aid," "Provide military protection or peacekeeping," and "Grant asylum." Additionally, ICEWS applies the Goldstein Scale, which assigns values from −10 (highly conflictual) to +10 (highly cooperative) to quantify the intensity of each interaction (Raleigh & Kishi, 2023: 552–554; Schrodt, 2012a: 6–88).

Accordingly, the nature of ICEWS enables the researchers to make use of its inclusiveness of domestic and international political events attributed to different actors, in addition to its categorization of events by nature and intensity (Boschee et al., 2023). This allows researchers to identify cooperative (positive) and conflictual (negative) verbal and actual events or behaviors attributed to specific leaders, creating indicative behavioral profiles. This method aligns with the common dichotomous categorization of leaders as hawkish/hard/offensive/conflictual or more dovish/soft/cooperative. Leaders typically fall somewhere on this continuum, reflecting more cooperative or conflictual behaviors.

This event data-based profiling technique is advantageous due to its accessibility, reduced time consumption, and decreased bias from language barriers. It allows for broader comparisons across leaders and timeframes. However, there are limitations, such as the difficulty of achieving full accuracy in identifying and assessing events, particularly by means of machine-coding and in cases of conflicting views (e.g. a cooperative event towards a foreign opposition or even terrorist group is indeed against the ruling regime) (Raleigh and Kishi,2023: 552-5). Compared to other techniques, event data analysis offers a more parsimonious categorization of leadership profiles. Despite its simplicity, it provides a preliminary step in highlighting fundamental differences between leaders, serving the purposes of congruence analysis and plausibility probe.

To profile Erdogan and El-Sisi, we used event data from 2014 to 2020, covering their tenures as presidents. We identified them as source actors, filtered out duplicate events (having similar date, target name and cameo code), resulting in 15,949 events, down from 25,486. We computed and categorized events by intensity and internal/external nature. Based on event intensity value, we computed a new variable indicating co-operation (Intensity>0), neutrality (intensity=0), or conflict (intensity<0), as well as high levels of cooperation or conflict (intensity ranging from ±6 to ±10). The following sections summarize some key results from the aggregate and annual actions of the two leaders at different levels.

(B-2) General Comparison of Total, Internal, External and High-Intensity Events

As shown in Figure 2, Erdogan's total events (11,531) were much higher than El-Sisi's (4,467). Additionally, Erdogan's external events (7,990) were almost three times El-Sisi's (2,876) events, indicating greater activism or media attention. Both leaders had more cooperative than conflictual events. However, detailed analysis shows clear differences. While conflictual events accounts for 21.4% of all Erdogan's events (compared to 54.1% for cooperative events), El-Sisi's conflictual events form only 6.1% of his total events (compared to 75.2% for his cooperative events). Comparing frequencies of events show that Erdogan's 2464 events are more than nine times El-Sisi's 272 conflictual events at home and abroad from 2014 to 2020.
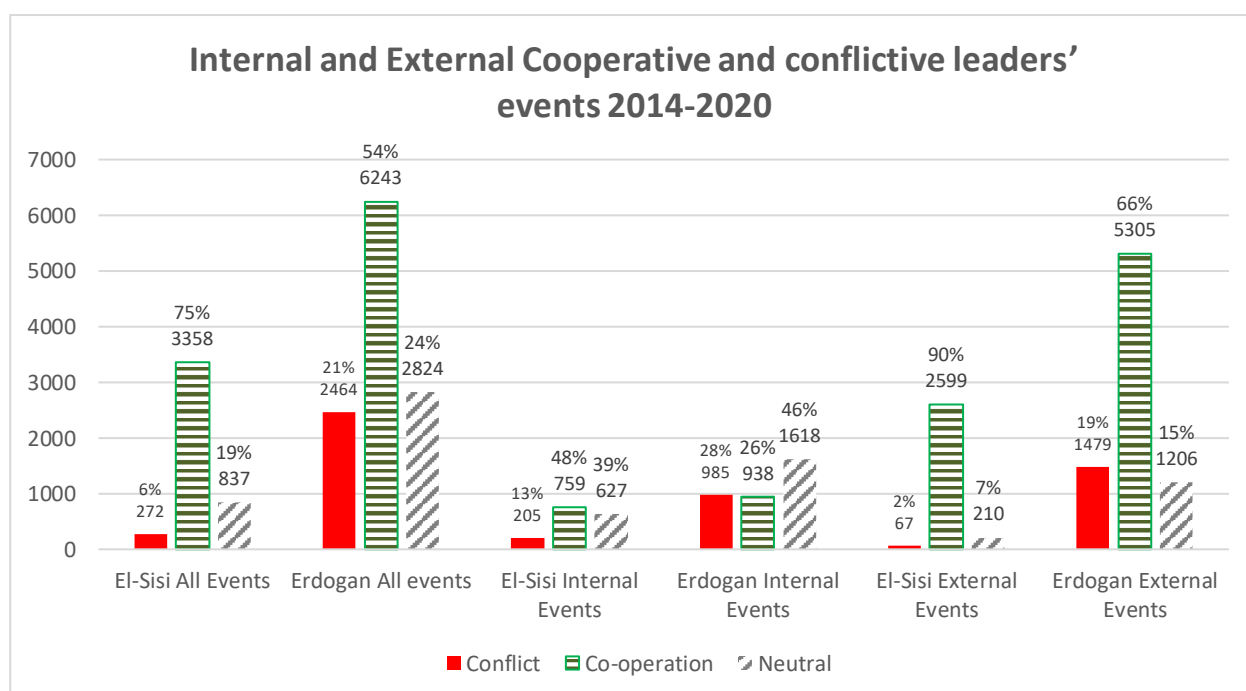

Figure 2: Internal and External Cooperative and conflictive leaders' events 2014-2020

Breaking down the data by the internal/external criterion reveals additional differences. Externally, Erdogan produced significantly more conflictual events (1,479), almost twenty-two times El-Sisi's external conflict events (67 events) over 2014-2020. El-Sisi's external events were 2.3% conflictual and 90.4% cooperative, while Erdogan's were 18.5% conflictual and 66.4% cooperative.

Domestically, El-Sisi had more cooperative events (759) compared to conflictual ones (205), whereas Erdogan had slightly more conflictual events (985) than cooperative ones (938). This is rather unexpected since the Turkish system, despite its backsliding, is more democratic than its Egyptian counterpart. However, this could be related to the more competitive nature of Turkish politics. Regardless, the numbers indicate Erdogan's more confrontational and polarizing nature on the domestic level, asserting his hawkish pattern.

For high-intensity events (±6 to ±10), disparities were still significant. El-Sisi had 52 high-intensity conflictual events compared to Erdogan's 138. Internally, both leaders were quite similar, with conflictual events forming around 41% of their high-intensity events. Externally, Erdogan is significantly more conflictual, with 100 events (equivalent to 16.4% of his total high-intensity events), compared to El-Sisi's 18 events (6.9%), as shown in Figure(3).
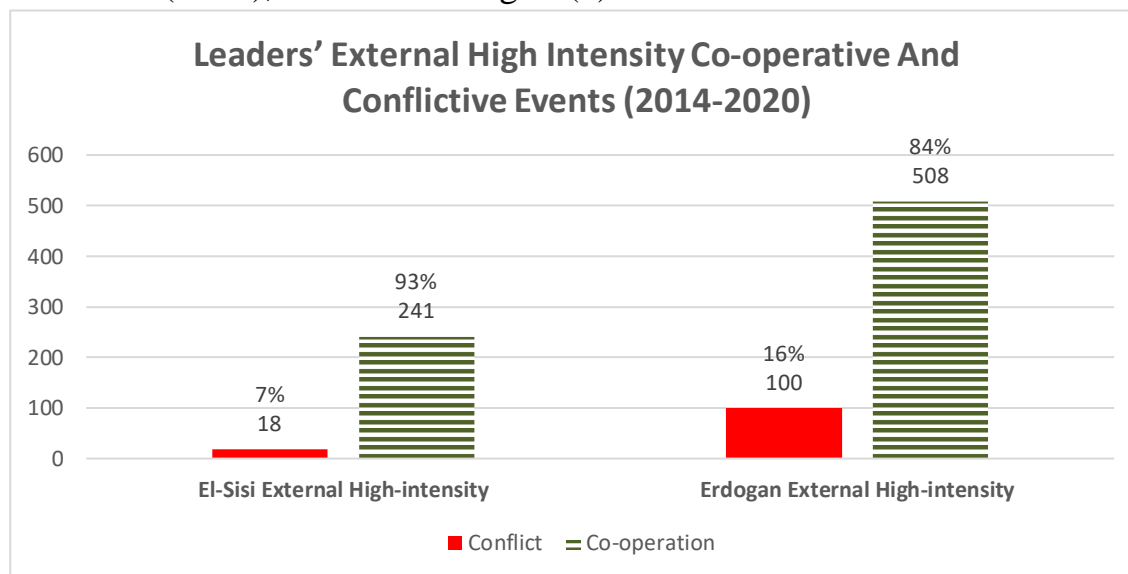

Figure 3. Leaders' External High Intensity Cooperative and Conflictive Events (2014-2020)

(B-3) Annual development of El-Sisi's and Erdogan's Events 2002-2020:

The Annual development of El-Sisi's and Erdogan's frequencies of conflictual events indicates a clear gap between both leaders. From 2014 to 2020, El-Sisi's peak annual frequency of conflictual events was 76 in 2015, which is about one-third of Erdogan's lowest annual frequency of 203 events in 2020, as shown in Figure (4).
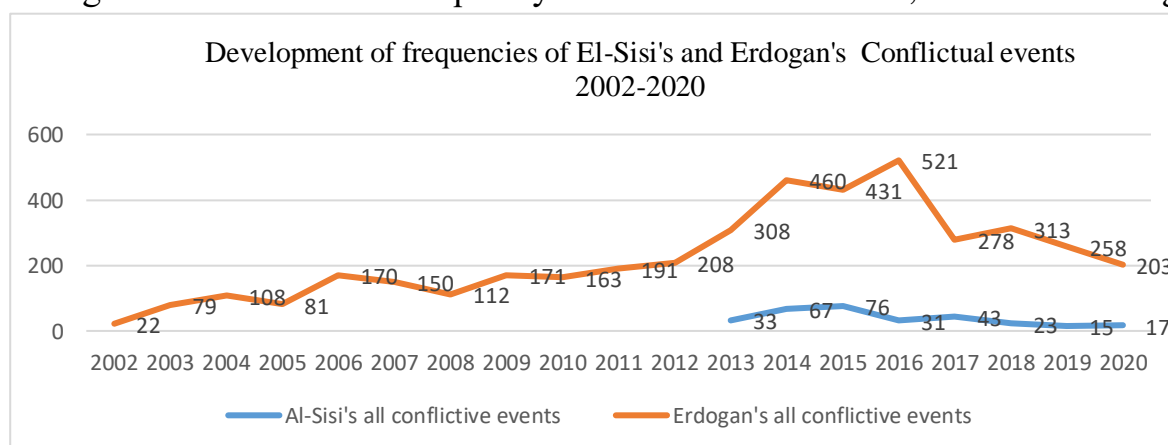

Figure 4. Development of Annual Leaders' Conflictual events 2002-2020

Although the data shows a downward trend in Erdogan's conflictual behavior since 2016, this trend is less consistent at the external level. Furthermore, the lowest

value of Erdogan's conflictual events between 2014 and 2020 exceeds the highest value of his own conflictual behaviour before 2011.
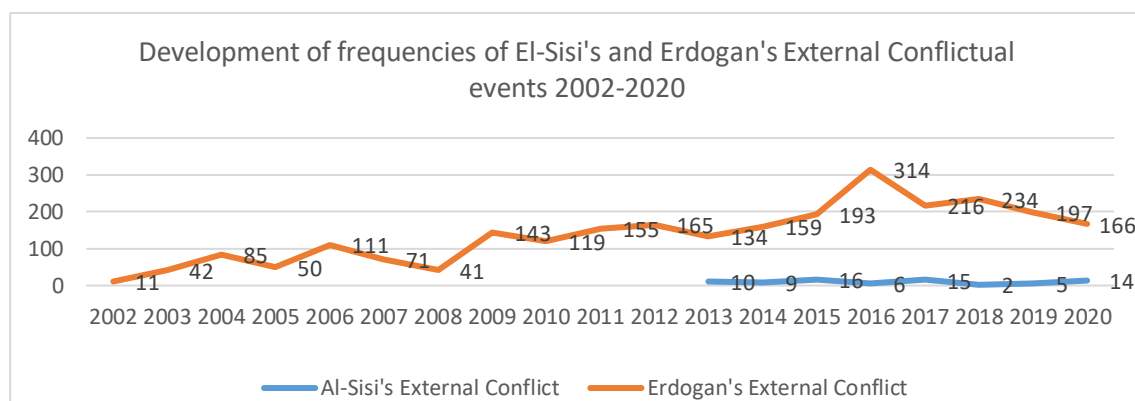

Figure 5. Annual development of Leaders' External Conflictual events 2002-2020

When internal events are filtered out, the gap between both leaders widens. While El-Sisi's external conflictual events were less than 17 per year, Erdogan's lowest yearly external conflictual events was 134 in 2013. In 2016, Erdogan reached the peak of his external conflictual events with 314 events, while El-Sisi's count stood at only 6 (as shown in Figure 5).

(B-4) Addressing Circularity: Analysis of Non-Migration issues and Mutual Interactions:

The absence of issue identification in ICEWS complicates the exclusion of migration-related events, which could cause circular reasoning risks. However, these events are expected to be relatively few compared to other behaviors of the leaders. A possible additional check is focusing on interactions outside migration issues.

For instance, ICEWS data corroborates other studies on El-Sisi's cooperative approach, even towards Ethiopia, whose actions regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) threaten Egyptian water security (El-Sayed & Mansour, 2017: 236-7). From 2014 to 2021, 93 of El-Sisi's 112 events directed towards Ethiopia were cooperative (83%), with only 16 being conflictual (14%). Most conflictual events (11 out of 16) occurred between 2020 and 2021 during negotiation stalemates. This pattern persists in high-intensity events (from ±6 to ±10), with 20 cooperative events versus only 2 high-intensity conflictual events.

The analysis of mutual interactions between El-Sisi and Erdogan can provide additional evidence to support or refute previous behavioral profiling, as these interactions primarily concentrated on regime change in Egypt and competition over strategic interests in the Middle East. Contrary to the assumptions of reciprocal nature in foreign policy behaviors and events, the analysis of mutual interactions since the ousting of Muslim Brotherhood from power in Egypt in July 2013 till 2021 shows a

predominance of Erdogan's conflictual approach towards El-Sisi. Out of 17 events, 12 were conflictual, 3 neutral, and only 2 cooperative. Meanwhile, Erdogan's broader actions towards Egypt appeared more balanced with 58 negative, 44 positive, and 40 neutral events. However, at least 31 of these positive events supported former President Mohammed Morsi or the Muslim Brotherhood's protests against El-Sisi, indicating that about 63% of the events were conflictual towards the Egyptian regime, while less than 10% were cooperative.

In contrast, El-Sisi did not respond or engage in any direct events towards Erdogan. El-Sisi's broader interactions with Turkey, totalling 9 events during the same period, were mostly cooperative (6 events), with 1 neutral and 2 conflictual events. These latter two events occurred in 2019 and 2020, amidst increased Turkish militarism in Northern Syria and support for armed groups in western Libya, a direct neighbour of Egypt. This pattern aligns with El-Sisi's repeated statements on multiple occasions of avoiding any tit-for-tat or escalatory foreign policy, driven by ethical considerations and the futility of conflict (Negm & Mandour, 2020).

Overall, the ICEWS behavioral profiling analysis underscores the usability of event data in demonstrating evident variations between leaders. Even though both leaders generally exhibit more cooperative than conflictual behaviors, Erdogan is clearly more conflictual when compared with El-Sisi, especially on the external level. From the perspective of refugees' instrumentalization, the highlighted differences between both leaders are quite indicative. Without neglecting the effects of other factors, the more conflictual nature of Erdogan aligns with his state's adoption of more offensive/harder forms of refugees' instrumentalization. Similarly, the more cooperative nature of El-Sisi (especially on the external level) helps to partially explain Egyptian softer and more cooperative utilization of Refugees' issues. A within-case analysis focusing on the yearly development of Erdogan's actions further supports this conclusion, revealing an increasingly conflictual nature correlating with shifts from softer to harder forms of instrumentalization.

Conclusion and suggested future research:

The authors have proposed a typology of IoM based on the dual synthesis of different concepts and categories of utilization of migration on one hand, and soft/hard power dichotomy on the other hand. The proposed typology can help further future research to integrate IoM with existing research on soft power of migrants and diaspora, soft and hard migration laws, as well as concepts such as sharp and smart power. The simplicity, comprehensiveness, and multi-dimensionality of this typology can help analyze different case studies and conduct systematic comparisons.

The brief comparative analysis of Turkish and Egyptian cases initially illustrates the applicability of this framework. The analysis systematically showed the differences between the Egyptian more cooperative softer forms of IoM compared with Turkish more offensive and harder IoM, in terms of Turkish higher responsibility in generation of Syrian refugee crisis, the tangibility and multiplicity of Turkey's possession and milieu goals, and its adoption of more confrontational strategies.

While literature has identified many factors affecting how refugees are instrumentalized, the paper focused on leadership as an understudied variable. As an exploratory preliminary probe, the authors utilized ICEWS event data to profile leaders' behavioral patterns. The analysis revealed Erdogan's more conflictual behavioral profiling when compared with El-Sisi, especially on the external level, asserting the consistency between leader's behavioral profiles and forms of IoM.

This profiling is quite intriguing given the civilian background of Erdogan and his, albeit debatable, more democratic credentials relative to El-Sisi. The illiberal paradox and military-background restraining effects could provide partial explanations. Further application of diverse cognitive and psychological leadership analysis techniques, such as operational code analysis and leadership trait analysis, could also explain such discrepancies. They apparently coincide with each leader's world view and perception of his country's status, either as a rising 'world power' in case of Erdogan or a 'semi-state' that needs to rebuild its capabilities in case of El-Sisi. In this regard, El-Sisi's own explanation of not adopting confrontational approaches against Erdogan or others' offences until "growing up and hitting back" is quite telling (Nadi,2014). The case of Erdogan is also indicative, with his harder IoM coinciding not only with contextual factors but also with growing conflictive tendencies in his behavior since 2013. This highlights the future need for more in-depth case analysis and within case comparisons to trace the development or change of leader's perceptions, and more complex understandings linking leaders' pattern and roles with other structural, institutional and contextual factors

Another suggested dimension for future research is analysing how leadership affects effectiveness or success of IoM, not just its patterns. Such analysis can focus on strategic interactions among leaders of different parties. While the current study has focused on the utilizers' leaders, another understudied domain is the impact of leadership on the receiving end or target actors, as well as migrants themselves and their leaders or representatives.

All of these proposed themes offer possible horizons for future research to better understand how leaders instrumentalize migration, and enrich both theoretical and policy-related research.

Declaration of interest statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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