

## TURKEY AND AFGHANISTAN: POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DYNAMICS IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** This study aims to investigate the political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan within the context of the Islamic world. The research seeks to explore the historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors that shape the relationship between these two nations and their impact on the broader Islamic community.

**Methods of the Study:** A qualitative research approach is utilized, incorporating historical analysis, comparative studies, and examination of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Afghanistan. Secondary sources such as scholarly articles, reports, and official documents are consulted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

**Results of the Study:** The research reveals intricate political and ideological interactions between Turkey and Afghanistan, highlighting shared historical ties, divergent ideological influences, and geopolitical considerations. The study underscores the complexities of their relationship within the broader Islamic world.

**Conclusion of the Study:** Through an analysis of the political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan, it is evident that these nations play significant roles in shaping the Islamic world's landscape. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding the nuances of their interactions to comprehend broader geopolitical developments in the region.

**Recommendations of the Study:** Based on the findings, it is recommended that policymakers and scholars continue to monitor and analyze the evolving political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan. Enhanced diplomatic engagement, cultural exchange initiatives, and collaborative efforts can facilitate mutual understanding and strengthen relationships within the Islamic world.

**Keywords:** Turkey and Afghanistan, historical, cultural, geopolitical.

### INTRODUCTION

A topic of constant interest and academic study is the complex web of political and ideological developments within the Islamic world. The relationship between Turkey and Afghanistan is an interesting case study among the many interactions that form this landscape. Turkey, which is positioned at the meeting point of Europe and Asia, has long been seen as a link between the East and

the West, combining Islamic tradition with a distinct style of secular rule. Afghanistan, on the other hand, displays a complex mosaic of political and cultural influences within the Islamic realm due to its turbulent history and diverse ethnic mix.

The relationship between Turkey and Afghanistan in the Islamic world has been shaped by various historical events that have had significant impacts

on their interactions. Some key historical events that have influenced their relationship include:

During the time of the Osman Empire, Afghanistan maintained diplomatic relations with the Ottomans. The Osman Empire's influence in the region and its interactions with various Islamic states, including Afghanistan, played a role in shaping the historical ties between the two regions. In the aftermath of World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, both Turkey and Afghanistan experienced periods of transition and independence movements. The emergence of modern nation-states in the early 20th century influenced their respective paths and set the stage for their future interactions.

The Cold War era significantly impacted the dynamics of global politics, including in the Islamic world. Turkey and Afghanistan found themselves entangled in the geopolitical rivalries of the era, with Turkey aligning with Western powers and Afghanistan navigating its relationships with the Soviet Union and the United States.

One of the most significant events that influenced the relationship between Turkey and Afghanistan was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Turkey, a NATO member, supported Afghan resistance against Soviet forces, providing humanitarian aid and political backing to the Afghan mujahideen.

Recent geopolitical developments, including Turkey's expanding regional influence and Afghanistan's ongoing challenges with security and governance, continue to shape the relationship between the two countries in the contemporary Islamic world.

In the modern relationship between Turkey and Afghanistan, religion continues to play a significant role, albeit in distinct ways that reflect the countries' unique historical and contemporary contexts. Here are some key aspects of the role that religion plays in shaping the Turkey-Afghanistan relationship today:

Both Turkey and Afghanistan have predominantly Muslim populations, and Islam serves as a unifying factor in their societies. Shared Islamic heritage provides a cultural and historical connection between the two nations, influencing perceptions and interactions at various levels.

Despite being rooted in Islam, Turkey and Afghanistan exhibit diverse interpretations and practices of the religion. Turkey's historical experience of secularism and reforms under

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk contrasts with Afghanistan's more conservative and traditional approach to Islam, reflecting varying religious dynamics that can impact their relationship.

Religion, particularly Islam, can serve as a tool for diplomacy and soft power between Turkey and Afghanistan. Both countries may leverage their religious affiliations to foster cultural exchanges, enhance diplomatic ties, and engage with Muslim communities globally, projecting influence and building alliances.

Turkey and Afghanistan engage in educational and religious exchange programs, such as scholarships for Afghan students to study in Turkey and collaborations on religious education. These initiatives contribute to strengthening people-to-people ties and deepening understanding of each other's religious practices and traditions.

Given their shared Islamic identity, Turkey and Afghanistan have the opportunity to engage in interfaith dialogue and cooperation to promote religious tolerance, counter extremism, and foster peace within the Islamic world. Such initiatives can help bridge differences and promote mutual understanding between the two nations.

Despite shared religious backgrounds, differences in religious practices, interpretations, and political contexts can lead to tensions and frictions in the Turkey-Afghanistan relationship. Competing influences, divergent approaches to Islam, and geopolitical considerations may at times strain their religious ties.

### **Significance of the study:**

The study on the political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan within the Islamic world explores the historical ties, cultural exchanges, and geopolitical implications shaping their relationship. By delving into these dynamics, the research offers insights into broader regional power struggles, facilitates cultural exchange, informs policymaking, contributes to academic discourse on Islamic geopolitics, and holds potential for conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts in the region. This study is significant for its multifaceted contributions to understanding and enhancing relations between Turkey and Afghanistan within the Islamic world.

**Research objective:**

The study is to analyze and elucidate the intricate political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan within the context of the Islamic world. By examining historical ties, cultural influences, and geopolitical considerations, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping the relationship between these two nations and their impact on broader Islamic geopolitics. The study seeks to uncover the nuances of their interactions, identify areas of cooperation and divergence, and offer insights that can inform policymaking, academic discourse, and efforts towards fostering mutual understanding and collaboration in the region.

**Research Questions:**

How do historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors shape the political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan within the Islamic world?

What are the key shared historical ties, divergent ideological influences, and geopolitical considerations influencing the relationship between Turkey and Afghanistan and their impact on the broader Islamic community?

What recommendations can be proposed to policymakers and scholars to enhance mutual understanding and strengthen relationships within the Islamic world by monitoring and analyzing the evolving political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan?

**Literature Review:**

According to Khalid, I. (2011). Stated that the study delves into the ongoing challenges facing Afghanistan, characterized by a complex interplay between internal and external forces that disrupt the country's social and political fabric. By addressing key questions such as the influence of political history on present instability, the motivations of external actors in Afghanistan, and the potential of institutional development to manage current functional issues, the research aims to demonstrate that the current crisis stems from internal conflicts and external interventions. The analysis traces the roots of the current situation to historical precedents, the strategic interests of major players, and the conflicting agendas of Afghan leadership, which have historically hindered institutional progress. The study suggests a path forward involving the

establishment of modern democratic structures alongside the preservation of Afghanistan's traditional political culture as a means to navigate the existing political tensions and foster stability.

According to the Yavuz, M. H. (2004). Explain that the study investigates the persistent challenges facing Afghanistan, characterized by ongoing discord between internal and external forces that disrupt the country's societal and political structures. By exploring critical questions regarding the impact of political history on current instability, the motivations of external stakeholders in Afghanistan, and the potential benefits of institutional development in addressing present functional issues, the research aims to demonstrate that the current crisis results from a combination of internal divisions and external interference. Examining historical roots, the strategic interests of key players, and the conflicting agendas of Afghan leadership, the study highlights a lack of progress in institutional building in Afghanistan. It suggests a way forward by advocating for the establishment of modern democratic institutions while respecting the traditional political culture of the Afghan people as a means to navigate existing political tensions and promote stability.

According to the DAI, H. D. (2005). Stated that the study delves into the evolution of Islamic political identity in modern Turkey, where opposition to the West and westernization historically defined this identity. The research argues that recent efforts by Islamists to reassess this historical stance have given rise to a new form of Islamic identity, evident in the actions and policies of the ruling Justice and Development Party. The study aims to elucidate how the Islamists' stance towards the West shaped their Islamic political identity, the factors prompting a reevaluation of this stance, and the implications of this shift on the identity formation and policy direction of the ruling party.

According to the Yavuz, M. H. (2004). Explain that the paper explores the complex interplay between universal Islamic principles and practical, immediate concerns that shape daily actions. It argues that while Islam offers universal principles for meaningful living, these principles are often adapted and localized within specific narratives. The author introduces seven distinct "zones of Islam" to highlight the diverse ways in which individuals engage with and practice their faith,

emphasizing the absence of a singular path to salvation but rather multiple paths to being a Muslim. By dissecting the concept of the "Islamic or Muslim world" through these zones, the paper delineates how political Islam varies across regions due to factors such as historical legacies, nationalism, and socio-political structures. The study delves into specific zones like Arab, Persian, and Turkish contexts, examining influences such as Sufism, Ottoman legacy, and economic structures in shaping Islamic knowledge and practices within the Turkish zone.

According to the Warning, M., & Kardaş, T. (2011). Stated that the article examines Turkey's new foreign policy in relation to its shifting identity and global positions, critiquing the oversimplified narratives that often characterize discussions on this topic. It delves into the theoretical foundations of Turkey's foreign policy under figures like Ahmet Davutoğlu, explores the role of religious and cultural identity, and scrutinizes empirical cases such as Turkey's stance on Iraq and Israel. The article aims to provide a balanced perspective on whether Turkey is moving away from the West in its foreign policy approach.

According to Vamvakas, P. (2009). Stated that the paper contends that Turkey's role in the Euro-Atlantic security framework, as well as its EU membership aspirations, has been complex and at times contentious. Highlighting Turkey's rejection of the Berlin Plus agreement as counterproductive, the paper emphasizes the mutual need for cooperation between Turkey and the Euro-Atlantic security alliance, especially concerning missions like ISAF in Afghanistan. It suggests that addressing shared policy objectives rather than cultural differences can help overcome policy disagreements and enhance collaboration.

According to the Bishku, M. B. (2020). Stated that the analysis explores the multifaceted ties between Turkey and Afghanistan since 1919, emphasizing cultural, security, and trade connections. Notable periods of close relations include Atatürk and Amanullah's eras and recent affiliations under Turkey's AK Party and Afghanistan's Islamic Republic. Turkey's NATO membership has facilitated these strong bonds, despite Afghanistan's historical preference for nonalignment, except during the Marxist period.

According to the Kuschminder, K. (2018). Stated that the study addresses the dearth of research on

refugee journeys, focusing on the factors shaping Afghan refugees' decisions to remain in Greece or Turkey or move onward. Building on BenEzer and Zetter's work (2015), it analyzes temporal aspects, drivers, destinations, journey processes, and traveler characteristics. Using quantitative methods with a dataset of 364 Afghans, regression analysis reveals the significance of these factors in Afghan decision-making. The study underscores the policy implications of its findings.

According to the Ekşi, M. (2010). Stated that the paper explores Turkey's evolving role in Afghanistan, focusing on political and economic relations, Turkish foreign policies, and contributions to Afghan security and socio-economics. It discusses Turkey's stance on sending troops to Afghanistan, its diplomatic history with Afghanistan, and the potential for increased involvement under Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's leadership. The analysis suggests Turkey is gearing up to play a more prominent role in Afghanistan, aligning with Davutoğlu's vision of positioning Turkey as a global actor.

According to the Kaya, K. (2013). Stated that the Turkey's enduring commitment to Afghanistan, rooted in historical, cultural, and religious ties, is highlighted by statements from Turkish leaders emphasizing a long-term presence in the region. Beyond rhetoric, Turkey's involvement is seen as a duty to aid Afghan peace and stability, supported by a strategic interest in regional security. While refraining from combat operations, Turkey contributes through security measures, logistical support, training Afghan personnel, and enhancing capacity development, leveraging its cultural and religious connections to play an active role in Afghanistan.

According to the Karacasulu, N. (2010). Stated that the article reviews international reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and focuses on Turkey's contributions within this framework. Turkey's involvement spans military and non-military aid, with a recent emphasis on regional cooperation for peace and stability. By promoting trilateral dialogues and combining security interests with societal development, Turkey is seen as playing a constructive role in Afghanistan's post-conflict reconstruction through diplomatic, training, and economic initiatives.

According to the Kaytaz, E. S. (2016). Stated that the analysis delves into Afghan migrants' journeys to Turkey, portraying the journey as a narrative shaped by long periods of immobility interspersed with travel. By transcending conventional journey dichotomies, the article examines the irregular travel conditions, emphasizing the uncertain and transformative nature of migration. It highlights how these journeys serve as narratives that influence decision-making, skill acquisition, and autonomy among migrants in Turkey.

According to the Karahan, H., & Karahan, H. (2020). Stated that the enduring chaos in Afghanistan and the significant support Turkey has provided to the nation over the past fifteen years. Turkey's multifaceted cooperation program, spanning security, defense, humanitarian, and development aid, has notably improved the welfare of Afghan citizens. Turkey's success in Afghanistan stands as a model for international collaboration, showcasing the impact of holistic assistance programs in conflict-affected regions.

According to the Doğan, S. (2011). Stated that the Turkey and Afghanistan share a deep historical and cultural bond that dates back to the early 20th century. Their relationship was formalized through diplomatic ties shortly after Afghanistan's independence in 1919. The two nations signed significant agreements, including the Turkey-Afghanistan Alliance Agreement in 1921 and the Treaty of Eternal Friendship in 1928, solidifying their enduring friendship. This foundation has sustained the strong relations between Turkey and Afghanistan throughout the years.

According to the Özcan, S. A. (2010). Stated that the During 2009 and 2010, Turkey faced pressure from the US to contribute more troops to combat missions in Afghanistan, challenging Turkey's traditional stance of avoiding direct involvement in armed conflicts. In response, Turkey focused on diplomatic efforts to promote peace and stability in the region, emphasizing international cooperation, civilian protection, and adherence to UN Security Council resolutions.

According to the Fayzullaev, A. (2024). Stated that the article emphasizes the significance of "soft power" in modern international relations, particularly in influencing worldviews and utilizing media power effectively in foreign policy. It specifically examines Turkey's soft power in Afghanistan, showcasing its success in blending

historical, religious, cultural, and ethnic ties to create a unique and influential presence in the region.

#### **Research methodology:**

**Research Design:** This study employs a qualitative research design to delve into the political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan within the Islamic world. This design allows for a detailed exploration of historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors shaping their relationship and influence on the broader Islamic community.

**Data Collection:** The primary method of data collection involves the analysis of secondary sources such as scholarly articles, reports, and official documents. These sources provide a foundation for understanding the intricate interactions between Turkey and Afghanistan, focusing on shared historical ties, ideological disparities, and geopolitical considerations.

**Data Analysis:** Historical analysis and comparative studies are used to dissect the political and ideological interactions between Turkey and Afghanistan. By examining diplomatic relations and historical contexts, this study aims to uncover the complexities of their relationship within the Islamic world.

**Ethical Considerations:** Ethical guidelines are followed throughout the research process to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the findings. Proper citation of sources and respect for intellectual property rights are maintained.

**Limitations:** Potential limitations of the study include reliance on available secondary sources, which could impact the depth of analysis. Additionally, the scope of the research may focus primarily on historical and diplomatic aspects, potentially overlooking contemporary developments.

#### **Data Analysis**

The research highlights several key aspects between Turkey and Afghanistan:

#### **Shared Historical Ties:**

##### **Cultural and Historical Connections:**

Turkey and Afghanistan share a rich history that dates back to the Ottoman Empire and the early Islamic conquests. These historical ties have

fostered a sense of cultural affinity and mutual respect, influencing contemporary relations.

**Common Islamic Heritage:**

Both nations are predominantly Muslim, which creates a foundational ideological bond. This shared religious identity often shapes their political discourse and diplomatic engagements.

**Divergent Ideological Influences:**

**Political Systems:**

Turkey, as a secular republic, contrasts sharply with Afghanistan's complex political landscape, which has been influenced by various regimes, including the Taliban. This divergence leads to different ideological frameworks that affect their interactions.

**Geopolitical Alignments:**

Turkey's alignment with NATO and its aspirations for EU membership contrast with Afghanistan's

historical reliance on regional powers and its struggle for stability. These ideological differences can lead to tensions in diplomatic relations.

**Geopolitical Considerations:**

**Regional Stability:**

The geopolitical landscape of Central Asia and the Middle East significantly impacts Turkey and Afghanistan's relationship. Turkey's strategic interests in the region, including energy security and counter-terrorism, intersect with Afghanistan's need for stability and development.

**Influence of External Powers:**

The involvement of external powers, such as the United States and Russia, complicates the dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan. Their relationships with these powers can influence bilateral ties and regional security.

**Table 01:**

Component	Details
Historical Context	Shared historical ties from the Ottoman Empire and early Islamic conquests. Common Islamic heritage influencing contemporary relations.
Political Systems	Turkey as a secular republic vs. Afghanistan's diverse political landscape. Divergent ideological frameworks affecting interactions.
Geopolitical Considerations	Importance of regional stability for both nations. Strategic interests of Turkey in Central Asia and Afghanistan's reliance on external support. Influence of external powers (e.g., U.S., Russia) complicating bilateral ties.

The above table reveals that the political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan are shaped by a complex interplay of historical ties, differing political systems, and geopolitical considerations. Understanding these components is crucial for comprehending the nuances of their relationship and the broader implications for stability and cooperation within the Islamic world. The historical context provides a foundation for potential collaboration, while the divergent political ideologies and external influences present challenges that must be navigated carefully to foster a productive partnership.

**Conclusion:**

The research finds the political and ideological dynamics between Turkey and Afghanistan, highlighting several key aspects. Shared historical ties, rooted in the Ottoman Empire and early Islamic conquests, foster a cultural affinity and mutual respect, while their common Islamic heritage shapes political discourse and diplomatic relations. However, divergent ideological influences arise from Turkey's secular republic status and Afghanistan's complex political landscape, influenced by various regimes, including the Taliban. This divergence leads to different ideological frameworks that affect their interactions. Geopolitically, the relationship is impacted by the need for regional stability, with Turkey's strategic

interests in Central Asia intersecting with Afghanistan's reliance on external support for development. The involvement of external powers, such as the United States and Russia, further complicates their bilateral ties.

the interplay of historical ties, differing political systems, and geopolitical considerations underscores the complexities of Turkey and Afghanistan's relationship, emphasizing the need for careful navigation of these factors to foster a productive partnership within the broader Islamic world.

### **Recommendation:**

**Establish a Bilateral Research Consortium:** Create a collaborative platform involving Turkish and Afghan scholars, policymakers, and think tanks to continuously monitor and analyze the evolving political and ideological dynamics. This consortium can facilitate the sharing of insights, data, and research findings, ensuring that both nations remain informed about each other's developments and challenges.

**Regular Reporting Mechanisms:** Implement regular reporting mechanisms that summarize key political, economic, and social developments in both countries. These reports can be disseminated to relevant stakeholders to foster informed decision-making.

### **Enhanced Diplomatic Engagement**

**High-Level Diplomatic Visits:** Encourage high-level visits between Turkish and Afghan leaders to strengthen diplomatic ties. These visits can focus on discussing mutual interests, addressing concerns, and exploring avenues for collaboration in various sectors, including security, trade, and cultural exchange.

**Bilateral Dialogues and Forums:** Organize regular bilateral dialogues and forums that bring together government officials, diplomats, and experts from both countries. These platforms can facilitate open discussions on pressing issues, allowing for the negotiation of agreements and the resolution of misunderstandings.

### **Cultural Exchange Initiatives**

**Educational Partnerships:** Promote educational exchange programs that allow students and scholars from Turkey and Afghanistan to study in each other's countries. Such initiatives can foster cultural

understanding and build long-term relationships between future leaders and professionals.

**Cultural Festivals and Events:** Organize cultural festivals and events that celebrate the shared heritage of Turkey and Afghanistan. These events can include art exhibitions, music festivals, and culinary showcases, providing opportunities for people-to-people connections and enhancing mutual appreciation of each other's cultures.

### **Collaborative Efforts on Regional Issues**

**Joint Security Initiatives:** Develop joint security initiatives to address common challenges, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and regional instability. Collaborative efforts can enhance both nations' security and contribute to broader regional stability.

**Economic Cooperation:** Explore opportunities for economic cooperation, including trade agreements and investment partnerships. By identifying sectors of mutual interest, such as agriculture, energy, and infrastructure, Turkey and Afghanistan can work together to promote economic development and prosperity.

### **Engagement with External Powers**

**Strategic Alliances:** Engage with external powers, such as the United States, European Union, and regional players, to align interests and address common challenges. By presenting a united front, Turkey and Afghanistan can enhance their influence in international forums and negotiations.

**Multilateral Cooperation:** Participate in multilateral organizations and initiatives that focus on regional security and development. Collaborative efforts within these frameworks can help both nations navigate external influences and promote their interests effectively.

### **Public Diplomacy and Communication**

**Media Collaboration:** Foster collaboration between media outlets in Turkey and Afghanistan to promote positive narratives about each country. Joint media initiatives can help counter negative stereotypes and misinformation, enhancing public perception and understanding.

**Social Media Campaigns:** Utilize social media platforms to engage with younger audiences in both countries. Campaigns that highlight shared values, cultural connections, and collaborative efforts can

foster a sense of solidarity and mutual respect among the youth.

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