

**EVALUATING THE ROLE OF GEOPOLITICS IN TURKEY-EU
RELATIONS: REGIONAL SECURITY, MIGRATION, AND POWER
DYNAMICS IN A CHANGING GLOBAL LANDSCAPE**

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DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2024.v09i02.005 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2024.v09i02.005>

Received: 1 Feb. 2024 / Accepted: 18 Feb. 2024 / Published: 24 Feb. 2024

Introduction

Research Background

Turkey's changing position in global and regional politics has drawn increasing attention from students of international relations. As a nation located in the overlap between Europe and Asia, Turkey's foreign policy tirelessly influences its relations with powers located both to its East and West. The report by Chatham House and the European University Institute highlights Turkey's increasing assertiveness in regional affairs and deviation towards a more autonomous foreign and security policy (Cubukcuoglu, 2022). This act of geopolitical moderation is further evidence of a growing number of regional powers making themselves felt globally. Meanwhile, European Parliament reports analyse the complexity of EU-Turkey relations, taking into account Turkey's historical alliances and its strategic position in regional dynamics (Yilmaz-Elmas, 2020). The new dynamics taking shape would also make it necessary to consider the place of Turkey in the global and regional re-leveraging of forces that is now taking place, and therefore its study is necessary to grasp the current state of international relations and the new forms of influence that are taking shape in the world.

Research Rationale

Fully comprehending Turkey's geostrategic machinations is indispensable to understanding the evolving international relations in the country. As such, we aim to fill the gaps in the academic literature through this pundit collaboration...(Baydemir, 2020). This research will serve as an academic milestone in researching Turkey's Influence on foreign policy where regional politics meet realpolitik and will contribute to proper academic coverage for use in classrooms, think tanks, and the US government body. (Erşen and Çelikpala, 2019). The outcome of this research

will inform readers of the rock-paper-scissors nature of how titans like Turkey vie for small gains of power, and how such plays any relevance on win and loss of firm dominance.

Fig-1 (The EU Dimension of Turkey's Population and its Security Policies in the Middle East and Balkans Geography)



Source- (Yilmaz-Elmas, 2020)

Research Objectives

- ❖ To analyse Turkey's changing position in the global (political) context, with a focus on the Western powers and the regional order as well as Turkey's strategic realignments and the country's ambition.
- ❖ To investigate the implications of Turkey's foreign policy choices for its relationship both, with traditional Western allies and regional neighbours.
- ❖ To explore Turkey's contribution to shifts in global power structures, identifying its role in the changing balance of power and how it navigates between competing interests in a multipolar world.
- ❖ To evaluate the implications of Turkey's foreign policy on EU-Turkey relations, focusing on the challenges and opportunities it presents for European foreign policy and broader geopolitical strategies.

Research Questions

1. How has Turkey's position in the global political context evolved, especially regarding its interactions with Western powers and the regional order, and what are the key factors driving Turkey's strategic realignments and ambitions?
2. What are the key implications of Turkey's foreign policy choices on its relationships with traditional Western allies and regional neighbours, and how do these choices affect regional stability and cooperation?
3. In what ways does Turkey contribute to shifts in the global power structures, and how effectively is it navigating the complexities and competing interests in a multipolar world?
4. How does Turkey's foreign policy impact its relations with the European Union, and what challenges and opportunities does this present for European foreign policy and the broader geopolitical landscape?

Research Gap

The existing literature discusses Turkey's foreign policy predominantly concerning major power relations and its engagement in regional conflicts. More discussion is needed regarding comprehensive studies which would incorporate Turkey's position in the globe concerning the actors and global power shifts. There exists considerable literature showing the impact of Turkey's policies on the EU process however, an elaborate analysis of how Turkey's policies reflect and influence broader European geopolitical strategy is lacking in the literature (Saatçioğlu et al. 2019). The research will thus aim to present an integrated perspective of Turkey's position concerning global politics and its diverse but integrated relations with the Western Powers and regional entities.

Chapter Summary

The first chapter provides an effective introduction to understanding the changing place and role of a transforming Turkey in global and regional politics and its importance in the field of international relations. The chapter very nicely covers the strategic repositioning of Turkey, its increasing assertiveness in and outside its region and the implications of these moves on the relations of Turkey with the Western and regional powers (KALKAN, 2020). The chapter also probes into the gaps in the literature to reveal the lacuna in the existing literature straightening from the limited understanding of how Turkey is influencing the emerging global order and its multiple interactions with the European geo-strategic realm (ÇEPEL, 2023). The chapter very

effectively and succinctly states the aims, research questions and study objectives which are pretty clear in terms of knowing what the study is done. The research aims, questions and objectives give a setting to deeply understand how Turkey as a pivotal state is affecting the dynamic balance of global power and playing a role in the wider international system.

Literature Review

Theme 1: Economic Dimensions of Turkey's Foreign Policy

As per Reiners & Turhan, (2021), Turkey, as an emerging and developing economy, began to integrate more economic factors into its foreign policy. Many developments and changes in Turkish foreign policy have led to more emphasis on the economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Statista conclude that Turkey is the 19th largest economy in the world and has a gross domestic product (GDP) of 905 billion US dollars in 2022 (Dierks, 2024). It can be said that, with this figure Turkey's foreign policy is better understood. On the other hand, GDP per capita has been declining since 2013 and increased especially in the years 2020 and 2022 and according to the IMF, it reaches 10.6 thousand dollars. It can be understood that the financial system is effective in Turkey's foreign policy (Dierks, 2024).

Görgülü & Dark, 2017, stated that the types of businesses that make up Turkey's GDP say much about their foreign policy preferences as well. For example, the fact that Turkey has diversified its economy to include everything from agriculture to advanced manufacturing suggests that Turkey has a vested interest in pursuing a more complex foreign policy that balances trade with geopolitical alliances (Görgülü & Dark, 2017). For instance, Turkey's desire to be more integrated into Western economic ecosystems, including the EU Customs Union, can be partially attributed to its need to bolster trade and investment ties that can support these industries.

As per Turhan & Wessels, (2020), Turkey's pivot to Russia, China, and Gulf states for financial resources and investments can also be seen as a practical move to diversify its economic engagement and reduce dependency on its traditional Western economic partners. This is not a new topic but it is part of a larger evolving strategy of Turkey's foreign policy where the economic imperatives have started to be almost as important as, if not at the same level as, the geopolitical considerations. Turkey has recently faced significant economic challenges such as the depreciation of the Turkish lira against the dollar and euro reaching around 30% and inflation reaching 25-30% within the last six months (ÇEPEL, 2023). Therefore, Turkey now needs even more aggressive foreign direct investment (FDI) push and trade opportunities to stabilise and grow its economy domestically.

Theme 2: Turkey's Geopolitical Balancing Act

As per Öniş, (2023), Turkey's phenomena of geography, stuck in the middle of the major global powers, results in its distinct outlook and affairs with other countries around the world. As a member of NATO and a republic born out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey is turning to a more independent foreign policy. Its relationship with the world is shown best in the current Ukrainian crisis where Turkey, backing Ukraine, still bends over backwards not to antagonise Russia. Its careful dance around the Ukrainian issue maintains strong ties with the Kremlin, but also with Ukraine.

As per Tsarouhas, (2021), Turkey's convention has been particularly late and relatively fiery in the interaction issue in a country past Turkey's district. In conflict areas like Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh, this interaction continues to spike. What's more, Turkey's dynamic duty to the Black Sea showing its key situation there yields a suggestion that Turkey is another stick of its standard currency which is preserving area stability but the associated operation is also to pump up Turkey's force and self-address in a varying universe. Contrary reasons demonstrate that Turkey is progressing from life particularly embarrassing against some more standard bunches and that it can prepare genuinely reliable to the extent of this complex communicating amidst moving on a strong reason for its national amuses.

The problem with the existing literature is that it does not analyse the depth of Turkey's geopolitical grand strategy, but rather focuses on Turkish diplomacy on ad-hoc instances. Thus, there is a need for a more nuanced analysis of how Turkey's geopolitical coupes are affecting its long-term grand strategy and national identity (Ott, 2020). This should include how Turkey's geography, NATO membership and historical connections are being leveraged to maintain a balance with the major powers, such as the US, Russia and emerging regional actors. This is crucial to understand Turkey's future role in shaping regional power dynamics, which are unpredictable due to changing power balances.

Theme 3: Turkey's Relations with the West

As per Cubukcuoglu, S.S., (2022), Turkish relations with Western powers, such as the European Union and the United States, are something of a two-edged sword. On one hand, there are strands of cooperation, for example with the United States, with whom Turkey has a long history of partnership via NATO. On the other, relations can be highly strained, particularly when Turkey feels its values are being trampled on by arrogant Europeans. Turkey's relationship with the West is further complicated by other aspects of its strategic behaviour, including its position on potential NATO enlargements, and its relationships with major powers such as Russia and China. Most importantly American-Turkish relations in the domain of defence and technology

are subtly intertwined with Turkey's NATO membership. At the same time Turkey's ties with Europe, and particularly its EU membership application, inevitably impinge on its relationship with the US and NATO.

According to Turhan and Wessels, (2021), Conventional academic examinations of Turkey's ties to the West centre on specific events or policy choices such as Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 missile systems or its role in NATO. There needs to be a more integrated analysis that weaves these events into a meta-narrative to illuminate our understanding of the relationships which are emerging and now on the cusp of redefining the relationship. This will shed light on how Turkey is employing its position as a regional power to navigate a shifting geopolitical landscape characterised by great power competition.

Additionally, the dynamics of the global supply chain, which has been significantly affected in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, have further complicated Turkey-West interactions. Turkey's aspiration to be a more influential actor in the global supply chain, particularly towards European and Western markets, has strategic implications. This economic and diplomatic side of the Turkish West relations is crucial to understanding Turkey's multifaceted engagement with the West. It is also key to understand how Turkey's economic ambitions and geopolitical strategies go hand in hand and how these shape Turkey's foreign policy choices and its positioning at the global level.

Literature Gap

Much of the current literature notes the security and geopolitical dimensions of Turkey's foreign policy, but some authors tend to downplay or ignore the complications of this balancing game and its direct (or indirect) linkages to the major changes in global power balances. Turkey's deft and clever geopolitical positioning is routinely acknowledged, but analysts often seem lacking in offering an all-encompassing context of what these calculations involve. Turkey's economic ambitions, its much-emphasised manoeuvring in regional and global politics, and its evolving relations with the major power centres such as the EU and the US must all be looked at much closer to potentially see a very different picture of what Turkey pretends to be.

Methodology

Research Philosophy

The research approaches the topic with a positivist philosophy, prioritising objectivity and empirical evidence. Positivist philosophy contends that knowledge comes from observable and measurable facts, as a result, the collection of objectively confirmed empirical data is the core of this philosophy. In terms of this study, Tonga's foreign policy usage is largely based on existing

literature, reports and data by inspecting relevant literature where the verifiable facts and figures lie and drawing conclusions from it (Mishra & Alok, 2022). Thus, the research aims to use verifiable factual empirical evidence primarily from respectable secondary sources from which the research aims to ensure an unadulterated fact-oriented analysis regarding the changing time, existing country situations as well as the needs of Turkey's geopolitical strategies and economic policies.

Research Approach

This qualitative research study relies on existing literature and data, as the focus is only on the research development and this approach only uses secondary sources of data. Qualitative research can be the basis of exploration of literature since it will be mainly based on data in repositories of academic articles and reports from think tanks like Chatham House, RAND, and European Parliament, obtained global economic data, which answers my research questions and tests my hypotheses (Nayak & Singh, (2021). I have decided to utilise the secondary data research method as it will be useful to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding in terms of the geopolitics and economic policy of Turkey and would highly benefit to provide an appropriate interpretation for the potential of the country on a greater stage of the global and regional dynamics by using a non-numerical type of social science.

Research Design

For this study, a pragmatic, descriptive, and analytical approach to research design was employed as far as practically possible, given the time span and resources that were available to the researcher, and the extent of the topic area to be understood. Because this study was grounded in a qualitative methodology, no hypothesis tests or experiments were implemented in the research design (Ocaña-Fernández & Fuster-Guillén, 2021). This study, instead, involved a literature survey, supplemented by reports and statistical data, and aimed at a comprehensive analysis of and explanations of various aspects of Turkish foreign policy.

Time Horizon

Beginning in the early 2000s and continuing through 2024, this study is set in a time frame that not only characterizes a key turning point in Turkey's external relations, but also provides some context for recent dynamic issues. By focusing on this era, which witnessed a decisive shift within Turkey's foreign policy; Turkey, that once pursued a unyielding Western orientation, despite the post-1990s multipolar world order; attempted to adopt a more self-enclosed and multi-levelled one. The reason for the concentration of the overseas Turkish strategies is indeed considered as a significant part of the constantly changing international and regional landscapes that are induced by its increasing number of economic challenges and fluctuating geopolitical

associations (Jamieson et al. 2023). For around two more weeks, the individual will also attempt to analyze Turkey's current approaches and the immediate consequences of its professional worldwide relations.

Data Collection

The study's data was exclusively sourced only from secondary sources, gathered through a systematic literature review approach. Academic research databases including Google Scholar and JSTOR, and official web pages of institutions such as the European Parliament and Chatham House were excessively analysed to carefully gather scholarly articles, think tank analyses, government reports, international organisation publications (Day, et al. 2020). This method guarantees a diverse collection of relevant information as well as the credibility of the materials obtain. The goal of the data collection was to mainly identify materials that possibly give out information about Turkey's geopolitical dynamics, economic strategies, foreign policies, and relationships with Western powers. This reflects a comprehensive and complex understanding of the research subject, thereby supplies significant background context.

Ethical Considerations

This research follows ethical standards according to the research guidelines APA style by providing an appropriate citation for any materials or sources used in this study. This research also refers to any secondary sources used in this research; respect intellectual property rights as the original is recognized and acknowledge any other person's work or contribution that will be used by me in this research, so it will not be committing plagiarism which means it respects plagiarism rule in the broad concept.

Findings and Discussion

Strategic Realignment and Ambitions of Turkey

The theme "Realignments and Ambitions: Turkey's Strategic Evolution" traces Turkey's positioning in the world of global politics, with special reference to its relationship with the Western powers and regional order. It probes into the variables which have played a role in Turkey's strategic realignments and aspirations. Discussion is focused on Turkey's changing alliances in its search for regional grandeur – how it has tried to maintain the traditional linkages with the Western powers besides striking out for new regional partnerships. This theme critically analyses Turkey's journeying through a geo-political identity as it accommodates itself to a changing world and yet aspires to remain embedded as a significant regional and international power.

Implications of Turkey's Foreign Policy Choices

In line with this conception, the essays examine the consequences of Turkey's foreign policy choices for its relationships with its traditional Western allies, and its regional neighbours. This includes not only considering how Turkey's actions affect regional stability and cooperation, and the balance among regional conflicts. It also includes asking whether Turkish policy changes the global power structures and trying to evaluate how it has navigated a multipolar world in which it must simultaneously manage competing interests and alliances.

Turkey-EU Relations and Broader Geopolitical Impact

It will appraise the challenges and opportunities posed by Turkey's policies to European foreign policy and the broader geopolitical order. We will investigate the convergence of interests and differences between the EU and Turkey on migration and security, on economic relations as well as the process of Turkey's EU accession. Furthermore, our approach will shed light on how the turbulent and dynamic relationship between Turkey and the EU impacts the existing and emerging geopolitical order.

The three themes provide a heuristic device to analyse Turkey's role and strategies regarding the global agenda's current context, offering an understanding of how Turkey positions itself in its regional and international environment and what kind of repercussions its foreign policy choices might have.

Discussion

The strategic repositioning of Turkey and its ambitions in global politics emerges as a central puzzle illuminating a state proactively navigating through a complex global maze to enhance its regional and international standing. This study contributes to our understanding that Turkey's changing global position, particularly its entanglement with Western powers and regional dynamics, is not simply a reactive response to a changing global order, but a rational and strategic quest for more voice and potency. The country's twin-anchored East-West position, or a desire to continue tradition alliance with the West while at the same time to forming new regional alliance, underscores a compound strategy composed of not just old alliances but also new ones.

Assessing Turkey as an active and purposeful state navigating the world to improve both regional and international position is the aim of this essay. This helps to understand Turkey's evolving place in the global system, as well as Turkey's alliance issues with the West and its adjacent regions. It suggests that Turkey's position between East and West is not a reaction against the changing international system but a logical response where Turkey searches to secure

more power and influence. This dual strategy of Turkey contributes an entrenchment of Turkey's East-West position and seeking new diplomatic ties with the West and its surrounding regions. Turkey's approach enables it to supplant its conventional, established alliances with a new array of alliances. This demonstrates Turkey's aspiration to transcend historical constraints and to become a primary global player.

At its heart, this project positions Turkey as a progressive, proactive agent, eager to redefine the ground on which a major actor operates, amid the fast-mutating international dynamics; its strategic reorientations, foreign policy affinities and relations with the EU helps to decode its EU ambition and gauge the repercussions for regional stability, global power alignments and the narrative of geopolitical tomorrows.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

In sum, according to the investigation, Turkey's strategic reorientation and proactive engagement into global and regional politics is unmasked which places Turkey as an influential actor in the current dynamics of geopolitics. The self-calibration of Turkey between conventional alignment with Western powers and pioneering regional cooperation points out the ambition for foreseeable and worldwide ascendancy. DP outlines Turkey's foreign policy transformation that indicates adaptability and farseeingness to the multipolar world, power broker for regional stabilisation and transforming the power design through the global level. The study determines Turkey's intricate association with the European Union which exhibits combined complexities and opportunities that shape Europe's foreign policy and extensive power strategies. Collectively, the analysis of Turkey's shifting part clarifies the Turkey-metic points to redesign the global map of international relationships and the worldwide power system.

Recommendations

To gain a better grasp of how Turkey's global political role is changing, research moving forward should concentrate on the following areas: First, Turkey's economic policies and how they might be affecting and being affected by Turkey's foreign relations. This is particularly relevant given their recent economic challenges and shifts in worldwide trade. Second, it would be insightful to explore Turkey's diplomatic and military introduction to their region, especially in the area's many ongoing conflicts, to see how it is engaging in the region and why it does so. Finally, researching Turkey's domestic political situation, including the popular opinion on foreign policy, would allow for a deeper understanding to fully comprehend what drives Turkey internationally.

Future Research

Future investigations should examine the subtle relationship between internal politics and foreign policy in Turkey. Exploring the effect of internal political dynamics, such as how the public feels or political rhetoric, on foreign strategies of Turkey, would give researchers a range of information. Also, exploring the process of interplay between Turkey's internal polity with its increasing economic stance in the world, especially in the changing world economic order, is mandatory. Further research might provide the answer to how Turkey affects regional conflicts and how her diplomatic attachments improve her position in the region. This research would enlighten the multidimensional foreign policy of Turkey and the global and regional geopolitics importance of this case.

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