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## China and Turkey Relations from Complexity Theory Perspective

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**Abstract:** Turkey and China countries have shared unique historical background. There is no doubt, historical facts and perceptions affected their mutual relations. International system in the 21st century is complex and interdependent where mutual relations have been more diversified and intensified. That's why complexity theory has been useful tool to understand nature of international system. In this respect, this article seeks to understand three dimensions of Turkey and China relationship which are concurrent modernization, economic and security cooperation with the notion of co-evolution, interdependency and emergence vis à vis complexity theory. As analyzed, complex international system would bring new opportunities especially post COVID-19 era together with more material, operational and institutionalized policies by two actors.

**Keywords:** China-Turkey relations, Turkey, complexity theory, co-evolution, China.

### Karmaşıklık Teorisi Perspektifinden Çin - Türkiye İlişkileri

**Öz:** Türkiye ve Çin uzun bir tarihi geçmişe sahip olmakla beraber hiç şüphe yok ki, tarihsel gerçekler ve algılar karşılıklı ilişkilerini etkiledi. 21. yüzyılda uluslararası sistem, karşılıklı ilişkilerin daha çeşitlendiği ve yoğunlaşarak karmaşık ve birbirine bağımlı haline gelmiştir. Bu nedenle karmaşıklık teorisi, uluslararası sistemin doğasını anlamak için yeni ve daha gerçekçi bir yaklaşım olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu bağlamda bu makale, karmaşıklık teorisi çerçevesinde birlikte evrilme, karşılıklı bağımlılık ve zuhur etme kavramlarıyla eş zamanlı modernleşme, ekonomik ve güvenlik işbirliği olarak Türkiye ve Çin ilişkisinin üç boyutunu anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Analiz edildiği gibi, karmaşık uluslararası sistem, özellikle COVID-19 döneminden sonra, iki aktör tarafından daha maddi, operasyonel ve kurumsallaşmış politikalarla birlikte yeni fırsatlar getirecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkiye-Çin İlişkileri, Türkiye, Karmaşıklık Teorisi

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#### I. Introduction

Growing attention to Chinese culture, politics and especially economics began its journey to a peak point in the middle of the 20th century. Perceptions about China no longer depend on such obvious tokens as Chinatowns with their abundance of restaurants and shops and their emerging presence in different countries and cities. However, during the last 20 years, China has moved closer to the West with its economy, politics and culture. In 2020, China became the second largest economy in the world and the most populous country in the world with over 1.4 billion people which is expected to be biggest one by 2028 (BBC News, 2020). Traditional China has embedded its political position in the constitution of The Republic of China. The political system in China is

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decentralized and provincial with an extremely strong Communist Party. In other words, ancient Great China dates back to world politics and continues its strong emphasis on economy, multidimensional foreign policy and popular culture. Some scholars called their rising entrepreneurs “Asian Tigers” and President Xi Jinping has referred to “The Great renewal of the Chinese nation” (Xiaosi, 2013). There is no doubt that this great interest in China will continue for a long time.

On the other hand, Turkey has showed impressive economic and social development performance since the early 2000s has increased employment and income levels, making Turkey an upper-middle-income country although the increase in economic fragility and the emergence of a more challenging external environment in the last few years threaten these achievements (World Bank, 2021). The same as China, Turkey has become one of the main “hot spots” in its region and in the world at large thanks to its foreign policy, political developments and diverse culture (Açıklın, 2020). Turkish foreign policy has been under transformation exceptionally which centers humanitarian and more assertive policy making (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2020). It can be foreseen that Turkey will be one of the global powers within the next few years. As mentioned, Turkey and China are not considered simply developing countries in the international system but are expected to become global powers in the next century. This idea is not only with regard to the economic success of both countries but also to increasing attention to their culture and politics through proactive roles in international system where Turkey and China shapes their relations based on multidimensionality and smart-power sentiments (Yoon, 2019).

Not only China and Turkey’ development in last two decade, international system has been also transformed. During the last twenty years in international relations, debates have been revisited over the notions of dynamism and unpredictability. Particularly, with the effects of globalization, interconnected, nested and non-hierarchical relations are increasing and new actors have sprung up (Tome & Açıklın, 2017). In other words, international system is no longer a traditional and closed system, rather it is composed of numerous actors with nonlinear behavior (Açıklın & Bölücek, 2014; Bosquet & Curtis, 2013; Kavalski, 2007). As expected, new patterns of international systems motivate us to reexamine relationships between states with properties of complexity theory. From this perspective, this paper seeks to answer with what discernment the shape of Turkey-China relations has been studied throughout history with co evolution properties of complexity theory. The first part is a brief overview of Turkey and China relations in history and the second part is about an international system as a complex adaptive system. The third part analyzes dimensions of Sino-Turkish relationship in a complex international system.

## **II. Bilateral Relations from the Historical Perspective**

The relation between Turkey and China was established centuries ago. The first interaction of Turkic people and Chinese went back to B.C 209-220 with Huns and the Han Dynasty (Yalınkılıç, 2014). During this time, trade served as the relationship's backbone (Togan, 2013). In modern times, the late nineteenth century is an apt starting

point for examining the historical origins of the two countries' relationship. In Chinese records, the Ottoman Empire was known as “Lu Mi or Lu MiGuo” which are pronunciation forms of “Rumi” (Fidan, 2011). Although The Ottoman Empire attempted to develop diplomatic relations with China for the first time in 1875, they couldn't establish official relationship and once again trade was the major component of the relationship (Togan, 2013). At the end of the 19th century, marked by development of basic technologies, expansion of a capitalist system and colonialism, the Ottoman Empire and the Qing Dynasty had been declining in terms of politics and economics pushed them to be considered the “Sick Man” as similar destiny (Mahoney, 2020). The perception of “shared destiny as a Sick Man” was faddish within Chinese intellectuals who tried to analyze their own world politics and find a political partner. The prominent political thinker Kang Youwei, who was responsible for reform in the Qing dynasty, was the first person in China to actually make a systematic analysis of the Ottoman Empire chose to adopt European style reforms (Wenqian, 2019).

Following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, at a time when China was experiencing turmoil following the fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, two governments signed an Turkish-Chinese Friendship Agreement in 1934 which also facilitated establishment of consulate level relationship till 1945 (Temel, 2007; Yusufu, 2019). Turkey opened a consulate in Nanjing where was capital of China which was upgraded to embassy in 1945. However, The People's Republic of China was established in 1949 marking a turning point in bilateral relations since then Turkey refused to recognize the communist People's Republic under the influence of the Cold War when perceptions of two countries to each other were tangled up with ideology and a warlike face due to Korean War and Uyghur issue (Akdağ, 2019; Demircan, 2020).

The official bilateral relationship between Turkey and the PRC was established in 1971 but kept a low profile until the 1980s. There were internal and external factors that affected Turkish foreign policy, such as the Cyprus issue, normalization of Sino-American relations, and the 1980 coup d'état (Çolakoğlu, 2014). In other words, Turkey was excluded from the EEC and marginalized by Western countries, Turkish politicians tried to seek a new political balance in different regions and the PRC became a potential partner. Regarding the changes in international political patterns, Turkey became a key actor within unstable regions that were sourced from emergence of new states. Along with the strategic reasons, historical and cultural background in Central Asia opened new horizons for Turkey. So, Turkey found itself in a region where it had a common identity and similar history roots. In other words, Turkey had advantageous position where it can influence the region from the Black Sea to China (Kirişçi, 2009). These warm relations had been carried with high level visits. President Kenan Evren's visit to China in 1982, accompanied by Chinese President Li Xiannian's visit to Turkey in 1984, Prime Minister Turgut Özal's visit to China in 1985, and Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang's visit to Turkey in 1986, all contributed not only to the first concrete steps toward a stronger relationship, but also to the strengthening of the relationship (Çolakoğlu, 2013).

1990s was an interesting and paradoxical decade for mutual relations. Although positive atmosphere was deteriorated due to Beijing's reservations about Ankara's policies towards the Uyghur community in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which were exacerbated by Turkish politicians' contacts with Uyghur opposition leaders, Turkey chose to make cooperation with Russia and China in Central Asia as well as strong military relationship was started (Atay, 2010; Shichor, 2009).

As aforementioned, Turkish-Sino relations have deep historical background and ups and downs throughout the centuries, changing dynamics of international system as well domestic policies of two nations level up to new phase of relationship since the millennium which remarked with AK Party era in Turkey and emerging a new global power of China. In order to understand unique nature of Turkish-China relations in this decade, there will be brief introduction to complexity theory in the following part.

### **III. Understanding International System with Complexity Theory**

For centuries, the Newtonian approach dominated natural and social sciences. Conventional theories tailored by a linear approach, contradicted natural and social systems. Linear paradigms were based on rationality, predictability, determinism and no inherent limits to human knowledge and progress (Geyer, 2003). Complexity theory can be considered an umbrella notion, which contains non-linear, complex and chaotic systems research. In other words, complexity research focuses on dynamics of change, emergence, unpredictability and self-organization. Inclusion of complexity theory in social sciences emerged after its development in natural sciences. At the beginning of the 20th century, mathematicians and physicists claimed that human rationality, linearity and order will be altered in the coming years. Then technological developments showed that human beings have the capacity to manipulate a natural world (La Porte, 1975). So, physics proved that some natural phenomena are orderly and others are disorderly which are called as complex adaptive system (CAS) such as weather systems, immune systems and social systems. The features of CAS that are formulated as follows by Valle (2000):

- (i) a large number of similar, independent and interdependent agents
- (ii) constant responses from these agents to other agents;
- (iii) self-organization, in the order by which the system forms spontaneously;
- (iv) The coevolution .

There is no doubt that social systems are rife with disorder and unpredictable phenomena. An approach such as “the world as a non-linear flow” became the most prominent approach (Law & Urry, 2004). From this perspective, the end of the Cold War and fueling by globalization gave birth to a new approach of international relations as open, complex, partially organized (Cindea, 2006; Tome and Açıkalın, 2017). Thus, conventional theories of IR are not enough to grasp new dynamics of IR. As Rosenau suggests, the recognition of normative and empirical uncertainties make world affairs impossible for parsimonious theories while ignoring the suggestions of complexity theory (Rosenau, 2003). The most valuable contribution of complexity theory to

international relations is encouraging a new way of thinking about interconnectedness of international politics. In light of this, Tome and Açıkalmı redefined international system as CAS (2017). Firstly, the complex adaptive international system, the diversified actors' including individuals interact each other without limit contain either positive or negative feedback. Secondly, interactions between actors in international system always occur in a nonlinear way which are fundamental reason behind changing patterns of international system. In other words, the complex adaptive international system is change-based, and the emergent behavior of actors results from the interaction among them. Thirdly, actors in the international system naturally self-organize themselves to adapt to emergent dynamics of international system vis a vis its interest. Lastly, coevolution express changing together in complex adaptive system that interpreted as underwent a self-organization process, and all actors coevolved within international system along with new circumstances.

In this analysis, the international system after 2000s is considered as a complex system and Turkey and China are taken as unique actors in complex international systems. Especially two characteristics would be used as a framework, which are co-evolution and interdependency to dissect intense, interdependent and multidimensional nature of mutual relationship in last two decade.

#### **IV.Co-evolutionary and Interdependence in Turkey and China Relations since 2002**

As recalled co-evolutionary means 'the evolution of one domain or entity that is partly based on the evolution of other associated domains or entities, or one domain or entity changes in the sense of the other(s)' is what co-evolutionary means (Mitleton-Kelly, 2003). "Entities" means individuals and organization as an actor; it is closely related to the level where actors operate. Morçöl defines the term "an emergent and self-organizational complex system (Morçöl, 2012). The relations among the elements (actors) of this complex system are nonlinear and its relations with its elements and with other systems are co-evolutionary". In other words, a notion of "co-evolutionary" in international relations in two ways. First, actors can evolve with other actors where having multi actors is a characteristic. Second, although decision-making takes place within one actor's network, it may also take place in another network, allowing decision-making in one network to co-evolve with decision-making in another. Simply, those actors should be also independent at the same time but their existence will somehow depend on other actors' existence.

In the case of Turkey and China relations in the last twenty years can be described in two ways. Firstly, coevolution somehow implies that both countries have developed a nested cooperation network in different fields, which also provides a construction that shares common values between two actors (Erkoçak, & Açıkalmı, 2014). Secondly, interdependency is also related with a nested cooperation of coevolution. Turkey and China as actors are completely independent in terms of their foreign policy making; yet they are definitely and naturally interdependent from and interconnected to each other.

Thus, bilateral relationships would be analyzed under three main areas that are concurrent modernization, economic partnership and military cooperation.

#### **A. Concurrent modernization in Turkey and China**

“A time is coming when we will need to ride through strong winds and rough waters” (Xiaosi, 2013).

As noted above, two countries experienced of coevolution process regarding modernization and development that have been affected by the nature of a complex international system in terms of beginning of modernization process. The modernization processes of both countries are composed from three main elements: new political leadership, democratization and economic developments. Both countries co-evolution process labeled by those three elements within complex international system.

Turkey has had a huge economic and political development since 2002. The AK Party enjoyed a triumph and started an uninterrupted nineteen years of administration. After long years of coalition government, political patterns completely changed under AK Party leadership. Then a democratization process was fostered with EU process. Elimination of authoritarian, constitutional and legal norms which were inherited from military regimes, was a main expectation of EU from Turkey (Yazıcı, 2004) Constitutional changes, democratic opening can be considered as catalyst elements of Turkey's domestic transformation. Also 2001 reforms made it more difficult to support the difficult prohibition of political parties. In 2004, the death penalty in the time of war or threat of war was abolished by 2004 reforms. Especially, freedom, rule of law, and democracy are shaping norms of new Turkish constitutional change. This reform process is not only limited to 2001, 2004 and 2011 but also still ongoing with economic and human rights reform packages in 2021 (Rakipoğlu, Özkan & Kurukız, 2021).

Along with political developments, Turkey also succeeded in economic development to fulfill its modernization. The 2001 economic crisis was completely devastating for Turkish economy. However, there has been debate about how various economic metrics should be viewed. The Turkish economy has changed since the AK Party took power in the 1990s. The real GDP was increased from 241 billion USD in 2002 to 860 billion USD in 2018 (World Bank, 2021). While, according to World Bank GDP per capita was 3687 USD in 2002 that raised to 9455 USD (2021). On the other hand, despite some long-term structural issues like inflation and unemployment, Turkey's economy appears to have grown in quantity and quality during the AK Party's era (Öniş & Güven, 2011; Yıldırım, 2017)

At the same time, China was experiencing its own modernization process. There was no doubt that China was rightfully named as a “new superpower” of the 21st century. Similar to Turkey's progress, there was no doubt that the 16th Party Congress in China led to new political leadership after 2002. For the first time in PRC history, power transition proceeded in a peaceful way, which was a great boost for Chinese leadership (Li, 2012). Then of course in the year of 2012, Xi Jinping became general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party since when political reforms were conducted in China.

While it is not easy to fully describe each reform, it can be said that holistic changes appeared in China with reforms based on three main pillars: increasing social welfare, maintaining national security and keeping up economic development. Minzner and Wallace summarized those reforms as follows; “a) An increasingly norm-bound politics of elite succession b) depoliticization of the bureaucracy, as shown by a decrease in factional purges and an increase in meritocratic norms c) Consistent institutional distinction, with top Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders managing more explicitly specified portfolios and state-owned enterprises responding to market pressures d) The emergence of bottom-up “input” institutions — municipal elections, administrative-law outlets, and a partially commercialized media expressing common grievances — provided people with a limited political voice and aided state legitimacy e) New channels that helped to give the rising new economic elite a sense of being invested in both China’s future and in the existing party-state f) An intellectual position that is available to a wide variety of domestic social constituencies as well as international institutional developments.” (Minzner & Wallace, 2015).

The final dimension of China’s development is of course its economic success, although the year 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic for economic slowdown. China is now the second largest economy in the world. China has become richer faster than any large country in history. In 1980, China had only %2.2 of the world’s economy and now has grown to %17 by 2020 (Global Times, 2021). Along with political reforms, economical reforms have played a major role in this success with adoption of such programs as fiscal decentralization, increased autonomy for state enterprises, development of the private sector, stock markets, establishing a banking system, collectivized agriculture and liberalization of prices [Central Intelligence Agency, 2021]. Statistical data showed China’s success in economy through numbers; the GDP in 2019 is 14,5 trillion USD while GDP per capita was 10.200 USD (World Bank, 2021).

As mentioned above, the beginning of the 21st century can be deemed as era for China and Turkey to share common processes of modernization and development. Similar political and economic reforms in both countries have also shaped bilateral perception and relations of each other. Turkey and China are no longer Far East and Far West countries but strategic partnership vis a vis Belt and Road Initiatives and Turkey’s proactive foreign policy which directly reflects on economic and military dimensions of the relations.

### **B. Economic Cooperation between Giant and Regional Power**

As drawn in the above, trade has been backbone of Turkey and China relationship where characteristics of complex international system, interdependency can be found (Thomson, 1967). Especially after 2002, thanks to economic development of both countries, economic cooperation between two countries has been seized. A top Chinese political advisor, Jia Qinglin, paid a goodwill visit to Turkey in 2008, meeting President Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan, and organizing a high-profile Turkey–China Economic and Trade Opportunities Forum in Istanbul, where 19 contract of purchase were signed (China Daily, 2008). In 2010, Wen Jiabao, China's premier paid a visit to

Turkey, during which the two countries declared their intention to form a strategic partnership. China's leaders have stated that they are aware of Turkey's power and presence in the international community as well as in its neighboring regions. Both sides have signed several agreements and have agreed to settle trade in their respective currencies (Zou, 2015). Agreements included a Turkish Trade Center in Urumqi and the Sino-Turkish Industrial for Turkish businessmen. In addition to this, users of these two centers were also offered incentives from both governments with priority investment areas such as lowest rate of industrial land transfer, reduction of corporate income tax and fixed at 15 %, the real estate tax exemption, a tariff exemption, financial supports, and infrastructure construction supports (Çolakoğlu, 2014). However, this project was never realized because of Urumqi protests in the region and it led to tension between the two countries. Also, the main sectors which Turkish investors focus on in China are steel, construction, precious metal, food and textile. Also Çimtaş, Demirdöküm, Arçelik-Beko, Şişecam, Garanti Bankası, Sabancı Holding and Zorlu Textile are leading Turkish companies (Hürriyet Gazetesi, 2012).

Furthermore, when Xi Jinping was vice president in 2012, he visited Turkey and signed seven agreements including SWAP that covered large scale project estimated to be 4.3\$ billion in total costs (En Son Haber, 2012). Following those efforts, ten additional bilateral agreements have been signed between the two countries since 2016, including ones on health and nuclear energy. After Russia, China is now Turkey's second-largest import partner. Between 2016 and 2019, China invested \$3 billion in Turkey (Alemdaroğlu and Tepe, 2020). Bilateral trade volume between Turkey and China surged to 24 billion in 2020, up from 1.1 billion in 2001 (Gençtürk, 2021). Furthermore, the Belt and Road Initiative is an ambitious development program that aims to improve regional integration, increase trade, and stimulate economic growth by connecting Asia with Africa and Europe through land and maritime networks along six corridors. On December 4, 2020; the first train carrying export goods from Turkey to China departed from Istanbul as a historical moment for economic relations. Also, Xiaomi, Oppo, and Vivo, among other Chinese smartphone manufacturers, have made direct investments in Turkey (Daily Sabah, 2021).

If we look over general picture of Turkish-Chinese economic relations, it can be said that interdependency is asymmetrical because of the size and proportion of the Chinese economy. Although, Turkey's increasing export to China, the foreign trade deficit that favored the latter decreased by 7% in the last five years (Gençtürk, 2021); trade, finance, and tourism asymmetries and imbalances exist and are part of a long-term trend. According to statistics, Turkey's exports to China totaled (only) US\$2.92 billion in 2018, while China's exports to Turkey totaled US\$17.86 billion, a multiple of Turkey's (Trading Economics, 2021).

An increasing density of economic relations after the 2000s pushed both Turkey and China to have more long-run economic cooperation that created positive atmosphere where both Turkey and China started to see each other as a “reliable partner.

### **C. Undesirable Alliance by West: Security Cooperation of Turkey and China**

Thirdly, emergence of intensification of mutual relations in complex international system paved a new cooperation area for China and Turkey- security cooperation. Security cooperation of two countries can be conceived in two dimensions; military agreements, military technology and fighting against terrorism.

Firstly, Turkey and China relations had actually background regarding military technology cooperation since 90s including agreement to purchase medium-range missiles to be jointly produced in Turkey which reinforced (Kumar, 2013). After 2002, joint production with China and technology transfer policies had been intensified. In 2002, Turkey's ROKETSAN developed J (Yıldırım) Missile with the China and also (Egeli, 2017). In 2005, it was announced that Turkey's FNSS (Savunma Sistemleri A.S. or Defense Systems Inc.) had collaborated with China to create a new BMP-3 turret to fit over its advanced Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFV) (Kanwa Defence Review, 2005). A Turkish general visited Beijing in 2009 and signed there an agreement with the Chinese government that included the organization of joint military exercises and a deepening of defense industry cooperation. Following this visit, Turkey and China held a bilateral military exercise in Konya, Turkey on October 2010 that made Turkey is the first NATO member to have joint exercise (Çolakoğlu, 2018). In same year, leaders signed a declaration for establishment and development of a strategic cooperation relationship, and announced that they would work together in the fight against terrorism. Chinese Prime Minister Jiabao suggested that their relationship be considered as a "strategic partnership," and said that he "recognized Turkey's power and influence in the international community and its region (Jones, 2007). It's also worth noting that Turkey and China have exchanged naval visits on many occasions. In 2011, the Turkish frigate Gemlik made port calls in Shanghai and Hong Kong to commemorate the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries (Erkin, 2011).

One of the milestone in military cooperation happened in Turkish Long Range Air and Missile Defense System (T-LORAMIDS) project. Chinese firm (CPMIEC) seemed to be ranked first in the technical scoring made in 2012. Then, the Defense Industry Executive Board announced China's place in the ranking, it was felt as if China won the tender directly however there was no official announcement (Seren, 2015). Although the project was cancelled just before Antalya G20 Summit, it led to more tensions between Turkey and the West. Also, Merrill Lynch withdrew from bidding to underwrite Turkish defense contractor ASELSAN's second public offering can be deemed as a strong signal to Turkey. "The United States will not even consider taking the risk of integrating a Chinese system into theirs and therefore NATO's system, as these ballistic missiles are made up of a software that could easily contain a virus, which could allow the Chinese to have access to the NATO or US defense system" (Daloğlu, 2013; Tanchum, 2019).

Secondly, fighting against terrorism is one of the controversial cooperation field between Turkey and China. Especially after the September 11 attacks China is among the countries that openly support the USA's global counter-terrorism strategy. Mainly, the Uyghur issue is the determinant element of this relationship. In last two decade, China

has been trying to solve the Uyghur problem within the scope of "terrorism", with its "securitization" policy (Temiz, 2017). In 2015, President Erdoğan visited to Beijing on the same year and clearly mentioned that Turkey is against all forms of terrorism and activities which threaten China's sovereignty and integrity (Hürriyet Gazetesi, 2015). Also, it should be noted that Turkey clearly differentiates its position towards the Uyghurs and fighting against terrorism. Beijing finds Ankara's issuance of Turkish passports to Uyghur asylum seekers a clear affront in this regard while Turkey considers it as a Turkey's humanitarian responsibilities (Pamuk, 2015).

On other hand, China's position for separatist groups has been negative Çolakoğlu also underline that Beijing has never designated the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) as a terrorist organization has irritated Turkish leaders, particularly because Ankara has designated the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) as a terrorist organization in deference to China. Ankara finds Beijing's statement that it does not routinely label terrorist groups in China to be unsatisfactory (2018). Syrian war is vital for testing level of cooperation in fighting against terrorism. When Turkey conducted 'Peace Spring Operation' against PKK/YPG, China Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang calls Turkey to stop military action that created tension between two countries (Isik and Zou, 2019). On the other hand, a strong relation on military technology is influential in fighting against terrorism too. The Bora ballistic missile, which is based on the Chinese B-611 missile and was deployed in the Turkish military operation against the PKK in 2019, is the product of bilateral defense cooperation, as was Chinese military officers' involvement in Turkey's Ephesus military exercise in 2018 (Kasapoğlu, 2019; Savunma Sanayii Dergilik, 2019).

Security cooperation can be considered as an emergent property for Turkey and china relations in complex international where both countries have similar feelings of rejected and marginalized by West regarding advanced military technology transfer. Whether Turkey and China would be strategic partner or not, security cooperation plays key role to determine. Joint military technology and exercises can be considered as the beginning of long run cooperation although two countries have distinct perception fighting against terrorism.

#### **V.Conclusion: Future Prospects of Turkey and China Relations**

The 21st century started with political and economic reforms for Turkey and China who has deep and long lasting relationship. Changing dynamics in international system nudged us to rethink the mutual relations with non-traditional perspective, which is complexity theory. In this respect, complex international system brings new perspectives and implications on Turkey and China relations. Coevolution and interdependency in complex international systems definitely shape bilateral relations. In this respect, concurrent modernization and development, economic cooperation and security cooperation are analyzed as focal points of this article.

Turkey and China showed similar trends in political and economic reforms, which can be analyzed with the notion of coevolution within an international system that makes them closer politically and economically. For economic cooperation, Turkey and China

are getting close through years although they have inevitable asymmetrical and interdependent relations in terms of trade and investment. More interestingly, security was emerged as somehow new cooperation field within complex international system which based on joint military exercises, military technology and fighting against terrorism. This cooperation area seems to be fragile due to rifts for fighting against terrorism however well developed in terms of military technology and intensification of mutual relations.

As complexity theory suggests that complex systems are constantly evolving where equilibrium has been changed. From this perspective, complex international system has also implications for future prospects of Turkey and China relations too. First of all, in post COVID-19 world would embrace new opportunities for economic cooperation of Turkey and China on various sectors like e-commerce, transport, communication, food & agriculture and railway cooperation with Middle Corridor Initiative. Secondly, security cooperation would be ameliorated especially in development of military technology where Turkey became leading country in production of UAVs.

Overall, more material, operationalization, and institutionalization policies are needed. Thus, Turkey and China, who were old neighbors in ancient times are becoming a new power axis in a complex international system while Sino-Turkish relations appear to be improving with nonlinear way.

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