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# The Impact of Jihadist Propaganda in the Russian Language: Analysis of Kavkazcenter

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Kavkazcenter,  
Russia,  
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Terrorism,  
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Propaganda

Terrorism and jihadist propaganda are among the primary threats of the contemporary era. Because of the high number of foreign fighters from the post-Soviet republics among the rank of the Islamic State, there is a general concern about jihadist propaganda in the Russian language. Kavkazcenter has appeared as one of the main websites in the Russian language to support Imarat Kavkaz (Caucasus Emirate) and regional militant groups. Firstly, this paper examines scientific literature useful to classify Kavkazcenter as a jihadist portal or a media agency. Secondly, the research focuses on the website Kavkazcenter investigating its structure, ideologies and connection with the Arab-Muslim world and the international terrorist network. Finally, this investigation intends to describe if Kavkazcenter represents a serious threat not only for the Russian national security but also for the entire post-Soviet space and the European Union itself, where North Caucasian migrants and refugees live.

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## Introduction

Academia and Intelligence agencies have recently paid substantial attention to jihadist propaganda in the Russian language because of the rise of Daesh, a terrorist group capable of creating a Caliphate in Iraq and Syria and promoting its ideology in the West pushing people to organise violent attacks on the European soil.<sup>1</sup> Since the rise of the Islamic State in 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's propaganda machine has spread its ideology into the post-Soviet space and among Russian speakers using social networks and the magazine *Istok* (Parazsczuk, 2015; Krupnov, 2017).

Terrorism has influenced the Russian Federation since the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Dobaev, 2016). Before the Islamic State set up its propaganda apparatus, numerous websites and social network profiles belonging to the North Caucasian local militancy have promoted jihadist ideology in the Russian language on the Russian soil.

*Kavkazcenter*,<sup>2</sup> an Internet portal linked to *Imarat Kavkaz* (Caucasus Emirate), has been one of the most dynamic and famous websites because of its massive impact on the public opinion in the Russian Federation and abroad.<sup>3</sup> For more than a decade, this website has disseminated its ideological message against the Russian central authority showing longevity and the ability to survive at Kremlin's counter-terrorism measures (Campana and Ducol, 2015).

Although nowadays this Internet portal has only the Russian version online, in the past *Kavkazcenter* had developed also English, Arabic and Turkish versions to create a network of contacts and followers in the Middle East and Central Asia, notably in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Consequently, the website

lost its international audience because of the lack of multi-language versions limits the impact of *Kavkazcenter's* propaganda, which is more Russian oriented and seems to be deficient in international supporters.

Since the leading role which *Kavkazcenter* has played in Russia and among the Russian terrorist organisations, this research aims at investigating its structure and strategic communication to understand if we can classify what the website reports to the public audience as jihadist propaganda and a threat not only for the Russian national security but also for the entire post-Soviet space and the European Union where several North Caucasian refugees and migrants live. If truth be told, the European Union has several times asserted its commitment in the fight against all form of terrorism and crime, and Europol has underlined the menace of the jihadist propaganda in the Russian language for Europe (Europol, 2015).

The EU-Russia cooperation in counter-terrorism has been slow down because of the Ukrainian Crisis, Brussels's critiques on the Kremlin's management of the North Caucasus, the EU-Georgia partnership, and those representatives of the former Chechen Republic of Ichkeria who live in Europe with the status of political refugees or asylum seekers (The Jamestown Foundation, 2007; Asmus, 2010; Harding, 2012; Marten, 2015; Svarin, 2016.). The geopolitical confrontation between the EU and Russia has also defined the existence of *Kavkazcenter* and involved North European and Baltic countries. Truly, since 2003, Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, and Finland have hosted the website on different servers, although the Kremlin has incessantly requested to shut it down. Albeit in July 2011 the United Nations Security Council ascribed *Kavkazcenter* on the sanctions list, the website is still operative and supported by the *Finrosforum*, *Suomalais-venalainen kansalaisfoorumi* (Finnish-Russian Civic Forum) and the Pro-Caucasus in Sweden and financed by the Soros Fund which has vast interests in Finland (Bifulchi, 2018).

Firstly, this paper examines academic literature, NGOs' reports and media articles on *Kavkazcenter* and its strategic communication to understand if the website might be qualified among those Internet portals which spreads terrorist ideologies among the public audience. On the one hand, the Kremlin considers *Kavkazcenter* a terrorist website because of its jihadist propaganda and support to local militant groups in the North Caucasus. On the other hand, *Kavkazcenter* founders have always defined the Internet portal as an Islamic media agency whose primary goal is to report truthful information and news from the North Caucasus and counter Moscow's propaganda and censorship. Secondly, we will investigate *Kavkazcenter's* structure, contents, and social network profiles because all these elements are a substantial part of its strategic communication. Lastly, we will emphasise the impact of *Kavkazcenter* in the post-Soviet republics, especially the Russian Federation, to understand if we might interpret its strategic communication as a threat for Russia and those European countries where North Caucasian refugees and migrants and Russian speakers live.

### ***Kavkazcenter*: A Terrorist Website or an Independent Media Agency?**

The critical situation of independent media in the Russian Federation has created space for radical ideas to thrive, and *Kavkazcenter* has appeared as one of the leading sources of 'information' in the North Caucasus in this media vacuum. Undeniably, as the Russian journalist Fatima Tlisova has highlighted in her studies and journalistic reports, the Kremlin has controlled regional information and threatened independent media in the North Caucasus, and have also conducted an 'assassination campaign' against those journalists who reported the Russian government's repression in the region (Dameron, 2010). Mikael Storsjö, a Swedish journalist who provided hosting for *Kavkazcenter* but was also accused of being involved in the illegal transfer of potential terrorists from the North Caucasus to North Europe via Turkey, claimed the right to freedom of speech, and since the beginning has supported the website *Kavkaz.org* which Adam Tumsoev, a pseudonym of a Chechen IT specialist and journalist, administered (Malishevski, 2013; Tlisova, 2010).

In 1999, Movladi Udugov, the former Minister of Information of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, established the website *Kavkaz.org* whose goal was to inform on events in Chechnya and provide news and report regarding the local situation in the North Caucasus against the Kremlin's censorship campaign (Dannreuther & March, 2010). The establishment of *Kavkaz.org* coincided with the beginning of the Second Chechen War (1999 – 2009) described by the Kremlin as a counter-terrorism operation in the North Caucasus after a series of violent attacks in Moscow, Volgograd, and

Buynaksk and the Chechen militants' penetration in Dagestan to create an Islamic state in the region (Calzini, 2005; Tsatsos, 2014). Kavkaz.org worked until 2002 when the Russian authorities stole the domain, and the editors created a new website titled *Kavkazcenter*. Therefore, since 2003, this Internet portal has become the principal source of information from the local militia. Albeit the Russian government banned *Kavkazcenter* and approved various cyber operations to hacking the website, Moscow could not shut it down. In 2005, *Kavkazcenter* declared itself as an Islamic news agency.

There is an open discussion whether *Kavkazcenter* is a media agency whose purpose is to contrast the Kremlin's censorship or a terrorist website which aims at promoting the jihadist ideology and helping the North Caucasian terrorist groups to recruit militants among the young generations.

Egdunas Račius (2006) contextualised this open debate on *Kavkazcenter* analysing the Lithuanian case. At the beginning of 2003, when the website's server was moved to Lithuania, the State Security Department spokesperson explicitly said that *Kavkazcenter* was not a threat for national security. Later in the same year, albeit *Kavkazcenter* declared itself to be a product of the Chechen Independent International Islamic Internet Agency, which the Chechen National Center for Strategic Research and Political Technologies created in 1999 in Grozny, Lithuanian Intelligence considered the website a propaganda machine of the Chechen jihadist group *Riṣṣat al-Ṣāliḥīn* (the Meadows of the Righteous) led by Shamil Basayev. This event divided the Lithuanian public opinion between those who supported the national authority's decision of closing *Kavkazcenter* and those who accused the Lithuanian government of succumbing to the Russian pressure. The debate finished when in 2005 *Kavkazcenter's* server was transferred to Finland.

In his research on the rise of *Imarat Kavkaz*, Dmitry Shlapentokh (2008) wrote that Movladi Ugudov was a jihadist and editor of *Kavkazcenter* considered "the best-known online resistance publication". Greg Simons (2010: pp. 184–185) affirmed that we cannot classify all the content on *Kavkazcenter* as being extremist and dangerous, although some material might be related to the terrorism.

Sue Ann Harding (2011: p. 49) studied competing narratives on the Chechen wars focusing the attention on the terrorist attack in Beslan in 2004.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of Harding's research was to show how Russian state media *RIA-Novosti* and so-called 'independent' media *Kavkazcenter* and *Caucasian Knot* reported the event. The author noted that *Kavkazcenter* had a strong connection with the government-in-exile of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, reported statements of the Chechen *mujāhidīn* and, in the occasion of Beslan's siege, depicted the Russian government as a treacherous regime incline of using excessive force against civilians and children.

Stalinsky, Green and Razafimbahiny (2012) described Kavkaz Center a jihadi news agency which distributed articles promoting and exalting *jihād* in the North Caucasus and elsewhere. Their investigation stressed that the so-called 'media agency' was affiliated with *Imarat Kavkaz*, posted videos and interviews of its leaders and spread exclusive information on the Caucasus Emirate, evidence of a close connection between *Kavkazcenter* and this terrorist organisation. The scholars supported their idea that *Kavkazcenter* was a jihadist website studying its tweets whose primary goal was to discredit Vladimir Putin (at the time of the investigation he was the Prime Minister of Russia) and report on jihadist activities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, the Caucasus (especially Chechnya, Dagestan, and Georgia), and Kazakhstan.

Adrián Tarín Sanz (2017) considered *Kavkazcenter* "the most prominent news agency of the jihadist faction of the Chechen guerrillas" and "the most representative media outlet of the jihadist insurgencies". *Kavkazcenter* categorised the ethnic Russian as the enemy of Islam and compared the Russian military forces which were operating in Chechnya with the Tsarist soldiers who fought the Caucasian War (1817-1864) against the Imamate led by Shamil.

Elena Pokalova (2018: p. 415) investigated al-Qaeda's strategy of using the Chechen rebels as part of its fight against 'the infidel'. She noted that since the beginning of the Second Chechen War in 1999, *Kavkazcenter* published articles that used religious leaders' statements and opinions and the Quran to exhort the Muslim believers to fight in the name of Allāh. Moreover, in its narrative, *Kavkazcenter* echoed al-Qaeda's messages and ideologies spread through Internet forums and its magazine *Inspire*



and emphasised topics such as the Islamic Caliphate, the fight against all enemies of Islam, and the global *jihād*.

### Structure and Contents of *Kavkazcenter*

*Kavkazcenter* bases its counter informative exercise on the publication of exclusive content that ideologically supports the local militancy and terrorist groups and spreads information whose access is difficult for journalists and researchers. Initially, the main core of the project were statements, communiqués, and testimonials from members of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria's government. Since 2007, when Doku Umarov established *Imarat Kavkaz*, *Kavkazcenter* became the propaganda medium of the Islamist guerrillas reporting ideologies and information regarding clashes with the Russian special forces (Tarín Sanz, 2015: pp. 238–240).

From a first glance, *Kavkazcenter* appears to be a well-structured website that uses extensively videos, pictures, articles, and social network accounts with quite a lot of references to Islam and the Muslim community. In reality, on the top right of the website, there is the *basmala* “*bi-smi llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*” (In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) which underlines the religious configuration of the website and the will to promote a message for the entire Muslim *umma* (community).<sup>5</sup> The *basmala* is a distinctive Islamic character which allows *Kavkazcenter* to overcome the North Caucasian ethnolinguistic and national divisions and spread its message to the entire Russian Muslim community.

The website has well-defined sections that highlight the core topics of its strategic communication:

- *Umma*.<sup>6</sup> The readers can unknowledge the current situation of their Muslim ‘brothers and sisters’ in Russia and abroad through a report activity which everyday releases news, data, and information about the Muslim *umma*. Among the vast number of articles, there is special attention to Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, the Chinese policy against the Uyghur tribes and Beijing’s expansion in Central Asia. This section reveals *Kavkazcenter*’s desire to create a link between the North Caucasus and those Muslim territories where local Muslim believers are fighting against foreign occupation or a strong central regime and religious repressive measures are affecting the everyday life of the other Muslim brothers.
- In the World (*V mire*).<sup>7</sup> The articles focus on Kremlin’s domestic and foreign policy and US – Russia confrontation. Washington has a double value because it is at the same time an enemy of the Muslim *umma* but also an ‘ally’ in the war against the Russian Federation. The rhetoric in this section highlights that since 2001 the White House has fought the Taliban in Afghanistan, has imposed a Shia government in Iraq after toppling down Saddam Hussein’s regime, and has tried to control through its military power the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia with the aim at diffusing its capitalist philosophy and exploiting the regional natural resources. The core message of these articles was that the White House’s strategy has posed dangerous threats to the Muslim community and Islamist ideology. However, Washington was also the *mujāhidīn*’s supporter during the Russo– Afghan War (1979 – 1989) and the first enemy of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Nowadays, the United States is still facing the expansion of the Russian Federation in the Middle East and North Africa and contrasting the Russian military presence and operations in the post-Soviet space and those territories where there is a consistent number of Muslim believers (Alterman, 2017). *Kavkazcenter* describes alternatively the United States and the European Union as ‘allies’ of the Muslim community when they contrast the Russian Federation and ‘enemies’ of Islam because of episodes of racism and intolerance. In effect, the website amply criticises Western foreign policies which follow the steps of the colonialism or imperialism.
- Russia (*Rossiia*).<sup>8</sup> Coexistence among different religious and ethnic groups, the action of the *Federal’naja Sluzhba Bezopasnosti* (Federal Security Service or FSB), and special forces’ activities on the Russian soil and abroad, and Putin’s life are the main trends discussed in this section. There is the attempt of emphasising the ‘disrespectful’ Kremlin’s religious policy against the ‘real Islam’ and the Russian will to impose its favourite Muslim clergy to dominate the Russian Muslim *umma*. The description of military operations and FSB activities aim at alarming the entire world about the Russian military threat for international stability and Moscow’s abuses of human rights. The Russian president is an ‘obsession’ for *Kavkazcenter* (2020) that describes Putin as the first

and fiercest enemy for the North Caucasian people and Muslim believers and links the Kremlin with Satanism.<sup>9</sup>

- *Caucasus (Kavkaz)*.<sup>10</sup> In this part, there is a massive emphasis on articles, news, and analysis on contemporary and past events in Chechnya, Dagestan, and Ingushetia. Moreover, the editors mostly discuss and report information and news on the Chechen Head of State Ramzan Kadyrov and Chekism<sup>11</sup> but they also consider pertinent those events in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia related to the Muslim community or whose relevance might have a connection with the North Caucasus and Russia.
- *Opinions (Mnenie)*.<sup>12</sup> *Kavkazcenter*'s followers can read a mix of analytical reports, commentaries, a historical description of the past events in the North Caucasus, especially the period of the Chechen Wars, speeches and explanation of Doku Umarov, Shamil Basayev, and some of the most influential leaders of the local militancy. Since 2001 the portal has published a high volume of articles in this section even though in the last two years the activity consistently decreased.<sup>13</sup>
- *Press (Pressa)*.<sup>14</sup> A collection of opinions, news, articles, and studies from Russian and international websites and blogs on the Caucasus, Islam, discrimination in Russia, ethnic problems, and conflicts whose purpose seems that of accrediting *Kavkazcenter* to the role of a news agency.
- *Da'wa (Da'avat)*.<sup>15</sup> Religion and the explanation of *sūra* or single parts of some specific *sūra* are central in this area of the website whose purpose is to clarify the meaning of *jihād*, the necessity of being a good Muslim, the duties of the Muslim believers and to contrast what is considered 'false Islam'.<sup>16</sup>
- *Feedback (obratnaya svyaz)*.<sup>17</sup> *Kavkazcenter* allows its followers and readers to contact directly the editorial board using the contact form. Thanks to this module, the editors can create a dialogue with followers.
- *Media*.<sup>18</sup> Pictures and videos are essential in *Kavkazcenter*'s propaganda. Visitors and readers can select videos of *Imarat Kavkaz*'s emirs discussing special religious issues such as *jihād* and *mujāhidīn*'s role in the contemporary era.

*Kavkazcenter* had an official Twitter account @Kavkazcenter launched on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011, and linked to the website (Stalinsky et al., 2012). Although Twitter has contrasted jihadist and terrorist organisations' activities as requested by different governments, since 2017, *Kavkazcenter* has a new Twitter account @newkc14. In September 2020 @newkc14 had more than 12 thousand followers and follows only 38 accounts that cover topics such as the United States, Donald Trump, conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Islam.<sup>19</sup> Re-tweeting and posting articles and news about Afghanistan and the Middle East can be an attempt to create a link with the North Caucasus. Moreover, Afghanistan and the Caucasus have a psychological impact on the ethnic Russians because they recall those battlegrounds where in the past the Tsarist empire and the Soviet Union fought prolonged wars against the locals risking of being defeated as in the Caucasian War (1817 – 1864) or registering one of the worst defeat for the Red Army as in the Russo-Afghan War (1979 – 1989) (Baumann, 1952; Bilev and Degoev, 1994; Gulin, 2014; Cicek, 2015);

*Kavkazcenter* spreads not only information on the North Caucasus and the Muslim community and jihadist ideology but also contrasts Kremlin's propaganda considered a threat for the Russian citizens and the entire world. The research of the Russian term '*propaganda*' inside the website reveals more than 1800 articles and news which refer to the Russian propaganda described as Kremlin's lies and 'fake news' and Moscow's expansion strategy.<sup>20</sup> For instance, in December 2019, the website published an article titled 'Information War. Seven factors, that the Russian propaganda exploits for its lies' (Kavkazcenter, 2019) translating and using the post of the website *EU vs Disinfo*, a project managed by the European Union.<sup>21</sup> This article shows how *Kavkazcenter* uses investigations and publications released by EU and US agencies and think tanks to cover and contrast the Russian strategic communication and support its anti-Kremlin propaganda.

## Conclusion

We can consider *Kavkazcenter* an aggressive, pro-Islam, anti-Russian website which reports news on the North Caucasus and the Muslim *umma* promoting at the same time jihadist propaganda. In fact, according to this preliminary investigation, *Kavkazcenter* is more a jihadist propaganda website than an information news agency against Russian censorship as Adam Tumsoev and Mickael Storsjo

declared. Its purpose is to have a significant impact on the readers using Quran and Muslim terminology and articles and reports from distinguished personalities in the West. Without an English version, *Kavkazcenter's* international dimension has been mitigated and nowadays the website targets Russia, the Russian speakers, and the post-Soviet space contextualising its propaganda inside the contemporary conflict which opposes the Russian Federation and the West against the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, and local militant groups.

It is possible to state that the transformation into an Islamic media agency makes *Kavkazcenter* and its propaganda a threat for the entire Eurasian continent because the portal exhorts its followers to look at the local militancy or the political Islam as the solution to their problems exploiting the sense of belonging to the Muslim *umma*. The chief targets are those ethnic groups and Muslim believers whom the State central authority has oppressed with anti-religious or discrimination campaigns.

The jihadist propaganda of *Kavkazcenter* endangers the Russian national security because the website admonishes its followers and readers to interpret the Kremlin's activity as a menace to their lives and for the Muslim community. The exaltation of Caucasian personalities and leaders who fought against the Russians in the past (i.e., Imam Shamil, Dzhokar Dudaev, Shamil Basaev, Doku Umarov) serves to drive the attention of the Russian Muslim young generations and recruit supporters and future militants.

The European Union is not immune to the jihadist propaganda in the Russian language and *Kavkazcenter* might pose a serious threat to the European stability considering the noteworthy North Caucasian diaspora in the continent, first among all the Chechens. Undeniably, during the First and the Second Chechen Wars, the European Union was a desirable destination for North Caucasian people seeking refuge from the local conflicts or the Russian repression (Petrovich and Ostaptschuk, 2013). Chechens are the majority of the North Caucasians who escaped from Chechnya under Kadyrov's leadership and their number has been increasing since 2003 as highlighted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, academic investigations, and media (Vatchagaev, 2008; Kirilenko, 2017). *Kavkazcenter* might affect the North Caucasian diaspora in the European Union through its jihadist propaganda and, in general, terrorist ideologies disseminated in the Russian language. Indubitably, in the recent years, security forces in Europe have arrested Chechen people because of their connection to the Islamic State or other terrorist organisations bringing to light the problem of security connected to the North Caucasian diaspora and the jihadist propaganda in Russian (Deutsche Welle, 2010).

To sum up, *Kavkazcenter* is a pro-jihadi website whose aim is theoretically to be recognized as an Islamic news agency even though in reality it is an online portal which has a connection with the North Caucasian local militancy and foreign terrorist groups. Due to its propaganda activity in the Russian language and the consistent presence of North Caucasian refugees or citizens in Europe, Brussels should strive to manage this problem and tried to cooperate with Moscow to avoid the rise of new terrorist groups or the organization of terrorist attacks on the European soil.

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<sup>1</sup> Daesh is the Arabic acronym of the *ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī 'l-'Irāq wa-sh-Shām* well-known in the West as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and after the 2014 as the Islamic State (IS). The United Nations as well as my international organisations and individual countries (among them the Russian Federation) declared the Islamic State a terrorist organisation.

<sup>2</sup> The website [www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/](http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/) was accessible during the collection of data of this investigation for the period September – October 2020.

<sup>3</sup> *Imarat Kavkaz* (Caucasus Emirate) is a terrorist organisation created in October 2007 which wants to set up an Islamic state in the North Caucasus based on *shari'a* law. Doku Umarov abolished the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria resulted from the First Chechen War and founded *Imarat Kavkaz* declaring himself an emir. The creation of the Caucasus Emirate changed the confrontation between the Russian military forces and the local militant groups and transformed the ethno-nationalist cause into an Islamist program. Since 2007 *Imarat Kavkaz* has organised several terrorist attacks on the Russian soil. After 2013, when the Russian forces managed to eliminate Doku Umarov, this terrorist organisation started losing its regional appeal and vitality. After the rise of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq different leaders of the Caucasus Emirate pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Nowadays, the Russian government still considers *Imarat Kavkaz* a threat for the national security, there are only few information about the existence of this terrorist organisation. Cf. Hahn GM (2011) Getting the Caucasus Emirate Right. Available at: [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy\\_files/files/publication/110930\\_Hahn\\_GettingCaucasusEmirateRt\\_Web.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/110930_Hahn_GettingCaucasusEmirateRt_Web.pdf) (accessed 22 October 2020); Jasutis G (2016) The Rise and Decline of the Caucasus Emirate. Zurich: Center for Security Studies ETH.

<sup>4</sup> On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004, a group of Chechen militants and Islamic fundamentalists assaulted the school number 1 located in Beslan in North Ossetia-Alania and kidnapped about 1200 adults and children. After two days of negotiates the Russian military forces decided to raid the school. At the end of the operation more than three hundred people died, including 186 children, and over 700 were wounded.

<sup>5</sup> The *basmala* (in Arabic: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ) is used extensively in everyday Muslim life and said as the opening of each action to receive blessing from God.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/ummah>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/world>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/russia>

<sup>9</sup> There are more than 11 thousand articles related to the Russian President Vladimir Putin as the following link shows <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/search/all/all/Путин%20>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/caucasus>

<sup>11</sup> Chekism (from the Russian word *Cheka*) refers to the period of the Soviet Union when the secret police strongly controlled all spheres of society. In contemporary Russia, Chekism is also used to criticise Kremlin's policy and the unlimited power of the Russian law-enforcement. Cf. Anderson J (2006) The Chekist Takeover of the Russian State. *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 19: 237–288; Anderson J (2007) The HUMINT Offensive from Putin's Chekist State. *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence*, 20(2): 258–316; Galeotti M (2016) Putin's Hydra: Inside Russia's Intelligence Service. Report for the European Council on Foreign Relations.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/opinion>

<sup>13</sup> Since 2018 there is a vacuum of articles in conjunction with the fall of *Imarat Kavkaz* and the rise of Islamic State. In fact, in the period 2013 – 2016 the Russian special forces killed some of the most influential leaders of the Caucasus Emirate (among them Doku Umarov) while other regional leaders preferred to swear allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Cf. Youngman M (2016) Between Caucasus and Caliphate: the splintering of the North Caucasus insurgency. *Caucasus Survey* 4(3): 194–217; Holland EC and Witmer FDW and O'Loughlin J (2017) The decline and shifting geography of violence in Russia's North Caucasus, 2010-2016. *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 58(6): 613–641.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/press>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/daawa>

<sup>16</sup> *Da'wah* (also daawa, dawah, daawah or dakwah, from the Arabic term: دعوة "invitation") is the proselytising or preaching of Islam. In Islamic theology, the purpose of *da'wah* is to invite people, Muslims and non-Muslims, to understand the worship of God as expressed in the Quran and the Sunna and to inform them about the Prophet Muhammad. Cf. Salam A (1996) *Dawah Guide (Towards Perfectioning Dawah)*. Students Islamic Publications, pp. 1-3.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/feedback>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/media>

<sup>19</sup> For instance, among the 'following' there is the official Twitter account of the spokesperson of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Zabihulla Mujahid.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/search/all/all/пропаганда%20>

<sup>21</sup> The website EU vs Disinfo <https://euvsdisinfo.eu> is a project of the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force started in 2015 to counter what they consider the Russian disinformation campaign.

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# Domestic Politics and Regional Dynamics in Turkey's Geopolitical Approach to the Middle East Between 2002-2019

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

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The Middle East,  
Isolation

During the last two decades, key reforms in social, economic, and political structures have elevated Turkey into a rising regional power. In the Middle East, the increasing influence of Turkey for a better part of the last two decades has been reinforced by its humanitarian oriented foreign policy. Whereas this transformation is extensively attributed to the reform agenda by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the last decade has proved to be challenging for Turkey's foreign policy stance. Regional dynamics, such as the Syrian civil war, Qatar crisis, and the Kurdish question, have influenced Turkey to gradually shift from its previous subtle to a more assertive foreign policy. Additionally, the frequent domestic political challenges and economic pressure on the AKP government have only pushed Turkey further towards a more assertive Middle East foreign policy. This article examines how regional and domestic political developments are influencing Turkish foreign policy approach. The analysis will attempt to provide a comprehensive perspective on why Turkish geopolitical engagement and an increasingly assertive foreign policy that is characterised by unilateralism particularly in the pursuit of national and regional security is leading to its isolation.

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## Introduction

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, successive Turkish administrations guided by the principles of Kemal Ataturk embarked on modernising the Republic. While Kemalism<sup>1</sup> led to the establishment of closer ties between Turkey and western powers, minimal attention was given towards the Middle East. Turkey's path toward modernisation required strict emulation of European progressiveness in key sectors such as the military, economy, science, education, and legal organisation (Jung, 2001). However, despite the attempts of the Kemalist government to advance a liberal agenda and align its modernisation programme with the Western model, it remained very suspicious of the West (Aybey, 2004). For instance, despite the existence of the Sevres Treaty<sup>2</sup>, no Turkish parliament has ever passed its provisions. Nonetheless, the engagement of Turkey with the West does not imply that the Middle East was completely ignored. On the contrary, Turkey was among the first countries to recognise

<sup>1</sup> Kemalism is a modernization philosophy which guided the transition between the multi-religious, multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire to the secular, unitary Republic of Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> Sevres Treaty was signed between the Allied powers and Ottoman Empire after World War I on August 10, 1920. The treaty partitioned the Ottoman Empire to the Allied powers and granted autonomy to the Kurds and Armenians



newly established Arab states after World War II, and in 1947 supported the Arab course in protesting against the division of Palestine (Candar *et al.*, 2001).

The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is crucial to understanding Turkey in the context of Middle East geopolitics. This is because, since 2002, Turkey embarked on an aggressive reform agenda (domestic and foreign) including building its soft power capabilities by providing significant humanitarian support to countries such as Iraq and Syria and instituting more bilateral and cordial ties with other states in the region. During the first decade of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule, domestic economic development and improving democratic space endeared Turkey not only to the region but also to the international community.

This improved image gave Turkey some aspects of legitimacy outside the confines of its territorial borders. Turkey's influence expanded significantly, and its proactive foreign policy was manifested in attempts to mediate regional conflicts in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. The AKP government exploited its appealing image to call for political reforms throughout the region on issues such as human rights and emphasised the urgent need for the region to democratise (Statesman, 2004). Indeed, the pursuit of national interests coupled by rapidly transforming geopolitical dynamics meant that the Middle East was no longer just a ground for Turkey to engage as a mediator in conflicts, but rather, as an actor that institutes order and stability. According to Davutoğlu (2010), Turkey shifted from approaching the Middle East as a region representing its interests to a region representing Turkish influence in international politics.

However, it is imperative to note that since 2002, there has also been a systematic rediscovery of the Ottoman socio-cultural and religious consciousness. AKP rule stimulated a burgeoning of Turkish Muslim elites who regard Kemalism in foreign policy as challenging to Turkey and as such, advocate for the subordination of ethnic identity in favour of an inclusive religious and civilisational identity (*umma*). This group, therefore, supported closer ties with the Middle East (Robins, 2007; Marcus, 2009). Indeed, the victory of AKP in 2002 was not only a sign of protest by the Turkish voters against years of economic mismanagement, corruption, and rising household poverty but, it also symbolised increased concerns over the deterioration of national values founded on Islamic socio-cultural and religious identity (Warning *et al.*, 2011).

In one opinion column published by *Turkish Daily News* (8 March 2003), the conflicts in the Middle East were described as a source of agony for Turkish citizens who share deep historical and socio-cultural relations with the region and as such, the author argued, Turkey needed to take bold measures in engaging with the region to restore order. Rabasa *et al.*, (2008) emphasise that this shift did not constitute attempts to Islamize Turkish approach to the geopolitics of the Middle East even though the new policy was influenced by religious identity and cultural solidarity. The deep re-engagement with the Middle East has influenced an assertive foreign policy in which Turkey has demonstrated its willingness to take pre-emptive actions before any perceived threats have materialised. Although Turkey has often insisted that its actions are rational relative to its national interests, the projection of its strength through its military industry has attracted criticisms from its allies. This article will therefore attempt to demonstrate how the transformation from early Kemalist inclined to a “neo-Ottoman” foreign policy has created tensions between Turkey, Middle Eastern neighbours and its traditional Western allies. The article argues that these tensions have gradually led to a pattern of international isolation of Turkey.

## Defining Geopolitics

Geopolitics is a core subject matter in discussions and analyses of political discourses by academicians, strategists, journalists, and political analysts. The end of the Cold War created far-reaching changes in the structure of the international system. The subtle foreign policies projected by small and middle power states during the Cold War era is best captured by Kaplan (1968) who argues that a tight bipolar international system of two superpowers dominating international politics leaves minimal room for smaller powers to manoeuvre. In other words, in the post-Cold War order, the structure of the international system transformed into a multipolar global order. In this new setting, geopolitics has become a core element of international politics.

According to Cohen (2003), key elements of geopolitical discourse can be traced back to classical scholars such as Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Thomas Hegel, and Montesquieu. However, it was not until 1899 that Rudolf Kjellen introduced geopolitics into the mainstream discussions of political concepts as a form of

political identity and expression of interests by the state (Tuathail *et al.*, 1996; Dodds *et al.*, 2000). Notably, during this period, there was an expansion of European imperialism stemming out from economic, military, political, humanitarian, and religious reasons, as well as the acceptance of a new Social Darwinism theory to justify and legitimise colonial expansion. In this context, geography was promoted as a scientific field, and intellectual thinkers advanced the idea of geography in influencing a state's foreign policy.

Sloan *et al.* (1999) define geopolitics as the influence of a state's political and economic geography on politics, power, and foreign policy. Cohen (2003) defines geopolitics as the examination of the relationships between geographical perspectives and settings and the existing political processes. As such, geopolitics provides a platform through which the effects of these interactions (geographical settings and political processes) are addressed. Actors involved in the formulation of foreign policies, therefore, ought to be equipped with the capabilities to identify the interactions between geography and political processes.

### **Turkey's Socio-Cultural Identity and Geographical Location in Middle East Geopolitics**

Understanding the geopolitical influence of Turkey in the Middle East requires a comprehensive understanding of Turkey in the context of its demography and geographical location. The power of a state is measured in terms of capabilities that can be ranked according to strength in areas such as population size, territory, military power, economic, and political influence (Carr, 1979). A report by the UN Population Division (UNPD, 2019) shows that Turkey's population has increased to 82 million to become the most populous state in the Middle East and the second in Europe after Germany. This means that Turkey has also become a significant producer and consumer of goods and services for the Middle East region.

Secondly, religious and cultural identity is a key factor when it comes to how Turkey approached the Middle East during the early years of AKP rule. In this period, through the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA), Turkey developed its humanitarian aid foreign policy tool to establish close ties not only across the Middle East but also in Asia and Africa. According to a study by Dağ (2016), foreign aid to countries with a Muslim population diversified, and the amount of aid increased considerably. Although foreign aid (humanitarian aid) to countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, Palestine and Iraq seem to have been as a result of strategic policies, it is an undeniable fact that an important factor in terms of selectivity is religion as a common denominator.

But more importantly, is the demography of this population with regard to the Kurds. According to statistics by the CIA World Factbook (2018), the Kurdish population in Turkey is approximated to constitute 18 per cent of the total population. This is a significant factor for Turkish geopolitical approach to the Middle East because sections of the Kurdish population have been pushing for secession from Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran. In Turkey, this secessionist agenda is being fronted by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) that wants to establish an independent ethnic state of Kurdish people in the region (Jongerden, 2008). This demography and the political relevance attached to it has transformed Turkey's domestic politics and foreign policy. The PKK terror organisation has not only caused immense suffering on innocent civilians in its war with the Turkish state but also, redefined how politics is conducted in the country. Inadvertently, countering the threat of PKK empowered certain institutions such as the military; redefined the boundaries between state and society, and significantly slowed down the democratisation process in Turkey- thereby serving the interest of certain sections of the state bureaucracy.

The conflict between the state and the secessionist groups in Turkey has led to a mass movement of Kurds from conflict-affected areas either willingly or through force to other areas in western Anatolian cities. For Turkey, its complex socio-cultural demography has become a sensitive issue that has rendered the state in a dilemma over national interests of territorial integrity and security, with the commitment balancing friendly relations with neighbouring states in the region such as Syria and Iraq. Any approach to the Kurdish problem is carefully handled to avoid communalization of the conflict with PKK as one that is between ethnic Kurds and Turks. The government has had to seek means of distinguishing and separating the problem of PKK terror organisation from other legitimate issues of the Kurds who have often decried about their marginalisation.

To an extent, therefore, this article recognises that Turkey's approach to the geopolitics of the Middle East is attached to the structural transformation arising from a redefined understanding of the region's social and political identity by the ruling political class. Davutoğlu's doctrine (2009) that has perhaps influenced part of

the contemporary approach of Turkey to the Middle East highlights the role of identity in Turkey's foreign policy in the Middle East. Nonetheless, the influence of identity in Turkish geopolitical approach does not exist as a singular factor but one amongst other structural realities such as the distribution of power in the region.

### Geographic Location

Turkey's geographical location provides both enviable opportunities and challenges. Turkey is between south-western Asia and south-eastern Europe with the lands west of the Bosphorus constituting part of European geography. Turkey borders the Black Sea between Georgia and Bulgaria and the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea between Syria and Greece.

**Figure 1:** Turkey's Geo-Strategic Location and Geopolitical Vectors



Source: *Geopolitical Intelligence Services*, (2018)

According to Çelik *et al.*, (1999), Turkey's geographical location gives it control over the strategic points of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles straits, therefore, making Turkey a key player in the geopolitics of the Middle East, Asia, Eastern Europe, and post-Soviet independent states in the region. However, Turkey's location has also subjected it to an environment of different characteristics, ideologies, and state regimes with competing interests. These multivariate factors, therefore, necessitate Turkey to engage actively in the region to pursue, defend or maintain its national interests. A commentary in the *Hürriyet Daily News* (26 October 2009) postulates that the reintegration of Turkey into Arab geopolitics is a strategic decision by the Turkish government. Oran (2001) argues that Turkey's geographic location has been at the crossroads of global power axes – during the Cold War bipolar power structure and, in contemporary times, as a North-South axis divide modelled upon economic development. Turkey's strategic geographical location has therefore been beneficial, on the one hand, for projecting its influence in the Middle East in a higher capacity than its relative geographical size, economic capacity, and population would permit (Aydin, 2004). On the other hand, this strategic location also poses a serious security threat to Turkey. Terrorist groups such as the PKK live among the Kurdish population that have settled along and across the borders of Turkey with neighbouring countries Iran, Iraq and Syria. Moreover, the central location of Turkey at the crossroad of Europe and the Middle East has exposed the country to illegal migration routes to Europe, as well as a hub for human trafficking.

## Influence of Turkish Domestic Politics to its Geopolitical Approach to the Middle East

This article argues that transformation in the domestic political ideology has significantly influenced Turkey's approach to geopolitics in the Middle East. Major political developments since 2002 continue to influence Turkish foreign policy agenda in terms of policy formulation and motives. Some of these major domestic political developments include the AKP electoral win in 2002; the beginning of the EU accession talks in 2005; Oslo negotiations with the PKK from 2006-09; the collapse of the Kurdish peace talks in 2014; and a coup attempt in 2016. The essence of these developments is that they changed the political identity of the AKP and redefined how the government approached both domestic policy and foreign policy that shifted towards more engagement with the Middle East.

According to Waldman *et al.*, (2017), after AKP came to power in 2002, the beginning of orienting Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East was in line with the popular opinion amongst the AKP's support base comprised of small and medium-scale conservative Muslim business entrepreneurs from the Anatolian provinces. AKP was itself established as the democratic, conservative and non-confessional movement by former President Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Its foundation nonetheless is connected to the increasing role of Islam in Turkish life experienced from the beginning of the 1980s and '90s. These conservative business entrepreneurs were profiting from increased cross-border trade and valued the shared religious identity consciousness with countries in the Middle East. To address the interests of this strong emerging middle class, AKP regime even advocated for a regional market similar to the European Schengen model and proposed easing travel restrictions such as visa requirements and establishing the region's own "Sham-gen" (Kirişçi *et al.*, 2011). This new drive led to increased trade and growing economic cooperation with other states such as the Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran, that provided profitable markets for the Turkish construction industry.

Secondly, domestic political and institutional reforms by the AKP regime that characterised this period attracted massive recognition for Turkey not only within the Middle East but also across the western hemisphere. Turkey was lauded for its reform agenda, and Ankara became a model and a source of inspiration for liberal Arabs as well as other religious conservative groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, who were attracted to the regime's embrace of Islamism blended with people-centred economic development that lifted Turkey to an upper-middle-income country in a span of a decade (Altunışık, 2010). The political ideology of AKP fused fundamental principles of Islam with democratic and free-market principles. The AKP regime, while opening its domestic market for prospective investments from the Middle East and other regions in the different sectors of the economy, also intensified its campaign for good governance and respect for human rights and freedoms across the region. Turkey highlighted the plight of other states such as Palestine and opened its borders to Syrian refugees escaping from conflict. Several studies (Robins, 2003; Hale, 2012; White, 2014) take note that AKP internalised the Kemalist vision of establishing a strong state with the capacity to deter external threats and overcome aggressors when challenged in direct confrontations. This strong image portrayed Turkey as a natural leader in the Middle East (Bechev, 2017).

Thirdly, the formation of a coalition between the AKP and the Gülenist movement also impacted the foreign policy stance adopted by Turkey towards the Middle East. The coalition ensured a parliamentary majority in 2007, thereby giving the AKP government assertive and absolute mandate over the formulation of foreign policy. The influence of the Gülenist movement in the Turkey's judicial system offered ideal protection for AKP's religious conservatism ideology against attacks by Turkey secular establishments. More importantly, AKP gained control of not only the executive but also the legislature and council of ministers. However, coalition differences between in 2012 allowed AKP to be no longer confined by the interests of its coalition partner and therefore, able to develop more aggressive or proactive foreign policy agenda. It is important to note that although the AKP and the Gülenist movement previously formed a coalition, both sides had different views on how the new era of the Republic ought to be. Gülenists were preoccupied with advancing a more transnational economic-oriented and soft-power foreign policy agenda while the AKP preferred a more expansive foreign policy within the framework of conservative democratic practices. As such, having established a large network of supporters at home and abroad through groups affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and other conservative democratic groups, the AKP government became more confident in advancing its proactive foreign policy in the region. For instance, Turkey provided significant support to the Arab Springs that emerged to consolidate democracy across states in the Middle East and North Africa (Aktürk, 2017).

Internal political squabbles such as the Kurdish question advanced by the PKK continue to fundamentally influence the Turkish approach to geopolitics, particularly in regard to the question of territorial integrity and national security. The Kurds have issued proposals and demands ranging from the recognition of cultural rights and freedoms to the establishment of federalism as a political system in Turkey. More radical demands have been calls for nationalism that have taken the extreme form of terrorism against Turkey and moderate Kurds by PKK since 1984. The connection between the PKK, which has been designated as a terrorist group by the EU, US, NATO, and Turkey, and the Kurdish population in Turkey remains a challenge to Turkish foreign policy to the Middle East, especially in relation to countries such as Iraq and Syria. According to Yavuz (2015), because of domestic politics in Turkey, AKP did not have a policy towards the Kurdish question during the 2002 elections as it attempted to avoid criticism and potential loss of support from Turkish Grassroot nationalists and conflict with the military. Within the Turkish security apparatus, military regime, and civilian bureaucracy, there were devoted anti-Kurdish state sentiments thwarting any attempts towards establishing a lasting solution to the Kurdish question (Çandar, 2009).

The influence of domestic politics can also be seen during the invasion of Iraq by the United States. Having won elections in December 2002 with a parliamentary majority of 363 members, the legislation of foreign policy bills was expected to be easier, considering that unlike coalition governments, one-party governments tend to be disciplined and advantageous in parliamentary proceedings (Hekimoğlu, 2009). However, despite intense lobbying by both Erdoğan and Gül, the Turkish parliament failed to pass the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2003 bill that provided for a Resolution regarding America's use of Turkish territory in its war against Saddam Hussein. This was because Parliament had opposed the invasion of Iraq by the Bush administration on the basis that the invasion lacked international legitimacy. *Hürriyet Daily News* (2 March 2017) reported that the resolution would have permitted the deployment of 250 US warcraft, use of 5 seaports, deployment of an estimated 80,000 US troops, and additional use of 13 airports in Turkey against Iraq.

Perhaps a more assertive influence of domestic politics on the geopolitical approach of Turkey is the failed 2016 coup attempt by the Gülenists terror group (FETÖ) that attempted overthrow the democratically elected AKP government. The aftermath of the failed coup attempt led to allegations by AKP that key government institutions such as the military, judiciary, public service and other state security organs had been infiltrated by the Gülenists. AKP further alleged that the government bureaucracy was hesitant to take initiatives that would guarantee national security interests of the state. Thus, the coup attempt initiated the beginning of a raft of radical changes in government institutions and organs. This restructuring included the declaration of war on terrorism domestically against the Gülenist movement and across the Middle East region against PKK and its affiliate groups such as People's Protection Units (YPG). Turkey has resorted to using hard power in securing its borders as witnessed in the launch of military operations such as Operation Euphrates Shield against ISIS in Syria and Operation Olive Branch against the PKK affiliated YPG. The revision of the Syrian policy to one that is focused on eliminating the threat of the Syrian Democratic Forces has been supported by a majority of the Turkish citizens who accept this war as an extension of the fight against PKK. This domestic support became more steadfast after leaked documents in 2013 alleged that Abdullah Öcalan<sup>3</sup> who is the imprisoned PKK leader, contributed to the establishment of Syrian Defence Forces.

Threats of sanctions from US and EU members against Turkey's military operations in Syria have only resulted in more domestic political support for the government and thereby becoming even bolder in executing the Syrian policy. The success of two previous military operations strengthened the Turkish position in Syria and emboldened Turkey to conduct another unilateral military offensive (Operation Claw) to create a safe zone along the Turkey-Iraq border despite continued condemnation by the international community. The emerging unilateral approach to security demonstrates Turkey's resolve to approach the region using hard power should it deem that its national interests are under threat as well as serve as a basis for AKP to galvanise its domestic political support.

### Is Turkey's Geopolitical Approach Leading to its Isolation?

Over the last decade, Turkey has experienced unprecedented changes in its domestic politics and witnessed a far-reaching transformation in regional dynamics of the Middle East. Since 2010, there have been concerns of increasing religious-conservatism and growing authoritarianism (Karaveli, 2016); entrenchment of

<sup>3</sup> Formed the PKK in 1984 and has been under solitary confinement since 1999 in a maximum-security facility on the small island of Imrali.

nationalism (Haynes, 2010); and a confrontational slant in political conduct. Additionally, Turkey has undergone political disturbances such as the Gezi Park protests in 2013 (Gürçan *et al.*, 2014; Carkoğlu, 2015); collapse of the Kurdish peace process in 2014 (Lindenstrauss, 2016); an attempted coup in 2016 (Öktem, 2016); and a constitutional referendum introducing an executive presidency in 2017 (Aytaç *et al.*, 2017). On the regional front, the Middle East has experienced the Arab Springs that emerged in 2011 (Springborg, 2011); increased threats of terrorism from ISIS, PKK, and other outlawed militia groups; the intervention of external actors in Syria (Cheterian, 2015); the KRG independence in 2017; and the Qatar crisis in 2017 (Aras *et al.*, 2017).

One significant impact of the domestic political developments in Turkey is that they have provided an avenue through which President Erdoğan has assumed stronger executive powers granting him a full monopoly over Turkish foreign policy. On the regional front, these developments have increased Turkey's resolve to pursue an independent national security policy and, notably, caused Turkey to resort to using hard power in addressing key geopolitical issues that threaten its national interests. This stance is coherent by realists' arguments on the security of states. According to Mearsheimer (2001), the principal goal of states is to achieve hegemonic status and therefore, states should utilise any window that changes the distribution of capabilities even if such actions may jeopardise their survival. The underlying argument is that the primary objective of states is survival, and outside this, all other goals are considered secondary. In other words, the behaviour of a state cannot be derived from ethical underpinnings but rather from predicted consequences. The pre-emptive military decisions taken by the Turkish government appears to be premised on this perception. For Turkey, striking first against perceived threats to its national security is the surest way for the state to guarantee its survival.

Previously, the approach of Turkey to the Middle East geopolitics was synchronised with the stance taken by the EU, Israel, and the United States (Davutoğlu, 2008). However, Turkey has since increased bilateral ties through strategic engagements with Russia, Iran, and China, thereby extensively changing the dynamics of Middle East geopolitics (Akturk, 2015). The growing opposition of Turkey by its traditional Western allies has created a security dilemma, and Turkey has responded to this by strengthening its position through establishment of unofficial alliances with other regional powers such as Russia and Iran. Turkey's change in attitude toward its Western allies can also be attributed to a new 'Eurasianist' ideology postulating that Turkey can be an equal, if not dominant, a partner in the Middle East and the larger Eurasia (Lin, 2016). This article highlights three cases that demonstrate how Turkey has responded to the new geopolitical dynamics in the region while pursuing national interest.

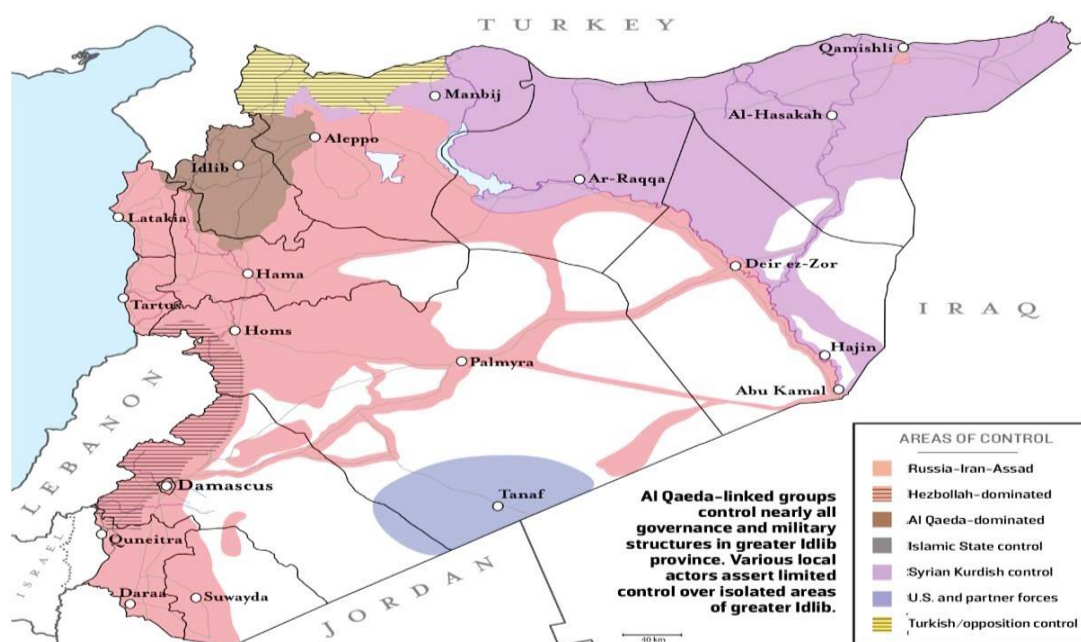
## 1. The Syrian Complexities

Since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict in 2011, Syria has played host to external interventions by Turkey, the US, Russia, and Iran (Humud *et al.*, 2016). On the one hand, both Turkey and the United States have been critical of the Assad regime while Russia and Iran have supported the status quo by providing critical support for the Assad regime (Charap, 2013). However, the approach proposed by Turkey and the US has been a source of conflict between the two NATO allies. This is because US resorted to providing financial, technical, and military hardware support to anti-Assad rebels such as the YPG and the Syrian Defence Forces (constituted of Arab and Kurdish forces) which have been fighting the Islamic State. But for Turkey, YPG is a designated terrorist organisation because of its affiliation to PKK, which continues to threaten Turkish national security (Salih, 2015). Additionally, Turkey has been supporting the non-Kurdish opposition groups and fighting alongside the Free Syrian Army against ISIS in Northern Syria through operations such as the *Euphrates Shield*<sup>4</sup> and *Olive Branch*<sup>5</sup>. From the beginning of the conflict in Syria, the underlying agenda has been constructed from a natural security and territorial integrity perspective in which Turkey is opposed to any post-war settlement that would attempt to grant territorial autonomy to the Kurds in Northern Syria because this would threaten Turkish territorial sovereignty.

<sup>4</sup> OES was launched on August 24, 2016 to establish border security; to push DAESH away from the border line and prevent DAESH attacks particularly against border provinces); and to block the YPG/PKK, a PKK offspring in Syria, from carving out a corridor by taking control of the east-west line in the north of Syria.

<sup>5</sup> On January 20, 2018, Turkey, in cooperation with the Free Syrian Army (FSA), launched Operation Olive Branch with the stated aim of eliminating the PYD/PKK and Daesh terrorist presence in Syria's northern Afrin district.



**Figure 3.** Spheres of influence in Syria

Source: *Institute for the Study of War, 2019*

Russia's backing of the Bashar Assad regime is purely anchored on its Middle Eastern interests. By giving the Assad government military assistance in the form of troops, weapons, airstrikes, and diplomatic support at the United Nations, Russia has been providing lifeline support to the government of Syria as it seeks to maintain influence in the region covertly through the Assad administration. Syria is key to Russia as it holds its military base in Latakia and another naval base in Tartus port (Bodansky, 2016). Iran has also been a key ally of Assad by sharing key intelligence and providing military aid to the Syrian government and military training to government forces to counter the Syrian opposition forces and ISIS (Allison, 2013). For Iran, Syria is a key ally against Israel and Saudi Arabia, and even more importantly, Syria acts as a key partner by providing support to Hezbollah, which counters Israel in Lebanon.

Since the civil war began, Turkey has also been the host of over 4 million Syrian refugees. Even though the public opinion on Turkish government support of Syrian refugees was high during the earlier years of conflict, Syrian refugees have become a politicised issue in Turkey with the government coming under intense pressure and criticism to change its Syrian policy. Economic problems characterised by high unemployment rates, financial crisis (weakening of the lira), and high rates of inflation have increased anti-refugee sentiments in the country. Consequently, the refugee crisis in Turkey, as well as the differences in agendas pursued by both Russia and the US which do not align with the interests of Turkey, have influenced the government to formulate a unilateral foreign policy in Syria characterised by conducting military operations in strategic areas such as Afrin and Manbij against ISIS, PKK, and YPG.

## 2. The Qatar Crisis and Gulf Relations

Following the Qatar Crisis, tensions have been rife within the Arabian Peninsula. The tough stance taken by the Saudi-led coalition to Qatar is due to the allegations that Qatar has been supporting terrorist groups, warming up to Iran, and spreading propaganda through the Al-Jazeera broadcasting agency. When Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt cut their diplomatic ties with Qatar, Turkey voiced regrets to the Gulf countries and advocated for resolving thorny issues through dialogue and negotiations. Turkey also expressed willingness to contribute to solving the crisis through mediation because it was concerned with the stability of the Gulf region particular that of Qatar which is one of the leading foreign direct investment country in Turkey (Manyuan, 2018).

Notably, whereas the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt maintain tense relations with Turkey, other states in the Gulf such as Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait view Turkey as a logical and responsible partner. During the crisis, Turkey condemned sanctions and measures taken by the three Gulf countries against Qatar as unacceptable and “inhumane”, and President Erdoğan was quoted equating the sanctions against Qatar with the “death penalty” (Al-monitor, 2017). Turkey reiterated a commitment to strengthening and developing relations with Qatar. This commitment benefited Qatar by providing Turkish economic support in the form of food supplies to address emerging shortages in the Qatari markets. Additionally, on June 8, 2016, parliament ratified an agreement paving the way for the deployment of Turkish troops to Qatar. The breakdown of bilateral ties between Turkey and UAE was several reasons such as the continuous criticisms of Turkey by UAE for creating a buffer zone in North-Eastern Syria; Ankara's support for Qatar; competing interests in the Horn of Africa (Somalia); and, Ankara's close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, which is deemed as threatening to the status quo in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, and Bahrain (Ramadan, 2011). The failed attempt by Turkey to mediate in the Gulf crisis became just another case that demonstrates its fading influence in Middle East geopolitics.

Turkey's decision to support Qatar during this crisis at the expense of the Saudi-led coalition was not just out of “brotherly solidarity” but because of the significance of Qatar to Turkey in the region. First, the sanctions and embargo placed on Qatar could potentially have an extensive negative impact of the economy of Qatar and thereby reduce Qatari investments in Turkey. The investment of Qataris is estimated at more than USD 20 billion and is spread across agricultural, tourism, real estate, and banking sectors. Secondly, Qatar is considered a close ally by Turkey because of their bilateral foreign policy approaches in the region, as evidenced in the Syria conflict, Iraq, Libya, and their support for movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. This article argues that the emergence of the Qatar crisis influenced the establishment of a Turkey-Iran-Qatar alliance in the region to counter the Saudi Arabia-UAE-Egypt alliance in the Middle East geopolitics. Secondly, this crisis has intensified efforts by Turkey to restore and strengthen bilateral ties with other Gulf states such as Kuwait to restore good relations in the region.

### 3. The Kurdish Question and PKK Counterterrorism

The Kurdish question has been one of the critical issues plaguing the Turkish government for several decades (Bacik *et al.*, 2011). However, despite earlier efforts by the Turkish government to use soft power policies in an attempt to address the Kurdish question (*Çözüm süreci*) the government has gradually shifted from this approach and increasingly adopted hard power and a hard-line political stance towards the Kurds, especially across the Turkish territory. The 25 September 2017 referendum regarding the autonomy of the Iraqi Kurdistan (Kurdish Regional Government) was vehemently opposed by Turkey as unlawful and unacceptable (Kaya *et al.*, 2017; Park *et al.*, 2017).

As a response to the independence referendum by Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey announced countermeasures such as imposing military, political, and economic sanctions not limited to blocking the transit of KRG oil going through Turkey and threatening to use force if the security of the Turkmen in Kurdistan is threatened (Reuters, 25 September 2017). Additionally, Turkey increased its diplomatic relations with both Iraq and Iran to isolate the Kurdish Regional Government (Hürriyet Daily News, 29 April 2019). However, with the geopolitics in the Middle East undergoing constant and rapid changes, the relations between the Kurdish Regional Government and Turkey have improved as Turkey has shifted focus to countering the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) within Turkey, Syria and northern Iraq. Over time, Turkey has transformed its stance towards the KRG from an antagonist to Turkish ally against the PKK. During its military offensive dubbed ‘Operation Claw,’ Turkey deployed military hardware such as drones, armoured vehicles, jets and helicopters in the northern regions of Iraq in its war against the PKK and YPG. Addressing the Kurdish question has therefore seen Turkey resort to hard power policies in its approach to the Middle East geopolitics as it attempts to safeguard existing and pursue new national interests.

Prior to 2015, Turkey enjoyed presumable a significant level of moral legitimacy across the Middle East. Its inclusive approach and good relations with actors in the region positioned Turkey as a leading mediator. However, in pursuing a reformed but characteristically confident and ambitious foreign policy in the region, Turkey has experienced weakened ties or increasingly strained relations with countries such as United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Syria, Egypt, Bahrain, and Iran. Turkey's policy in the region has also put it at loggerheads with other big powers such as the US which has responded with threats of sanctions. Specifically, the decision by Ankara to purchase the Russian manufactured S-400 missile defense system



against NATO policies and diplomatic warnings by Washington have resulted in Turkey being subjected to several sanctions including being expelled from the F-35 fighter jet development program. With regard to Russia, there have been strained diplomatic relations between Moscow and Ankara. Despite the existence of economic ties between the two traditional foes such as the S-400, the gas pipeline from Russia through Turkey to Europe, and tourism, political relations are becoming more strained.

Both the Russian and Syrian regime forces conducted offensive military campaigns against rebels and Islamists in Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama provinces in northwest Syria, despite emphatic calls from Turkey against such an attack in cognisance with a bilateral truce between Russia and Turkey to set up a demilitarised zone in Syria in September 2018. The essence of the demilitarised zone for Turkey was to hold off terrorist groups such as the PKK and YPG, extend the 'safe areas' along the Turkish border with Syria and deter another refugee influx into Turkey which has become a hotly contested domestic political agenda.

The involvement of Turkey through an assertive foreign policy in the Middle East has been because of different objectives. In Iraq and Syria, Turkey has been pursuing terrorist groups which threaten its national security and territorial integrity. In Libya, the primary objective has been to secure its maritime boundary agreement in the Mediterranean- which has also sparked tensions with the European Union. In the Eastern Mediterranean, the policy is unlike that of other regions. The position of Turkey in the area is not a government policy but rather a state foreign policy. In other words, Turkey's position with regard to the Eastern Mediterranean has not changed. It has been the same before President Erdoğan came to power, it has remained so during his presidency, and is likely to continue given the bipartisan support it has attracted as a state policy.

The independent foreign policy pursued by the Turkish government has not only cooled relations between Washington and Brussels, but it has also failed to win new allies for Turkey. Indeed, aside from Qatar, Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Libya's UN-backed Government of National Accord, it is difficult to identify other close allies. Even though Turkey's military exploits in Syria, Libya, Azerbaijan and Iraq can be hailed as having been successful, it risks becoming overstretched. Nonetheless, this article argues that even though Turkey's time in Syria may be limited given that the Assad regime backed by Russia is focused on regaining full control of the entire country, the government will continue to pursue its assertive foreign policy in the region. This is because the regional dynamics have a direct impact on Turkey's domestic politics in the sense that it exacerbates the narrative that Turkey is under a siege of an international coalition threatening its interests and therefore, strong and decisive leadership is needed to overcome the challenges.

## **Conclusion**

The Syrian crisis, which has been at the centre of Middle East geopolitics since 2011, has yielded both positive and negative results for Turkey. Through the assertive and independent foreign policy, Turkey has been able to create a safe zone where it intends to relocate the 4 million refugees and undermine the YPG which it deems a threat to its national security. On the other hand, waning relations between Ankara and its traditional Western allies have limited Turkey's capacity to challenge any aggressive Russian influence in the region. Perhaps given the tensed geopolitical dynamics over the last few years and the advent of Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative for Turkey to make a tactical retreat to re-evaluate and balance its hard-power and soft power capabilities; establish a low-profile attitude in the region, and focus on addressing domestic political and economic challenges. Having elections in 2023 can be said to be very timely for the government to reassess its domestic and foreign policies. The performance of opposition in the March 2019 municipal elections in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir is indeed a reflection of growing dissatisfaction with the government policy on both domestic and foreign fronts. Increasingly, the government has come under intense pressure from the deteriorating economic conditions worsened by Covid-19. Since 2017, the Turkish lira has lost almost 90 per cent of its value, and Central Bank reserves have been exhausted during the several attempts by the government to support the Turkish lira. Therefore, a strategic reassessment of Turkey's foreign policy may prove critical for the country moving forward.

However, this article is also alive to the fact that given the government's preference of 'quick wins', it is very likely that the assertive foreign policy stance will be continuously exploited in the short-term as the best tool to galvanise domestic political support for the government or better, prevent further decline of existing support. The volatility of Middle East has offered Turkey the opportunity to either achieve quick military wins or engage in confrontations- both of which serve to advance the image of a transformative government

that has elevated the country to a position of regional hegemon. One anchoring assumption of this assertive foreign policy stance by the government is that despite several verbal condemnations that may be levied against Turkey by the international community, in particular EU and US, not much can be done practically to undermine Turkey in the region. However, the EU led by France is increasingly manifesting the regions disapproval of Turkey's unilateral decisions while the election of Joe Biden signals the end of cordial Erdoğan-Trump relations and the beginning of a hardened US policy towards Turkey. Regardless of the basis and objective upon which each and every Turkish foreign policy decision has been taken towards the Middle East over the last decade, the result is that Turkey has found itself surrounded by antagonistic states (Syria, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Iraq) and very unreliable partners (Russia). With regard to these regional dynamics and the disengagement with traditional Western allies, it is plausible to argue that Turkey is increasingly facing isolation. Perhaps the ongoing strengthening of the Turkish defence industry that has seen Turkey begin to develop its own helicopters (T129 ATAK) ballistic missiles (BORA), high-tech military drones, armoured personnel carriers (Kirpi), indigenous submarines, frigates, corvettes (Ada class corvettes), and cruise missiles is perhaps an acknowledgement that its increasing isolation can only be mitigated by self-reliance on security.

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# Foreign Direct Investment, Gross Domestic Product, and Export Nexus in Turkey: Autoregressive Distributed Lag Bounds Model and Granger Causality Approach

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Autoregressive Distributed Lag Bounds Model (ARDL), Granger Causality, Export, FDI, GDP

The relationship among the FDI, GDP and Export has gained vast attention among the researchers and policy-makers. There are many studies on the interaction of these variables using various econometric approaches in the literature. However, it has been seen that the findings have been different from country by country. Therefore, this study's main problematic is to estimate the coefficients that show the interaction among the FDI, GDP and Export covering 1980-2019 in Turkey. The ARDL Bounds Model and Granger Causality approach were selected to measure the coefficients statistically. Three models were executed to calculate the short-run and long-run coefficients. While the Model 1 and Model 3 were found statistically significant to explain the dependent variables, the Model 2 was found statistically insignificant. Because of this, the Model 2 was excluded from the study. The short-run coefficients were also found statistically significant to explain the dependent variables of the Model 1 and Model 3. While GDP affects the FDI positively in Model 1, GDP affects the Export negatively in Model 2. The ECT was found statistically significant at 0.01. The speeds of adjustment of the Model 1 and Model 3 were calculated as approximately 93% and 16% levels, respectively. Unlike the ARDL Bounds Model, the Granger Causality test was implemented to measure the variables' causal relationship. It was seen that there is only a unidirectional Granger causal relationship running from GDP to FDI in the Model 1 and from GDP to Export in the Model 2.

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## Introduction

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Export, to some extent, affect the economic growth and development such as investment, physical equipment, technology, human capital, knowledge spillovers. As it is known that the Less Developed Countries are in the permanent lack of convertible external saving which can be used as a payment tool in international trade. Even if domestic saving is sufficient in the internal market, they need to have convertible external saving to import the items used in their production process. In order to eliminate this problem, if the lending, grant and humanitarian aid are ignored, the most preferred options of the countries are attracting the FDI into the domestic economy and increasing export revenues from the international trade.

In the classical growth model, the capital should move from the developed countries to the less developed countries because of the diminishing returns of capital. However, FDI goes largely to the developed countries and markets with high GDP. This situation is called as “*Lucas Puzzle*” in economic theory (Lucas, 1990). In the neoclassical growth model (Solow, 1956); (Romer, 1988), economic growth is broadly based on capital accumulation and total factor productivity. In this context, FDI can be seen as a substantial source of capital accumulation which complements the growth efforts in the country.

Domestic companies have much more information and access opportunities for the domestic market. If a foreign firm decides to enter the domestic market, it has to compensate for the advantages of domestic companies. For this reason, foreign companies have to get lower cost and high efficiency to eliminate this unwanted situation. Because of this, The FDI is generally accepted as more efficient than domestic investments. Nevertheless, it is difficult to attract FDI into the domestic economy. There are many factors affecting FDI inflows such as infrastructure, the regime type, the rule of law, political stability, the quality of labour force, effective tax and wage rates, etc. The market size is accepted as the most determining factor when comparing to the others. The variable representing the market size is the GDP level. The GDP affects both FDI inflows and Export simultaneously.

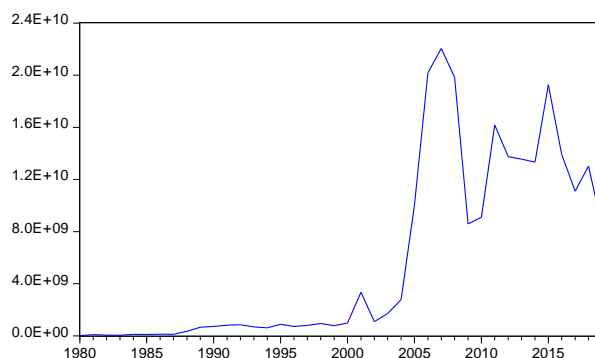
It should not be forgotten that the most reasonable form to eliminate the external saving gap is to get export revenues from foreign trade transactions. Moreover, the export revenues depend on the productivity and efficiency levels of the economy. If the policies on FDI are formed as the necessities of the host economy, FDI can affect the competition power of the host economy via increasing productivity and efficiency levels. So, the study's main problematic is to estimate the coefficients that show the interaction among FDI, GDP and Export by using Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) Bounds Model and Granger Causality test for Turkey covering 1980-2019.

## 1. Factsheets

It can be stated that FDI is one of the most crucial instruments to strengthen the competitive power of the host countries by improving the efficiency and productivity of the domestic economy against the international economic powers.

The FDI inflows into Turkey over the period of 1990-2000 remained stable at a low level. After the 2000 Crisis, The FDI inflows into Turkey have increased gradually. Applied economic policies transform the Turkish Economy more open to foreign competition in this period. It is possible to say that FDI inflows reached the highest level in the period of 2006-2008. Although encouraging economic policies have been implemented, it can be stated that Turkey has failed to attract the FDI sufficiently. Essentially, Turkey is actually quite a good position in attracting FDI into the domestic market. However, when considering Turkey's economic potential and geostrategic position, it can not be said that Turkey is very successful for attracting FDI. In this process, it is necessary to say that Turkey has been subjected to the political obstacles unrelated to the economic truths as well. The FDI Inflows into Turkey is displayed in a figure as follows:

FDI Inflows (1980-2019, US\$)



There is approximately \$1.5 trillion of FDI circulated throughout the World in 2019. More than half of FDI (51.9%) went to the developed countries and markets with high GDP level. It is seen the same tendency in country data as well (USA-\$246 billion, China-\$141 billion, Singapore-\$92 billion, Netherlands-\$84 billion,

United Kingdom-\$64 billion). Turkey attracted approximately \$8.4 billion of FDI into the domestic market at the same year, equal to 0.5% in total. FDI inflows by groups of economies in 2019 are as follows:

#### FDI Inflows by Groups of Economies, 2019

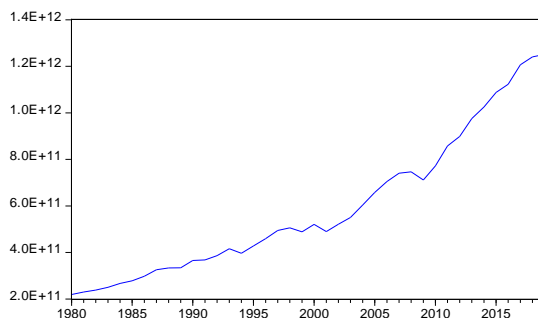
Group of Economies	FDI Inflows (millions, \$)	(%)
Developed Countries	800.239	51,9
Developing Countries	684.723	44,5
Less Developed Countries	21.147	1,4
Others	33.771	2,2
The World	1.539.880	100

UNCTAD World Investment Report 2020, page: 8

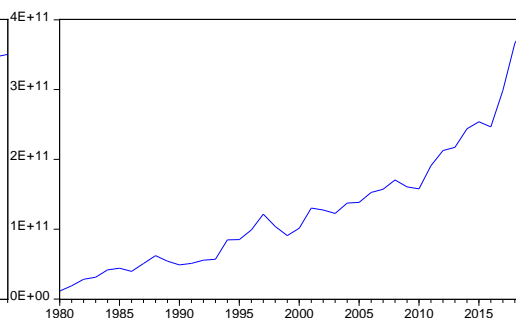
As seen from the table that if a country is developed, it attracts more FDI into the domestic economy. Therefore, it can be said that one of the most critical indicators affecting the FDI movements is the market size, which is measured in terms of GDP. The structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies with limited market size have been subjected to insufficient FDI inflows to eliminate the saving gaps.

According to the World Bank and IMF data, Turkey's GDP in 2019 is worth 754.412 billion dollars, which corresponds to the 0.63 per cent of the world economy. While Turkey is the 17th largest economy in the World in GDP at current prices in 2019, it is the 13th largest economy regarding the GDP, calculated by the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). GDP (PPP) in Turkey is 2.325,617 million of international dollars in 2019. Besides this, Turkey is the 6th largest economy in rankings of the same year compared to the EU countries. As seen from Figure A, the Turkish economy has remarkably performed well since the 2000 Economic Crises. The average growth rate of this period is approximately 5 per cent level. The visible improvements in the Turkish Economy have also triggered foreign trade positively. Figure B shows the export performance of Turkey. The export performance of Turkey is approximately worth 180 billion dollars in 2019. 31.6% of GDP was exported to the foreign markets in the same year. According to the World Bank's official data, Turkey is the 26<sup>th</sup> in the rankings of World export in 2019. GDP (constant, 2010, US\$) and Export (constant, 2010, US\$) in Turkey are shown in figures as follows:

**Figure A) GDP (constant, US\$)**



**Figure B) Export (Constant, US\$)**



## 2. Literature

There has been a spate of research in literature deriving the econometric relationship among FDI, GDP and Export. The various methods have been used so as to estimate these interactions. According to the results of the selected studies, it can be stated that the results of the studies are inconclusive.



Afzal and Khan (2017) used the ARDL Bounds Model to investigate the impacts of Export on Economic Growth for Pakistan over the period of 1972-2014. In this study, Export, Import, CPI and Terms of Trade were selected as independent variables to explain the dependent variable, GDP. The results showed that while Import, CPI and Terms of Trade negatively affect economic growth, Export has a positive impact on Economic Growth. Bellouni (2014) used the ARDL Bounds Model, Granger Causality and Cusum test to estimate the dynamic relationships between Labor, Trade Openness, FDI, Capital Investment and Economic Growth in Tunisia covering 1970-2008. The results show that Trade Openness and Economic Growth promote FDI in the long-run. There is no significant Granger causal effect from FDI to Economic Growth and vice versa. In addition to this, there is no Granger causal effect from Trade Openness to Economic Growth in the short-run and vice versa. Modou and Liu (2017) examined the interactions between FDI, Trade Openness and Economic Growth in 13 West African Countries from 1980 to 2015. They used Fully Modified Ordinary Least Squares (FMOLS) method to estimate the relationships. The outcomes of the model show that Trade Openness and FDI affect Economic Growth positively.

Kalai and Zghidi (2017) analyzed the relationship between FDI, International Trade, and Economic Growth using ARDL Bounds Model and VECM approach for the 15 selected Middle Eastern and North African Countries (MENA) covering 1999-2012. The findings show that there is a long-run unidirectional relationship from FDI to Economic Growth in MENA countries. In addition to this, there is also found that the FDI can generate positive spillover externalities for these countries. Aqeel and Nishat (2014) identified the determinants of FDI growth in Pakistan for the period 1961-2003. Tariff Rate, Exchange Rate, Tax Rate, Credit to Private Sector and Index of General Share Price variables were used to the estimation. The Ordinary Least Squares, Cointegration and Error Correction Technique (ECT) were used for the estimation. The variables affect both FDI inflows and Economic Growth positively in both short-run and long-run in Pakistan. Borensztein *et al.* (1998) tested the effect of FDI on Economic Growth using a cross-country Seemingly Unrelated Regression-SUR for 69 developing countries covering 1970-1979 and 1980-1989. The study suggests that FDI is an important vehicle to transfer the technology from abroad to the internal economy. Bouchoucha and Ali (2019) attempted to examine the impacts of FDI on Economic Growth in Tunisia using ARDL Bounds Model for the period from 1980 to 2015. The findings show that FDI has a positive impact on Economic Growth in Tunisia in both the short-run and long-run. Domestic Investment and Human Capital also have positive effects on Economic Growth in the same period. The degree of Trade Openness has a negative effect on Economic Growth in both the short-run and long-run. Zubaudi *et al.* (2007) investigated the role of FDI on Economic Growth in Malaysia by using ARDL Bounds Model covering 1970-2004. The findings show that Domestic Capital Formation, FDI, Human Capital, and Financial Deepening positively affect the Economic Growth. Carbonnel and Werner (2018) analyzed the link between Economic Growth and FDI by using ARDL Bounds Model, Pairwise Granger Causality, Two-stage OLS and GETS (General to Specific) tests covering 1984-2010 for Spain. FDI, Credit, Bank Lending, International Commodities Index, Total GDP of G7, EUR/DM Exchange Rate, EUR/USD Exchange Rate, Employed Spanish Population, Educational Level of Employed Population, M1, M2 and Spanish Overnight Interest Rates were determined as the variables of the study. It was found that there is no causal relationship from FDI to Economic Growth.

Goah and Sam (2017) examined the long-run relationship among the FDI, Export and GDP in selected Asian economies using the bootstrap ARDL Bounds Model and Granger Causality tests. The tests failed to find the existence of cointegration when GDP is taken as a dependent variable. According to the findings, the FDI and Export are not the sole sources of economic growth in India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, China and Hong Kong. It was also found from the Granger Causality test that GDP affects the FDI inflows positively. Canal-Fernandez (2018) examined the relationship between FDI, Export and Economic Growth in Spain by using ARDL Bounds Model for 1970-2016. The ECM and VECM were determined as the estimation methods. The results show that there is a long-run relationship between the variables. There is a strong unidirectional causal relation from FDI to Export. In addition to this, there is no causal relationship from FDI to Economic Growth and vice versa. Dritsaki and Stiakakis (2014) investigated the relationship between Export, FDI and Economic Growth in Croatia using annual time series data for 1994-2012. The ARDL Bounds Model and ECM-ARDL model were determined as the estimation. The results show that there is a bidirectional short-run and long-run relationship between Export and Economic Growth. Anshul (2013) examined the dynamic causal relationship among Economic Growth, FDI, Trade and Capital Stocks covering 1970-2012 using the ARDL Bounds Model, Granger Causality and Cusum test for India. The findings show that the Capital Investment and FDI promote the Economic Growth in the long-run, and there is no Granger causal effect from FDI to Capital Investment and vice versa. Etale and Etale (2016) examined the relationship between Export, FDI and Economic Growth using Johansen

cointegration and VECM tests covering 1980-2013 in Malaysia. The findings show that there is a significant bidirectional relationship between FDI inflows and GDP. Sultanuzzaman *et al.* (2018) examined the short-run and long-run relationship among FDI inflows, Export and Economic Growth using ARDL Bounds Model in Sri Lanka covering 1980-2016. The study showed that FDI inflows affect Economic Growth positively in both the short-run and long-run. However, Export has a negative effect on economic growth in the short-run and long-run. If Export increase, The GDP growth will decrease. Khan (2020) analyzed the relationship between FDI inflows and Economic Growth using the ARDL Bounds Model and Granger causality tests covering 1972-2017 in Bangladesh. The ARDL Bounds Model reached a long-run relationship between variables. Besides this, there is a unidirectional Granger causal relationship from GDP to FDI. Klasna (2019) examined the relationship between FDI, Trade Openness and Economic Growth using the ARDL Bounds Model covering 1975-2004 in Pakistan and Turkey.

The results indicated that there is a bidirectional relationship between Trade Openness and Export for Pakistan. Moreover, there is also found a bidirectional relationship between FDI and Export for Turkey. Shimul *et al.* (2009) examined the relationship between FDI and GDP in Bangladesh by using the ARDL Bounds Model and Engle-Granger two-step tests over the period 1973-2007. The results show that there is no cointegration between the variables. The FDI and Openness have no causal effect on GDP. Shahid and Pentecost (2007) examined the determinants of FDI inflows using the ARDL Bounds Model the period 1973-2004 for Pakistan. The results show that GDP is the main determinant to attract FDI into the domestic economy in the long-run. The political risk is the other factor affecting FDI inflows in the short-run for Pakistan as well. Gudaro *et al.* (2012) analyzed the relationship among GDP, FDI, and CPI using the Multiple Regression Model covering 1981-2010 in Pakistan. According to the findings of the model, FDI has a positive effect on GDP. Uwubanmiran and Ogiemudia (2016) examined the effects of FDI on Economic Growth by using ECM in both short-run and long-run in Nigeria. The time-series data cover the period 1979-2013. The study revealed that FDI affects the economy in the short-run and has a non-significant negative effect in the long-run. According to the Granger Causality test, FDI has a significant positive effect on Economic Growth in Nigeria. Nguyen (2017) examined the long-run effect of FDI and Export on the Economic Growth in Vietnam for 1986-2015. The ARDL Bounds Model and ECM were implemented to the estimation. The study shows that FDI is an important factor affecting Economic Growth positively, while Export negatively affects economic growth.

### 3. Data and Methodology

#### 3.1. Data

This paper used annual time series data on FDI (net inflows, BoP, constant, 2010, US\$), GDP (constant, 2010, US\$) and Export (constant, 2010 US\$) covering the period of 1990-2018. FDI and Export variables were deflated by the GDP deflator, which was constructed specifically for this prediction. The variables were also expressed in natural logarithm levels as LNFDI, LNGDP and LNX. The data were taken from the World Development Indicators (WDI) released from the World Bank. In this paper, the ARDL Bounds Model and Granger Causality approach were used for the estimation.

#### 3.2. Methodology

- **Unit Root Test**

Many studies on time series require the stationarity tests to transform the data to be stable. If a time series is stationary, the mean, variance and covariance of the series do not vary in the time process. Essentially, there are several tests used to determine the stationary in practice. In this paper, the stationary was measured by the applying Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) and Phillips-Perron (PP) tests. In these tests, if the critical value is lower than the estimated value, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the series is accepted as stationary.

**Table 1****Unit Root Tests**

<b>Intercept</b>				<b>Trend Intercept and</b>			
<b>ADF (Level)</b>	<b>ADF (1st Dif.)</b>	<b>PP (Level)</b>	<b>PP (1st Dif.)</b>	<b>ADF (Level)</b>	<b>ADF (1st Dif.)</b>	<b>PP (Level)</b>	<b>PP (1st Dif.)</b>
-2.4774 (0.1286)	-8.0229*** (0.0000)	-2.6425 (0.0934)	-12.1251*** (0.0000)	-3.9203*** (0.0205)	-18.9165 (0.0000)	-3.9529*** (0.0189)	-18.9165 (0.0000)
-1.0695 (0.7181)	-5.5982*** (0.0000)	-1.1182 (0.6990)	-5.6069*** (0.0000)	-1.2227 (0.8917)	-5.5988*** (0.0003)	-1.6580 (0.7507)	-5.5914*** (0.0003)
-2.6194 (0.0977)	-5.8287*** (0.0000)	-2.5778 (0.1061)	-6.2131*** (0.0000)	-5.6704*** (0.0002)	-5.7309 (0.0002)	-5.7309*** (0.0002)	-6.0147 (0.0001)

(\*\*\*); stationary of the variable at 0.01 level; values in brackets are the probability values of the variables.

As seen from Table 1, in the “Model with Intercept”, FDI, GDP and Export were found stationary at 1<sup>st</sup> difference at 0.01 in both ADF and PP tests. In the “Model with Trend and Intercept”, while FDI and Export were found stationary at level in ADF, GDP was found stationary at 1<sup>st</sup> difference. In PP test, the results are similar to the ADF test. While FDI and Export were found stationary at level, GDP was found stationary at 1<sup>st</sup> difference. Schwarz Information Criteria (SIC) was used to determine the optimal lag orders for all variables as well.

- ARDL Bounds Model**

The ARDL Bounds Model is developed by Peseran *et al.* (2001). The model examines the short-run and long-run effects of variables empirically. It is accepted that the ARDL Bounds Model possesses some advantages comparing to the other cointegration tests such as Engle-Granger, Johansen and Johansen-Juselius. Working more efficiently in the small size of data, unbiased estimate in the long-run, and not requiring the same order integration of variables have been accepted the chief advantages of this model.

The ARDL Bounds Model involves two steps. The first step is the estimation of the existence of the long-run relationship, and the second step is the estimation of the short-run relationship by using error correction regression.

$$\text{Model1: } \Delta \ln fdi_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \sum_{i=1}^n \Delta \ln fdi_{t-i} + \beta_2 \sum_{i=0}^n \Delta \ln gdp_{t-i} + \beta_3 \sum_{i=0}^n \Delta \ln x_{t-i} + \beta_4 \ln fdi_{t-1} + \beta_5 \ln gdp_{t-1} + \beta_6 \ln x_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

$$\text{Model2: } \Delta \ln gdp_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \sum_{i=1}^n \Delta \ln gdp_{t-i} + \beta_2 \sum_{i=0}^n \Delta \ln fdi_{t-i} + \beta_3 \sum_{i=0}^n \Delta \ln x_{t-i} + \beta_4 \ln gdp_{t-1} + \beta_5 \ln fdi_{t-1} + \beta_6 \ln x_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

$$\text{Model3: } \Delta \ln x_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \sum_{i=1}^n \Delta \ln x_{t-i} + \beta_2 \sum_{i=0}^n \Delta \ln gdp_{t-i} + \beta_3 \sum_{i=0}^n \Delta \ln fdi_{t-i} + \beta_4 \ln x_{t-1} + \beta_5 \ln gdp_{t-1} + \beta_6 \ln fdi_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$$

Hypotheses of the models are shown as follows:

$$H_0 : \beta_4 = \beta_5 = \beta_6 = 0 \text{ (Cointegration does not exist.)}$$

$$H_1 : \beta_4 \neq \beta_5 \neq \beta_6 \neq 0 \text{ (Cointegration exists.)}$$

**Table 2****The Results of the ARDL Bounds Model**

<b>Model</b>	<b>f-bounds test ( Value)</b>	<b>f- statistics ( Significant)</b>	<b>finite sample: n=40</b>	
			<b>I(0)</b>	<b>I(1)</b>
<b>Model 1</b>	9.360277	10%	3.373	4.377
		5%	4.133	5.26
		1%	5.893	7.337
<b>Model 2</b>	1.946795	10%	3.373	4.377
		5%	4.133	5.26
		1%	5.893	7.337
<b>Model 3</b>	4.762506	10%	3.373	4.377
		5%	4.133	5.26
		1%	5.893	7.337

There were three models created in the ARDL Bounds Model. The models can be expressed as follows:

$$\text{Model1: } \ln fdi_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \sum_{i=1}^p \ln fdi_{t-i} + \alpha_2 \sum_{i=0}^r \ln gdp_{t-i} + \alpha_3 \sum_{i=0}^s \ln x_{t-i} + u_t$$

$$\text{Model2: } \ln gdp_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \sum_{i=1}^p \ln gdp_{t-i} + \alpha_2 \sum_{i=0}^r \ln fdi_{t-i} + \alpha_3 \sum_{i=0}^s \ln x_{t-i} + u_t$$

$$\text{Model3: } \ln x_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \sum_{i=1}^p \ln x_{t-i} + \alpha_2 \sum_{i=0}^r \ln gdp_{t-i} + \alpha_3 \sum_{i=0}^s \ln fdi_{t-i} + u_t$$

The ARDL Bounds Model unveils long-run associations between variables. In the guideline, if the f-value exceeds the critical value's upper bounds, there is cointegration between variables in the long-run. It means that all variable move together in the long-run as well. If the f-value is between upper and lower bounds levels, it can not be said something to explain the long-run associations. This interval is called as the area of uncertainty. If the f-value is under the lower bound levels, there is no relationship between variables in the long-run.

The f-value of *Model 1* was measured as 9.360277. It is higher than the upper bounds values at 0.01, 0.05 and 0.10 levels. It means that there is a long-run associations between variables which are FDI, GDP and Export. They are all cointegrated and move together in the long-run. The f-value of *Model 2* was measured as 1.946795. It is smaller than the upper bounds of the model at 0.01, 0.05 and 0.10 levels. It means that there is no long-run associations between variables. The variables are not cointegrated in the long-run. They do not move together as well. The f-value of *Model 3* was measured as 4.762506. It is higher than upper bounds levels only at 0.10 (4.762506 > 4.377). It means that the model is significant at 0.10. There is a long-run associations between the variables at this level. All variables are cointegrated and move together in the long-run.

**Table 3****The Long-run Coefficients of the Models**

Model	Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-statistics	Prob.
<b>D(LNFDI)</b>	LNGDP	0.459066	0.620558	0.739764	0.4656
	LNFX	1.508139	0.431773	3.492894	0.0016(***)
<b>D(LNGDP)</b>	LNFDI	0.377709	0.244067	1.547765	0.1310
	LNFX	-0.476949	0.590862	-0.807208	0.4252
<b>D(LNFX)</b>	LNGDP	0.004950	0.553277	0.008946	0.9929
	LNFDI	0.317256	0.183951	1.724680	0.0937(*)

(\*\*\*), (\*\*), (\*); significance at 0.01, 0.05 and 0.10 levels, respectively

The coefficient of GDP was found as statistically insignificant to explain the dependent variable of FDI in *Model 1*. It means that there is no long-run relationship between GDP and FDI statistically. The coefficient of Export of *the Model 1* was found as positive and statistically significant at 0.10. It means that there is a long-run relationship between Export and FDI. The GDP coefficient of *Model 3* was found statistically insignificant, which means that there is no long-run relationship between GDP and Export. FDI coefficient of the *Model 3* is statistically significant at 0.10. It shows the long-run relationship between FDI and GDP. The *Model 2* had been excluded from the paper, because of the f-value of the model was found lower than the upper bounds values.

- Error Correction Model**

The ECM is used to eliminate the imbalance between the short-run and long-run relationships in time series analysis and test the short-run and long-run causalities between cointegrated variables. The models are shown as follows:

$$\text{Model1: } \Delta \ln fdi_t = \gamma_0 + \alpha \gamma_1 U_{t-1} + \gamma_2 \sum_{i=1}^p \Delta \ln fdi_{t-i} + \gamma_3 \sum_{i=0}^r \Delta \ln gdp_{t-i} + \gamma_4 \sum_{i=0}^s \Delta \ln x_{t-i} + \mu_t$$

$$\text{Model3: } \Delta \ln x_t = \gamma_0 + \alpha \gamma_1 U_{t-1} + \gamma_2 \sum_{i=1}^p \Delta \ln x_{t-i} + \gamma_3 \sum_{i=0}^r \Delta \ln fdi_{t-i} + \gamma_4 \sum_{i=0}^s \Delta \ln gdp_{t-i} + \mu_t$$

**Table 4**

The Short-run Coefficients of the Models (Unrestricted Constant and No Trend)

Model	Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-stat.	Prob.
<b>Model 1 (FDI)</b>					
	C	-11.67316(***)	2.147194	-5.436470	0.0000
	D(LNGDP)	-0.253723	0.494236	-0.513365	0.6117
	D(LNGDP(1))	0.650340	0.470677	1.381710	0.1780
	D(LNGDP(2))	0.826763	0.480371	1.721093	0.0963
	D(LNGDP(3))	1.828285(***)	0.498237	3.669508	0.0010
	<b>CointEq(-1)</b>	<b>-0.644308(***)</b>	<b>0.117481</b>	<b>-5.485126</b>	<b>0.0000</b>
<b>Model 3 (EXPORT)</b>					
	C	3.014855(***)	0.748896	4.025732	0.0003
	D(LNGDP)	-0.652159(***)	-1.32258	-4.930968	0.0000
	<b>CointEq(-1)</b>	<b>-0.159281(***)</b>	<b>0.040952</b>	<b>-3.889468</b>	<b>0.0004</b>

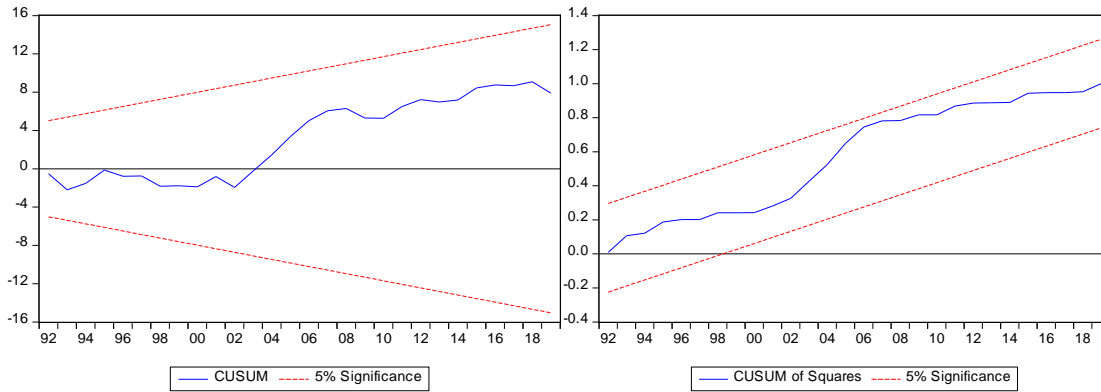
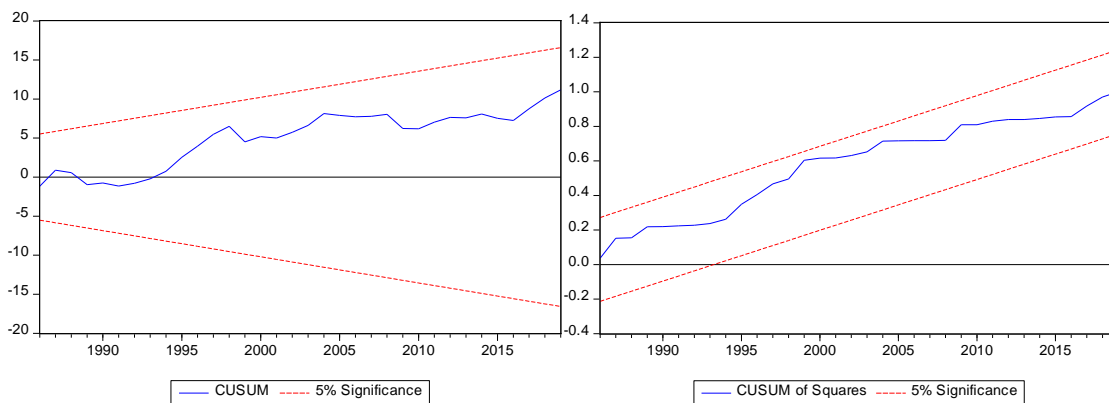
(\*\*\*); significant at 0.01 level

The short-run coefficients of the *Model 1* and *Model 3* were found statistically significant to explain the dependent variables. While it was found a positive relationship between GDP and FDI, it was found a negative relationship between GDP and Export. In the guideline, the coefficient of ECT should be negative and statistically significant. As seen in Table 4, The Error Correction terms of the *Model 1* and *Model 3* are compatible with the guideline. The Error Correction terms were found both negative as -0.644308 and -0.159281, respectively. The coefficients indicate the speeds of adjustment of the models. According to the findings, the systems of the *Model 1* and *Model 3* were adjusted towards the long-run equilibrium approximately at the speeds of 64% and 16% in the corresponding period, respectively. The results also unveil that the Error Correction coefficients show the existence of a stable long-run relationship between the variables. So, all the variables are cointegrated and move together in the long-run.

#### • The Cusum and the Cusum Square Tests

It is accepted that the Cusum and the Cusum Square tests, which can be calculated by the consecutive errors are valid and reliable tests for evaluating the stability of the long-run relationships between the variables. It gives us rough information about whether or not there are breaks in the data set. If there is a break in data set, it can be fixed using the Cusum Square test.

The graphs show the stability of coefficients of the models for the period of 1990-2018. As seen from the graphs, there is no structural break in the long-run. Therefore, it is accepted that both the *Model 1* and *Model 3* are stable concerning the Cusum and the Cusum Square tests displayed as follows respectively:

**Model 1****The Cusum and the Cusum Square Tests****Model 3****The Cusum and the Cusum Square Tests**

- Granger Causality Test**

The study applied to the Granger Causality test to ascertain the causal relationship between variables. The Granger Causality test is a statistical method for investigating information between time series. If the p-values are higher than 0.05, the null hypothesis can not be rejected, which means that there is no Granger causal relationship between variables and vice versa. If the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected, which means that there is a Granger causal relationship between variables and vice versa. The results of the Granger Causality test are as follows:



**Table 5**

The Results of VAR Granger Causality/Block Exogeneity Wald Tests

Model	Chi-Sq.	Prob.
<b>LNFDI</b>		
LNGDP	10.95866(***)	0.0009
LNK	3.212822	0.0731
All	14.20860(***)	0.0008
<b>LNGDP</b>		
LNFDI	2.137327	0.1438
LNK	5.95E-05	0.9938
All	5.398296	0.0673(*)
<b>LNK</b>		
LNFDI	2.099993	0.1473
LNGDP	7.289292(***)	0.0069
All	7.291810	0.0261(**)

(\*\*\*), (\*\*), (\*); significance at 0.01, 0.05, and 0.10 respectively

According to the Granger Causality Test, the p-value of the GDP coefficient in the Model 1 was 0.0009, which is less than 0.05. The lag order was found as 1. It is statistically significant to explain the dependent variable, which is FDI. It means that there is a Granger causal relationship running from GDP to FDI. The p-value of the Model 3 was found as 0.0069, which is less than 0.05. It means that the coefficient of the GDP is statistically significant to explain the dependent variable, which is Export.

## Conclusion

This paper investigated the FDI, GDP and Export nexus in the Turkish Economy covering 1980-2019. The ARDL Bounds Model and Granger Causality test were used to estimate the short-run and long-run relationship between FDI, GDP and Export. Three models were constructed in order to reach the relationship between the variables in both short-run and long-run. According to the findings, the f-value of Model 1 was 9.360277, which is greater than the upper bounds values of the test at all levels. It means all variables are cointegrated and move together in the long-run. Model 2 was dropped from the paper. Because the model was found statistically insignificant, thanks to the fact that the f-value of the model is less than the upper bounds values for all levels. The f-value of the Model 3 was found as 4.762506 and statistically significant only at 0.10.

The long-run coefficients of the models were estimated. According to the findings of Model 1, the probability value of Export coefficient was found as 0.0016. It is statistically significant at 0.01. GDP is not statistically significant to explain the dependent variable. The probability of the coefficient of GDP was found as 0.4656. It is higher than 0.05. As for the Model 3, the long-run coefficient of GDP was found as 0.004950. The probability value of the coefficient is 0.9929. It is higher than 0.05. Therefore, the GDP variable was found statistically insignificant to explain the Export. The coefficient of FDI was found as 0.317256. The probability value of this is 0.0937. So, FDI was found statistically significant to explain Export in the long-run at 0.10.

The short-run coefficients were statistically significant in explaining the dependent variables of the Model 1 and Model 3. According to the result of the Model 1, it was found that the GDP affected FDI positively. So, if the GDP increases, the FDI inflows also will increase. Besides this, it was also found a negative relationship between the GDP and the Export in Model 3. If the GDP increases, the Export will decrease. It was estimated the Error Correction coefficients of the models. The coefficients of the Model 1 and Model 3 were found as -

0.932295 and -0.159281, respectively. The signs of the coefficients are negative and statistically significant at 0.01. According to the guideline, ECT should be negative and statistically significant. In the model, the systems were adjusted towards the long-run equilibrium approximately at the speeds of 93% and 16% respectively.

The Cusum and the Cusum Square tests were carried out to get both models' structural breaks. The findings show that the models are stable, in which there is no structural problem in both models. According to the VAR Granger, Causality/Block Exogeneity Wald test indicated that there are some meaningful unidirectional Granger causal relationships from GDP to FDI and from GDP to Export in Turkey throughout 1980-2019.

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# Power Transition in the South China Sea Challenges for Regional Peace

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Power Transition,  
South China Sea,  
Second Cold War,  
Emerging Super Power,  
Hegemon State,  
Regional peace

The South China Sea is a contested region between China and different smaller states (Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Brunei) of the Asia Pacific region. The United States is acting as a balancer by supporting smaller nations against assertive Chinese policies. Moreover, the United States has a military presence in the region. According to the US, it has a military presence to protect its allies and freedom of navigation. China considers these US designs as a threat to its interest in the region. The United State who was once considered the sole superpower in the world is now challenged by China in the South China Sea. Power Transition theory explains if the emerging superpower does not follow the rules established by the existing superpower then the conflict is inevitable. As China is building artificial islands, it could invite a strong response from the United States that could eventually lead to a major conflict. This Study analyzes the conflict in the South China Sea by using the lens of Power Transition Theory.

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## Introduction

Geographically, the South China Sea is located between Malacca and Karimata straits and the strait of Taiwan (Mehboob, 2018). The region has been permanently remained an element of rivalries for vigilant powers due to the region's enigmatic and baffling nature and hydrocarbon reservoirs. Generally, The United States has always supported free access to the market and freedom of navigation. This US policy is also reflected in the case of the South China Sea (James Dobbins, 2017). Since, the episode of 9/11, the U.S remained preoccupied with the issues in Iraq, Afghanistan Syria, Ukraine, Iran, and North Korea. In that period the Chinese fully enjoyed the expansionist policy in the Asia-Pacific region. Many disputed and artificially constructed islands were put on the Chinese state sovereignty list (Hamzah, 2016). On the contrary, Washington witnessed the lack of policy consistency, firmness, and coherence in containing the Chinese surge in the Asia Pacific (Bouchat, 2017).

The ambiance of despondency reached 'it's' heights when Hillary Clinton, the then Secretary of State gave remarks at ASEAN regional organization, which was convened in Hanoi 2010, embarked on an offensive US strategy regarding the Asia-Pacific region at-large. She stated, "The U.S. supports a collaborative diplomatic process by all claimants for resolving the various territorial disputes without coercion. We oppose the use or threat of force by any claimant" (Chang, 2010). Clearly, the move was intended to give China a strong message. Yang Jiechi, Chinese Foreign Minister, immediately reacted and equates the comments as "an attack on China". President Barak Obama's 'Asia Pivot Policy' 2011, which aimed at containing the Chinese

surge, is the link of the same chain. Since then, in the South China Sea, the U.S has used a huge plethora of carrot and stick to retain and revive Washington's primacy (Bouchat, 2017).

The Incident of "Scarborough Shoal" occurred in 2012, remained a three-month-long standoff between the Philippines and China, completely shifted the South China Sea dynamics (Zappone, 2015). In 2014, the US renegotiated a defense pact (Extended Defense Cooperation Agreement) with Philippine President Benigno Aquino which gave accessibility to five military bases in the latter country in times of emergency. Similarly, in March 2016, U.S openly denounced Chinese claims and deployed naval warships in the South China Sea which includes aircraft carrier John Stennis, two destroyers, and two cruisers. However, the US policy of manifestation of power projection was aimed to challenge the supremacy of the Chinese brown water navy in the Asia Pacific region (Staff, 2016).

Regional tension rises to new heights especially after August 2018, when US armada warships movements in the South China Sea near Japan coast risked Sino-Japanese fury (Pickrell, 2018). The US-Japanese naval exercise which was later joined by the British and France as well in the Asia Pacific region inflamed the new dilemma of the Trade War. The verbal-fight between Mr. Trump and Mr. Xi remained for a while. Resultantly, the U.S placed crippling tariffs of 25 percent worth \$200 billion Chinese goods imports. In response, the Chinese government placed retaliatory tariffs on US goods worth \$60 billion which contain aircraft and liquefied natural gas (Pramuk, 2019).

By and large, the South China Sea prevailing rivalry has much capacity of igniting another Cold War between hegemonic competitors i.e. the United States and China. The South China Sea became a center of attention for the world because it is demanded by a country like China, which is considered the upcoming superpower by many researchers. Many authors are not convinced by the idea that the Cold war is over, but they consider the Cold war is still there. Many authors even maintain that a "second Cold War has been informally started after the end of the first Cold War and this Cold war is being played by the U.S and China" (Mughal, Second Cold War, 2017). In this Cold War, Southeast Asia is considered the epicenter of the emerging Cold War. China is the second-biggest economy solely because of its huge exports and its huge trade is being done via Sea in the backyard. The United States is backing small countries in Southeast Asia for containing the Chinese economic surge which surely will be the next hegemon not only at the regional level but in the international arena as well (Beeson, 2015).

### **Conflicts in the South China Sea**

The South China Sea has been a cause of disagreement between many states for the last sixty years. There are more than one hundred Islets in the South China Sea. The most disputed Islands are Macclesfield bank, Parcels Islands, Scarborough Shoal, Prata Islands, and the Spratly Islands. There are six South Eastern states in the area, which have different claims with historical proofs on these Islands. The skirmish over Paracel and Spratly are protuberant in the 21st century (US-DOD, 2015).

Vietnam, Taiwan, and China have claimed the Paracel Islands. Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, and China are contesting the Spratly Islands and other islets. China Claims that it had dominion over these islands archaeologically, but Vietnam discharges this idea (Goldstein, 2018). China is using a separation line like a U shape rottenly called 9 Dash Line which has triggered all other states near the South China Sea and they started challenging this line. China claims its sovereignty over approximately the whole region of the South China Sea and hoping that it could one day grasp who may transport its busy seaways (sails, 2015). In response, US defense secretary, at the Singapore Summit, Ashton Carter strained to stop seizures of land in the South China Sea by China and other states, China pulls rank it. Carter vowed to withstand US aircraft and warships in the global waters (Benner, 2015).

Philippine presents the reason for proximate to Spratly islands as propinquity of State jurisdiction in the region. Spratly Island is 100 miles from the Philippines and 500 miles from China. Malaysia also claims a small number of Isles in Spratly. Thus, the main protagonist of the battle in the South China Sea is Beijing (O'Rourke, 2019). The isles situated in the South China Sea are strategically significant for China to gratify its ultimate objectives of achieving omnipotence in the world. According to Carter "it is unclear how much farther China will go," (Benner, 2015). The US' struggle has many directions i.e. to deal with Beijing and to support Taiwan and the Philippines in their cause in the South China Sea.

The balancing act in the area has become a colossal job for Washington. A straight fight between Washington and Beijing in the South China Sea can be alarming for the whole world. The US will not endure soundlessly when Taiwan and the Philippines are antagonizing Beijing in the South China Sea. Similarly, China is not horrendous in combating a war against Washington in the South China Sea (Phillips, 2015). Beijing is more organized to face gigantic challenges and it is in temperament to reply to the superpower of the time. A Chinese newspaper, *The Global Times*, foretold in this way “If the US bottom line is that China has to halt its activities, then a US-China war is inevitable in the South China Sea” (Benner, 2015). However, the struggle in the South China Sea is a skirmish limited to a specific area but it can affect the whole world. China is the succeeding largest economy of the world and it has converted a challenger for the superiority of Washington in many regions of the world. This struggle has taken the form of a Second Cold War. Washington is assisting her allies that are convoluted in this conflict to attain her anticipated objectives in the South China Sea (Lamothe, 2016).

Taiwan has been a cause of disagreement between Washington and Beijing in the past. America has buttressed Taiwan many times in the past and present which is facilitating the later claim on the isles in the South China Sea. American collaboration with Taiwan is meant to pawn the increasing influence of China in the region. Philippine is yet another friend of Washington in the South China Sea which has been acting the same way as Taiwan i.e. the South China Sea claims on the cost of containing Chinese rising role (Department of Defense, December 31, 2018). Philippine is one of the utmost aid takers of the US and it is prepared to work for the wellbeing of the US in this region. If China challenges the Philippines and Taiwan, then it merely means the former and the US are fighting a Second Cold War in this region. In this way, the South China Sea battle indirectly shows a fight between China and the US (Department of Defense, December 31, 2018).

### **Theoretical Understanding of the Study**

Economic bonhomie was considered the basic ingredient of hegemony at a multi-polar international political setup. However, the age of globalization overruled the geo-economic factor and placed geo-political and strategic indicators state(s) top priorities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Beeson, 2015). The pivotal role of maritime and ocean resources is an undeniable fact which set the stage for hegemony in the international political arena. In this regard, the region of the South China Sea is the central theater for great powers' antagonism (Breslin, 2010).

There is no denial of the fact that the Chinese determination to stamp its influence on international politics especially the South China Sea is posing, what Thucydides' has coined as 'Security Dilemma' for the existing superpower – the US. How this potential threat can be patterned? Many realists and liberal theories of international relations have put forward their arguments, i.e. the advocacy of liberalist emphasis on the policy of institutional and economic engagement of China to integrate her into the global economy. This means that some liberal scholars have a belief that if the Chinese are allowed to make progress in the economic sector it will then minimize the possibility of potential conflict. Because Economic progress will persuade the Chinese government that it is more suitable for them to cooperate with western countries. On the contrary, realists presented an aggressive approach to the Chinese economic surge i.e. involving China in containment policies. Realists argue that American hegemony and the status quo can be destabilizing if the system of proper checks and balances for minimizing Chinese growth has been not introduced (Kirshner, 2010) (Whyte, 2013).

Keeping in view the developments in the South China Sea, one can easily say that realists are far more dominant in such a scenario. Organski has presented the concept of Power Transition which argues that “power struggle” (realism) or ‘power cycle’ – attaining, increasing, and maintaining power – dissatisfied the international system. The international system where a single superpower and many great powers exist is most likely to disturb due to the rise or increase in power of great powers since the hegemon consider such developments as a threat. Organski stated that “war is likely to be precipitated by a faster-growing upstart in its attempt to displace the declining hegemon” (Tammen D. L., 2003). The basic assumption of Power Transition Theory says that war looms when the existing hegemon is challenged by secondary great power. By keeping in view the parameters of great powers, the contest in the South China Sea between China and America is perfectly reflecting Organski's Power Transition Theory.



## Power Transition Theory

The chief architect of power transition theory is Organski who in late 1950 coined the assumption of the relationship between states and how it operates in the international political arena. Organski's power transition theory argues that in an anarchic international political set up the distribution of power solely relies on hegemonic behavior, i.e. rules in international relations are set by a more powerful state (Benson, 2007). Power transition theory gives more focus on the hierarchical structure of the international political setup than on anarchy which contributes to the dissatisfaction of emerging states or satisfaction of the hegemon (Danilovic, 2008). According to Organski's power transition theory where the top hegemon sets the rules for resources and influence utilizations which suit best their interests. Others states below the hegemon either satisfied or dissatisfied with such distribution of power. Those states which get satisfied with the current rule of games set by the hegemon usually streamline their interests with major power and, support and help the policies to ensure peace and stability (Harris, 2014). On the other hand, those states which dissatisfied with the rules set by the hegemon start finding ways to curtail the game rules. Such a struggle between the hegemon and the emerging power forge conflict in international political theatre (Lebow, 2009).

## Features of Organski's Power Transition Theory

There are many features of Organski's power transition theory ranging from domestic power transition to the international political arena of power and influence. However, the writer focuses on the features which best suits the Sino-US struggle in the South China Sea. Some of these features of power transition theory better explain the relationship between China and The United States i.e (the concept of hierarchal international order and dissatisfied power in the international system). Moreover, these features are contested in comparison with classical realism particularly the balance of power realism to fully understand the 'strategic rebalancing' phenomenon of the study.

## The preponderance as Peace Keeping Agent

The striking difference between classical realism and power transition theory is anarchy and hierarchy respectively (Silvius, 2014). Though both paradigms emphasize the state as a central actor in the international system and its power capability matters in building relations (Khoo, 2013). Due to such similarities, power transition theory is considered as a branch of realism (DiCicco, 2003). However, there is a difference of opinion in the subject matter of war and peace in international relations (Christensen, 2001). For instance, in the balance of power realism for ensuring peace and stability among conflicting parties, the necessity of a balance of power phenomena is a top priority (Changhe, 2008). War is most likely to happened when one power start enhancing its power influence which disturbs the constructed balance of power phenomena in international relations (Finel, 2002). On the contrary power transition theory presents the complete opposite of the balance of power assumption of war and peace in the international system, i.e. balance of power phenomenon is not a guarantee of preserving peace rather it is an invitation to war (Paul, 2004). According to the power transition theory, higher stability in the international system is acquired with a large imbalance where a powerful hegemon enforces the terms of peace and stability (Lobell, 2016).

*"A preponderance of power on the one side [...] increases the chances of peace, for the greatly stronger side need not fight at all to get what it wants, while the weaker side would be plainly foolish to attempt to battle for what it wants" (Organski, 1968).*

## Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction in Status Quo

The second basic difference between classical realism or balance of power phenomenon and power transition realism is the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of hegemon and rising power in already existing international order constructed or enforced by major powers (Kugler, 1996). In the classical balance of power realism revisionism of state is always considered as a threat to the existing hegemon and distribution of power pattern in international order (Waltz, 2008). In order to sustain peace and stability, a key focus is given on the status quo while any revisionist activities are termed as security dilemmas for the existing hegemon and international order is most likely to change in such a scenario (Ringsmose, 2008). To sum up, the classical balance of power realists target the emerging power for disturbing the international order as it forges an atmosphere of distrust between the hegemon and rising power (Walt, 1987).

On contrary, power transition theory depends on the variable of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with-in the status quo (Rauch, 2016). Since it is a common phenomenon that emerging power is always dissatisfied with the existing international order (Lemke, 2006). So according to power transition theory, it is not emerging power which is posing threat to international order rather it is the hegemon that has created such an order where emerging powers are at a disadvantage while creator and allies benefit themselves (Tammen R. L., 2006). This dilemma pushes rising power to challenge the 'international order' to reduce the level of dissatisfaction in the existing status quo (Schweller, 1994). It is also the fact that the existing dominant power does not give up voluntarily 'its own' international order (Lee, 2015). The establishment of a new order is the need for rising power while the existing hegemon wants to maintain the status quo, this is why the need for use of force or war or conflict of interest happened (NOLTE, 2010). In short, according to the power transition theory, the motivation of challenging the international order by the revisionist state is constituted by the factor of dissatisfaction in the prevailing status quo.

### **The Relevance of Theory with the Study**

Both the aforementioned variables of power transition theory i.e. preponderance as peacekeeping agent and satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the status quo suits best the prevailing turmoil between China and the US in the South China Sea. In this study, China is considered as an emerging power that is competing against the unipolar world hegemon – the US. As mentioned earlier, an emerging state when dissatisfied with the established norms of international order constructed by the prevailing hegemon, usually challenge the game rules. Moreover, the differences i.e. from ideological outfit to economic understanding, between China and the US are also convincing enough to contest Organski's power transition theory. Similarly, the variable of preponderance is also contributing 'its' part in Sino-US turbulence in the South China Sea. In this regard, China as an emerging power has overcome the factor of preponderance in international order i.e. according to Organski's power transition theory preponderance in international politics helps the powerful hegemon to not be challenged. However, Chinese geostrategic and economic bonhomie reduce the level of preponderance where the US and 'its' constructed international order can be questioned.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, state power and its political influence in the international system are measured by economic growth. In this regard, Chinese military modernization, economic growth, and maritime policies in the Pacific region, especially in the South China Sea, are challenging the American hegemony. Chinese dissatisfaction with game rules in international order established by the hegemon, US is the main reason which surely is/will disturb the Organski's preponderance phenomenon. On the other hand, the US for rebalancing or re-sitting international preponderance is implying the policy of geographical encirclement of China. Such policy requires strengthening its economic and military ties with surrounding states and a stronghold in the South China Sea which justifies the US current policy in the East Asian Region.

Similarly, China, on contrary, to escape 'its' dissatisfaction in the international system, has created a strong economic influence in South and Central Asia, Africa, and, in other pivotal points where Chinese leverage in the South China Sea can be created to challenge US hegemonic position. Chinese strengthening territorial sovereignty claims in the South China Sea is an illustration of such intentions. Chinese extraterritorial jurisdiction has disturbed the preponderance phenomenon in the South China Sea which is the key factor for forging tension over maritime borders, sea-lanes and, free trade, and transportation dilemmas.

### **Conclusion**

South China Sea has been the center of magnificent concern for the great powers of the world like the PRC and the US. The struggle in this region is intensely rooted in the contemporary history of the South China Sea. Beijing had many battles with the Philippines and Vietnam in the past (Mazza, 2019). It was much easy for Washington to counterbalance in the region and to stop China from confronting smaller countries in the South China Sea because Beijing was not such an authoritative country in the past as it is today. PRC of 2015 has been a greater challenge for the pre-eminence of Washington in different zones of the world (Parameswaran, 2019) The observation of the US reconnaissance containers cannot stop the Islet from making the process of PRC in the South China Sea. US is operating her traditional strategies to pledge China in the area like all such campaigns which the US used throughout the Cold War with USSR (Huang, 2018). The US is exasperating to strengthen the martial power of her associates located in the South China Sea to rejoinder any possible ferocity from Beijing on them.

A New Cold War has become visible in the South China Sea in all forms and manifestations. Earlier to this issue, the symbols of the New Cold War were puzzling for a common spectator but the skirmish of the South China Sea and Islet building process of China in the region underlined the recurrence of the Cold War in its full swing. As the public of China talks about a striking, issue in a highly unassertive Way. Similarly, they identified much more about the starring role of the USA in the South China Sea. They professed openly about the “Double Standards” of Washington. It validates that they are making to respond to the dual morality of the US in the area and beyond. China has lost its conviction in the US and it could momentarily shake the relationships of both these states in the world. It will also distract the business ties of both China and the US, while they are prime trade cronies (Cronin, 2018).

The hidden goal of the foreign policy of the US is to contain any emerging challenger in the world. China is a new rising challenger in many areas predominantly in the South China Sea. In the name of nonviolent advancement, China, want to become a world power. The benefits of both the state's crash with each other unintentionally (Mehta, 2015). Although both China and the US do not want to antagonize each other the welfares of both these states will remain in rattle with each other in the coming future. The presence of US militaries in the Pacific region is to be anticipated to rise in reaction to China's expansion. The US will be no longer outstanding power in the area of Asia Pacific.

If two states with dissimilar ideologies are good trade partners, then it does not necessarily demonstrate that there will be no stress between them. It does not mean that they will secure the interests of each other. They are contestants and strains will rise further, when China becomes a more powerful nation. Before the 1990s there were few points of deviations between the PRC and the US but after the 1990s these themes became diverse, the relations between PRC and the US became complex because China had become a contestant of the US (Eckstein, 2016) Obama's government focused on the countries located in the South East and the South China Sea to pawn the hegemonic schemes of the PRC. Japan and South Korea are magnificent allies of the US to work for its benefits in the region, while Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei are considering the backing of the US to counterpoise China in the region. Smaller states like Vietnam and the Philippines cannot stand against China without the backing of the US. Both these countries have claims on different islets with the validation of their juxtaposition to the Islands (Burns, 2018). All the Islands like Spratly, Parcels, and Scarborough Shoal are very far from China, but her hegemonic schemes, military strength, and strong economy force her to delineate a U-shaped line in the South China Sea to encircle the area of her sovereignty. The Islet making of China is a foreign territory building process. The US differentiates it the peril for the peace of the world but China exhibits it an exertion for peaceful development (Gertz, 2017). This is in fact an exceedingly advanced hegemonic design. If China becomes successful in this design, then it will endure the procedure of generating more and more Islets. There would be new competitiveness in fabricating synthetic islands in the world. This action does not portray an economic activity, but it displays the strategic determination of a nation (Mughal, Second Cold War, 2017) Thus, it is crystal clear that the battle of the South China Sea is not only a conflict of China with few states likes Vietnam and Brunei but also it is an indirect conflict between Washington and Beijing. But this is the new Cold War, which was in progress between the US and China, has been discernible in the issue of the South China Sea in all its forms and manifestations.

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# BOOK REVIEW

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Robert Irwin

## ***Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography***

(Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018, ISBN: 978-0-691-17466-2, 267 pp., \$ 29.95)

Ibn Khaldun (Wali al-Din ‘Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun) who lived between 1332 and 1406 has been one of the greatest intellectuals in human history. He clearly deserves this reputation because his ideas, especially those in his *opus magnum* the *Muqaddimah* (Introduction), constitute remarkable contributions to our understanding of history, sociology, economics and international relations, among many other fields of social inquiry. Not surprisingly, there are numerous scholarly works in many languages about Ibn Khaldun’s life, ideas, as well as the impact of his ideas on the development of various social science disciplines.

Robert Irwin’s *Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography* is a noteworthy contribution to this ever-growing literature about Ibn Khaldun’s life, ideas and scholarly influence. Irwin is a renowned British historian, novelist, and writer. He is a Senior Research Associate at the School of Oriental and African Studies of London University as well as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in the United Kingdom. Irwin got this book published from one of the top publishers of the academic world - the Princeton University Press. In other words, this short background information is sufficient to demonstrate that both the author and the publisher of this book are highly respected in the academic world. Not surprisingly, the book was already received very positively by various reviewers around the world.

In this very well-written book, Robert Irwin’s main aim is not to provide an authoritative account of Ibn Khaldun’s contributions to various social disciplines or to offer a novel interpretation of his publications. His core objective is to contextualize his ideas and scholarly works by exploring them in connection with the turning points in Ibn Khaldun’s own personal life, the challenges of the historical period in which he lived as well as the characteristics of his own belief system and the dominant worldviews of the North

African and the Andalusian Arab societies in late fourteenth century.

Throughout the book, Robert Irwin puts forward the following argument: the existing academic literature on Ibn Khaldun tends to distort the historically and culturally specific character of Ibn Khaldun’s ideas as they are largely abstracted from their fourteenth century specific historical and cultural context and deemed valid universally irrespective of their historically and culturally specific time- and space-bounded character. Irwin claims that Islamic belief system as well as the socio-economic and cultural life of the historical period in which Ibn Khaldun lived had shaped his life, ideas and publications considerably. Therefore, it is incorrect to treat Ibn Khaldun’s ideas and publications which are products of the medieval Islamic world as modern ideas and publications establishing the groundwork for the emergence of modern social science disciplines from historiography to economics from sociology to cultural studies.

This book is remarkable not only in terms of its scholarly content and thought-provoking argument, but also in terms of its writing style. As a novelist and literary writer, Robert Irwin uses his literary writing skills masterfully so that the reader enjoys reading such a condensed book about very complex issues of historiography, culture as well as socio-economic and political life of the fourteenth century without any difficulty in understanding or boredom at all. The Preface of the book explains Robert Irwin’s justification for writing his own intellectual biography of Ibn Khaldun. Robert Irwin also provides a very useful Chronology marking major events in the extraordinary life Ibn Khaldun from his birth on 27 May 1332 to his death on 17 March 1406. Needless to say, both of these introductory sections of book make it easier to follow the flow of Robert Irwin’s argumentation in the main body of this book.



Robert Irwin's *Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography* is divided into eleven chapters: The first chapter (Ibn Khaldun among the Ruins) outlines the influence of the devastating effects of the Black Death and failed governments on the historical evolution of settled and nomadic communities and his desire to reflect on the God's judgement about the problems of the prevailing socio-political order. The second chapter (The Game of Thrones in Fourteenth-Century North Africa) explores the protracted conflicts over the reunification of the lands which were previously ruled by the Almohad Empire in the thirteenth century. The third chapter (The Nomads, Their Virtues, and Their Place in History) presents Ibn Khaldun's understanding of the nomadic societies and the importance of Ibn Khaldun's conception of *asabiyya* for understanding the importance of tribal loyalty as an engine of social change in nomadic societies.

Having described the socio-historical context in which Ibn Khaldun's ideas came into existence, in the first three chapters, Robert Irwin examines Ibn Khaldun's *opus magnum* the *Muqaddimah* (Introduction) in Chapter Four (Underpinning the Methodology of the *Muqaddima*: Philosophy, Theology, and Jurisprudence). In this chapter, Robert Irwin notes that Ibn Khaldun emphasizes the value of jurisprudence as a response to the limitations of the intellectual debates in favor of either philosophy or theology which characterized the medieval thinking in the Middle East and North African region. As a renowned historian of the Mamluks, Robert Irwin devotes the fifth chapter (Ibn Khaldun's Sojourn among the Mamluks in Egypt) to Ibn Khaldun's life in Cairo as a Chief Qadi and his encounters with Tamerlane in Syria during the final years of his life.

Irwin explores the mentality of Ibn Khaldun in Chapter Six (The Sufi Mystic), Chapter Seven (Messages from the Dark Side), Chapter Eight (Economics before Economics Had Been Invented) and Chapter Nine (What Ibn Khaldun Did for a Living: Teaching and Writing). In these four chapters, Irwin describes Ibn Khaldun's mentality as essentially subjectivist in terms of his commitment to the Sufism and his inclination to magic and superstition as well as his respect for the uses of rhetoric, poetry and oral teaching despite the fact that his ideas contributed to the objectivist labour theory of value which is central to the Marxist studies of political economy.

In the remaining two chapters – Chapter Ten (The Strange Afterlife of the *Muqaddima*) and Chapter

Eleven (Ending Up), Irwin concludes the book by explaining how Orientalists, colonialists and nationalists have distorted Ibn Khaldun's ideas in order to provide justification for their modernist ideas and by characterizing Ibn Khaldun as a very successful example of medieval Muslim thinkers.

Although Robert Irwin is largely careful in taking a balanced approach to Ibn Khaldun and his ideas as well as publications by situating them in their own historical and cultural context, Irwin's labelling of Ibn Khaldun and his ideas in terms of their strictly medieval and pre-modern character may be interpreted as his neglect of the universal character of Ibn Khaldun's ideas which might have influenced modern thinkers in the same way as the ideas of many medieval thinkers in Europe have shaped the emergence of modern science and philosophy. In other words, Irwin's assessment of Ibn Khaldun may be used to ignore the crucial contributions of Ibn Khaldun to the emergence and development of various social science disciplines from Sociology and Cultural Studies to Political Economy. The fact that Ibn Khaldun's conceptualization of socio-political change is not based on causal explanations following the Aristotelian tradition, cannot be used to discredit the scientific character of his scholarly works. To the contrary, Ibn Khaldun's conceptualizations have still been considered scientific by various post-positivist schools of thought in several social science disciplines.

In a nutshell, Robert Irwin's *Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography* is a noteworthy contribution to the academic literature about Ibn Khaldun's life, ideas and influence. I would like to recommend this book to all researchers and students specializing in various branches of social science from history and sociology to international relations.

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# BOOK REVIEW

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Julian A. Zelizer

***The Presidency of Barack Obama: A First Historical Assessment***

(Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018, ISBN: 9780691160283, 368 pp., \$ 21.05)

The calendar showed 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2016 when a group of professors gathered at Princeton University for a 2-day lasting conference to put the presidential period of Barack Obama on the table from various perspectives such as inequality, counterterrorism, immigration, the Supreme Court and race and discuss each heading in detail. The conference was convened following Trump's election for the presidential post and this was the reason New York Times preferred to select an headline such as "Historians Assess Obama's Legacy under Trump's Shadow" in order to announce the conference, give place to it in its pages. The motivation behind the selection of the mentioned headline was to stress the unexpected result of the American elections. This study, "The Presidency of Barack Obama" is an edited scholarly work by Julian E. Zelizer, who is a professor of political history in Princeton University. The chapters covered in the edition in a sense underline the failures of Obama that led to the victory of a quiet controversial Republican figure Donald J. Trump. There are 17 chapters in the book from 16 different authors who are competent and time-served in their fields focusing mostly on four main realms; social reforms, economic implications, international politics - foreign policy perspectives and legal issues. Considering the length of the articles it would be too much to expect a full-fledge assessment of each of the mentioned themes however they are quiet adequate and satisfying to give an academic insight regarding the volume of the content they tackle.

Barack Obama's coming to the post in January, 2009 was welcomed and even glorified internationally as well as all the circles domestically which was assumed a completely new era due to his hitting title as the first African American president in American history. However in his second term, he fell in a situation and became a lame duck. In 2012 Republican Party managed to dominate the Congress, which undermined the control and manoeuvre capability of the incumbent president. Zelizer in this study

brought fore coming American historians to examine the presidential period from political and historical perspective. When looking back to the 2008 election campaign and promises, it is commonly argued that the expectations from Obama government fell short which would have concrete impact on 45<sup>th</sup> president's period in the office. This book becomes prominent to pre-examine and stipulate such potential effects in Obama's successor's policies. Besides the dissatisfactions caused by Obama's actions, another contribution of this book lies in its foresight; the accomplishments of Obama were at risk by the reason that 45<sup>th</sup> President Trump would shift the country just the opposite direction in many areas. Paul Starr is one of them who argued in Trump's term as President, Obama's progress would be likely wasted or completely wiped away (45). Although the ideas taking place in this book was printed right after the 2016 elections, today we have witnessed that Trump administration withdrew from various international organizations such Paris Climate Agreement, Trans-Pacific Trade pact and froze Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership which was again founded during Obama's period between the EU and U.S. While these policies point to a axis shift from the multilateral understanding of the 44<sup>th</sup> President, they also give credit to the book for the prospects regarding Trump's period. Besides the differences in understanding and approaches to the political issues between Republicans and Democrats, some authors underline the similarities with a smart move. Kathryn Olmsted is one of them who argues there is no significant difference among Bush' and Obama's foreign policy when it comes to counterterrorism and Middle East. Other than the critical approaches, there are pieces in the book, which show positive sides of the Administration especially in economic recovery, health reform, closing the economic gap between the rich and poor, reducing economic inequalities. Paul Starr in his chapter argues that Obama government succeeded in economic sense however could not show the same performance in making its



propaganda to the public. The administration enhanced the tax liability of highest income group in 2013 while the taxes of middle class and poor remained considerably low compared to previous periods in U.S. history. The Recovery Act, healthcare reform and tax changes under Obama administration had considerable impact but failed to satisfy the public at large (59). Another favourable practice of Obama's period, his fight against global warming was covered by Meg Jacobs who analysed Administration's solid executive actions to slow emission and led a distinct change in policy. Today there is no doubt that the green legacy of Obama is eroded in the hands of Trump as foreseen by Jacobs back at 2016. Promising bypassing Obama's Clean Power Plan and withdrawing from Paris Agreement worked out in swing states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia and Michigan.

The authors lay stress on major cases that played a considerable role in Obama's presidency such as conservative backlash, race, the 2008 financial crisis, increase in criminal activities, health care reforms, usage of drugs, counterterrorism, American foreign policy towards Afghanistan and Iraq, environmental issues and Paris Climate Agreement, immigration, education, gay rights and urban policy. Considering the chapters covered in the book, they somehow point to the fact that although Obama has exercised a solid policymaking, he was not successful to get the political benefit of what he has done in return. His lacking motivation to mobilize his Democrat Party to unite the congressmen towards a common goal was also an undermining factor that paved the way for the Republican candidate win elections in 2016. The common view among the authors reflects the argument Obama was not able to gather the Democrats and progressive activists under one umbrella to confront and compete with the rising conservatism in the public.

Another interesting theme covered in the book is Obama's Africa Policy by Jacob Dlamini, which crystalizes 44<sup>th</sup> President's apathy towards this continent despite of his bounds to Kenya due to his father. Obama's particular policies on Africa are a rare subject covered among the scholarly works of academics. In Dlamini's chapter, Obama's attempts to consolidate institutions in Africa, protecting vulnerable groups, fostered the interests of women and young people, perpetuating Bush's projects on HIV/AIDS and malaria, confirming trade pact with 39 African countries, initiatives to increase the access to electricity are discussed which are remarkable subjects to analyze the approach of the Administration. However his African policies

again fall to the same cluster; fail to satisfy the interested parties. Increasing U.S. military presence in Africa, sending great number of drones to the region compared to previous period, AFRICOM's conducting alliances with certain military groups along Sahel desert did not give any tangible result.

This book sums up Obama's term as a disappointment or with a more moderate saying; dissatisfaction; "the mountain has brought forth a mouse" would be an appropriate adage to clarify the mentioned period. A solid assessment could be found in Jeremi Suri's chapter "Liberal Internationalism and Law". Considering his election campaign, many circles expected him to "democratize international affairs by opening policy to new ethnic groups, or expanding the dialogue about race and foreign affairs. He did some of that, but it was not his consistent priority. He was not a great liberator." (210).

Considering the group of authors is overwhelmingly liberal, all in all this compilation of scholarly works is a product of an in-depth analysis of a specific period targeting the ones that would like to form a proper idea on Obama's presidential period while sticking to the facts. I recommend this satisfying and accessible study to anyone who has special interest to have insight on American politics, economy and the issues related to its social life.

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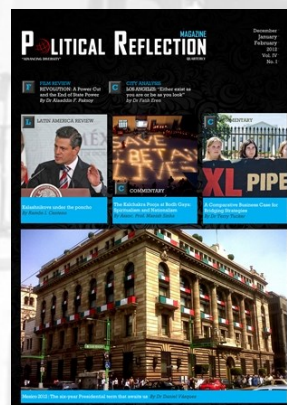
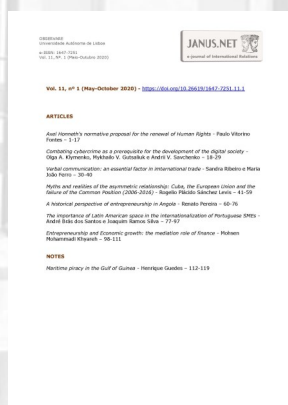
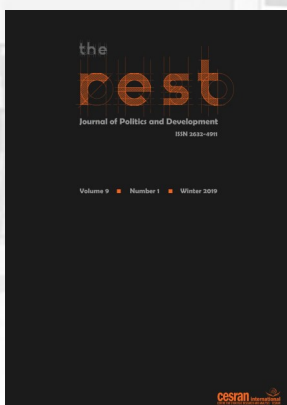
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# BOOK REVIEW

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Richard Pomfret

***The Central Asian Economies in the Twenty-First Century: Paving a New Silk Road***

(Princeton University Press, 2019, ISBN: 978-0-691-18221-6, 328 pp., \$45.00 / £38.00)

Central Asia is of strategic importance to many countries, in particular Russia and China. Russia has sought to maintain its influence in the region since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR whereas China has emerged as a viable contender thanks to its Belt and Road Initiative. A thorough analysis of the Central Asian economies in the early twenty-first century would therefore provide the necessary background knowledge to understand how and why each country differ in its interactions with each other, and with the regional powers and the wider world. This book aims to do just that. It provides a detailed comparative analysis and examines how politics and economics interact and evolve in the region.

The first part focuses on the process that follows the dissolution of the USSR and examines the challenges faced by the newly independent Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan). Each one of these states followed a different path during the transition from the Soviet-style centrally planned economy to a market-based economy and Pomfret particularly emphasises the role of the natural resources.

After this brief introduction, the author examines each country with a particular focus on what follows the transition to a market-based economy from early 2000s onwards. In his analysis, Pomfret states that Kazakhstan experienced rapid economic growth in the early twenty-first century. This is mainly due to its rich oil and gas resources and much of this income has been used to invest in infrastructure and social development programmes. However, Pomfret also mentions that the country still suffers from poor governance and its economy remains to be vulnerable to financial and banking instability and fluctuations in oil prices.

Furthermore, Pomfret details Uzbekistan's gradual approach to transition. The author compares Karimov's cautious approach to that of

his successor Mirziyoyev's accelerated reform agenda. The following chapter focusing on the Kyrgyz Republic concludes that in stark contrast to Uzbekistan's gradual approach, the Kyrgyz Republic adopted a rapid transition program. However, despite being "the most liberal Central Asian state", Kyrgyzstan's economic development has been constrained by poor governance, corruption, clientelism and the rising populist nationalism.

Tajikistan's transition process, on the other hand, was not peaceful and the country suffered from the civil war in the early 1990s. The author highlights the importance of exporting electricity for boosting the economy, and stresses that these ambitions had to be curbed in a region where water security is one of the main sources of contention; hence, much of its economy now relies on remittances from migrant workers. Finally, Pomfret rightly identifies Turkmenistan as the "most-closed" state. The country's economy relies on its natural gas reserves, and it has the most authoritarian government in the Central Asia region.

In addition to comparative politics and economics, this book would also contribute to international relations scholarship. The final section of the book focuses on the implications for the region and the wider world. Pomfret points out the challenges for regional cooperation and emphasises the fragile relationship between these countries and their regional security concerns particularly about water and border security. The book identifies the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as the two most influential organisations in the region and highlights the differing approaches of Russia and China towards regional integration. The chapter touches upon Central Asian countries' engagement with the wider world, mainly Russia, China, the United States, and the European Union. Considering that the Central Asia is a landlocked region where "the high cost of

international trade” is the main obstacle for regional integration, connectivity would be vital to boost trade and attract foreign investment (p.202). Hence, the author particularly underlines the significance of China’s Belt and Road Initiative and points out that “the China-Europe Landbridge could also signal a new opportunity for Central Asia” (p. 278).

The book is particularly useful as an introductory reading as it helps to understand the historical trajectory of the development of the Central Asian economies and how and why each differ in their experiences in the early twenty-first century. Although it is an explanatory study, Pomfret’s latest book provides a comprehensive coverage of and a timely contribution to the literature on the theories of economic transition. As a landlocked and resource-rich region, Central Asia provides an excellent testing ground to evaluate the implications of differing policy decisions, socio-political structures, and external relations for the region’s economic transition process. It also sheds light on how elites in authoritarian regimes deal with challenges when transitioning to a market-based economy and provides novel insights into the relationship between political and economic reform in the region. Pomfret’s analysis of the impact of the Soviet rule for the region’s

contemporary political and economic structures also engages with the colonial legacy in the Central Asia. Overall, the book is a thought-provoking study analysing the complicated relationship between history, politics, and economics.

The main strength of this book is its comparative approach and its meticulous analysis of various sources of economic data. Considering the problems of accessing reliable information in authoritarian regimes, the author’s endeavour to present an authentic assessment of a plethora of available economic data is commendable. Its easy-to-read language makes the book accessible for non-economist readers as well. Pomfret provides country-specific analyses with enough detail, which can also serve as a springboard for students who would like to specialise in the Central Asia region to conduct further in-depth academic research.

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# BOOK REVIEW

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Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley

***The Metropolitan Revolution:***

***How Cities and Metros are Fixing our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy***

(The Brookings Institution, Washington, 2014. 288 pages. \$27.70. ISBN: 9780815721512.)

The Metropolitan Revolution describes a new relationship between levels of government in the United States. It is essential to express a new dynamic in which small Suburban Municipalities, an integral part of US cities and economic areas, come together and address regional socioeconomic issues. In addition, the book published by the Brookings Institution is emerging as cities and metropolitan areas taking on a new leadership role in economic development, given the lack of leadership at the state and federal levels.

Even though, the book seems to be organized through an introduction; four case studies; the creation of innovation districts; global trading networks or economic development; relationships among the federal government, states, and metropolitan areas; and five points guide to how policymakers, governors, or administrators can start their own process, the book is organized into two sections; The metropolitan revolution today (city case studies), and the future of the metropolitan revolution. In the first part, New York City, Denver, Houston, North East Ohio (Cleveland), and Detroit are mentioned by the author as examples of city case studies to make people understand the significant city's situation in the US after 2008 The Great Recession. These cases were obviously selected to illustrate the diversity of metro types and clearly demonstrates that different cities have different issues.

In the second part of the book, on the other hand, the authors highlight the future of the US metropolitan revolution in the line of innovation district by explaining making sense of innovation district. Then in the line of federalism; first, how federalism changed over time, then what metropolitan area's need from federal and state government. Then, economic

structure or development; the impact of the great depression and great recession on the metro areas. The book also stresses the new levels of collaboration; inter-local or intergovernmental cooperation.

In addition, 4 case studies are utilized by authors to demonstrate their opinion better on American metropolitan revolution. First of all, the authors use **New York City** (Chapter 2) as an example of the importance of innovation and of cooperative governance structures. Innovation is related to technology and science, according to the authors. Universities are playing a big part explaining cluster economy. As a result, the Cornell campus project, New York City, researches demonstrate how cities will look in the future after the tech and science cluster. Also, according to the book, even though the real measure of success will not be apparent for years, the city and the NYCEDC believe that the Applied Sciences initiative is already paying off.

Secondly, **Denver** (Chapter 3) case, on the other hand, includes four votes being a process of the city from the 1960s to today and regional economic development of a metro city. Four votes illustrate a good relationship between the urban city and suburbs over 45 years. Because the issues have been complicated for one metropolitan area, Denver city case is an excellent example of cooperation between the centre city and suburb cities to solve or mitigate their problems during this period. Creation of a new airport, fuels collaboration, declaring new regional sales tax, building a new rail transit system is such examples illustrating an affirmative relationship in the city.

Moreover, the book moves on with the case of **Northeast OHIO** (Chapter 4) being about the economic future of the US. Even an economic shrink, a massive building boom, happened in the 1990s in Cleveland, it is time to redevelopment the economy in this region. The main focus of this development was on creating an innovation cluster, involving local universities, government officials, nonprofit organizations, and community groups. Also, as I understand, manufacturing will be the first priority again in the US in the future after redevelopment in Northeastern OHIO. Moreover, this book is an excellent source to learn what has happened after the 1990s in Northeastern OHIO.

On the other hand, **Houston** (Chapter 5) has been called the neighbourhood centre because of the big migration community, which often leads to crime and poverty. The book clearly illustrates that Houston has an immense diversity such as race, poverty, or socioeconomic situation of people, and city governors have the skill to cope or fight to overcome the problems by using neighbourhood centres. Neighbourhood Centres are providing the necessary arguments for migrants to make sure they have adequate social services. This case is significant to understand how these sorts of programs help cities to handle poverty reduction and social services development.

Innovation districts are the clusters of universities and local businesses, hospitals, museums, technology and manufacturing industries held together regionally. Innovation districts remind me of agglomeration economies that I have learned from urban economic classes, which explains why firms locate close to one another. There are two significant reasons; Localization economies, firms in an industry cluster, and Urbanization economies: firms in different industry cluster. Firms cluster has several benefits, such as, share intermediate inputs, share a labour pool, get better matches of workers and labour tasks, and share knowledge. In this aspect, the collaboration of local governments has been significant for making a better cluster to cope with issues. For instance; during the book discussion section, the example of Kansas City and Missouri were given to explain how the collaboration of cities is running smoothly.

In the chapter of the global trading network, the authors discuss the history of metropolitan areas economic development, and what it will look like in the future. It is necessary for the US to keep up with the global economy to

make the much profitable economy in metropolitan areas; also, making a good relationship with foreign business and market owners will be helpful for US metropolitan revolution for the future. Metros have become both the object and subject of the new trading system according to the book, and some of the examples of trading networks linking metropolitan areas are Portland, Miami and São Paulo across the globe.

Even if the dual federalism, splitting power between federal and state government, is one of the best options for US metropolitans, the relationship between federal, states, metropolitan areas and cities do not work very well in this century for organizations to trade globally. Although the economy is global in the 21st century, the locals or metropolitans have to wait for federal decision to trade with other countries and cities. Therefore, metropolitan areas need to be the focus and organized to achieve their economic goals in the global economy. In this chapter, also, the book mentions metro deals by explaining the benefits of metro deals for the federal government, states, and metropolitan areas. Metro deals accept that reinventing entire systems, and they can help the federal and state governments begin to behave more like successful metropolitan networks.

Furthermore, the section on creating your own metropolitan revolution steps is really significant in a policymaker or public administrator to handle issues and make our cities livable for the future. The five steps of creating your own revolution are discussed in the last chapter of the book as follow;

1. Build your network; the challenge for metropolitan areas is not whether they have leaders, but whether those individuals work organized in a rigorous way to drive change.
2. Set your vision; all transformative innovations begin with a vision, often one bold enough to redefine the identity and image of the metropolis.
3. Identify and implement game-changing initiatives; once a vision is set, specify and sharpen a conversation toward implementing it.
4. Bankroll the revolution; initiatives without financial resources, like visions without specific agendas, have no currency.
5. Sustain the gain; the key is not the age of the institution, but its creativity and its

persistence. Then discusses the elements being necessary to spreading the concept across metropolitan areas.

Overall, the innovative structure of American cities is carefully examined; also, the advantages and disadvantages of the metropolitan areas are considered by the authors in a careful manner. This book is an important document for metropolitan leaderships to act as one and solve the metro areas problems, fix the country's broken politics and renew its ailing economy to create a better future for current and next-generation, which is believed by the authors as well when you read the book. The general message is that if the federal government, urban and suburban leaders, state officials and foundations get together to discuss problems, the resulting projects are bound to

be great. On the other hand, having the global economy, the book ought to give some specific city case examples in more detail throughout the world, and this issue could be explained in a more explicit and comprehensive way to understand global metropolitan revolution. In this case, although the administrator ought to know the global metropolitan revolution, the readers just would be able to figure the US metropolitan revolution out in the book. Consequently, this book is a first-rate read for planners and policymakers ready to support this metropolitan revolution if professionals would like to understand the metropolitan revolution from beginning to the future.

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