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Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi

Journal of Social Sciences

| e-ISSN 2602-229X |



<https://prensip.gen.tr>

ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Globalization and Regional Conflicts: A Case Study - Türkiye's Foreign Policy

Küreselleşme ve Bölgesel Çatışmalar: Bir Vaka Çalışması - Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası

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Geliş Tarihi/Received Date: 27.02.2025

Kabul Tarihi/Accepted Date: 25.05.2025

ABSTRACT

Globalization has reshaped international relations, influencing how states navigate regional conflicts and pursue their foreign policy objectives. This article examines the interplay between globalization and regional conflicts, focusing Türkiye as a case study. The study evaluates and emphasizes the political, social, economic and international background. Türkiye's unique geopolitical position bridging Europe, Asia, and the Middle East has made it a critical actor in regional conflicts, from Syria to the Eastern Mediterranean, including Russia and Ukraine, Hamas and Israel. The specificities determine a comprehensive analysis of Türkiye's foreign policy in the context of globalization and regional conflicts. The aim of this research is to analyze how Türkiye navigates its role within the global framework while addressing regional tensions and conflicts that influence its foreign policy objectives. Utilizing a qualitative methodology that combines theoretical analysis and case studies, this study integrates perspectives from realism, liberalism, and constructivism to understand Türkiye's strategic maneuvers in the face of globalization pressures. The findings reveal that Türkiye employs a multifaceted foreign policy that balances national security concerns, economic interests, and cultural identity, contributing to both regional stability and tension. Using narrative and historical qualitative research models and available data, the article focuses on evaluating the continuous dialectical method within the framework of assessing globalization and regional conflicts and their structural elements. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the understanding of how globalization shapes state behavior in contexts marked by conflict, with implications for policymakers and scholars in international relations.

Keywords: Globalization, Regional Conflicts, Türkiye's Foreign Policy, International Relations, Security, Economic Interests.

ÖZ

Küreselleşme, devletlerin bölgesel çatışmalarda nasıl yol izlediklerini ve dış politika hedeflerini nasıl takip ettiklerini etkileyerek uluslararası ilişkileri yeniden şekillendirmiştir. Bu makale, küreselleşme ve bölgesel çatışmalar arasındaki etkileşimi inceleyerek Türkiye'yi bir vaka çalışması olarak ele almaktadır. Çalışma, politik, sosyal, ekonomik ve uluslararası arka planı değerlendirip vurgulamaktadır. Türkiye'nin Avrupa, Asya ve Orta Doğu'yu birbirine bağlayan eşsiz jeopolitik konumu, Suriye'den Doğu Akdeniz'e, Rusya ve Ukrayna, Hamas ve İsrail'i de içeren bölgesel çatışmalarda kritik bir aktör haline getirmiştir. Bu özellikler, küreselleşme ve bölgesel çatışmalar bağlamında Türkiye'nin dış politikasının kapsamlı bir analizini belirler. Bu araştırmanın amacı, Türkiye'nin dış politika hedeflerini etkileyen bölgesel gerilimleri ve çatışmaları ele alırken küresel çerçeve içindeki rolünü nasıl yönettiğini analiz etmektir. Teorik analiz ve vaka çalışmalarını birleştiren nitel bir metodoloji kullanan bu çalışma, küreselleşme baskıları karşısında Türkiye'nin stratejik manevralarını anlamak için gerçekçilik, liberalizm ve yapısalcılık perspektiflerini entegre etmektedir. Bulgular, Türkiye'nin ulusal güvenlik endişelerini, ekonomik çıkarları ve kültürel kimliği dengeleyen, hem bölgesel istikrara hem de gerginliğe katkıda bulunan çok yönlü bir dış politika uyguladığını ortaya koymaktadır. Anlatsal ve tarihsel nitel araştırma modelleri ve mevcut verileri kullanarak, makale küreselleşme ve bölgesel çatışmaları ve bunların yapısal unsurlarını değerlendiren çerçevesinde sürekli diyalektik yöntemi değerlendirmeye odaklanmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın önemi, küreselleşmenin çatışmayla işaretlenen bağlamlarda devlet davranışını nasıl şekillendirdiğinin anlaşılmasına yaptığı katkıdır ve uluslararası ilişkilerdeki politika yapıcılar ve akademisyenler için çıkarımlar içermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küreselleşme, Bölgesel Çatışmalar, Türkiye Dış Politikası, Uluslararası İlişkiler, Güvenlik, Ekonomik Çıkarlar.

Please cite this paper as follows/Atıf için:

Memeti, R. M. (2025). Globalization and regional conflicts: A case study - Türkiye's foreign policy. *Alinteri Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 9(1), 98-111. <https://doi.org/10.30913/alinterisosbil.1648305>



INTRODUCTION

Globalization has fundamentally altered the dynamics of international relations, compelling states to adapt their foreign policies to an interconnected yet volatile world.

The potential outcome of this article is to present the reasons for the current globalization and conflicts analyzed from the perspective of Turkish foreign policy for the benefit of the community of researchers, scholars and academics.

This article investigates how globalization influences regional conflicts by examining Türkiye's foreign policy. Globalization, once heralded as the "end of history" has instead birthed a new era of localized tensions, where regional conflicts spill into global arenas, and global forces reshape local power dynamics.

The case study includes various aspects as well as conclusions regarding the expected directions of further development, expectations and challenges. Scientific theory attempts to clarify various aspects of globalization and then considers its potential to create social conflicts.

Modern scientific theories attempt to clarify various aspects of globalization and then considers its potential for creating multifaceted conflicts.

Globalization, once heralded as the "end of history" has instead birthed a new era of localized tensions, where regional conflicts spill into global arenas, and global forces reshape local power dynamics.

Globalization describes the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information. Countries have built economic partnerships to facilitate these movements over many centuries. The term gained popularity after the Cold War in the early 1990s, as these cooperative arrangements shaped modern everyday life (PIIE, 2018).

The wide-ranging effects of globalization are complex and controversial. As with major technological advances, globalization has delivered benefits to the world's societies but has been the target of criticism for allegedly harming certain groups and aggravating inflation, supply chain disruptions, trade disputes, and national security concerns. Understanding the relative costs and benefits can pave the way for alleviating problems while sustaining the wider payoffs.

There are a variety of definitions and descriptions of globalization, which, though overlapping in many respects, do emphasize different dimensions of the process. Robertson's is one of the first and the most general: Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole...both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century (Robertson, 1992, p. 8).

Anthony Giddens's adds an important dimension to the picture by emphasizing the interactive, or dialectical dimensions of the process: Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse

direction from the much distanced relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space (Giddens, 1990, p. 64).

Various regional linkages, including population movements, smuggling routes, transnational identity groups, criminal rings, and political connections are often systematic features of a conflict. Such networks often overlap and shift as the nature of conflict mutates and the participants' incentive structures develop throughout the course of a conflict.

Regional conflict complexes encompass a wide range of actors tied together through a fluid web of alliances and enmity: rebel groups, official state actors, and the civilian population. An exploration of these four networks may serve to illustrate their differing impacts on civil conflict and the potential challenges they pose to peacebuilding.

These linkages fit into the regional conflict complex through four types of networks: military, economic, political and social.

Military Networks

The most self-evident military element of regional conflict complexes is the invasion of states by rebel groups that receive financial support, logistical aid, actual troops, or a base of operations from neighboring governments.

Economic Networks

There are a number of ways in which economic networks can add to regional conflict complexes. Regional trade routes may be a means by which conflict goods can escape formal sanction, enabling neighboring states to derive revenue from one state's civil conflict and the resulting establishment of trade restrictions.

Political Networks

Linkages across borders amongst political and military groups may contribute to the regional conflict complex, as individuals utilize their political associates to engage in a variety of both licit and illicit trade deals. In this sense the repercussions of political networks are not separate from the other networks discussed in this report. Rather, political alliance channel behavior in the military, economic, and social spheres, structuring relationships in these areas in line with political goals and aspirations.

Social Networks

Transnational social networks include familial, kinship, occupational, and diaspora groups. Family networks in particular play a vital role in providing social and economic welfare to impoverished societies through the disbursement of private loans and employment opportunities. When the state is unable to guarantee basic livelihoods and sustenance, informal shadow networks comprised of familial and clan systems may fill the vacuum, directing the organization and provision of essential goods and services (Studdard, 2004).

METHOD

The research article requires the use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to conduct this study. In essence, the research of this

matter was carried out using the methods of data collection, analysis, systematization, induction, hypothesis creation and deduction.

Foresight, the realization of scientific goals, is designed on the basis of cause-and-effect relationships established in a dialectical framework.

Additional sources were collected using empirical articles. In the analysis, a selection of institutional sources was made, data from reputable newspaper sources due to the very nature of the demanding data which contain information sublimated after the comparative valuation method. It can be stated that all available information has been confirmed and categorized, according to their understanding.

In the methodological sense, the thematic analysis was carefully followed for a realistic interpretation of all data and their integrity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Access and quality selection of literature during the research process is extremely demanding as a whole.

There is available literature on this topic that is extremely rich and structured. But on the other hand, it is very difficult to research a large number of quality databases that can precisely and clearly respond to research requests.

In the case of the subject of Globalization, there is a difficulty in the research spectrum. Globalization is an extremely complex and broad concept and represents a real challenge for research and selection of the right literature in relation to conceptual matching.

On the one hand, the literature on globalization is wide, and on the other hand, the approach that would result in a sought-after source around the Regional Conflict is complicated.

And in the end, it is difficult to place these two terms in a mutual and reversible process through the prism of isolated analysis, which deals with history, sociological political, military, economic and strategic perception.

It is especially important that these two concepts of globalization and regional conflicts are incorporated through the prism of Turkish foreign policy.

When reviewing the literature, it is fairly comprehensive, but basically Turkish sources prevail as the most acceptable for research and analysis.

It can be pointed out that the review of the literature of this work shows a large number of examples that express realistic opinions.

GLOBALIZATION AND CONFLICT

Though the previous discussion is suggestive, the link between globalization and conflict requires further explication. Much of the literature distinguishes between conflicts which focus on issues of culture and identity, and others which appear to be primarily economic, and the discussion that follows adopts this approach while acknowledging that in practice the two elements are interrelated.

Conflicts of world views and interests should not, however, be seen as inherently threatening or negative. Indeed, many of the tensions of social change are largely unavoidable, and some are undoubtedly creative in their effects. At the same time, however, the analysis which follows suggests that if the human needs and rights issues involved are not adequately addressed, the incidence and intensity of social conflict associated with globalization are likely to increase steadily in the years ahead.

Globalization' has become a commonly used word as it is widely perceived to be a catalyst for both social and economic change. This term has largely replaced the phrase 'economic interdependence' which refers to a series of international events such as the global integration of economic markets and societies (Studdard, 2004).

Globalisation is a multifaceted process involving economic integration, cultural exchange, and political cooperation. It results in faster, more efficient movement of goods, services, capital, people, and information worldwide. It promotes global interdependence but also raises challenges such as economic disparities and cultural homogenization.

Technological advances in transportation, communication, and manufacturing are key enablers of globalization.

In essence, globalisation is the growing connectivity and interrelation of the world's countries and peoples across economic, cultural, and political dimensions, reshaping how societies interact and develop on a global scale. In summary, globalisation is a complex and multifaceted process that shapes how the world interacts economically, culturally, politically, and socially, making the planet more connected than ever before (Youmatter, 2024).

CASE STUDY: TÜRKİYE'S FOREIGN POLICY

Türkiye's foreign policy plays a significant role in the context of globalization and regional conflicts, as its geographic and strategic position bridges Europe and Asia, making it central to many geopolitical dynamics.

Globally speaking, we are going through a period characterized by increased uncertainties, unpredictability's, crises, and conflicts threatening peace and stability in our vicinity, accelerated political and economic rivalries among various powers, as well as the erosion of multilateralism and universal values. The international setting is shaped by the inadequacy of the current global governance mechanisms, fragilities that are increasing globally but especially in our region, rising inequalities, and acceleration of digitalization.

In order to eliminate the threats and challenges emanating from that backdrop, and to take advantage of emerging opportunities, Türkiye is compelled to pursue a foreign policy that is strong on the ground and at the table by implementing an insightful and agile diplomacy. Having celebrated the quincentenary of the Foreign Ministry, Türkiye benefits from its deep-rooted tradition of diplomacy and derives strength from several factors including its central geographical position, rich historical experience, robust institutions, strong human resources, and dynamic economy. As such, Türkiye's foreign policy is the embodiment of a bridge between the tradition and the future.

Turkish Foreign Policy aims to protect Türkiye's interests in a volatile regional and global environment, while also shaping conditions for sustainable peace and development in our neighborhood and beyond. In the pursuit of this primary goal, Türkiye contributes to peace, prosperity and stability around the world. In the "Century of Türkiye", which has begun with the centenary of the Republic of Türkiye, our national foreign policy aims to strengthen regional peace and security, expand the institutional basis of our foreign relations, promote economic development and prosperity in our region and influence the transformation of the global system. Guided by our enduring objective to achieve "Peace at Home, Peace in the World" as set out by the founder of our Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and within the framework of our President's vision of the "Century of Türkiye", we conduct an independent and national foreign policy.

Turkish Foreign Policy, which constitutes a part and parcel of our national security system, prioritizes strengthening regional peace and security through combating terrorism and extremism, conflict prevention, peaceful resolution and mediation, and regional ownership (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025).

Türkiye's foreign policy is especially dedicated to the Geopolitical Environment. Due to the fact that Türkiye is situated at a strategic crossroads between Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia, this unique positioning affects its security concerns and offers opportunities to act as a regional power broker. Türkiye's proximity to conflict zones like Syria and Iraq situates it at the heart of regional politics. Additionally, Türkiye seeks to bolster its national security, economic prosperity, and regional influence, while also addressing the complexities introduced by globalization and regional conflicts.

EU-Türkiye Syrian Refugee Deal

This project has been activated on November 29, 2015. It makes the argument that Türkiye used the urgency of the refugee crisis and its position as a major transit country for refugees en route to Europe as leverage to acquire visa liberalization with the EU and bring momentum to its accession negotiation talks. By using active diplomacy and issue-linkage bargaining, Türkiye was also able to secure the EU's commitment to modernization of the Customs Union Agreement and provision of financial support for the welfare and protection of Syrian refugees in Türkiye. Upon realizing that the perquisites secured through the deal were not going to materialize due to a multiplicity of reasons, Türkiye switched to compellent threats and blackmail and engaged in boundary challenging against the EU. The refugee deal between the EU and Türkiye makes it very costly for the EU to 'lose' Türkiye and will serve as a good litmus test on whether Türkiye will switch from challenging to breaking its boundaries with the EU. If the threat of revoking the deal becomes reasonably credible, then it is possible to talk about a switch to boundary breaking (Dursun-Özkanca, 2019).

Key aspects of Türkiye's foreign policy related to globalization and regional conflicts:

- Strategic Location and Alliances,
- Regional Influence,
- Economic Interests and Energy Policy,

- Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy,
- Migration and Refugee Policy,
- Security Concerns,
- Economic Factors,
- International Relations and Alliances.

Türkiye, navigates its foreign policy to achieve a balance between its historical aspirations, regional ambitions, and global responsibilities. These influences shape Türkiye's interventions, diplomatic strategies, and responses to regional and global challenges.

Having restructured its domestic and foreign policies in line with the above-mentioned vision, Türkiye diversified its foreign policy actors to increase its state capacity and signal its intention to adopt a holistic approach, as do other global powers. With the introduction of additional stakeholders, which would contribute to efforts to maximize Turkish interests through the implementation of foreign policy within their respective areas of responsibility, the country opted for a more complex yet more inclusive approach to foreign policy.

At the beginning of the 21st century, due to the coming to power of the “Justice and Development Party” led by Erdoğan, the country’s foreign policy was significantly reformed, taking into account the cultural, historical and geographical features of the Turkish state, as well as the modern geopolitical reality. During the rule of the “Justice and Development Party”, significant changes took place in Türkiye’s foreign policy. Türkiye began to pay more attention to national interests than in the second half of the 20th century. In the course of the transformation of modern international relations, the foreign policy of the Republic of Türkiye is formed under the influence of both internal and external factors, and is becoming a clearly defined multi-vector feature. In this article, the directions of Türkiye’s foreign policy in the system of modern international relations were scientifically analyzed (Abduvoitov, 2024).

In the 21st Century of Türkiye, the primary objective of Turkish foreign policy is to build the Türkiye Axis based on the principles of justice, stability, inclusiveness, multilateralism, and the rule of international law. President Erdoğan made that point as follows at the vision document’s unveiling ceremony: *“We share with humanity that the Century of Türkiye represents a revolution that will bring democracy, development, peace, and welfare to the entire world starting with our country and our region”*.

Türkiye aims to build that axis by using all of its different identities (Turkic, Muslim, Middle Eastern, European, etc.) simultaneously and actively. Having played an active role in the management of regional and global crises over the last two decades, the country continues to become an influential player amid the ever-deepening and ever-escalating global struggle for power.

In conclusion, as part of its efforts to build the Türkiye Axis, Türkiye aims to become a country with the state capacity and a powerful economy to pursue an independent foreign policy and to have a military might to deter domestic and foreign threats and diplomatic instruments to involve itself in regional and global developments.

The main purpose of that plan is to promote national security, attain regional leadership, and build a just global order. At the same time, Türkiye highlights the importance of not repeating the mistakes of the 20th century and calls for shaping the next century on the basis of shared values and common reason. Having restructured its official institutions and increased its capacity to meet those targets, Türkiye shall continue to use all resources at its disposal to further its national goals (Ataman, 2023).

GLOBALIZATION AND REGIONAL CONFLICTS: THE EVOLUTION OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY

In an era defined by the dual forces of globalization and fragmentation, Türkiye has emerged as a pivotal actor navigating the contradictions of a multipolar world.

Globalization has been both a catalyst and a constraint. The neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 2000s propelled Türkiye into global markets, fostering economic interdependence with neighboring regions and incentivizing proactive regionalism. Energy pipelines, trade corridors, and infrastructure projects such as participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative underscored Turkey's ambition to position itself as a transit hub linking Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Yet, this integration has also exposed Türkiye to the volatilities of great-power competition. The Ukraine war, for instance, forced Ankara to balance its NATO commitments with economic reliance on Russian energy and defense partnerships, epitomizing its "multi-vector" diplomacy. Its NATO membership and relationships with both Western and non-Western powers allow it to mediate and balance interests in volatile regions.

Regional conflicts have tested Türkiye's aspirations to be a mediator and power broker. Its involvement in Syria, Libya, and the Caucasus reflects a blend of hard-power assertiveness and conflict-resolution pragmatism. While hosting over 3.6 million Syrian refugees and mediating grain exports during the Russia-Ukraine war, Türkiye has simultaneously deployed military forces abroad to secure perceived national interests. This duality underscores a broader tension: as globalization demands cooperative multilateralism, regional rivalries compel Ankara to prioritize sovereignty and security.

The interplay of these forces reveals Türkiye's evolving identity a middle power resisting alignment, yet deeply enmeshed in global networks. Its foreign policy today is a mosaic of economic ambition, geopolitical balancing, and ideological pragmatism, offering a compelling lens through which to examine how states navigate an unhinged world order.

This introduction weaves thematic threads from the sources, emphasizing structural shifts, economic drivers, and strategic dilemmas (Dalay, 2024).

Türkiye has carved a unique niche in regional conflict management, blending diplomatic mediation with hard-power interventions to safeguard national interests while positioning itself as a pivotal actor in Eurasia and the Middle East. This dual approach reflects its ambition to balance global integration with regional hegemony, often navigating contentious alliances and competing geopolitical agendas.

Diplomatic Mediation and Peacebuilding

Türkiye's mediation efforts are anchored in its "pioneering role" in global conflict resolution, particularly through initiatives like the UN-led Black Sea Grain Initiative, which averted a global food crisis by facilitating Ukrainian agricultural exports amid the Russia-Ukraine war (Özdemir, 2024; Takış, 2025).

Ankara's emphasis on inclusive negotiations insisting on Russia's inclusion in Ukraine peace talks underscores its pragmatic stance that lasting solutions require engaging all stakeholders.

The Astana Process (with Russia and Iran) exemplifies Türkiye's hands on diplomacy in Syria, establishing de-escalation zones, enabling humanitarian aid, and advancing political negotiations. This multilateral framework allowed Türkiye to mitigate cross-border security threats, such as Kurdish militant activity, while shaping Syria's post-conflict trajectory (Benli Altunışık, 2009).

Military Interventions and Security Priorities

Türkiye's foreign policy frequently employs military force to address perceived existential threats. In northern Syria, operations like Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch targeted Kurdish militias linked to the PKK, aiming to prevent territorial consolidation near its borders. Similarly, in Libya, Ankara's military support for the UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA) countered rival factions backed by Egypt and the UAE, securing maritime rights and energy interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. These interventions highlight Türkiye's willingness to challenge regional rivals (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Egypt) to expand its geopolitical footprint.

Balancing Acts in Geopolitical Rivalries

Türkiye's "multi-vector" diplomacy is evident in its simultaneous engagement with NATO and partnerships with Russia (e.g., S-400 purchase, TurkStream pipeline) and China (Belt and Road Initiative). In the South Caucasus, it backed Azerbaijan militarily and diplomatically during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war, leveraging historical Turkic ties to deepen influence in the Caspian region. However, its growing role in Somalia training security forces and establishing a military base has exacerbated tensions with Ethiopia, contributing to a regional "security dilemma" (Arshad, 2024).

Humanitarian and Soft-Power Engagements

Hosting 3.6 million Syrian refugees, Türkiye has framed itself as a humanitarian leader while using refugee flows as leverage in EU negotiations. Its disaster relief initiatives in conflict zones, such as post-earthquake aid to Syria, further bolster its soft-power credentials.

Challenges and Contradictions

Türkiye's approach often blurs the line between mediator and protagonist. While advocating for ceasefires in Ukraine and Gaza, its military operations in Syria and Iraq draw criticism for undermining neutrality. The Astana Process, though successful in reducing violence, has been criticized for side-lining Western-backed Geneva talks, reflecting Ankara's preference for authoritarian-aligned coalitions.

Türkiye's Mediation Endeavours

In line with its strong commitment to preventive diplomacy and mediation, Türkiye actively works to resolve conflicts peacefully and leads numerous initiatives across a wide geography, especially presented as follows:

- Efforts to achieve internal reconciliation in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Kyrgyzstan,
- The establishment of the trilateral cooperation mechanism with Afghanistan and Pakistan and the launch of the “Heart of Asia - İstanbul Process” based on the principle of regional ownership,
- The establishment of trilateral consultation mechanisms between Bosnia and Herzegovina-Croatia-Türkiye and Bosnia and Herzegovina-Serbia-Türkiye,
- Trust-building efforts between Sudan and South Sudan through joint economic projects,
- Facilitating indirect talks between Israel and Syria,
- Promoting the peaceful resolution of Iran's nuclear program through dialogue,
- Supporting the peace process in South Philippines,
- Assisting discussions between Somalia and Somaliland,
- Mediation and facilitation efforts to support dialogue between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, including the Black Sea Grain Initiative and Russian-Ukrainian prisoner exchanges,
- The Ankara Declaration between Ethiopia and Somalia

The above mentioned are among the examples that highlight Türkiye's notable contributions to mediation efforts on the global stage (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2025).

Türkiye exemplifies how middle powers navigate globalization's complexities while asserting regional dominance. Its evolving strategy part mediator, part power broker offers critical insights into the interplay of national interest and global governance in conflict zones.

Türkiye's unique position straddling Europe, Asia, and the Middle East enables it to act as an intermediary in regional disputes.

The country has normalized relations with several regional actors, creating new opportunities for cooperation and peace, particularly in the Middle East and the Balkans.

Strategic Engagement in Conflict Zones

Türkiye maintains an active presence in regional hotspots such as Cyprus, Libya, and the Horn of Africa. Its involvement often includes diplomatic initiatives, humanitarian aid, and economic investment, aiming to stabilize these areas and prevent the escalation of conflicts.

Ankara's focus on aligning policies with Gulf countries and strengthening ties with Africa demonstrates its commitment to regional stability and economic development.

Multipolar Vision and Global Stability

Türkiye's foreign policy is increasingly shaped by a vision for a multipolar world, where no single power dominates. This approach encourages cooperation, reduces the risk of hegemonic conflicts, and allows for more inclusive solutions to regional disputes.

Türkiye illustrates how states can play a constructive role in globalization and the management of regional conflicts by:

- Leveraging strategic geography for economic integration and trade,
- Investing in technology and renewable energy to align with global trends,
- Acting as a mediator and balancing power in regional disputes,
- Pursuing a multipolar vision to foster global stability,

These efforts underscore the positive impact that proactive, adaptive states can have in an interconnected and often turbulent world.

CONCLUSION

Despite claims by Türkiye's leaders of possessing "*global*" or "*central power*", Türkiye continues to exhibit middle power characteristics that significantly shape, if not completely determine, its foreign policy toward various external actors and regions around the world. In addition, not only do ongoing uncertainties in both regional and global politics hamper Türkiye's ability to make substantial foreign policy changes or firm commitments in its external relations.

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in discussing Türkiye's "*changing role*" in its surrounding regions and at the international level, which has led to some theorizing about Türkiye's grand strategy. Whereas some scholars argued that Türkiye should adjust its grand strategy due to the changing international order, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive strategy to protect its national interests, others explored historical precursors to Türkiye's grand strategy, identifying indicators and also limitations for future strategizing efforts.

By way of emphasizing a need for a process-based approach to grand strategizing for Türkiye, Aydın (2020) argued that a non-geopolitical and non-ideological idea, such as growth, should determine Türkiye's grand strategy.

According to Şan-Akca (2020), democratic assertiveness should be the guiding framework for Türkiye's grand strategy and Türkiye should focus on democratic reforms at the domestic level while pursuing an assertive but democracy-first-oriented defense strategy.

Focusing specifically on the question of "*How Should Türkiye Position itself in the Competition for Alternative International Systems?*" Tarık Oğuzlu (2023) noted three fundamental factors that should determine the positioning of Türkiye in the currently evolving global and regional politics:

(1) The negative impact of the geopolitical developments in Türkiye's neighborhood on Türkiye's territorial integrity and economic prosperity,

(2) The nature of Türkiye as a trading state, which helps the country to "derive half of its national wealth from international trade," and

(3) Türkiye's status as a "medium-sized [economic] power" with a national income of less than one trillion dollars.

According to Oğuzlu (2023), the predominance of Türkiye's economic relationship with the Western world regarding trade and foreign direct investment should lead Türkiye to keep distant from the current polarizations between the West, led by the US and its Western allies on the one hand, and the seemingly strengthening China-Russia cooperative relationship on the other.

Türkiye's relations with these powers will continue to be tested as power keeps shifting, and new conflicts continue to erupt in Türkiye's surrounding regions, shaped by decades of conflict. Despite some calls for Türkiye to follow a neighborly core doctrine for Türkiye's grand strategy, with a focus on keeping the military forces of the great powers "out of [Türkiye's] immediate neighbors," realistically, Türkiye has neither the hard nor the soft power to control many of the regional developments due to complex nature of relationships and issues in its surrounding regions, as well as the volatile conditions at the global level.

It is no secret that Erdoğan is eager to participate in the mediation efforts and in Gaza's postwar reconstruction and governance. Türkiye has had decades of peacekeeping experience in Somalia, Bosnia, and Afghanistan and has the capacity to play a role in Gaza. For Erdoğan, Turkish flags flying in Gaza would be the ultimate fulfillment of a historic mission.

But as it is, he has self-sabotaged any Turkish role in Gaza in the short term. Türkiye is frozen out of the ongoing negotiations with Hamas because it has offended Israel so deeply in the latter's time of need. Erdoğan has erred by using language that has not only angered the Israeli government but also alienated Israeli society. I doubt Israelis will want Türkiye near Gaza at least during the present Israeli government. As to what happens in a post-Netanyahu scene, it is too early to say.

But as I said before, Erdoğan is a pragmatist and I feel he is angling for a post-Netanyahu relationship in any case. Erdoğan is lashing out at Netanyahu but by personalizing it, he wants to keep open the door for engagement with a future Israeli government. We will see if that will work.

Additionally, Qatar is already playing a role in mediation efforts with Hamas. So, Türkiye is not needed there, though Erdoğan would have loved to lead the negotiations in the way he did with the Black Sea grain deal or prisoner exchanges between Ukraine and Russia. Now it's a question of what Türkiye can do — and what Israel would want it to do in a postwar Gaza. Unfortunately, the idea of a postwar Gaza is still too distant to speculate. But the three ideas would be humanitarian aid, reconstruction, and providing legitimacy to whatever governance structure emerges. Türkiye would also be eager to help with governance issues in Gaza, but no one in the neighborhood would like that, including Egypt, Iran, and the other Arab states (Aydıntaşbaş & Huggard, 2023).

From a geopolitical standpoint, a war would undoubtedly exacerbate the ongoing volatility in the region. However, even short of a regional conflict, the current Israeli-Hamas war represents an absolute game-changer, as it is likely to stall the progress toward broader Arab-Israeli normalization. Complete, or even partial, (re)occupation of the Gaza Strip will create a new wave of refugees and socio-economic calamity in the region with great impact on Türkiye and its relations with the Middle Eastern states.

Finally, although the full impact remains unclear, there are concerns that the war between Israel and Hamas will divert the worlds, especially the US's, attention from Ukraine's long and bloody struggle against Russia. As a country still enjoying a working relationship with both Russia and Ukraine, Türkiye has followed a policy that some have called "pro-Ukraine neutrality", ... a "non-binary spot between Ukraine, NATO, and Russia in the war: Ankara is pro-Ukrainian, but not anti-Russian". It is not clear how this policy may be challenged if the dynamics in this war change due to the American and European response to the developments in the Middle East.

In light of the points, it has been discussed above and considering the expected continuation of worldwide instability during a time marked by tectonic shifts in regional and global politics, the (re)positioning of Türkiye becomes increasingly important. This is particularly relevant because there remains significant uncertainty surrounding the boundaries, principles, and norms of the alternative systems that are often perceived as challenging the Western liberal order.

In such a world, Türkiye should prioritize pragmatic adaptation in its foreign relations and strive to adjust foreign policy strategies and decisions in response to changing circumstances and evolving global dynamics while maintaining a focus on the progressive ideas and ideals of the post-WWII international order.

This approach involves being flexible and adjusting foreign policy as needed to avoid unnecessary and costly confrontations or conflicts. Moreover, a pragmatic approach focuses on diplomacy and the formation of alliances that revolve around common goals, rather than rigid ideological tendencies and emotional responses to international events.

Most significantly, in today's world, a foreign policy approach rooted in pragmatic adaptation can help Türkiye avoid isolation or marginalization on the world stage by preventing impulsive reactions to regional and global developments.

It ensures that Türkiye's national interests are aligned with the goals and interests that lead to a peaceful and prosperous future for all (Özkeçeci-Taner, 2023).

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