



**İzmir University of Economics**

Department of Political Science and International Relations

**TURKEY - IRAN RELATIONS DURING AHMADINEJAD ERA (2005-2013)**

**EFFECTIVE FACTORS ON CONVERGENCE**

**“A PERSIAN PERSPECTIVE”**

**Hossein Arian**

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TURKEY - IRAN RELATIONS DURING AHMADINEJAD ERA (2005-2013)

EFFECTIVE FACTORS ON CONVERGENCE

“A PERSIAN PERSPECTIVE”

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BY

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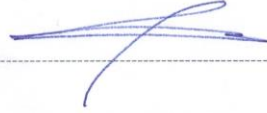
I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Political Science and International Relations.



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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Political Science and International Relations.



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## ABSTRACT

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Hossein Arian

Political Science and International Relations

Thesis Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Serhun Al

In recent years and especially during the presidency of Ahmadinejad (2005-2013) significant developments have been established in Turkish-Iranian relations. How can such a change in the attitude of both countries toward each other be explained? This thesis analyzes the reason for the expansion of Turkish-Iranian relations during the Ahmadinejad era and investigates the interactions between Turkey and Iran, and the factors affecting their political relations during the presidency of Ahmadinejad. Within this thesis; important geopolitical factors, including the crisis in Syria and Iraq, interaction and conflict between regional and trans-regional influences, economic interaction and

religious issues and their role in relations between the two countries are being examined.

Generally, this thesis examines with recognizing the necessity of addressing the issue of convergence between Turkey and Iran and ways of explaining the interests of both countries. The impact of economic and cultural relations on convergence explains positive and negative points affecting bilateral relations by examining these factors. The thesis through the lens of economics to diplomacy and international relations and examination of the history of bilateral relations and competition between the two countries argues that the best and most effective strategy to achieve convergence between Turkey and Iran has been an economic solution.

**Keywords:** Turkey, Iran, Turkish Iranian Relations, Economy, Geopolitics, convergence, divergence, Ahmadinejad

## ÖZET

# AHMEDİNEJAD DÖNEMİNDE TÜRKİYE – İRAN İLİŞKİLERİ (2005-2013) YAKINLAŞMAYA GÖTÜREN ETKİLİ FAKTÖRLER

## “İRAN PERSPEKTİFİ”

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Son yıllarda ve özellikle Ahmedinejad (2005-2013) döneminde Türkiye-İran ilişkilerinde önemli gelişmeler kaydedildi. Her iki ülkenin birbirine karşı sergilediği tutumlardaki bu değişim nasıl açıklanabilir? Bu tez, Ahmedinejad döneminde Türkiye-İran ilişkilerindeki genişleme nedenlerini analiz etmekte ve Türkiye ile İran arasındaki etkileşimleri ve Ahmedinejad başkanlığı sırasında politik ilişkilere etki eden faktörleri araştırmaktadır. Bu tezde, Suriye ve Irak'taki kriz dahil önemli jeopolitik faktörler, bölgesel ve bölgelerarası etkileşim ve anlaşmazlık, ekonomik etkileşim ile dini meseleler ve bunların ülkeler arasındaki ilişkilerdeki rolü tartışılmaktadır.



Genel olarak bu tez, Türkiye ile İran arasındaki yakınlaşma konusuna değinmenin gerekliliğini ve her iki ülkenin çıkarlarını açıklama yollarını incelemektedir. Ekonomik ve kültürel ilişkilerin yakınlaşma üzerindeki etkisi, bu faktörleri inceleyerek ikili ilişkileri etkileyen olumlu ve olumsuz noktaları açıklamaktadır. Ekonominin diplomasiye ve uluslararası ilişkilere yaklaşımı ve iki ülke arasındaki ikili ilişkiler ve rekabet geçmişinin incelenmesi, Türkiye ve İran arasındaki yakınlaşmaya ulaşmak için en iyi ve en etkili stratejinin ekonomik çözüm olduğunu savunmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Türkiye, İran, Türkiye-İran ilişkileri, Ekonomi, Jeopolitik, yakınlaşma, uzaklaşma, Ahmedinecad

# DEDICATED

To my wife and my daughter



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## ACRONYMS

1. AKP Justice and Development Party
2. D8 Developing Eight
3. NATO The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
4. CENTO Central Treaty Organization
5. CIA Central Intelligence Alliance
6. PKK Kurdistan Workers' Party
7. TAF Turkish Armed Forces
8. UN United Nations
9. BSEC Black Sea Economic Cooperation
10. EU European Union
11. OPEC Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
12. PJAK The Kurdistan Free Life Party

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction, Methodology and Theoretical Framework

### 1.1. Introduction

The study of relations between countries in the international arena especially two powerful neighbors always has been of particular importance. Because the agent's identification of convergence and divergence between these countries can develop strategic partnerships and ultimately help to establishment of peace in the region. Among Iran's neighbors, relations with Turkey have deep backgrounds and its ups and downs were not limited to the contemporary era and have continued throughout history. Turkey and Iran's relations may be described as one of the most stable and foreseeable relations in the Middle East.

Turkey is located in a sensitive area of the world and has a strategic geographic location and is considered as crossings of South West Asia and Europe and is an important transit corridor for goods and energy for many countries in the Middle East, especially Iran. The Anatolian peninsula that encompassing much of current Turkey has always been one of the world's oldest residential areas. After World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was established in 1923. The economic and political growth of Turkey in recent years has made this country a regional power.

Iran known as Persia until 1935 is located in West Asia and in the Middle East. According to Iran's huge reserves of fossil fuels which contain the largest natural gas field and the third largest oil discovered and verified reserves in the world has significant influence and role in International Energy Security and is an important regional power in the Middle East. This country is also one of the oldest countries in the world and is the legacy of the great ancient empires including the Achaemenid Empire that in that period covered almost all the civilized world.

Relations between Iran and Turkey have fluctuated between comradeship and competition resulting from the impact of geopolitical - political factors and economic issues. Of course, along with the disagreements and inconsistencies in mutual relations, these two countries due to proximity and cultural and religious commonalities had political and economic relations with each other. Iran is Turkey's bridge to the East and Turkey is Iran's bridge to the West and this common feature, puts Iran and Turkey in a very convenient position for cooperation as well as influencing the countries in the region and relations between the two countries play an essential and determining role in the regional equations.

What is certain is that Iran and Turkey as survivors of two great empires are two influential non-Arab countries in the Middle East, and regional developments are under the influence of Iran and Turkey. In terms of geopolitics, the two countries are located in a critical crossroads in the Eurasian region and their political, economic, and cultural relations together with other countries in the region have and will shape political, economic, and cultural developments in this area.

Figure 1: Location of Turkey and Iran in the region



Relations between the two countries are particularly important due to the wide geographical expanse that they can directly influence from the Indian Ocean to the Balkans and the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea. At the confluence of Asia and Europe, these countries are situated among four important and generally unstable geographical areas to include the Middle East, Caucasus, Balkans, Central Asia. Generally, relations between Iran and Turkey can be evaluated in the framework of cooperation and competition. In some cases, situations led to relations between the two countries moving from competition to opposition. But in general, relations between the two countries during the past 400 years did not exceed unwritten red lines because of the deep roots of historical, cultural and religious ties, consequently, the relationship has been, relatively stable.

After the election of the conservative government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on 24 June 2005 and despite increasing pressure from the West over the country and the past tensions, attitude, politics and foreign relations between

Iran and Turkey were revolutionized. According to Stephen Walt (2008), he has observed from the international level to relations of the United States and its allies in the unipolar world. He knows that the allies of the United States efforts to develop relationships with other governments, under the influence of a unipolar international system. From this perspective, flexibility in Turkish foreign policy towards Iran that began in Ahmadinejad's era is influenced by the structure of the unipolar system. Under this system, Turkey may fear being disconnected from --or neglected by-- the United States. Although deep changes inside Iran and Turkey led to major changes in attitudes and orientation of the two countries to each other, this research—despite emphasis on attitude at the national level—also considers transnational levels.

When Ahmadinejad came to power on 3 August 2005, AK Party in Turkey was into power from 2002. Center-right parties being in power in the two countries and the emergence of intentional or unintentional economic opportunities for cooperation created a golden era in relations between Iran and Turkey in the first 6 years of the Ahmadinejad era.

The research question of this thesis is how and on what basis can improved Turkish-Iranian relations be explained during the presidency of Ahmadinejad? The hypothesis is that these relationships can be explained in the form of economic integration, political coordination increased cooperation, and a common thought of Islam. But this rapprochement is more than the result of strategic convergence and the adaptation by new political ideologies but is also the result of global and regional necessity and response to crosses by the two countries. Consequently, during this period divergent factors also affected bilateral relations. This research from this aspect has importance that by

exploring the crisis and the common points and areas of convergence of the two countries, can offer solutions to strengthen bilateral relations.

In chapter one methodology and theoretical framework and literature review are introduced and presents the previous academic studies on Turkey-Iran relations. The second chapter includes a historical antecedent about relations between the two states. In this section, the relations between Iran and Turkey are briefly analyzed in three stages. before the Pahlavi era, the Pahlavi era from 1925 until 1979 and post-revolutionary time. The chapter three is devoted to influencing the rulers of foreign policy between the two countries in the past years is briefly examined and factors involved in Turkish-Iranian relations are analyzed.

## **1.2. Main Research Question and Methodology**

What are the factors that influence the relationship between Iran and Turkey as historical regional powers (i.e. political, economic, cultural, etc.)? Do these factors facilitate the convergence between the two countries? Or will they cause a divergence? How can the improved Turkey-Iranian relations during the Ahmadinejad era (2005-2013) be explained? What factors led to the convergence of the two countries in that period? Geopolitical analysis of effective factors on relations between the two states in different periods can help to better understand the variables influencing the convergence and divergence of interests of the two countries. This research examines these factors during the timeframe of the presidency of Ahmadinejad (2005-2013).

Iran and Turkey have a longstanding relationship as part of the strategic situation in the region. This leads to a relationship built on mutual interests. The relationship between Turkey and Iran during the Ahmadinejad era can be justified based on economic convergence, growing political coordination, and cooperation. Besides, such relations, as this study illustrates, goes beyond the above factors and stem additionally from the regional and global influential factors, requirements and crises which inevitably trigger these countries' reactions. As a result, even some simultaneous divergent factors potentially affecting the relations between these countries hardly undermine their mutual economic interests. Economic factors in the first stage and then the geo-economic position of the two states, shared history, cultures and security concerns play vital roles within the convergence of the two countries. Geopolitical analysis of effective factors on relations between the two countries in different periods can help to better understand the variables influencing the convergence and divergence of interests of both countries.

This research, looking at the Turkish-Iranian bilateral relations in the light of conditions that were created during Ahmadinejad era leading to an expansion of cooperation, considering convergent factors and on the other hand analyzing divergent factors and researching ways of reducing its impact on the relations between the two countries.

While many scholars have been studying and writing about Iran's foreign policy and foreign relations, little has been done about changing Iran's policy and relations with its neighbors. By choosing a specific case, that is, Turkey can give insights into the progress of Iran and its neighbors, in which they both influence each other's strategies and share such scientific knowledge.

After the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988 and the start of the re-construction period in Iran, the new regional situation arising from Afghanistan War and Iraq War created a necessity for the groundwork onto the development of Iran. Consequently, Iran used its geographical advantages and ideological communications trying to expand its influence in the region. On the other hand, after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, Turkey became interested in promoting the country's strategic position in the Middle East with a strong link to NATO and Europe. The proper understanding of the factors affecting the policies of the two countries is the basis for understanding bilateral relations. With this understanding of the statesmen, the security of the two countries and the region can be increased by strengthening the convergence factors and reducing the impact of divergent factors on the relations between the two countries. This study examines the geopolitical and policy context and its role in relations between the two countries during Ahmadinejad's presidency.

The resources which have been used to reach at the final finding of this study, can be categorized into two, primary and secondary data ranging from academic books, annals, academic articles, press e.g. Isna and Jam Jam, official websites such as of Iran Chamber of Commerce, of Central Investigation Authority, publications and journals. It is vital to point out, that both latest and earlier works on the subject were carefully covered to fit in with academic standard and therefore maintaining the reliability of this research study. However, it is worth to mention the fact that, a substantial part of this research is built upon secondary data due to the limited access to primary sources and the designated time frame for completion of the research, and for certain

reasons some academic sources which were extremely appropriate for the study were either not accessible at all or not fully accessible, so only excerpts from them were used.

All of the above are assessed within the process tracing method. But why was process tracing chosen as a method of analyzing the literature in this study? Essentially the answer lies to the fact that, since it is defined as a single case research method applied within-case to deduce presence or absence of causal mechanisms. Yet for Collier (2010), it refers to a systematic evaluation of diagnostic evidence selected within a framework of research question and hypothesis. An in-depth analysis of a single case is involved in this method, it's an effective technique for examining or testing theories of causality-in-action by evaluating the intervening steps (or variables) and therefore linking the theory and the real world (Reilly, 2010:735). In this case the explaining-outcome process tracing that is case-centric rather than theory-centric is chosen because the study's objective is to evaluate a given case with already developed theory i.e. explaining the improved Turkey-Iran relations during Ahmadinejad era, related factors that facilitated it.

Two themes are fundamentally significant in process tracing method—description and sequence; the method intrinsically explains trajectories of change and causation, however, if there is insufficient description in each step in this trajectory, the analysis cannot be successful. Hence a “static” description at each step is essentially necessary for analyzing the studied process. Equally significant, process-tracing gives importance to the sequential arrangement of all variables (Collier, 2010: 823).



Similarly, in this thesis, events are orderly arranged beginning from the Pre-Pahlavi period, following with the Pahlavi period, Post-Iranian revolution and Ahmadinejad's governance and up to current time. Since many causes can have their own various causes, process-tracing as a critical mechanism can effectively illuminate that issue of confounding variables. The approach links critical junctures to critical antecedents to explain the outcome of interest. Critical juncture refers to a period "in history when the presence or absence of a specified causal force pushes multiple cases onto divergent long-term pathways or pushes a single case onto a new political trajectory. Critical antecedents, on the other hand, are factors or conditions preceding a critical juncture" (Goldstone et. al, cited in Kisangani, 2015: 35).

Process tracing method was chosen due to the advantages related to it as a research method, because according to Kisangani among the various advantages of process-tracing is that it is one of critical mechanism that can be used to elaborate the issue pertaining to complexity of variables since various causal factors can have their own causes (Kisangani, 2015:35). Reilly argues that as a method its efficacy is in its ability to capture the evolvement of an issue, situation or event, particularly when dynamics of time and change are the focal points of the case as in the case of what this thesis paper, where the focus of analyzing is on the changing of Turkey-Iran's foreign policy within a given time frame. And thus, making the method being a good fit for the research study.

Process-tracing method was also found compatible for the study since it can be used for identification and description of policy events, and to illustrate one or more causal factors, concerning building and testing theories of policy

change over time, especially in supporting a theoretical pluralism that addresses policy studies' complexity, numerous methodological merits are presented by this method (Kay and baker, 2015: 2). It facilitates mapping out a single or multiple possible causal trajectories persistent in the outcome and the evidence in a case studied (Reilly, 2010: 736), the single or multiple paths leading to a particular policy event can be identified and illustrated by applying this approach. The method has been used in diverse substantive disciplines to study cognitive processes behind decision-making, innovation and problem-solving (Kay and Baker, 2015; Reilly, 2010).

### **1.3. Theoretical Framework**

Analyzing international relations or foreign policy of states takes a wide range of approaches and theoretical perspectives, essentially the significance of theories is in their ability helps us to make sense of the world, shaping assumptions and thereby facilitating comprehending complex phenomena by simplifying it (Nossal,1998). Then how can various International Relations theories explain the Turkey-Iran relations? And what are their limitations? Most of the International Relations theories are internally and externally challenged; obviously, due to their short-comings as a result, few scholars have been affiliated with one or another. In this subsection, only main stream International Relations theories are being presented alternatively to explain Turkey-Iran relations.

The abstract world of theories and the objective world of politics are closely related. We need theories to extract meaning from the information that targets us daily. Even politicians who do not have a good relation with theories inevitably must trust to these ideas about how the process of operating the objective world is so that they can make a rational and principled decision. Each of the theories in the field of international relations has a different view of international issues according to the considered and emphasized factors and the kind of ontology and epistemology.

In the international political economy, realism, liberalism, and constructivism are the three main viewpoints that can be used to explain the behavior of countries. The realist approach, which is the longest-lived theory among these, focuses more on gaining power and managing the economic affairs of countries. Liberalism, which was the most influential theory after World War II and is emphasizing on the role of the free market, has a clear look at the performance of organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank in creating a positive outlook for international economic relations. On the other hand, constructivism is a new school in international relations that is located in the trans-theoretical field of international relations and views international politics based on a relational ontology that cares about intellectual factors such as culture, norms, and ideas (Varastan, 2018).

By analyzing these theories and the economic actions of countries in the international sector it can be inferred that in the last two decades, again the realistic approach has been the focus of most countries' attention. Realists believe that there is anarchy in the international system. Therefore, every government must pursue its interests and ensure its security and economic

interests. One of the points of difference between realists and liberals is in the business sector. Unlike liberals, realists emphasize relative interests and therefore economic relations are seen as a zero-sum game, that is, the profits of any country would be detrimental to another country. While Liberals see economic relations as a play with positive sum from which all sides will benefit even a little; Realists as always, are looking for their benefit and in case of non-realization of profits, they are even willing to question the neutrality of organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization.

In Iran-Turkey relations, the prevailing atmosphere is caused by many different variables at the regional, national and international level of analysis. For this purpose, to understand and then analyze the nature of foreign policy behavior of Iran and Turkey, in this research, will investigate three theories of realism, liberalism, and constructivism. It explains why liberalism can better explain the development of Iranian-Turkish relations during the Ahmadinejad era.

### **1.3.1. Realism perspective**

Explaining and analyzing the current situation, decisions and even political disobedience at various stages is one of the most important tasks and roles of political systems and statesmen. One of the reasons for the effectiveness of the world's political systems has been the principle of national interest and this principle has played a decisive role in international relations. In the shadow of that view, “there is no permanent friendship and enmity” as an understanding

has emerged. Realists regarded human as evil in nature that violence and conflict is a natural and instinctive thing in his nature. This perspective, which is shared by theorists such as Thomas Hobbes, views mankind is not inherently benevolent but rather self-centered and competitive. So, for countries, the same as for humans, the most important concern is survival.

In early societies and traditional political systems, national interests were explained and summarized only in the interests of the king or the dictator and national interests have played a very minor role in policy and political decisions. However, governments and political systems have distanced themselves from the interests of the king and the sultan with political, social, and cultural changes and provided another definition of national interest.

World wars may have been one of the results of the new understanding and approach of governments as political actors, theorists, and political decision-makers and institutions of national interest. During this period, national interests led to the formation of new and varied political terms and concepts including realism and idealism of diplomacy. The theory of realism was, in fact, a collective reaction to the idealism of the early twentieth century and the failure of the expansionist policies of Germany, Japan and Italy idealists' efforts to make peace through legal moral and transnational norms and this period, realism became the dominant school of thought (Nurbakash 2017). Materialistic Realism is against to semantic constructivism. Jack Snyder believes that realism is a behavioral model where governments are interested in competing to maintain and increase their power and security (Ashley, 2015:2).

Despite different divisions, types of realism have the following in common: The state is seen as a major player in international relations emphasizing on national power and interests. They emphasize the independence of countries. The international system is considered anarchic that governments are struggling for power in this environment without a central authority. They distinguish between the internal and external environment and therefore between domestic and foreign policy (Donnelly, 2008:150).

Realism is also considered as the political theory of economic nationalism is an idea that economic activities should be objectively subordinate to nation building as a goal. Although political realists believe in a Hobbesian state of anarchy for power on the other dimension, they do have conviction in the fact that the state system can peacefully function due to two factors. First, hegemonic leadership that facilitates cooperation and second the balance of power which would prevent conflicts. Based on these assumptions, the states tend to forge alliances with one another.

Principally, similar principles apply to economic relations as well; states create economic alliances in order to avoid trade wars, like in the case of Turkey-Iran economic and political relationships. Due to the failure of the West to ally with Iran in recent years, Turkey has become an economic partner since the country is becoming an energy hub for the region. There is a pressing need to stabilize the relation between Turkey and Iran since they are neighboring states. Additionally, among the reason for the stabilizing the two states relations are the fact that Iran is one of the routes for exporting Turkish goods to Central Asian countries. Trade and commerce between the two states become a

converging factor since in many ways the economies of Iran and Turkey complement each other.

### **1.3.2. Constructivism perspective**

Constructivism as a new approach to International Relations offers a new definition of identity and foreign policy, which differs from traditional definitions of these concepts. One of the important axioms in constructivism theory is how states' norms, identities, and interests are shaped and how they influence foreign policy. Constructivists believe that all of one's actions and reactions take place in the social environment and make decisions, foreign policy is therefore what governments create, decide, interpret and declare, and ultimately implement, influenced by the culture of their own society (Karimfard, 2012:245).

In terms of constructivism, two points about social identity, culture, and foreign policy are important. First, government policymakers create a social world in which, they direct foreign policy in interaction with other countries. Foreign policy is, therefore, a tool to build bridges between governments. Second, countries are associated with social constructions that shape national identity. It is an identity structure that defines national interests.

For constructivism, identity is a key concept in the theory of international relations. In particular, one can explain the political structures and practices of a country by referring to that country's identity. From the structuralism

approach, politics is the power of thought that affects the way governments behave but it cannot explain all the behavior of countries in the international arena (Baylis and Smith, 2009:598).

Constructivism about anarchy and the balance of power, the relationship between state identity and interests, the complexity of power, and so on offers a different and alternative understanding (Hopf, 1998:175). What the constructivists emphasize, is the social nature of the actors. That is, people are actually seen in their social relationships.

Constructivism is appropriate to examine the foreign policy related to the culture, values, and epistemology and this is an efficient theoretical model approach that can explain various aspects. In constructivist theory, identities, norms, and cultures play an important role in global politics and governments' identities and interests are created by norms, interactions, and cultures and it is a process that determines the subject of government engagement (Adler, 1997:317).

For this reason, governments are not the only actors in the field of international relations, and actors such as transnational organizations and institutions, non-governmental organizations, groups, NGOs and associations are also effectively influenced (Hadian, 2003:915).



### 1.3.3. Liberalism Perspective

The most famous aspect of liberal theories is the belief in the possibility of change in international relations through cooperation reducing conflict and ultimately achieving world peace. In liberal theories, the four main axes can be separated: The first is the democratic peace, emphasizing the need to change the political structure of societies to achieve peace. The second is internationalism with an emphasis on the emergence of new actors in the field of international relations and consequently a change in international politics. The third aspect emphasizes the role of trade and communication in reducing wars and creating peace and the fourth aspect emphasizes the role of international institutions in achieving meaningful change at the international level.

Economic relations between countries are leading to increasing convergence and in relations between governments, conflicts instead of being resolved through violence will be settled by judicial agreement. But it should be noted that commerce alone does not bring peace. Under conditions of interdependence, the cost of war increases and must be avoided because we are so interconnected that there is a risk that any war would become a world war.

In the process of convergence, except for governments, that have political power and can hinder or encourage the convergence process, other actors can be very effective in the convergence process, both independently and through government influence (Nurai, 2006).

The first layer of liberal thought suggests that economic interdependence is a factor that compels governments to use force against one another. Because war threatens the welfare and prosperity of each of the parties involved. Accordingly, Liberalism in the International Relations believes that due to three major trends in the international arena, countries are moving towards greater cooperation:

First, the process of interdependence between countries, especially in the economic and trade spheres has made countries more profitable in working together and realizing that the cost of conflict has increased.

Second, the increased economic interdependence will lead to the emergence of a set of international norms, rules, and institutions created to facilitate, facilitate and co-operate between countries and third, the process of international democratization during which the government becomes more democratic reduces conflict and increases cooperation.

In international relations, communication is one of the conditions for cooperation. International communication leads to international negotiations, international negotiations to international cooperation, and international cooperation to international convergence. Since the convergence process is in the final stages of cooperation, communication process must inherently involve the interaction or feedback between the constituent units of an international system (Deutsch, 1996: 832).

Liberalism in international relations is strongly influenced by the logic of liberalism in the economy, and relies on the same assumptions of liberal

economics to explain the economic and political effects of globalization of the market economy in international relations.

From a liberal point of view, trade and economic exchanges are the cause of establishing peaceful relations between nations. The mutual benefit of economic interdependence between national economies fosters international cooperation. While politics tends to create a divergence between people, economy is the cause of their integration and convergence. Governments' economic cooperation on the basis of absolute achievements leads to the benefit of all parties involved, although the level of profitability of the parties may be different.

Relying on the fundamental assumptions of the liberal economy, liberal thinkers in international relations are extending the issue of coordination of benefits and public profitability within national boundaries to the international arena. According to this framework, if there is a free flow of trade in the international arena, countries will enjoy the highest possible level of utility and there will be no economic basis for conflict among them. In their perspective, it is important to distinguish between economics and politics, because if there is a desire for improvement in a market economy, politics can hinder it.

The role and importance of joint ventures and multinational companies have become increasingly important in the current era. According to the focus of international political economy on activity among the international actors, including governments, global corporations, international organizations, and NGOs, this view partly eliminates the weakness and paradigm of realism in

international relations. Realism separates politics from economics and considers power to be mainly political-martial.

## Interdependence

One of the concepts of international cooperation is the concept of “interdependence”. Robert Axelrod (1984) in his book “The Evolution of Cooperation” illustrates this concept with the evolution of cooperation in the game of “Prisoner’s Dilemma”<sup>1</sup>. He illustrated how a cross-strategy could use interdependence over time and despite the motives for infidelity, can lead to stable cooperation.

An increase in interdependence is normally strengthening this effect. Robert Axelrod argues that collaboration requires a prerequisite and this prerequisite visit and meeting of the actors together that meeting in the various forums, organizations, and gatherings and these meetings provide the conditions for communication.

In fact, the theory of interdependence is a description of neoliberal thought. The neoliberal notion of relations between states believes in the possibility of cooperation and the creation of economic interdependencies.

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<sup>1</sup> Prisoner's Dilemma: The prisoner's dilemma is a standard example of a game analyzed in game theory that shows why two completely rational individuals might not cooperate, even if it appears that it is in their best interests to do so. It was originally framed by Merrill Flood and Melvin Dresher while working at RAND in 1950. Albert W. Tucker formalized the game with prison sentence rewards and named it "prisoner's dilemma"

Instead of emphasizing the inevitability of conflict and opposition, neoliberals seek conditions for cooperation and believe in a positive sum game rather than zero sum game, whereby everyone can enjoy the economic benefits of cooperation (O'Brien and Williams, 2016:29). In total, this theory has a theoretical approach based on the interaction of economics and politics.

Developing trade, investment and financial cooperation between countries will create closer economic cooperation. Each country faces different factors disrupting the economy; however, it has little ability to control such factors by itself. Therefore, interdependence provides incentives for cooperation and competition at the same time.

### **1.3. Literature Review**

Özcan and Özdamar pointed out in their article titled “Uneasy Neighbors: Turkish-Iranian Relations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution”, that there was a drastic change in Iran’s foreign policy after the fall of Pahlavi Shah’s regime that was followed up by the 1979 Iran Islamic Revolution, consequently Iran became a challenge to the United States. They continue by explaining the level of the relationship between two states that it was low with suspicion in the first decade of the revolution since Turkey was part of the western alliance. However, the relationship begun with the initiative of Turkey and with economic and commercial relations, Turkey had recognized the new Iranian government just three days after the revolution and had made it clear that

leaving CENTO<sup>1</sup> would not weaken relations between the two countries (Özcan and Özdamar, 2010: 101-117).

In recent years the progress of a positive relations between Turkey and Iran is seen with suspicion for Larrabee and Nader (2013) concluded that many questions have been raised about the future cooperation between the two countries due to Turkey's participation in NATO, and that having a dynamic society and strengthening relations with the West, Iran could help to improve relations with Turkey.

Larabee and Nader (2013) believed that the western identity of Turkey is highly influenced by Turkish-Iranian relations, in fact they argued that despite the intensification of the United States and Western sanctions on Iran in 2009 and Turkey had deepened their political and economic relations and that is evidently observed from many cultural and geographical commonalities between the two states, and a new foreign policy based on independence and national interests, without ignoring other influential factors (Larrabee and Nader, 2013).

The Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979 was a turning point in the relations between Iran and Turkey and this thesis tries to analyze the relationship between the two countries during the Ahmadinejad era. This thesis describes the analysis of the relations between the two countries in six main concepts.

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<sup>1</sup> CENTO The Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), originally known as the Baghdad Pact or the Middle East Treaty Organization (METO), was a military alliance of the Cold War. It was formed in 1955 by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and the United Kingdom and dissolved in 1979.

The first is the geopolitical case that local situations bring the opportunity for the countries. The second is the identity of their relatives and their roots and their relations with the rulers. The third is cultural differences between the two countries. The fourth is the borders and border security of the two countries, of course, this boundary established in treaty of Qasr-e Shirin<sup>1</sup> in 1639 by the agreement between the Safavids and the Ottoman Empire is now without difficulty. The fifth is the borderline and the border security of the two countries, which, of course, is the boundary that was set in 1639 between the Safavid and Ottoman Saints. The sixth is the presentation of two different models of Islam.

Yet other scholars see that the energy, national security, and the economic factors were among the most important elements impacting the relations between Iran and Turkey during this period in the early 2000s. This was done by considering the foreign policy of AK Party and its economic and security perspective and by examining the relations between Iran and Turkey on the issue of Kurds and national security and regional policies of the two countries.

The election of Ahmadinejad in 2005 coincided with the November 2002 election in Turkey that brought for the first time in Turkish social-political history an Islamist political party in a government without a coalition for the

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<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin, also called Treaty of Zuhab, was an accord signed between the Safavid Empire and the Ottoman Empire on May 17, 1639. The accord ended the Ottoman-Safavid War of 1623-1639 and was the last conflict in almost 150 years of intermittent wars between the two states over territorial

sufficient votes that they had secured. The AKP, whose leaders were members of the former Islamic (Welfare Party) <sup>1</sup>, sought international recognition and legitimacy.

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has continued to rule Turkey since then, turning the course of state's foreign policy, as well as its relations with Iran. Not only did the party focus on improving Turkey-Iran relations but also with the European Union and the United States.

Karacasulu and Askar believe that mistrust exists between the two states because of the past experiences and social memory in both countries. Iran and Turkey managed emotional and peaceful relations through the agreement of the Shrine Palace, through which as two regional powers had to help build a constructive policy in the region (Karacasulu and Askar, 2011).

Derakhshe and Divsalar (2011) who closely studied Turkey-Iranian relations since the rise of the AKP in Turkey from 2002 to 2009 and its convergent and divergent factors between the two states and conclusively stated that the participation of a regional strategy can provide solutions to resolve the crisis.

According to them, a look at East and partnership with neighbors are among the factors leading to convergence between the two states, leading to the expansion of relations between Turkey and Iran during the period of the AK party to change the Turkish strategy (Derakhshe and Divsalar, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup>The Welfare Party was an Islamist political party in Turkey. It was founded by Ali Türkmen, Ahmet Tekdal and Necmettin Erbakan in Ankara in 1983.



For the reasons that led to decline in the negative Turkey-Iranian relations in the past decade Ebrahim, Yusoff and Jalili (2017) underline the importance of eliminating this suspicion and creating trust between the two countries by the AKP. In addition to focusing on improving relations with Western countries, which has strengthened its position inside and outside the country, AKP has strengthened confidence-building relations between the two countries. Regarding the impact of the economy, politics and strategic issues in the Iran and Turkey relations between 2002 and 2015, have investigated and researched. They concluded during Ahmadinejad and Erdogan administrations (2002–2010) when added to regional and international events, these changes allowed Iran and Turkey to overcome a long history of negativity and develop the firm ground of mutual trust upon which both nations now collaborate for the benefit of their people (Ebrahim, Yusoff and Jalili, 2017).

For Elik (2012) by attempting to expound the modified version of middle-power state theory and its impact on dimensions of the Turkish and Iranian international relationship putting the role of energy in consideration especially the contract for the sale of natural gas in relations between the two countries, he argues that the relationship between Turkey and Iran has become a competition for friendship and the neutralization of experience (Elik, 2012).

## CHAPTER TWO

### Historical Background of Turkish-Iranian Relations

#### 2.1. Before the Pahlavi Era (Before 1925)

After the Persian King Cyrus captured Sardis<sup>1</sup> in 547 BCE, the capital of the Lydian Kingdom, he assigned Croesus as the secretary of the Achaemenid Court. This established the first international communication between Susa<sup>2</sup> and Sardis. This started the relationship between Lydia (around present-day Izmir) and the Achaemenid Empire (Pirniya, 1927:64).

But relations between Iran and Turkey were shaped in the Ottoman Empire era. These relationships lasted for more than 500 years with many cultural, historical and religious connections (Kharazi 2005). Of course, these two entities not only had a difference in political structure, but also ideologically, with a structural disagreement.

The relationship between these two powerful neighbors included bloody wars, in which each side tried to overcome its neighbors. Of course, this relationship was not only due to political-military-religious struggle, but also to explore other areas such as economics, development Social and cultural relationships are important.

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<sup>1</sup> Sardis was an ancient city at the location of modern Sart, near the Salihli in Turkey's Manisa Province.

Of many factors influencing relations between the two countries, the major ones included religious disputes, control of territory, influencing tribes along borders, commercial activity, and economic competition.

After an extended period of conflict, the relationship between Iranians and the Ottomans entered into a period of relative peace. This period of time developed through political interaction with their common Muslim religion, facilitating relations between the people. These helped reduce the impact of ideological differences, allowing for the building of ties based on common interests within the context of the developing international situation in the region.

The era of European colonialism around the world placed Iran and the Ottomans as major powers in the Muslim world, with the relationship between the two countries being influenced by international rivalry, and the threat of domination by European powers. Historically, Iran and Turkey, and their predecessors, the Persian and Ottoman Empires, have been rivals as the two major non-Arab Muslim powers in the Middle East.

## **2.2. During the Pahlavi Era (1925-1979)**

The ambition of the growing Ottoman Empire and the Safavid Shiites in Iran eventually led the two nations to become increasingly greater rivals. This again led to wars between the two countries with subsequent implementation of important treaties playing an essential role in future relations. The most

important milestone in modern relations is the relationship formed between the new country of Turkey led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the Pahlavi monarchy in Iran. This led to improved relations due to converging interests until the end of the reign of Pahlavi in 1979.

The establishment of Reza Shah's regime in Iran led to improving relations with foreign governments and Turkey. Political, social and cultural reforms in Iran occurred at the same time that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk implemented reforms in Turkey, which included dissolving the Ottoman Empire and establishing a new government. Atatürk had some role in influencing reforms in Iran and facilitated the improvement of Iranian-Turkish relations.

Reza Khan, after returning from Turkey, had many changes in mind, and wanted to make Iran as close as possible to Turkey, including in the economic aspect. The meeting between Reza Khan and Atatürk, all border disputes between the two countries were resolved and there were grounds for making couples and economic contracts (Kharrazi 2005).

This began a period dominated by peace and dignity between the two countries starting in 1932, which was reflected by the visit of Reza Shah to Turkey in 1934. The Westernization of Iran and Turkey --to include reforms such as reducing the influence of veils-- and the conclusion of important agreements such as the treaty over the Sa'dabad region, brought a good relationship between these two countries. This reduced cultural differences that had caused tensions for centuries.

Mohammad Reza followed Reza Shah, and —like the leadership in Turkey-- followed a policy based on alliances with the West, especially America. Yet there were tensions between the two countries, especially in relation to the transit of Iranian trucks through Turkey. With the rise of Pan-Turkism in Turkey, Mohammad Reza began to become distrustful of Pan-Turkish politics (Mahdavi, 1996:45). Despite this, there was progress in relations between the two countries. For example, Mohammad Reza Shah took a major step in the signing of the Baghdad agreement in 1955, the CENTO agreement in 1959, and the agreement for regional development known as RCD in 1964 (Madani, 2001: 315).

During this period there were many agreements following the joint economic commission of Iran and Turkey in 1975, which facilitated economic, political and cultural ties. These efforts were designed to help the mutual development of these two important countries.

### **2.3. Iran and Turkey in the Aftermath of the Revolution (After 1979)**

After the Islamic revolution in 1979, the Turkish-Iranian relationship can be described as a “structural regional rivalry”, of which intensity and focus have been determined by conjectural changes at the systemic and sub-systemic levels in the first decade of the revolution.

## **The Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War**

The victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was followed by secular rule in Turkey. After the revolution in Iran, the 1980 military coup led by General Kenan Evren occurred in Turkey (Irna, 2018).

Turkey's secular governments frequently accused Iran's Islamic regime of supporting the Kurdish separatist movement (PKK) and Turkey's radical Islamists. Iran, for its part, disapproved of Turkey's close relations with Israel, and accused the country of supporting the opposition groups fighting against the Islamic regime (Habibi, 2012:2).

In addition to these issues, some analysts in Iran believe that the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran is one of the reasons for the 1980 military coup in Turkey, and according to some experts, the West arranged the coup to prevent Islamist influence growing in Turkey.

During this period, relations between the two countries were affected by the military coup in Turkey and the beginning of the 8-year-old war between Iran and Iraq. Relations were also weakened by the internal problems of both.

## **The Second Decade of the Revolution 1989-1999 (Reconstruction and Rafsanjani)**

The second decade of the Iranian revolution coincided with Rafsanjani's presidency in August 1989 and the beginning of the post-war rebuilding of the country and Turgut Özal's presidency in 1989 who established Turkey's economic policy in the transition to a free market system. Therefore, these two

presidents had a great role in building relations between the two countries after the Islamic Revolution.

Özal's views in reducing tension and increasing economic relations and definitions that he left behind in connection with Iran in the Turkish political system are currently in place, so that after years of that era, little has changed. Although he was basically a supporter of the West, he interacted with Islamists and was tolerant of them.

Due to this policy, Turkey largely avoided the escalation of crises in its political relations with Iran. Additionally, the development of economic relations with Iran is a priority and, consequently, Turkey considers political relations as a factor in supporting bilateral relations.

### **The Third Decade of the Revolution (reformists - Khatami 1997-2005)**

The third decade of the revolution, coincided with the presence of Erbakan as the prime minister in 1997 in Turkey. Among the prime ministers of Turkey, Necmettin Erbakan could be considered the first Turkish prime minister who had very warm relations with Iran and was the first Turkish prime minister with Islamic values. After serving as prime minister, he made his first official visit to Iran. This issue was criticized at the time in secular circles and by those hostile to the countries' relations, and was perhaps one of the most important factors leading to Erbakan's eventual dismissal.

During the prime ministry of Erbakan between 1996-1997, the D8 was composed of eight major Islamic countries, including Iran, and in the following

years, it was one of the agents of the rapprochement and development of relations between the two countries. The contract for the purchase of gas from Iran was also signed during his prime ministerial term.

Considering that since the establishment of the Republican system, it was the first time that the Turkish government was run by the administration of an Islamist party, it attracted great suspicion from the secular and military spectrum. As a result of the development of the influence of Erbakan and the emergence of more Islamist tendencies in the government, the opposition became more alarmed until, in 1997, Erbakan was forced to resign on charges of anti-secular activities with the intervention of the army, and the following year, the Welfare Party was dissolved (Larrabee and Rabasa, 2008:42-44). After Erbakan resigned under pressure from the army on 30 June 1998, relations between the two countries with the secular powers were maintained at that level, but with the advent of the Justice and Development Party after 2002, the relationship entered a new stage.

### **First term of Ahmadinejad (2005-2009)**

Ahmadinejad, who was elected as the mayor of Tehran in 2003 by Tehran council after the city council elections, won the 2005 presidential election over the Iranian veteran politician Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The factors behind Ahmadinejad's victory in the 2005 election can be studied in both domestic and foreign sides. In the domestic aspect, besides the obvious and hidden influence of power factors in Iran in support of Ahmadinejad, presenting popular electoral slogans, such as efficient government promoting



justice; opposing corruption (Kalantari 2005: 4), absence of strict dress code on women's hijab, and an uncompromising stance on nuclear issue (Fallahi 2007 93) and the sense of need for change in the public were the factors behind Ahmadinejad's victory in the election.

But in the international dimension, Iran adopted a pragmatic, peaceful policy based on détente during the Rafsanjani and Khatami presidency for 16 years, with a plan for civilizations in political circles and the United Nations to expand international cooperation, especially with the West and the United States and showed that there has been a change in its approach (Ramezani, 2002). But the attitude to Iran from the West was not positive. Especially after the September 11, 2001 attacks, despite Iran's efforts for cooperation, United States called Iran the biggest threat and pursued hostile policies toward Iran. This stressful and intimidating environment was one of the influencing factors of international environment in Ahmadinejad's rise.

When Ahmadinejad took over the presidency of Iran in 2005, the Turkish government had been in the Islamist Justice and Development Party's hand (AK Parti) for three years. The Islamic thinking of both governments gave Iran and Turkey the opportunity to work on resolving past doubts and developing their relations.

Hugh Pope from International Crisis Studies Group in Turkey says the Turkish government was looking for economic opportunities in the Muslim world at the time. "Turkish leaders have Islamic roots, at the time; they didn't pay attention to the differences between Shiites and Sunnis. They believed that Iran was a neighboring Muslim country, and a fruitful opportunity to start a

new relationship. I think the Turks also felt that the Iranians would accept them better because of their Islamic thinking, and maybe that was the beginning of the closeness of the two countries." he said.

Three factors: Commercial equations, Turkey's opposition to Israel in favor of the Palestinians, and a joint fight against guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), were important in the expansion of relations between the two countries during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's first term of presidency.

The coincidence with the start of Ahmadinejad's presidency and Rafsanjani presence in power provided a good opportunity for economic and political development. Why so the AKP, that founded by former disciples and partners of Erbakan, placed importance on political and economic relations with its close neighbors, including Iran, and during the reign of this party, relations between Iran and Turkey increased over the years. During the rule of AKP, the regular meetings of the leaders of the two countries were at their highest level, and the level of relations between the two countries was promoted to develop strategic relations.

#### **The Fourth Decade of the Revolution – the second term of Ahmadinejad (2009-2013)**

Ahmadinejad won the election again in 2009 with supported by conservative forces in power, in spite of the controversial election and street protests. After Ahmadinejad's disputed presidential election in June, Erdogan and his ally, the Turkish president, Abdullah Gül, were among the first foreign leaders to send congratulatory messages. Gül, then Turkey's president, visited to Iran during

post-election protests, and asked the leaders of the Middle East countries to pay attention to the "realistic" demands of their people in his meeting with the reporters in Tehran at the beginning of the protests, but without directly referring to Iran, and then continued his trip, visiting Isfahan and Tabriz.

Speaking to the Guardian in an interview, Erdogan called the move a "necessity of bilateral relations". "Mr. Ahmadinejad was declared to be the winner, not officially, but with a huge vote difference, and since he is someone we have met before, we have been called to congratulate him," he said. Erdogan said he would not raise the issue of post-election crackdown with his hosts, saying it would represent "interference" in Iranian domestic affairs. (Robert Tait. 25 Oct 2009)

This position was welcomed by the Iran's government and relations between Turkey and Iran increased during the second term of Ahmadinejad's presidency.

Ahmadinejad era coincided with the period of nuclear-related sanctions, which provided an opportunity for the development of relations between the two countries. In addition, in the course of the nuclear negotiations, members of the five plus one with Iran in the past years were hosted by Turkey, and negotiations took place at various levels in Istanbul and Ankara.

In 2010, Turkey and Brazil reached an agreement with Iran on a nuclear program and exchange of uranium enriched in Tehran. Many call this event the culmination of Iran-Turkey relations, but the US and Western parties reject Tehran's agreement, frustrating Turkey. In the same year, Turkey, a temporary member of the UN Security Council, opposed all Council resolutions against

Iran, and showed strong support. Shortly after Tehran agreement, Turkish President, Gül, went to Iran with a delegation of Turkish businessmen, aimed to expand economic relations with this country.

Bilateral cooperation between the two countries progressed, as well as bilateral relations at the level of various organizations for regional cooperation and multilateral cooperation. During this period, the leaders of the two countries announced the goal of expanding economic relations, bringing economic interactions to \$30 billion a year (Isna 17 September 2010). However, economic ties between the two countries has much greater potential due to the neighboring countries in the ECO Regional Cooperation Organization and the D8.

The most important aspect of the strategic relationship between Iran and Turkey is the stability in the energy field, which was founded during Erbakan era, on the basis of which oil and gas pipelines were constructed from Iran to Turkey. Iran is now one of the most important suppliers of natural gas and crude oil for Turkey, however, the amount of purchases has declined due to sanctions on Iran.

The issue of sanctions against Iran is one of the most important obstacles in developing the volume of economic relations between the two countries, but in parallel, some infrastructural deficiencies can be considered as one of the problems in further developing economic relations.

Tourism between the two countries is also one of the most important areas for economic cooperation. Due to the lack of visas, geographical proximity, and

beautiful nature and amenities during recent years, Turkey has been among the most important destinations for Iranian tourists, and tourists from Iran are always among the top five in the list of foreign tourists in Turkey.

The survey of Iranian-Turkish trade data from the beginning of the era of the AKP's sovereignty represents a huge increase in the capacity of trade between the two countries.

Since 2002, there has been great potential for greater cooperation in economic relations between Iran and Turkey. According to the official statistics of Turkish economic institutions, the volume of foreign trade between the two countries amounted to \$2.4 billion in 2002, after the success of Ahmadinejad in 2005 this increased to over \$10 billion, and in 2012, reached to 22 billion dollars. But the United States and European Union sanctions on Iran's oil revenues and the creation of the Syrian problem made this figure in 2013 to less than 14,5 billion dollars (Haghpanah, 2013).

### **The term of Rouhani (Since 2013)**

At the time, relations between the two countries were affected by the Syrian issue, BARJAM (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), Iran-West relations over nuclear issues and the failed coup in Turkey. At the beginning of Rouhani's presidency, despite the differences arising from the Syrian issue and the conflicting interests resulted from it, relations continued to be moderately good. During the failed July 15 coup, Iran's full support for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the early hours of the coup brought a great improvement.

According to the statistics, Turkish exports to Iran in 2015 were more than 3.5 billion dollars. Despite the fact that it reached \$5 billion in 2016, in 2017 Turkish exports to Iran declined to an estimated 3.2 billion dollars, the lowest level for 6 years. Turkey is the only country that Iran signed a preferential trade agreement.

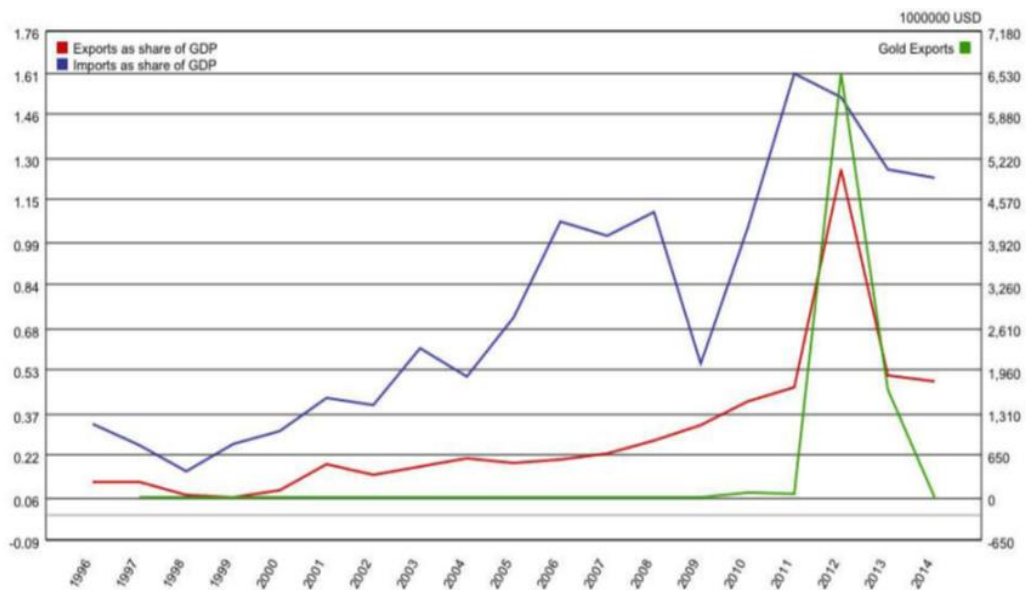
## 2.4. Overview of the relations between the two countries

Studying the relations between the two countries in the past years shows the depth of Iran-Turkey relations, which continued even in very difficult circumstances. Economics and trade have always played an important role in relations, especially in recent decades. But with the start of Ahmadinejad's presidency, Iran's trade relations with Turkey have experienced a great increase.

One of the main reasons for this leap in commercial relations during this period is the creation of an appropriate environment and mutual trust. Of course, Turkey has the greater potential for building confidence in trade relations, but on the other hand, Iran's big and prestigious market creates a significant potential for Turkish economic activities.

The chart below, based on the statistics of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, shows the volume of trade between Iran and Turkey over the course of 18 years.

Figure 2: The volume of exports and imports of Iran and Turkey from 1996 to 2014



According to the former Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki, the current level of economic cooperation between Tehran and Ankara is historically unprecedented. Mottaki stressed the importance of the country's leadership in expanding ties. Mottaki was also the Iranian Ambassador to Ankara from 1985 to 1989 and during the presidency of Ahmadinejad, he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran. From his point of view, the bilateral relations play a vital role in the security and thus the progress of the region. However, it is worth noting that, Mottaki was one of the leading critical voices Turkey's policies on the Syrian crisis.

However, some international relations experts believe that the international conditions and the natural circumstances of the two countries have been effective on the development of relations, and not just Ahmadinejad's

characteristic role. "If there was anyone other than Ahmadinejad in power, it would probably lead the two neighbors' relations to the same condition, because Iran's major foreign policy is being codified by Ayatollah Khamenei."

In this section, the history of the relations between Iran and Turkey in the pre-Pahlavi period and then during the reign of Reza Khan (Pahlavi I) and Mohammad Reza Shah (Pahlavi II) was examined, and then 40 years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran examined and analyzed. The statistics presented that economic ties between the two countries during the Ahmadinejad era (except for 2009) were heavily upbeat and peaked in 2012. In the next section, the foreign and security policy of the two countries will be examined and analyzed.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Case Study and Analysis

#### 3.1. Foreign Policy and National Interest

##### 3.1.1. Turkey's Foreign Policy

The principle of non-interference in Middle East issues was considered a priority for Turkey's foreign policy strategy during most of the twentieth century. But over the past decade, Turkey has significantly moved away from its Kemalist and introverted tradition, and has become one of the most active actors in the region. Based on this view, following the rise of the AKP in 2002 in Turkey, and its policy of zero-problem strategy with its neighbors, Turkey has established closer ties with its long-standing regional rivals Syria, Iran, and Iraq.

Ankara supported solving the conflicts between Israel and Syria (2008-2010), as well as Iran's nuclear case. The diplomatic relations that Turkey developed with Iran and the Palestinian Hamas, inflicted dissent with the United States and Israel. Following this event, Turkey's loyalty with the West and its Western aspirations became ambiguous and Turkey's move was either read as an indication of its incline towards Islamism or that it was to prove its alliance with the Eastern political circle. The complex layers that constitute Turkey's new strategy and attempts to explain the development of this new strategy and the recent uprisings in the Middle East.

Turkey's population is 81 million and after Germany is the second largest in Europe, and expected to reach around 100 million by the middle of the 21st

century. This would make Turkey the most populous country in all of Europe, and one of the major populations in the Middle East.

In the past two decades, Turkey has tried to act as a regional power in several areas, including the Balkans, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean, and it let Turkey to emerge as an increasingly important regional actor, wielding substantial military as well as diplomatic weight. When we look at the policies of Turkey over recent 1 years and its wide area of influence, it to some extent recalls the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the AK party tendencies can be explained in this new style. Of course, Ankara has more soft power applies including political, economic, diplomatic and cultural influence in the old territory of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey has national and strategic interests.

Turkey has been a member of major international organizations, including NATO, OIC "Organization of Islamic Cooperation", BSEC "Black Sea Economic Cooperation and" and ECO and has always tried to introduce himself as an influential member of these organizations (Gareth M., 2007:1).

During the AK party era, the attention of the Turkish Authorities, in addition to the West, was also focused on the Middle East. In other words, the government from the Justice and development Party tried to use the experience of the Erbakan government to integrate the policy of looking east, in addition to the tradition of the westward looking policy, and take advantage of both. Turkey showed its endeavors in expanding ties with Islamic countries, efforts to reduce the tensions in the Middle East and the new approach to Middle East

Developments, Cooperation with Europe and international activities (Dehghani, 2012:266).

In recent years Turkey has revealed that it desires to become a model in the Islamic world in terms of governance. The active presence in the cultural, political, and economic issues of the Islamic world, which has increased Turkey's relations with the Islamic world, and in particular the issue of Palestine, where Turkey has become a military alliance with Israel, has become a state of violent acts of this regime, is one of the most important measures of Turkey. Which is being analyzed in order to make Turkey a model for the Islamic world.

After AKP came to power, there have been many changes in Turkey's foreign policy. Turkey has been a leading player in the Middle East since 2002 and tried to play the active role of a model of a democratic Islamic state. In the past decade, Turkey changed the depth of its geographical impact by deepening its engagement with the Middle East (Öniş, 2012:45). Turkey has established better and closer relations with Iran, Syria, and Iraq, assumed a leadership position in the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Ankara has been a supporter of the Arab League and has helped peace in Lebanon through helping United Nations forces. She has also mediated in the Syrian-Israeli conflict as well as the nuclear standoff with Iran (Taşpınar 2012:127).

In fact, the pre-AK governments in Turkey have, in varying degrees, an emphasis on historical and cultural ties with the Middle East (Altunışık, 2009:178). Another factor that has prompted the AKP to confront the region is "it is believed that Turkey, as the heir to the Ottoman Empire, has a lot of

responsibility regarding the nature of its international relations" (Oğuzlu 2008:13). According to its strategies, the AKP firmly believed that history and culture, together with economic relations and affiliation, consolidated the relationship with the Middle East.

Economic factors, in particular, the economic development and export development policy in Turkey, despite the potential of Iran's large market and economic capacity, have made Turkey a growing business power with economic needs, as a trading country (Kirişçi 2009:29-56).

In addition, regional developments of the past decade in the Middle East, such as the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, under the Bush Doctrine, and the decision of the Turkish Parliament on March 1, 2003, have worsened Turkish-US relations, and also increased anxiety in Turkey concerning its vital interests. Hence, Turkey along with Iran and Syria, increased its diplomatic and economic relations in order to "soft balance" the USA (Ayman 2012:566-567). The increase in terrorism in the region also affects the Turkish-Persian relationship. Ahmadinejad, the former president, said that "We have to have coordination between the governments of Turkey, Iran and Iraq" (Today's Zaman 2008). Hence, security cooperation and fighting cooperatively against "cousin" terrorist groups, namely PKK and PJAK, became another factor that has increased strategic relations, to provide security in the area.

### 3.1.2. Turkey's foreign policy toward Iran

Turkey has started a new page in its improving relationship with Iran in the past decade, building cooperation and good neighborly relations with Tehran. Turkey views the Islamic Republic of Iran as a natural ally in the war against PKK. Ankara and Tehran shared other political concerns. Another factor is Turkey's attempt to reduce its security dependence on the United States, which provides an incentive for the country to create an independent logic for solving security problems related to Iran. Turkey has repeatedly stated that it is against the deployment of nuclear weapons in the Middle East, and this Turkish concern and opposition is due to the possibility of changing the military balance in the region, which could trigger the nuclear race and blend the current problems in the Persian Gulf (Uygur, 2008:6).

In the main, Iran's position in Turkey's foreign policy has significantly increased during the rule of the AKP. Today, Iran is the third-largest supplier of energy in Turkey. Turkey's role in the developments of Iran's foreign policy, such as hosting several rounds of Iran's nuclear negotiations and active mediation in this area, has contributed effectively to the issuance of Tehran's statement in the light of the emerging powers of the world, Brazil and the opposition. The sanctions of the Security Council against Iran have contributed to the increasing regional and international status of Turkey. Indeed, relations between Iran and Turkey in recent years have been based on the fundamental principles of non-interference in internal affairs, good neighborliness, and economic and military cooperation. As a result, the Turkish government and public opinion do not regard Iran as a direct foreign threat (Ulgen, 2010).

However, recent developments in Turkish foreign policy have caused serious challenges; one of the most important is the Syrian crisis. In this case, these two political units did not recognize each other's political structures, nor the other's ideology and ideological existence, and there was a structural divergence in relations.

### **3.1.3. Iranian Foreign Policy**

According to the Iranian 20-year vision document, the three areas of the region and neighbors, the world of Islam and universe has been designated as a priority for foreign policy. In the first priority, Iran plans to become the first power of the region. In the second priority, the target is to create an inspirational pattern. And in the third priority, the constructive engagement with the world to provide the necessary resources for the first priority is the goal. Peaceful coexistence, détente, confidence building, multilateralism, active and productive diplomacy, the development of pivotal, oppression and right-seeking are the principles by which the conditions of national security and authority will be strengthened. This will be realized through economic growth, political participation, decentralization and regional engagement, and at the regional level, Iran's foreign policy should be based on co-operation with the countries with which they have common interests (Askarian, 2012).

Iran's historical, civilizational, geopolitical, and political, and security situation in the regional and international security system is such that it makes the different approaches in practicing this principle inevitable.

The main approaches to regionalism of Iran's foreign policy are: geopolitical and geopolitical approach, historical and cultural approach, ideological, political and security approach.

Some experts consider the main challenge of Iranian foreign policy is to create a balance between two elements of geopolitics and ideology (Ramezani, 2004), others, the need to focus on the historical and civilian approach, and yet another group argues a need to balance ideological and pragmatic approaches (Karacasulu and Karakir, 2011). Taken together, since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, overall since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, regional foreign politics has been a combination of ideological, geopolitical, and pragmatic considerations, and the importance of the nation-state, the geopolitics and the Shiite ideology of Iran's regionalism is important.

Iranians have traditionally been highly sensitive to foreign interference in their country, pointing to such events as the Russian conquest of northern parts of the country in the course of the 19th century, the British and Russian occupations of the First and Second World Wars, and the CIA plot to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq<sup>1</sup>. This suspicion manifests itself in attitudes that many foreigners might find incomprehensible. Iran's Foreign relations are concerned with inter-governmental relationships between the Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries. Geography is a very significant factor in this.

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Mosaddegh was the 35th prime minister of Iran, holding office from 1951 until 1953, when his government was overthrown in the 1953 Iranian coup orchestrated by the United States' CIA and the United Kingdom's MI6

The ideology of Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution infuses Iran's foreign policy. The revolution overthrew a secular, authoritarian leader, the Shah, who the leaders of the revolution asserted had suppressed Islam and its clergy. In the early years, Iran attempted to "export" its revolution to nearby Muslim states.

Iran claims that the region's politics and economics have been distorted by Western intervention and economic domination. Iranian leaders also assert that the creation of Israel is a manifestation of Western intervention that deprived the Palestinians of legitimate rights.

However, many experts believe that the element of ideology in Iran's foreign policy was weakened during the first years of the revolution and after the Iran-Iraq war, especially during the Khatami era. More weakness resulted from a desire to create stimulation and motivation.

Turkey was a major trading partner, whose position could help alleviate Iran's isolation and bridge the gap between Iran and the West. Increasing Iran's Islamic Republic's regional prestige through constructive interaction with its Western allies involved exploiting economic opportunities that brought major changes to the Middle East.

#### **3.1.4. National Interests**

Iran's national interests also shape its foreign policy. Iran's leaders, stressing Iran's well-developed civilization and historic independence, claim a right to be



recognized as a major power in the region. They often contrast Iran's history with that of the six Persian Gulf monarchy states (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman).

Iran has sometimes tempered its commitment to aid Shiites, in order to promote its geopolitical interests. For example, it has supported mostly Christian-inhabited Armenia, rather than Shiite-inhabited Azerbaijan, in part to thwart cross-border Azeri nationalism among Iran's large Azeri minority.

The lack of support for the Islamic movements of the Commonwealth of Central Asia against Russia, and the preference for cooperation and good relations with Russia to support such movements, and support the sovereignty of the region against the Islamists, such as supporting Assad in Syria, shows that Iran's foreign policy has been more aimed at nation interest rather than religion and ideology.

### **3.2. Analysis of Factors Involved in Relations Between Iran and Turkey**

By examining the relationship between the two countries in recent years It can be seen that, while Iran and Turkey are seeking to increase their influence in the region by using various factors and strategies, the historical background of relations based on the economic, political and security cooperation between the two countries, it provides the groundwork that this has an unmatched strength in the area. Three elements of religion and culture, economics and

security play central role in aligning the interests of Iran and Turkey, and constitute the main relations of the expansion of relations between the two countries, the three elements of the global power and regional role, ideology and divergent politics have relations between the two countries.

### 3.2.1 Convergence Factors of the Two Countries

Prior to the Islamic Revolution, Iran-Turkey relations were largely based on political and economic factors that continued with the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran because of the ideological divisions between the two countries. With the coming of the AKP in Turkey, the security component, along with the economic component, has also become more prominent.

The most important convergent variables in Iran-Turkey relations can be seen in the complementarity of their economy and politics. Due to the incompatibility of Iran with the West, Turkey is becoming an energy hub for the region. Turkey and Iran are two neighboring countries that need mutual stability, for example, Iran is one of the routes for exporting Turkish goods to Central Asian countries<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Central Asian countries stretches from the Caspian Sea in the west to China in the east, and from Afghanistan and Iran in the south to Russia in the north. The region consists of the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

### 3.2.2. Effect of economics on convergence in the relations between Iran and Turkey

Economics and trade affiliations are the most important factors in the convergence of Iran-Turkey relations. Turkey is ranked 17th among world economies and Iran is 25th. These economies are in many cases complementary, so this structure has facilitated economic relations. Iran's need for industry and technology, and the need for the Turkish economy for energy, and especially gas, has led to the overlap between the two economies. The following diagrams represent 10 product groups with the highest dollar value in Iran and Turkey's import and export purchases during 2017. Also shown is the percentage share each product category represents in terms of overall of 10 product imports and exports into Iran and Turkey. By comparing it, we can examine the need and dependence of the two countries' economies on each other.

Figure 3: Iran's Top 10 Imports

Figure 4: Turkey's Top 10 Exports

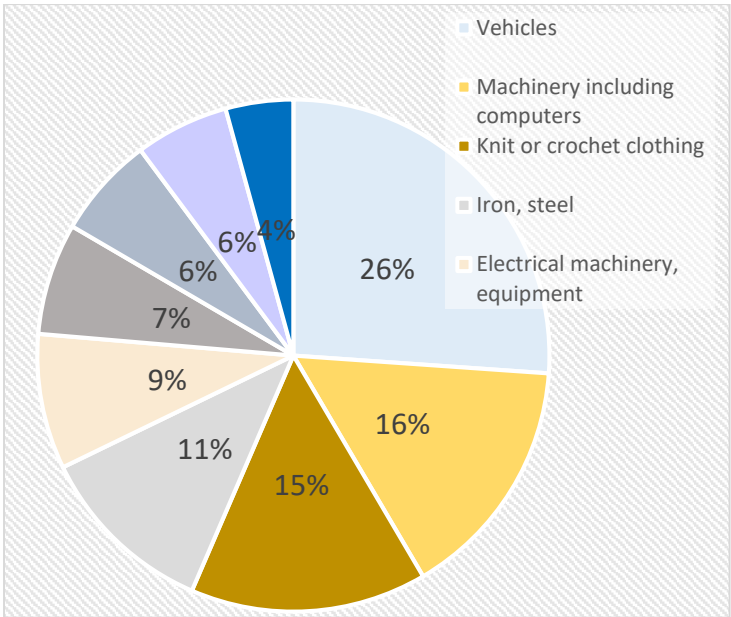
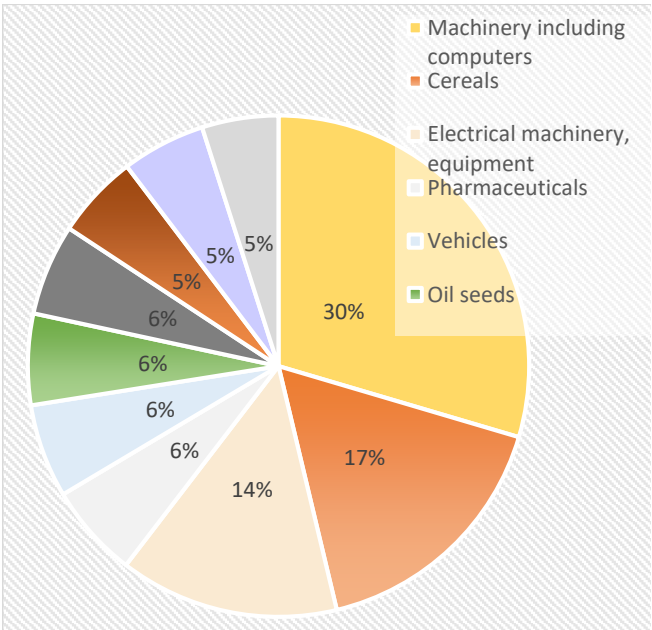


Figure: 5 Turkey's Top 10 Imports

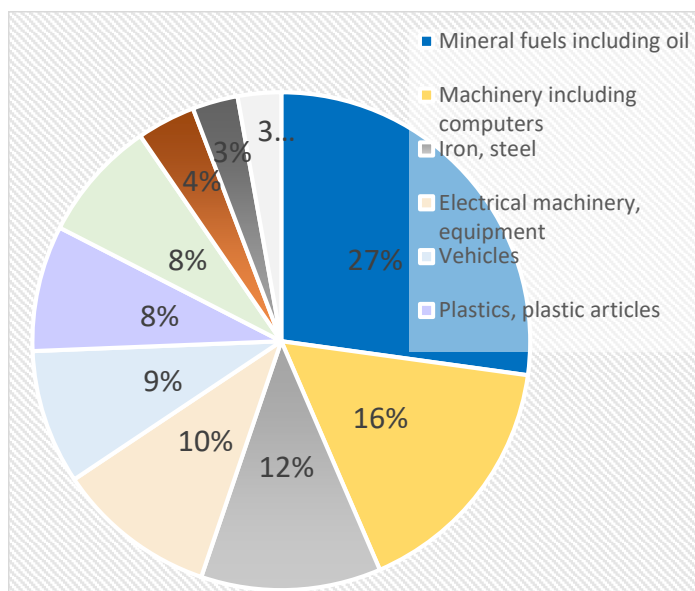
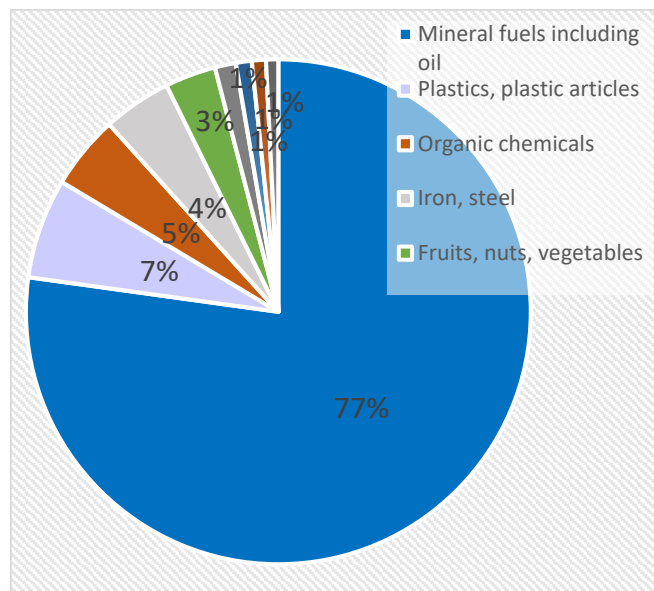


Figure: 6 Iran's Top 10 Exports



(Sources: International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook Database (GDP based on Purchasing Power Parity)*. Accessed on February 6, 2019)

The charts above clearly show that Iranian export goods, including Turkish imports and Turkish goods, are among the needs of Iran, which, of course, have increased dependence on sanctions.

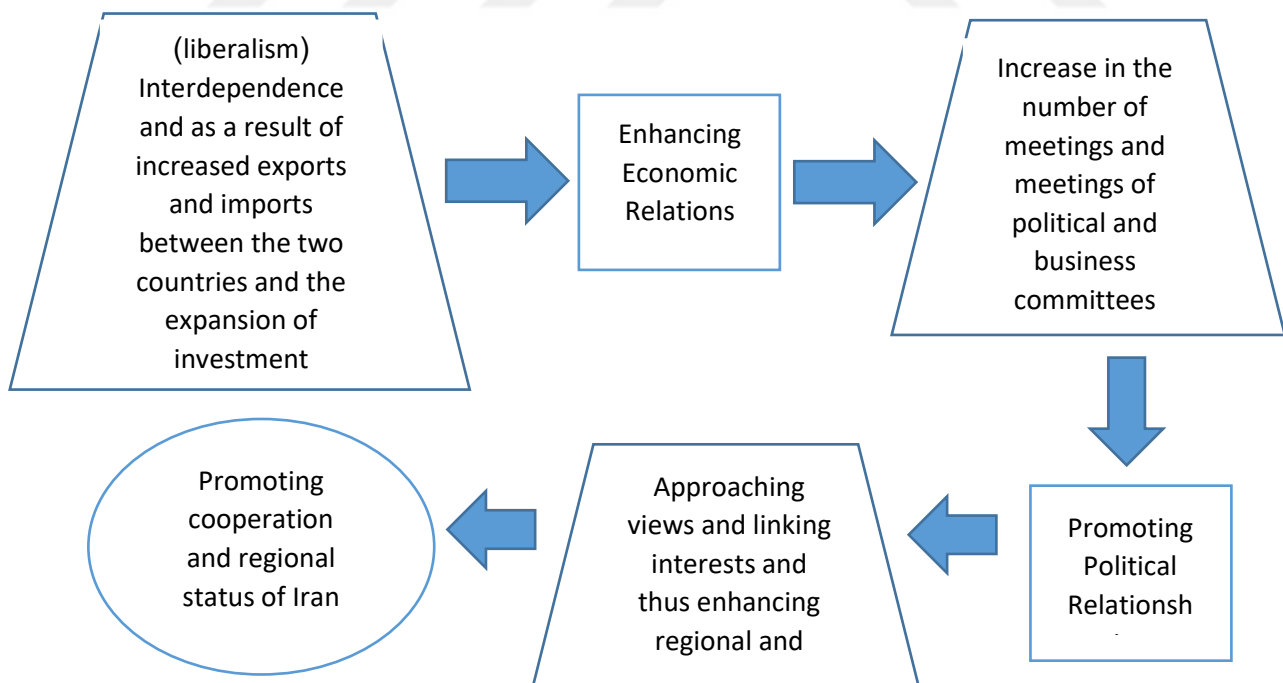
Iran's need for importing machinery and industrial products alongside Western sanctions on Iran provided a very good opportunity to expand exports of these products to Iran, thereby enhancing economic cooperation between the two countries. Turkey's favorable industrial growth and its products' compliance with Iranian conditions, the ease of business interactions and existence of land borders have been Turkey's concessions, especially during international sanctions against Iran. In other words, one of the best ways for Iran to avoid

the international isolation has been trade cooperation with Turkey, while Turkey's dependence on oil, gas, their derivatives and raw materials, and their abundance in Iran, has made Turkey dependent on Iranian products.

Geopolitical and geostrategic considerations of Iran and Turkey are clearly linked to the economic needs of the two countries and based on the ideas of interdependence that expressed by the theory of neoliberalism, the economic relations between the two countries have been intertwined so much that it has a positive impact on the politics of the two countries.

The state of relations between Iran and Turkey and its strong dependence on economic relations can be plotted in the following diagram.

**FIGURE 7: The state of relations between Iran and Turkey**



### 3.2.3. The role of energy in the relations between Iran and Turkey

Over the last century, the increasing role and security of energy in the industrialized world, and the importance of energy security, has led to the development of energy-supplier and consumer countries relations, and has created a kind of interdependence between countries. The role of fossil energy and its importance has always been growing.

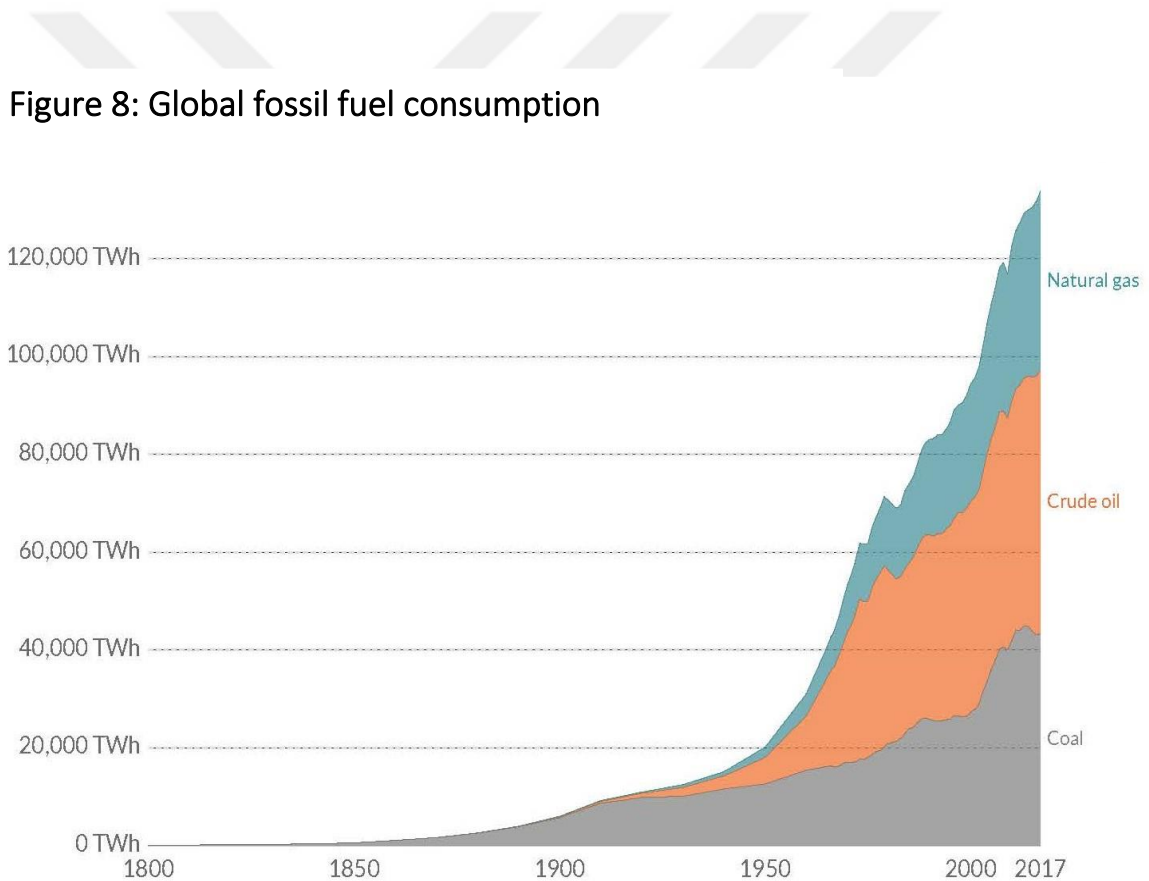


Figure 8: Global fossil fuel consumption

(Source: Vaclav Smil (2017). Energy Transitions: Global and National Perspective & BP Statistical Review of World Energy)

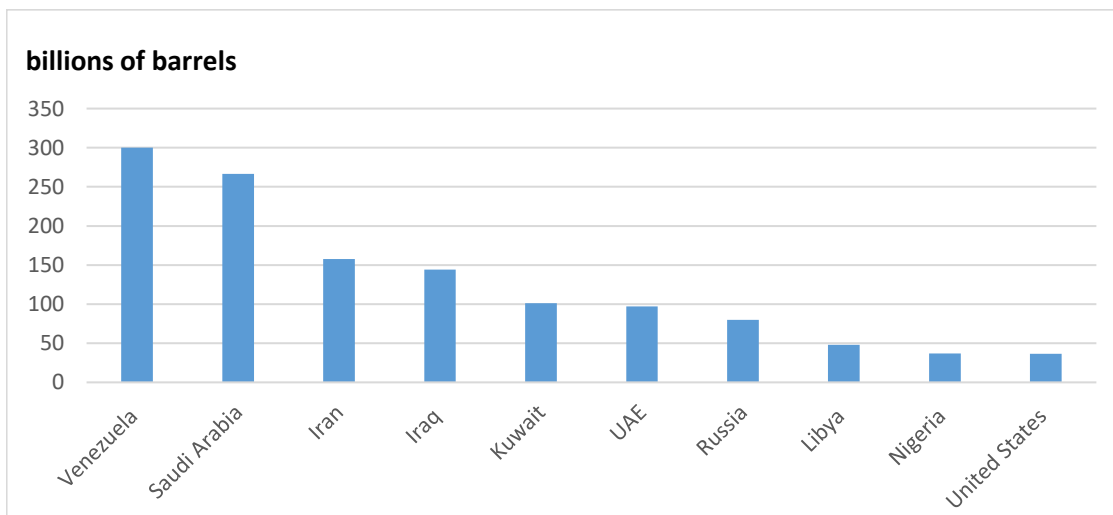
The 20th century saw a large diversification of fossil energy consumption, with coal declining from 96 percent of total production in 1900 to less than 30 percent in 2000. Today, crude oil is the largest energy source, accounting for

around 39 percent of fossil energy, followed by coal and natural gas at 33 and 28 percent, respectively.

Iran has one of the largest oil and gas resources in the world, but Turkey, in contrast, has limited energy resources and is heavily dependent on foreign energy resources due to population growth, and economic and industrial development. Iran needs to export its energy to Turkey and access European energy markets through its path, and Turkey's growing economy needs reliable and sustainable oil and gas resources to meet its economic needs (Baghat, 2014:1).

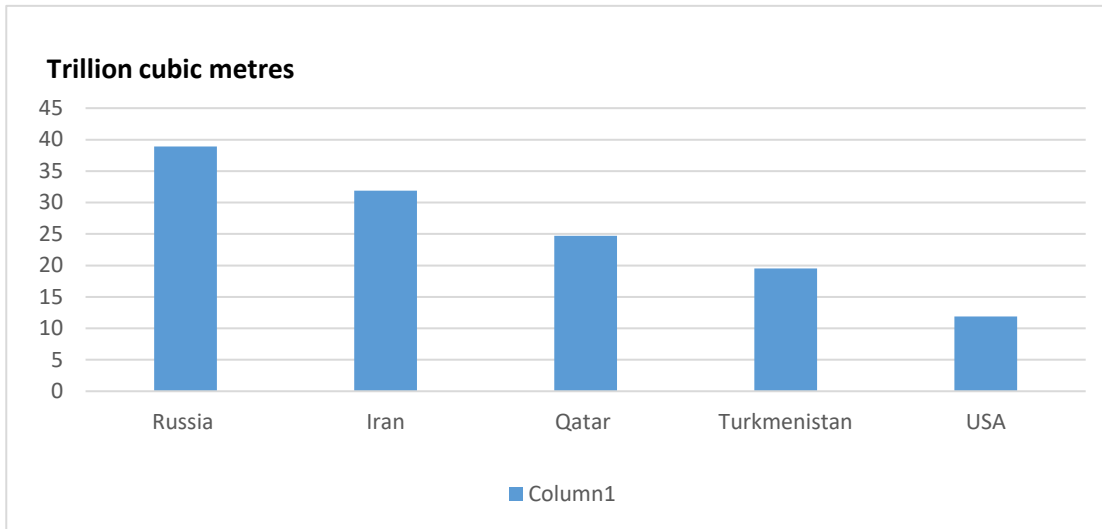
The following two diagrams show world oil and gas reserves. Iran is the third largest oil producer in the world after Venezuela and Saudi Arabia with 9% of world oil reserves, followed by Russia with 16.2%.

**Figure 9: List of countries by proven oil reserves**



(Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2015)

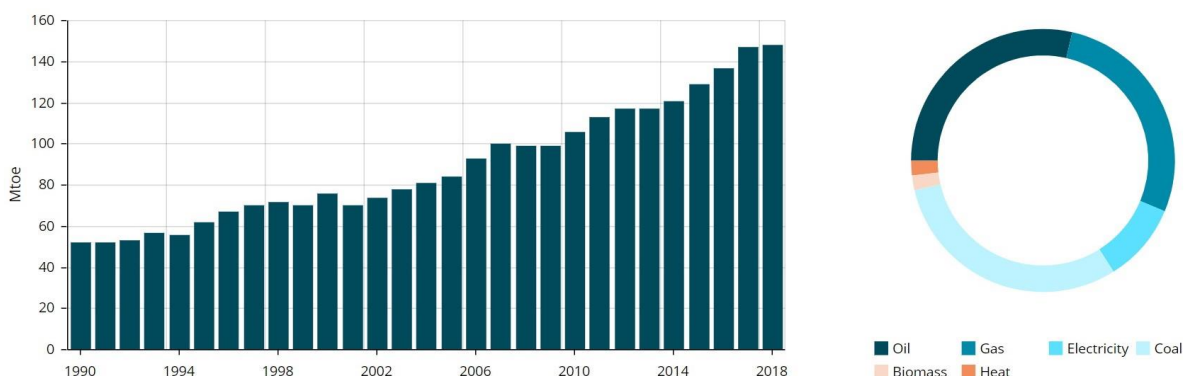
Figure 10: List of countries by proven Natural gas reserves



(Source: OPEC Annual Statistical Bulletin 2015)

Turkey, on the other hand, has become one of the largest energy consumers in Europe, with rapid economic growth. The rate of energy growth and its variation can be seen in the following chart:

Figure 11: Turkey Energy Consumption Trend over 1990 - 2018

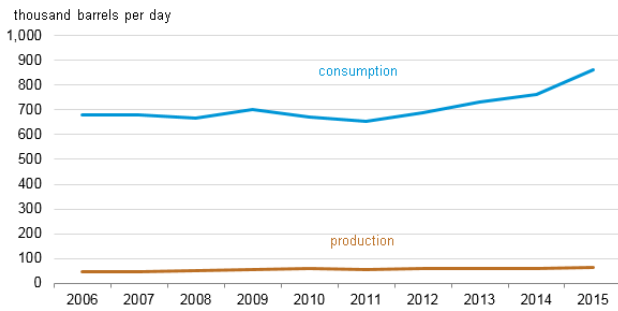


(Source: Global energy statistical Yearbook 2019)

Much of Turkey's energy consumption consists of oil and gas, with production and consumption figures as shown in the following diagrams.

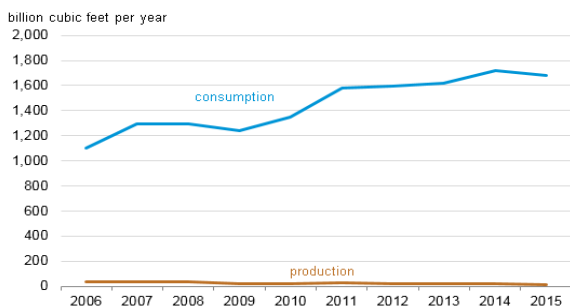


Figure 12: Turkey Petroleum and other liquids consumption and production



Over the past decade, Turkey's economy has expanded, and its petroleum and other liquids consumption has increased. With limited domestic reserves, Turkey imports nearly all of its oil supplies.

Figure 13: Turkey natural gas consumption and production

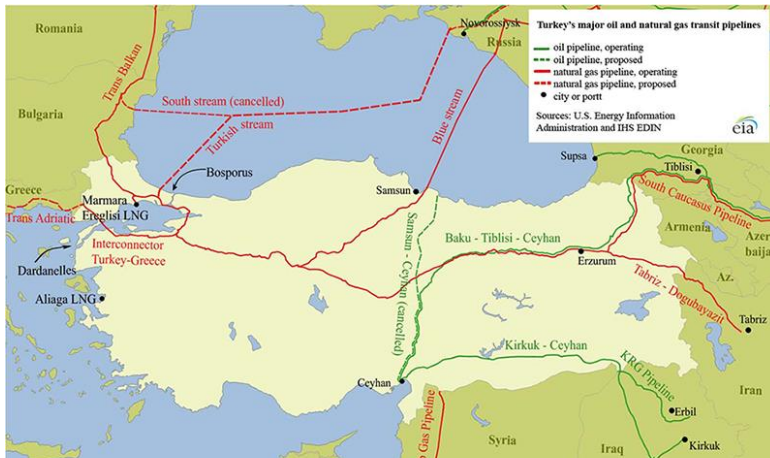


Turkey is an important consumer of natural gas and is becoming an important transit state for natural gas. Turkey is one of the few countries in Europe where natural gas consumption continues to show strong growth.

(Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration on IEA, Monthly Gas Data Service)

Turkey's oil extraction and consumption diagram shows dependence on oil and foreign sources for its industry. Adjacent to Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran, which holds the third position in the world with 136 billion proven barrels of oil, is considered by Turkish authorities to be one of the most important sources of oil and gas supplies. In addition to its domestic consumption, Turkey seeks to become an oil and gas hub in the region, due to its geographical location and relative security.

Figure 14: Turkey's major oil and natural gas transits



Turkey has a strategic role in natural gas transit because of its position between the world's second-largest natural gas market—continental Europe—and the substantial natural gas reserves of the Caspian Basin and the Middle East.

(Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration and IHS EDIN)

Between 2003 and 2010, Turkey and Iran signed two important Memorandums of Understanding, making Iran Turkey's major energy partner, and in 2009, it became officially Turkey's main oil and Gas supplier.

Figure 15: Share of Turkey's crude oil imports by country

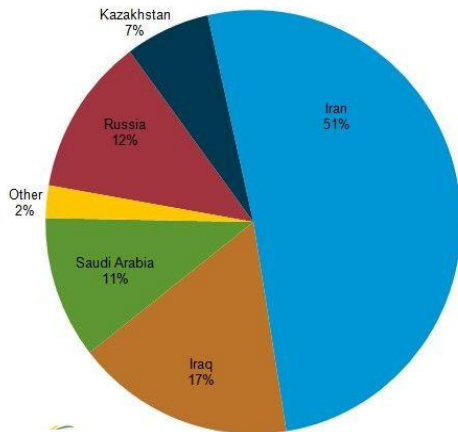
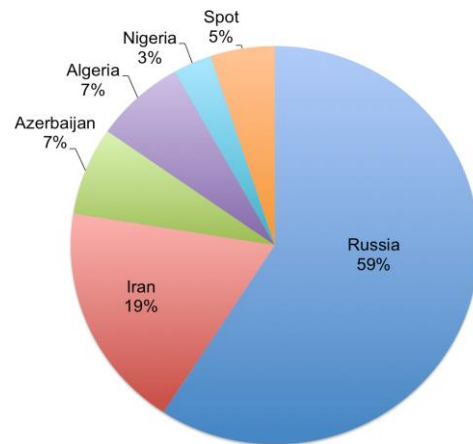


Figure 16: Turkey's Natural Gas Import by country



(Source: "Natural Gas Market Sector Report", 2012)

With stricter US sanctions in 2012, official purchases of crude oil from Iran declined, and Iraq became Turkey's primary source of crude oil; however, Iran remained one of Turkey's most important energy suppliers.

#### **3.2.4. Other issues affecting Iran-Turkey relations**

Mutual interests between Iran and Turkey, or at least, their security cooperation facilitates the security of the region. Neither has threatened the legitimacy and structure of any other government system. The two countries have common ground as the two non-Arab major actors in the region. Neither experienced direct colonialism, or as a consequence, any foreign influence. In addition, various factors, such as historical, cultural and economic links, facilitated keeping their security relationship.

Kurdish issues also affected their relations. Both have significant minorities of Kurds. Since the name of the country of Iran does not include more specific ethnic groups and countries of different ethnicities, Ethnicity-based nationalism is less common in Iran. The lack of ethnicity in the culture has also reduced the sensitivity to Kurdish and Azeri Ethnicity.

On the other hand, the ethnic and identity incompatibility between the Kurds and the Turks for cultural, linguistic and religious reasons has caused a continuing inconsistency between the Turkish government and the Kurds. (Kulai and Hariri and Asadikiya. 2015:10)

It seems that until the establishment of PJAK, The Kurdish issue played a divergent role in relations between the two countries, but after this time, and with developments in northern Iraq, there was a greater convergence of the two countries with regard to the developments in the region.

In recent years, along with the developments in northern Iraq, the Iranian branch of the PKK, the PJAK (Free Life Party of Kurdistan), was established and became active on the borders of Iran. Following these events, interests of the two countries to curb nationalism of minorities, and in particular the Kurds, have led to the convergence of the two countries. In the Ahmadinejad era, the Kurdish issue, which prevented good relations for two decades, became to lever for convergence.

### **Nuclear issue**

The mutual confrontation between Iran and the West has given rise to the nuclear issue, in a way that each party used it to reinforce its own identity and the other as a source of threat to this identity (Torkshavand and Ghorjili, 2013: 84). The peak of Iran's exploitation of this process was during the Ahmadinejad era. During this period, the ideological extremism of its foreign policy and concern with security became clear and as a result, the Islamic Republic of Iran were recognized as a revolutionary country of the region, and the main source of crisis, whose purposes collided with the international system (Shahidi, 2009: 69). Thus, inhibition of Iran was proceeded with the prevailing slogan "all options on the table". (Dehghani Firouzabadi and Ataei, 2015: 51)

One of the major factors affecting Iran-Turkey relations in recent years is Iran's nuclear issue. Despite western societies' efforts to portray Iran's nuclear technology as a threat to the region and the world, Turkey has always defended Iran's stance, and its policy toward Iran is clear from its elite's point of view. According to Davutoğlu, the Peaceful acquirement of nuclear technology is the right of all nations, and no boundary should be drawn, other than the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this regard, Ankara emphasizes efficient diplomacy and dialogue for resolving disputes. However, it has also been concerned about the negative effects of the spread of this crisis (Rezazadeh 2007: 9).

In November 2009, Turkey abstained from the IAEA's resolution against Iran, accusing the West of bias over Iran's nuclear program, stating that Iran had no interest in building a nuclear bomb. Turkish officials have also welcomed Iran's exchange of uranium in their territory. In March 2010, Erdoğan called Ahmadinejad a "good friend" and said Iran intends to develop a peaceful nuclear program (Rasi 2013).

However, Erdoğan's criticism of Iran came after Iran's unilateral decision to change the venue of the nuclear negotiations from Istanbul, as a protest against Turkey's stance on Syria. Finally, Turkey's efforts to mediate on Iran's nuclear issue and support Iran in the Security Council had a good reflection on Iran, and became an important factor in building trust and expanding relations between the two countries.

## **Religion and culture**

Migrations that have taken place between the two countries during the last century and their history as two non-Arab but Muslim countries have created many cultural similarities. The role of religion in their societies, in spite of the different views of the two governments, has been one of the factors facilitating a close relationship.

### **3.3. Divergence factors of the two countries**

The pattern of relations between Iran and Turkey is largely influenced by economic cooperation and political competition. there is a common interest in the field of bilateral relations in the economic and security spheres. On the other hand, among 16 Middle Eastern countries, Iran and Turkey are among the strongest and most democratic. This naturally has led to regional rivalry.

#### **3.3.1. The role of global and regional power**

Turkey seeks to increase its influence and role in the Middle East, especially as an interface between Western countries and the Islamic world, and on the other hand, Iran is trying to expand its influence in the region using cultural and religious factors. In recent years, Turkey has changed its focus on becoming a regional power in the Middle East and has become a central power with an agenda to expand its influence. Turkey uses all the opportunities that are

available in the region to achieve this goal. Similarly, in the years after the revolution, Iran tried to implement a policy of expanding its spiritual influence. Iran and Turkey have been seeking influence in the region for many years, but especially in the wake of recent developments and revolutions in the Middle East. According to Bowen's theory of relations between Iran and Turkey, both countries are trying to form and lead a network of political, economic, and security partnerships with state and non-state actors in the region, or even in the metropolitan area.

### **3.3.2 Ideology**

Despite the victory of the AK Party in Turkey in 2002, and the loss of importance of the ideological conflict in relations between the two countries, ideological conflict grew from efforts to expand influence in the region, creating geopolitical rivalries. The ideological rivalry for becoming the leader of the region is indicated by terms such as "Islamic world leader", "guardian of the region". In other words, geopolitical competition is accompanied by an ideological rivalry for regional leadership.

The two countries were influenced by vastly different experiences during the last century and especially after the Iranian Revolution. Since the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran, the struggle against imperialism and the struggle against the domination of the East and the West has been at the forefront of Iran's foreign policy agenda. On the other hand, Turkey, in recent years, has preferred to look to the Middle East and working with neighboring countries,

and the Eastern bloc, but its agenda has generally been integrated with the western block.

### **3.3.4 Politics**

Iranian-Turkish relations have progressed in contradiction to foreign policy in many cases. The tensions and positions of the past few years regarding Iraq and Syria and Iran's support for Assad are examples of these contradictions. In the era of the AKP, more attention was paid to the Middle East in Turkish foreign policy. But the Turkish strategy, which seeks to balance foreign policy and seeks zero problems with its neighbors, has been practically affected, at least in recent years, by regional and international conditions. Iran's foreign policy after the revolution was affected by several factors, including the early ideological radicals of the revolution, the 8-year war with Iraq, the Takfiri terrorism crisis in the region, and Iran's nuclear issue. This policy has sometimes coincided, and in some cases also contradicted Turkey's policies.

Concerning the issue of Iran's nuclear program, Turkey has always defended Iran's positions in the nuclear talks, and its policies toward Iran are clear from the viewpoints of the country's elites. In November 2009, Turkey abstained from the Agency's resolution against Iran, and accused the West bias against Iran's nuclear program.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusion

In today's world, a country's economic and political development is impossible without the development of neighboring countries. Considering the geopolitical and geostrategic position of the Middle East region, and the consequent presence of trans-regional powers and the complexity of the situation, regional strategic partnership as a solution to the crisis in the region can be considered. In this regard, Iran and Turkey, as the two major countries of the region, may play an important role in the stability of the region, and the unity of the Islamic world, depending on elements of convergence of relations.

Iran and Turkey share a history of cultural and social congruence as ancient Middle Eastern powers. In addition, their extensive border regions are characterized by traditional socioeconomic and political cooperation and the absence of border conflicts that foster a robust union of the Persian Gulf with the Mediterranean. Iran and Turkey are also members of the Economic Collaboration Organization (ECO). Both nations also tend to close ranks during regional crises while fighting terrorism and nationalism. Therefore, relations during the Ahmadinejad period (2005-2013) have been considerably improved when analyzing political convergence theories and regional security issues. Iran and Turkey can compete in a few realms but collaborate in many others.

From a realistic perspective, foreign Policy and International Relations of Iran at the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, with the arrival of revolutionary youth in the field of politics in the domestic and foreign fields, have been heavily influenced by idealist theory of politics and diplomacy. Indeed, one must see Iran's foreign policy in the first decade of the revolution's victory in idealism politics and concepts such as defending freedom struggles and movements around the world, global justice demanded the export of revolution, support, and alignment with the revolutionary anti-imperialist governments, was the main focus of Iran's foreign policy. However, in time, Iran with experience and learning, is gradually abandoning its understanding of the concept of power balance, in favour of mere idealism and realism, and therefore national interest has become the focus of politics. Iran has sought to attract regional and trans-regional allies solely based on its national interests based on existing international conditions.

On the other hand, in Turkey, with AKP's governance, realism in politics and prioritization of national interests enabled Turkey to direct, regulate and managed its environment in line with its goals, relying on its strength and power: It sought to reflect its growing power in foreign policy and, generally at the level of the international system, and privately, at the regional level, thus gaining the necessary power and respect. Of course, Turkey's new executive foreign policy can also have risks as well as benefits (Reza Solat 2017).

For decades, Turkey has tended to the West in its foreign policy. With the advent of AKP, however, it tried to redefine another kind of relationship by prioritizing its own interests. Turkey, while maintaining a relationship with the West, has also sought to expand its economic relation with Russia, China and

its neighbors, especially Iran. Turkey's geopolitical position has helped the country, especially in the energy sector, and now Turkey, by opening its economy to the economies of both East and the West, seeks to gain a foothold in international politics. Thus, it can be deduced that The Realistic view that is influencing the international economy has directed countries to maximize the profits, even at the expense of other countries.

Given Turkey's shared neighborhood with Iran, it has cooperated more with Iran during periods of sanctions, promoting both its own interests and its good relations with Iran. However, these partnerships have continued only to the extent that Turkey's interests have not endanger its relations with western countries, especially the United States, and considering the benefits and costs.

But the constructivists perspective, offers a new definition of power and relations. A strong government should not necessarily have economic and military power. In this definition, a strong government must be able to create such a normative space to be able to easily create desired behaviors (Checkel, 1997: 472). For example, the new Turkish approach is proof of this constructivism argument, that despite its military and political power, it seeks to make itself an active and powerful player in the Middle East by creating political and religious norms.

Since the founding of the new Turkish republic, the social and cultural system of this country was inclined to modern values and establishing friendly relations with Middle Eastern governments was a potential threat to Westernization (Kanat, 2010:209). This alienation and avoidance largely reinforced the basis of

Turkey's identity. It should be said that it had a direct impact on the dominant ideology which governed and regulated the social identity of Turkish society.

In the case of Iran and Turkey, Given the share of economics and interdependence in the relations between the two countries, it can be said that the theory of liberalism can better explain the expansion of Iran-Turkey relations in recent years, especially during the Ahmadinejad era. The political and economic conditions of the region in the past two decades have increased interdependence. The growing need of Turkey, a developing country, for energy and foreign investment, and Iran's need for getting out of the political and economic isolation resulted from the sanctions imposed by the West, has had a huge impact on increasing interdependence between the two countries.

The impact of the economy on the two countries' relations should be studied at two levels. At the micro level, the nature and approach of the two countries' foreign policy and the role of the economy are investigated. And at the macro level, the economic interdependence of Iran and Turkey in areas such as energy, transit, cross-border trade, economic crises and trade relations are studied.

The fact is that Turkey's foreign policy during the AK Party was heavily influenced by economic considerations. Thus, Turkey has tried to avoid tensions and disputes in its foreign policy, as the disputes will hinder Turkey's investment and development. Turkish authorities have proceeded with a policy of export development over the past three decades. As a result of this strategy, trade and investment development have become Turkey's top foreign policy priorities.

On the other hand, regional cooperation became a priority in Iran's foreign policy after the war with Iraq ended in 1988. Iran's emphasis on regionalism was partly the result of the western countries actions in imposing sanctions on it. Meanwhile, a neighbor like Turkey was the best option to reduce the impact of Western sanctions. This made Turkey an important trading partner for Iran.

At the macro level, Iran and Turkey have interconnected relations in the five areas of energy, transit, border trade, economic crises and trade relations. The most important area in this dependence is the energy field. Iran is Turkey's most important oil supplier; in 2011, Iran supplied 30% of Turkey's total oil imports. Iran is also Turkey's third largest gas supplier after Russia and Azerbaijan. Energy relations benefit both countries, and Turkey could become a transit route for the transfer of energy from Iran to European customers, just as it is an important transit route for importing goods into Iran from Europe.

In Iran-Turkey relations over the past two decades, the expansion of trade has created links between their economic and political sectors and the relationship developed. The emergence and expansion of economic institutions and NGOs, law drafting and introduction of preferential customs tariffs between the two countries, resolving gas disputes in international courts peacefully and economic, political and cultural agreements between the two countries have been major developments in the past two decades.

As the theory of liberalism has suggested the role of non-state actors, in this process, the cooperation of non-governmental actors including chambers of commerce and associations along with the public sector caused to spread of

economic relations that this has led to increased interdependence and, ultimately, a convergence between the two countries.

Overall, through a careful examination of the relations between the two countries in the last three decades, it can be concluded that the economy has played an important and essential role. Theories of liberalism and neoliberalism in particular, also provide a better explanation of why these relations, especially in economic terms, have expanded.

Ahmadinejad's presidency was a golden era in relations between the two countries, due to the similar attitudes of the two governments of Iran and Turkey, and the pursuit of mutual regional and international interests at that time. Cooperation led to the emergence of an unwritten agreement between the two governments on the division of the political and economic spheres in the region. This developed despite difference in political sympathies of the two governments at that time; the realistic view of the two countries; accepting the reality of the existence of two different lines (Ideologies?) in both countries. These differences are the realities of political life and international relations, reducing the divergent factors: On the other hand, the importance of the role of the economy in relations and the investment of the private sectors in the two countries, and security arrangements, strengthened the convergent factors, and this history has led to the improvement of bilateral relations. Therefore, it can be concluded that the best and most effective way to achieve convergence between Iran and Turkey is an economic solution.

The statistics show that the volume of economic exchanges in this study period has increased considerably.

The following table shows trade figures between the two countries between 2002 and 2014:

**Table 1 : Trade figures between Iran and Turkey between 2002 and 2014**

Year	2002	2008	2012	2013	2014
The amount of trade billion dollars	1,07	10.43	21.08	13.05	10.13

Therefore, the attitude of prioritizing the economy to other issues can lead to a better understanding of the decision-makers and statesmen of Iran and Turkey. Cooperation will lead to a win-win game for both countries.

It can be concluded that as long as energy as a source of vital income exists in relations, geo-economic pragmatism will overcome the geopolitical concerns and disagreements, and this can be a good starting point for promoting cooperation and even improving mutual political relations; therefore, the development of relations between Iran and Turkey will largely depend on the development of economic relations. In this regard, it is in the interest of Turkey and Iran to eliminate political tensions between them and pursue business pragmatic policies to further welfare and security for their citizens.

Iran and Turkey are two important countries in the region that, with all their differences, have been able to demonstrate their desire for peaceful

coexistence in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The ability of these two countries to continue good neighborly relations depends on two factors: how they interpret the events of the region and the world, and the characteristics of each country. Both countries will have enjoyed peaceful coexistence if they expand economic cooperation without hindrance, and avoid radical and overly one-sided rhetoric.





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