

DOI <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10459057>

TURKEY GEORGIA RELATIONS: CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Abdulmelik Alkan

Mr., PH.D.c in Political Science. University of Georgia, Georgia, abmelikalkan@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to critically assess the major contributions to the academic literature on Turkey-Georgian relations that is focusing on the period from the date from J.D.P party came to power in 2002 to 2022, based on a qualitative approach using an integrative and comprehensive literature review critically. We applied the content analysis of 46 high-impact, peer-reviewed papers from prolific authors who extensively have written on the relations between Turkey and South Caucasus with chosen case Georgia. The study provides insights but have literature gaps that require further explanations and more theoretical backing. This only occurs if nations and regions coexist peacefully and create development policies that ensure competitiveness and increase the productivity of the regions. Therefore, this paper reviews two decades of research on Turkey-Georgian relations focusing on Turkey's presence and influence on the South Caucasus. It also provides suggestions that are insightful for future research and provides a new way to interpret the contemporary world and analyze the complexities of political power shifts through the academic lenses. The paper also suggests that understanding the contemporary world would help in critically interpreting the influence of the international political economy, allow one to understand political and economic structures and hierarchies which drive economic nationalism and globalization. Most of the conclusions drawn from this paper need to be re-explored and supported by additional research. This could be done by widening the scope of the analysis. There was limited quantitative data to support the evidence-based qualitative analyses all within a framework that considers more political and historical dimensions.

Keywords: Georgia, Turkey, Literature review, International Relations

1 INTRODUCTION

The article intends to critically analyze the theoretical underpinnings of articles from 2002 to 2022 that discuss Turkey and Georgian relationship and the factors that have shaped it. It critically analyses and examines different literature on the Turkey-Georgia relationship. The diplomatic relationship between the two states has matured over the years despite their internal and external political shifts and conflicts. Their relationship has survived the cold war era (Baran n.p). It demystifies how diplomatic communication helps in ensuring that a region is peaceful. The reason for choosing the two states is that they are neighbors but hailing from different social political and cultural orientations. The article discusses how the relationship between Turkey and Georgia is reflected amidst conflicts between the South Caucasus states. Georgia is the only country bordering the Black Sea, connecting the Black Sea and Caspian, and connecting Central Asia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey via the land route (Mikhelidze n.p). Turkey has also utilized Georgia as a transit

country for energy projects from Azerbaijan to Turkey and finally to Europe. Turkey is also the only NATO member that Georgia does not have demarcation issues.

The gap in the existing literature is that although many studies have been conducted on the topic, most have focused on Turkey's political and economic security, energy, and other pragmatic measures and calculations toward the region. However, the authors have not considered that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, there were many challenges and opportunities for Turkey, mostly within the Eurasian geopolitical shift, as the state found itself as the main actor in the happenings of the region. Turkey became a regional power due to its long historical relationship with the region. However, with time, other actors also inserted their influence in the region, and Turkey's image as an effective player started diminishing. However, Turkey's involvement in the region intensified after 2008, when it established a Caucasus Cooperation to maintain regional stability and mitigate further escalation. Turkey did this as it perceived the region as a connection between Central Asia and another region. Thus, it acted as a buffer zone that would counter Russia's influence in the region. Garfali argues that the geostrategic position might have repositioned Turkey's international stance from being viewed as a "buffer" of the cold war to a "central country" that follows the new international order (Garfali 175). Notably, most literature focuses on the geographical imperative of the region, focusing on the Ottoman and Kemalist eras. However, more than the old concepts and definitions from these eras are needed to assess Turkey's foreign soft and ideational policies in the region. Turkey has aimed to restore security stability in a region with constant conflicts arising from ethnic strife, especially due to the influence of the various actors and ethnic strife. Turkey's policy is also founded on economic and political concerns and consolidating its relations with Georgia regarding oil transportation. There has also been recent repositioning and developments of its regional policies, and it has started bilateral talks with Armenia.

2 MATERIAL STUDIED

2.1 Definition of Turkey in the South Caucasus

Turkish foreign policy is stepped into the historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire. However, it is important to distinguish between the Ottoman foreign policy and that of the Kemalist Turkish Republic. The former is defined by "balance of power" relations, while the latter is based on isolationist exclusionism. Kemalist Turkey is further differentiated by its existential emphasis, most aptly characterized as a policy of historical disassociation from its Ottoman past. Ethnocentric pan-unionism distinguished the expansionist orientations of European imperial powerbrokers just before World War One. Pan-Turkism is one example of such an overcurrent in the conceptual incarnation of Turanism, the ideology that pursues to connect all Turkic world. The latter is a common ancestral Turkic homeland from Anatolia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Pan-Turkism was utilized to project and ultimately defy foreign policy interests of various regional powers throughout the historic Ottoman hinterlands, Czarist Russia being the most significant (Zürcher 567). Turkey has reacted to the region within the pan-Turkish sentiment throughout time.

Additionally, Aydin's article examines the relationship between Turkey, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The author identifies that in the early 1990s, some Turkish policy issues towards the Caucasus and Central Asia included its empty valor, disorganized attempts to reduce the region's influence, and endless euphoric pronouncements (Aydin 10). The success of these policies depended on how Turkey would respond to its constant ethnic strife with the Caucasus. The article indicates that Turkey's Bipartisan approach towards Caucasus problems has reaffirmed Georgian's integrity and thus enhanced their relationship (Aydin 18). Moreover, in the early 1990s, Turkey faced challenging policy choices due to the increased rivalry between the Russian Federation in the Caucasus and Iran in Central Asia. Aras also agrees with Aydin that Turkey repositioned itself due to the dynamic changes in the region (Aras 55). The newly independent states in the former Soviet Union created an influence area and opportunity for Turkey.

2.2 The Historical State of Turkish Foreign Policy

Turkish foreign policy (TFP) for the historical accounts of Turkey in the region was positioned in the volatile dynamic in the region and conceptualized as a *structural dynamic* that oriented itself on history (Aydin 20). Turkey is a rare multifaceted country with geographic positioning that combines the points of three continents, making it a pivotal location. The strategic positioning allows Turkey to communicate via the Caucasus between central Asia and Europe. Turkey has watched the region closely and cautiously after 1991 and shifted its foreign policy within or according to structural and conjectural changes. Aydin highlights the most significant policies of Turkey over the Caucasus. In his article titled "*Turkey's Caucasus Policies*," he seeks to explore the exploration of the intention of Turkey for the region; in doing so, he draws a timeline dating back to the cold war era. After the collapse of the USSR, Turkey became another regional power due to its long historical relationship with the Caucasus region (Aydin 18). Turkey has various reasons

to be an effective player. Aydin pinpoints what factors force Turkey to exert its influence over the region and Turkey's overall foreign policy implementation. Turkey's involvement in the region intensified after August 2008, offering to establish a Caucasus Cooperation and Stability to mitigate further escalation (Aydin 22). The dissolution of the Soviet Union brought both challenges and opportunities for Turkey in the 1990s; within this Eurasian geopolitical shift, Turkey found itself in the spotlight as an actor. Unlike the geographical imperative of the Turkish foreign policy, definition that was brought back from the Ottoman and Kemalist eras of Turkey, South Caucasus must be read behind "memorized" narratives and discourses. Thus, more than the old definitions and concepts are needed to assess Turkey's foreign policy's soft and ideational factors in the region. Soysal introduces Turkey is one the rare multifaceted countries with geographic position to combine the points of three continents, the pivotal location of Turkey communicates between central Asia and Europe via Caucasus (Soysal, 2004)

Historically, Turkey's foreign policy in the region was conditioned to be a counterweight against the Soviet Union. This narrative emerged and enlivened due to the historical events between the Soviet Union and Ottoman, and it continued to shape policymakers' perceptions (Celikpala 28). The official openings to the region initiated after 1923 marked the creation of Turkey, ceding from the Ottoman Empire. Before 1923, it was hard to recall the existing diplomatic relationship between Turkey and its southern states and states in Central Asia (Aras and Akpinar 54). During the cold war, Turkey adopted a cautious foreign policy in South Caucasus due to the securitization at the border and instability at the trans-border. In Turkish academia, there is no common word to define South Caucasus. However, many scholars including Ter-Matevasyon, Cecire, Mitat, Aras and Akpinar agree that Turkey has a sustainable foreign policy and Turkey is a key and indispensable regional player.

Turkey is one the rare multifaceted countries with geographic position to combine the points of three continents, the pivotal location of Turkey communicates between central Asia and Europe via Caucasus. (Soysal, 2004) Turkey has watched the region closely and cautiously after 1991 and shift its foreign policy within or according to structural and conjectural changes in the region. Aydin (2000, 2004, 2011)

There have been recent repositioning and developments of its policies regarding the Caucasus -for instance, it is having bilateral relations with Georgia and Armenia. Turkey in Georgian National Security (2012) Concepts is defined in four main themes: leading trade, energy cooperation, Security and Defense and cultural cooperation. Turkey came to region late that reflected in studies.

3 AREA DESCRIPTION IN TURKISH SCHOLARS RESEARCH

Turkey is a country with historical, language, cultural and religious affinity with states and people in the South Caucasus. It is located at the meeting point of the Eurasian steppes and the Middle Eastern highlands, between the Black and the Caspian Seas. Its strategic positioning signifies Turkey's multisectoral foreign policy for the region under three main parameters including "*natural neighbor*" "*geographical proximity*" and "*historical connection*." They define Turkey's identity in the region in which the primary linkage has been mentioned in discourse in Turkish foreign policy during the 'Justice and Development Party' (J.D.P) (Kamrava 338). These three main concepts characterize Turkey in the sense of a physical geographical dimension, recognizing that is not a regional country, but it is a geopolitical actor in this geographical dimension that has borders with three countries in the region. Its material and conceptual factors have allowed the country have a close connection with ethnic people in the region. Besides these concepts, the "*key player*," "*powerful actor*," and "*regional actor*" often underscore Turkey's ambition in the region. When defining and positioning Turkey as a unitary state character in the region, the concept of "middle power" can be another term to use for its recent multisectoral foreign policy that combined diplomacy with military and economic activism in the region (Kutlay et al. 3060). Its military alliances with Azerbaijan, economic partnership with Georgia, and diplomatic issues with Armenia, the such multidimensional foreign policy defines and ranks middle power states in the international system.

From the geographical aspect, The South Caucasus has been a defined "zone of influence" and a vital historical link for Turkey. Turkey and Iran are regional actors that exert control over the region's states. Therefore, the region has become one of the main areas of competition between Iran and Turkey as the two countries seek to expand their influence in the South Caucasus economy, politics, and military spheres (kamrava 340). Turkey sees the region as an opportunistic gateway to connect the wider region to central Asia to China. Therefore, Turkey is recognized as the "regional power" in the South Caucasus. The conventional narratives of Turkish foreign policy have revolved around Turkey's geographical location at the junction of three continents; Europe, Asia, and the South Caucasus. In Davutoglu writings, this distinction is evident with abstract definitions.

Turkey's South Caucasus foreign policy reflected in official documents that TFP is not one vectoral but

composed of various dimensions and objectives. These include security framework, political, economic, and cultural. Turkey's support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of countries in the South Caucasus has been the ultimate strategic goal since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Turkey's historical priority is to securitize the borders as well as to ascertain if any minor ethnic conflict and instability will disrupt the peace in the region and spill over the border of Turkey (Aydin 19). Literature and academia, mainly from Turkey, define South Caucasus and Central Asia as a "Neglected neighborhood" for Turkey. Its people and communities who are historically linked to Turkey are either "forgotten or "abandoned" (Aydin 10). Not all academicians think that the region was neglected; for example, Aydin claims that although Turkey has a historical, cultural, and linguistic connection to the region, it has structured a "pragmatic" approach to contribute to the institutionalization and identity formation of the newly independent states and benefit from the potential economic capacity in the region. Balci in his famous book mentions over sixty times Turkey's geostrategic objectives in the Eurasian and Caucasus.

Turkey sees itself as a potential leader of a loose Turkic-speaking community, taking advantage that end of its appealing relative modernity, its linguistic affinity, and its economic means to establish itself as the most influential force in the nation-building processes underway in the area (Balci et al. 340). Paul Kennedy, historian at Yale University, coined the "pivotal power" term to define Turkey as an ascending power "a state that could, and still can, significantly determine the course of events within the three geographies. Caucasus is one of the three regions that Kennedy mentions "the strategic partner." Labeling the concepts, it is implied that Turkey has become both a country of economic and political significance and, also, a strategic buffer zone for the US objectives.

This implies that Turkey has become both a country of economic and political significance and a strategic buffer zone for the actors' objectives. For example, Turkey is one of the strategic partners of Georgia, with enhanced cooperation in many areas, from the economy to education, as detailed in the study by Chkhikvadze (Chikhikvadze 8). He touches on Turkey's relationship with Abkhazia and creates political unreliability among Georgian elites toward Turkey. According to Ekinci, the geopolitical and geostrategic development of the Caucasus has evolved since the mid-1990s. Aleksanyan supported this by saying that the geostrategic positioning of the South Caucasus makes it a link between the west and the East. According to him, the region is strategically positioned and endowed with rich soils (Aleksanyan 308). These characteristics have made the region to be contested by different surrounding neighbors. The article by Göksel also recognized the significance of the South Caucasus in the region (Göksel 8). Göksel notes that the South Caucasus is an E.U member and acts as a transit zone for goods moving between middle Asia and the Caspian basin. Gafarli argued that Turkey views the Caucasus region as a land of opportunity and influence. Davutoglu adds Caucasus in his *Geography of Heart*. The geography of heart denotes that a link to people from different territory. In his image, the *Geography of heart* illustrates as pyramid each end diverges but converges back to Turkey. *Geography of the heart* means Islam as well that scatter around the world.

Davutoglu connects South and North Caucasus in a single united boundary that serves Turkey's geopolitical objective. Before analyzing Davutoglu, Geopolitical scope and Caucasus in general Georgia in specific, it is important to mention whom Davutoglu is highly influenced by Geopolitical writers from their ideas and inspired by such as Mackinder (1904), Houshofer (1941), Spykman (1944), and Brzezinski (1997). He generously cites their works in his "strategical depth: Turkey's position in International Order" book. As this concept gained popularity with his book titled "Strategic Depth" which reinterprets Turkey's position in the new International system and context as a driving force to redefining Turkey's geopolitical scope; thus, he projects a new vision in "historical lenses" with historical responsibility in Turkey all-natural neighborhoods and regions. As suggested by Davutoglu, Turkey must have a new style of the diplomatic language and behavior to conduct foreign policy making in the regions. (Davutoglu, 2010)

Davutoglu has different views on the states of South Caucasus. He discusses that Azerbaijan, in a general sense in Caucasia and specifically in South Caucasus, is a significant strategical ally of Turkey. If it is needed to make a comparison for regional connections, Azerbaijan in region is as essential as Albania in Balkan for Turkey's foreign policy. Davutoglu underlined that geopolitics is pragmatic and must be calculated carefully the geographical conditions of Turkey "We don't want to pay the bill of strategic mistakes or miscalculation by Russia, or by Georgia" that underlined Turkey's oscillation foreign policy that carefully observed the war between Russia and Georgia. With new initiatives of foreign policy , the new imagination of the geography has been established to connects abstracts of foreign policy with new initiatives, for example this imagining geography has also used by Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a speech in Rize "Our physical boundaries are different from the boundaries of our heart, is it possible to separate Rize from Batumi?" This quotation led a controversial topic among Georgian elite and Turkish ambassador had to clear it out. Turkey new geographical imagination has no boundary. Aras defines the new geographical mindset as follow

The relationship between 'bordering and othering' lost its meaning after removing the strains of domestic threat perceptions in regional policy. (Aras, 2009 p. 129) South Caucasus has become one of the important locations in Turkey "strategical depth" Davutoglu, 2008: 80). This statement indicates how Davutoglu perceives the South Caucasus in Turkey new foreign policy image.

Similarly, there are three type of Geographies Davutoglu readings and understanding. Geography of the Heart. Geography of the destiny and Geography of the memory. Each Geography is intertwined and inseparable. In a sense, it can be understood that each of them.

Even though Turkey is influential in these regions; however, if Albania and Azerbaijan are not stable without powerful regional status, it will obstruct Turkey to shape policies stretching from Adriatic to the Caspian Sea. Davutoglu views the Caucasus holistically as a region inherently connected to the interests of its neighbors. Therefore, any threat or source of instability is seen as a more significant geopolitical threat carrying economic consequences to the rest of the broader region; such factors evaluate the strategic depth of each area respectively. Comparatively, the state of Turkish diplomatic relations in the Caucasus mirrors those of its Balkan counterparts. The belated diplomatic mission arrival in the Caucasus and Balkans is attributed to Kemalist isolationism's diplomatic psychology. Upon realization of this belated arrival to the region, Caucasian has not taken as a whole in its boundary, and the Azeri and Armenian conflict was regarded as the issue of the parties. Davutoglu doesn't consider the conflict of the Azeri and Armenian conflict detached from the region. Azeri and Armenian conflict is one of the most significant issues of the Caucasus; it only can be solved by taking regional main strategy and parameters. Thus, Caucasus needs a multidimensional political scheme that connects near land basin with other regions that surround the geopolitics of Eastern Anatolia, Gulf, Eastern Aegean Sea as geo-economics Azeri oil, water resources of Eastern Anatolia and Northern Iraqi oil must be included (Davutoglu, 2008)

4 METHODOLOGY

We utilized qualitative content analysis for this research. The qualitative research design helped examining the political discourse in Georgia and how that has affected the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Georgia. The political events after the USSR's collapse are the main corpus of investigation to understand Turkey's policy ideation. For a balanced view, some literature consulted, such as that by Abbasbeyli, provided different views about Turkey's regional policies and the influence inserted by other players such as Russia, the U.S, and Iran (Abbasbeyli 50). Most importantly, Garfali notes that North Caucasians struggled against the Russian invasion, a struggle spurred by Caucasian's need for independence. Other literature selected involved Turkey's relationship with other states, such as Adjara and Abkhazia. This created a good foundation for understanding Turkey's influence in the region and how the influence affected Georgia. Therefore, the literature consulted provided reliable information on the importance of policies in ensuring regional stability.

The periodization from 2002 has been selected because Georgia and Turkey's relations transforming from secularist foreign policy into a proactive and multivectoral under a single party which JDP since then. After the USSR's dissolution, Turkey changed its foreign policies, which affected Georgia.

The review focused on peer review articles written in English, eclectic and composed by authors with the cultural and ethnic backgrounds such as authors from Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Westerns. 46 articles were utilized in this qualitative research design to help gain more insights on the topic. This is because the more the article used for the research, the broader the understanding of the topic is inferred (Levitt et al. 357). We carefully examined all key literature sources to identify consistency in their information. All articles used are scholarly articles, mainly from Google scholar and Scopus. As expressed, the information from the internet helped build on existing research.

Articles undergo meticulous analysis to ascertain the fundamental theme, encompassing both theoretical underpinnings and geographical ramifications. One difficulty we faced was the lack of a theoretical foundation or conceptualization in each article. In order to tackle this issue, we utilized keyword filtering to ascertain whether the publications were relevant to for example. realism, or liberalism with level of analysis. After establishing their connection the theory then we proceeded to analyze the particular notions of the theory that were addressed or utilized and concluded with implication in the region.

After data collection, we needed to analyze and present the data as useful information. Data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method to analyze texts and interpret the theme (Adu et al. n.p). The study thematically synthesized the findings of the thirty-nine focusing on Turkey's engagement in the South Caucasus. Other literature was grouped according to their theoretical concept on the topic, relevance, and importance (Klaus et al. 2577). Articles were excluded based on their content analysis; articles are included with a high hit and citation ratio. The literature was categorized in a sequence, listed from the publication

dates and starting from the most important ones, which covered the topic broadly, to the most specific ones that were clear about Turkey-Georgia relations. The main question asked is which article reflected and provided insights regarding Turkey-Georgia relations despite the effect of USSR dissolution. Author origin was also considered as it indicated the scope and perspective of their article. However, authors not from the region were also included, as their perspectives contributed greatly to this research. Due to the scope of the studies, dissertations and books are not included as the scholarly articles are considered representative of the studies. As expressed, it was important to have this analysis method other than having the literature in chronological order as it strengthened the review.

When engaging with existing literature, a comprehensive literature review is important as it helps get a clear perspective of the topic. Mostly, the literature review is done after data collection to avoid introducing bias and researcher perceptions that may lead to altered data analysis (Lochmiller). The importance of thematic analysis in the literature review was to allow themes to emerge naturally without being inhibited by the extant theoretical frameworks and other related hypotheses (Lochmiller). We engaged with the literature after conducting a comprehensive data analysis and prioritizing the relevant information. This enabled us to develop the theme innovatively.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Turkey and South Caucasus Geostrategic Positioning

This section focuses on the literature and discussion about the Turkey priorities and objective in the region and Georgia. It creates a descriptive, analytical and critical literature on the subject matter. Çaman and Akyurt assessed the Turkish-regional policy in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. They note that the ending of the Cold War led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union (USSR) and the emergence of newly independent states (Çaman 55). However, Reus-Smit notes that Turkey and Georgian relationship continued to mature over the years; internal and external political shifts and conflicts in Georgia and Turkey did not derail the good neighborly relationship nor obstruct it. The relationship survived during the cold war era and was furthered multidimensionally (Reus-Smit 220). Mustafa Aydin notes that other actors feared Turkey's involvement as they thought it would encourage the development of independent states. However, Turkey was forced to restructure its regional policy concept to deal with this change and accommodate these states. The authors note that this led to Turkey looking for new ways to make its foreign policy work. The transition geography of the region has greatly impacted Turkey, which has a complex array of political, cultural, and economic relations with its neighbors. The JDP's assumption of power in 2002 made Turkey even more proactive in ensuring that its regional policy approach solves the existing regional problems.

Mustafa Aydin highlights the most significant policies of Turkey over the Caucasus. In his article titled "*Turkey's Caucasus Policies*," Aydin explores Turkey's intention for the region; in doing so, he draws a timeline dating back to the Cold War era. After the collapse of the USSR, Turkey became another regional power due to its long historical relationship with the Caucasus region. Turkey has various reasons to be an effective player. Aydin pinpoints what factors force Turkey to exert its influence over the region and Turkey's overall foreign policy implementation. Turkey's involvement in the region intensified after August 2008, offering to establish a Caucasus Cooperation and Stability to mitigate further escalation. The dissolution of the Soviet Union brought challenges and opportunities for Turkey in the 1990s; within this Eurasian geopolitical shift, Turkey found itself in the spotlight as an actor.

Areshev postulated that the disintegration of the USSR had been viewed as a positive contributor to Turkey's influence in Caucasia and Central Asia. Mamuka notes that it has positively contributed to strengthening Turkey's political and economic sovereignty in the independent states in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, especially in the Black Sea-Caspian region. Kengerly notes that the disintegration of the USSR brought about changes in Turkey's policies that allowed Turkey to dominate the region because it no longer had one neighbor but six. The influence allowed Turkey to have relations with other countries, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia (Areshev 10). Therefore, Turkey has been able to forge a high level of cooperation with these countries except Armenia.

Kengerly adds that Turkey has since had a growing influence in the Middle East among other Turkic-speaking Caucasus and Central Asia populations (Kengerly 36). Oskanian notes that Turkey played a major role in the region's economic development through direct investments, trade, and expansion of transportation links. This has enabled Turkey to become a regional "power center," being involved in most of the important issues in the region, including those that focus on stabilizing the security in the region. Most importantly, as discussed by Grassi, Turkey has been interested in Caucasian countries to safeguard its territorial integrity, improve its cooperation with the U.N, OSCE, and NATO, for economic gains due to trade, and counter Russia's influence, thus dominating the region. Kardas notes that the Turkish government's rhetorical

prospects of deciding to maintain a peaceful coexistence with its neighbors were focused on maintaining a 'positive-sum' strategy to maintain regional cooperation. However, Frahm et al. hypothesized that the collaboration and the regional states' territorial integrity do not match Turkey's observable engagement due to what Goksel notes is outside influence by powerful actors. Mustafa Aydin highlights the most significant policies of Turkey over the Caucasus. In his article titled "Turkey's Caucasus Policies," Aydin explores Turkey's intention for the region; in doing so, he draws a timeline dating back to the Cold War era. After the collapse of the USSR, Turkey became another regional power due to its long historical relationship with the Caucasus region. Turkey has various reasons to be an effective player. Aydin pinpoints what factors force Turkey to exert its influence over the region and Turkey's overall foreign policy implementation. Turkey's involvement in the region intensified after August 2008, offering to establish a Caucasus Cooperation and Stability to mitigate further escalation. The dissolution of the Soviet Union brought challenges and opportunities for Turkey in the 1990s; within this Eurasian geopolitical shift, Turkey found itself in the spotlight as an actor.

Mamuka stated that Turkey being a member of NATO and EU in the region, created some hope for solving the insecurity experienced. However, the weakening of US presence and Russian domination in the region poses a greater risk as the security of the states in the region can be ensured through a solid Turkish-Western alliance meant to oppose Russian influence (Mamuka n.p). Oskanian postulated that Turkey's influence was faced with challenges, especially due to the past ethical history of extreme violence affecting the relationship between Turkey and its neighbors. Mikhelidze's argument could be true that Turkey's priorities, especially Ankara's policy-making, which focused on strategic partnership with the neighboring countries, could be an opportunistic stance.

Other superpowers, including Russia, overshadowed the Turkish position in the region. Balci, Bayram, and Thomas Liles suggest that all these superpowers had their interests, especially in the energy sector (Balci et al. 335). Therefore, Aleksanyan notes that Sovietization risked the glory of the region. Kengerly postulates that the interests have had Turkey clash with Russia on different occasions as Russia does not want to lose its dominance in the region (Kengerly 60). In addition, Garfali added that Turkish foreign policy affected its relationship with Russia (Garfali 178). He notes that there was a contribution by the Caucasus groups towards making the Turkish foreign policies and how they affected the inter-relations with Russian policies (Garfali 175-177). The Russian-Turkey conflict has involved other neighboring states. Such conflicts can destabilize the stability of the region at large. Therefore, regional policymakers need to utilize the information in the article to find ways to bring peace between Russia and Turkey and their relations.

Areshev points out that there have been rising tensions regarding these relations, which, according to Aleksanyan's perspective, might have far-reaching implications for the Caucasus region. Regional tensions caused by the increasing number of refugees have provoked internal conflicts around social issues, among other problems (Aleksanyan 315). The tensions tend to affect all countries, including those that seem more 'powerful' than the rest. The author notes that these tensions are likely to have a domestic and foreign negative impact on Turkey and impede it from being a reliable transit route for the region. The article reveals the issues that regional policymakers should look into to reduce tensions and improve the region's security.

In his article, Zhiltsov discusses this by saying that the USSR changed Russia's position in the energy sector. He discusses how the emergence of newly independent states ended the domination of Russia in energy exports (Zhiltsov 120). However, the energy policies by Russia on exports seemed viable since, during their creation, Russia had considered the emergence of new export routes that would involve the leading oil gas companies, including the USA and EU (Ryabov 259). The new routes acted as a gateway for the Caspian region's opening up for economic and political development. The article is a valuable resource for the politicians and specialists involved in the energy sector, decision-makers, and environmentalists.

However, Aleksanyan added that the collapse of the Soviet Union made the South Caucasus a focus of global transformation and political upheavals. The South Caucasus is an important region as it enabled Turkey to have influence even in other regions after the disintegration of the Soviet Union (Aleksanyan 308). However, the influence led to conflicts in some of the regions. Georgia assumed a significant role in Turkey's regional policy that helped unite Turkey with the Asian region, specifically central Asia. Therefore, Turkey-Georgian close relations since the mid-1990s can be seen to have been contributed largely by South Caucasus. Although Georgia is trying to diversify its foreign policy, its relationship with Turkey will continue to develop.

5.2 The Impact of Turkey Presence in South Caucasus

Turkey's presence in the South Caucasus led to regional security instability due to conflict between the region's states. Kirişci and Moffatt concluded that the South Caucasus and surrounding regions had had

security instability due to unending internal conflicts (Kirişci and Moffat 85). Abbasov hypothesized that the unending internal conflicts were fueled by ethnic-based politics and external influences by other nationalities, which greatly hindered the building of citizenry-based societies. Aydin also draws from his past published and unpublished work developed at the NATO defense college to build his ideas. He adds that ethnic and regional diversity, economic inequality, corruption, and poverty as reasons for the prolonged conflict and instability in the region. Ekinci notes that during the 1990s, Turkey had a close relationship with other states apart from Georgia despite being neighbors (Ekinci 50).

In his article, Galichian also discussed the geopolitical relations of the South Caucasus, where he notes that other Turkish-speaking cultures misunderstood Armenian history, geography, and culture (Galichian 10). The author's argument can be valid as he used data from historical maps such as the Third Map of Asia from Mercator's 1578 map and Map of Armenia, Aran, and Azerbaijan and government statistics to identify the state of South Caucasus in the 14th century. Turkish speakers might have falsified information by saying that Armenia is a newcomer, which affected the regional states' relations (Galichian 50). However, the tension between Turkey and Armenia is currently due to the inter-state level heightened political sensitivities and the history surrounding the two countries.

Aras article denotes that the J.D.P government initially seemed to ignore its relationships with the Caucasus and Central Asia after the 2002 elections. It concludes that the Turkish policies over the region are hoped to give the country clear advantages over its competitors in the future. The article explores Turkey's reasons for changing its roles in Central Asia and the Caucasus while exploring the assets used to enhance its influence in those regions. Aras agrees with Aydin that Turkey repositioned itself due to the dynamic changes in the region. The newly independent states in the former Soviet Union created an influence area and opportunity for Turkey.

Aydin's article examines the relationship between Turkey, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The author identifies that in the early 1990s, some Turkish policy issues towards the Caucasus and Central Asia included its empty valor, disorganized attempts to reduce the region's influence, and endless euphoric pronouncements. The success of these policies depended on how Turkey would respond to its constant ethnic strife with the Caucasus. The article indicates that Turkey's Bipartisan approach towards Caucasus problems has reaffirmed Georgian's integrity and thus enhanced their relationship. Moreover, in the early 1990s, Turkey faced challenging policy choices due to the increased rivalry between the Russian Federation in the Caucasus and Iran in Central Asia.

According to Cecire et al., Turkey is an ascendant power in the Caucasus system. He further argues that Turkey became a leading role in the region's economic area, and her relationship with Georgia is intensified and enhanced over the years. Turkey and Georgia need one another for mutual benefits. Turkey includes Georgia in Strategic Depth, while Georgia sees Turkey as a conduit to the Euro-Atlantic and a contributor to economic development. Cecire states that Turkey's Caucasus strategic outlook has three parameters: Economy, Geography, and Security (Cecire et al. 8). He further underlines that Turkey's interaction with the region is more economically pragmatic and not Islamic but pursues politics. Due to its dependency on oil and gas, Turkey's foreign policy in the region has more economic goals. Thomas De Waal discusses the Turkish connections to the region through the lenses of Azerbaijan and Georgia. Celikpala underlined that Turkey initiated a relationship with the Caucasus and ended its long-awaited arrival in 1994 (Celikpala 28). Strategies to develop a regional horizon to shape its relationship towards Caucasus and Georgia.

Goksel's article makes it clear that the disintegration of the USSR led to a lot of distress in the region caused by recognized and unrecognized ethnic, military, and political groups (Goksel 8). These problems interfered with the region's development by hindering economic integration, discouraging the creation of a common market, obstructing effective regional communication, and discouraging cooperation that would enable the region to deal with the region's common problems (Goksel 20). In addition, the South Caucasus region's isolation from one another has greatly hindered sustainable development. This comprehensive text enlightens and encourages Caucasian regional policymakers to understand the region.

The scholarly article by Eissler focuses on enabling a reader to understand the history of the relations between Turkey and Abkhazia, focusing on Abkhazia's perspective. The author focuses on allowing a reader to understand Abkhazia as a small territory while targeting to get the attention of international relations experts and hoping that the region would recognize Abkhazia as an independent territory. Eissler notes that Turkey's interaction with Abkhazia has affected its relations with other countries, such as Georgia (Eissler 127). Despite this, he notes that the clash between Turkey and Georgia captured the attention of parties aimed at conflict resolution. Goksel notes that the conflicts drew the attention of most superpowers, both the government and non-governmental organizations in the regional powers such as the U.S, Europe, Russia, and the South Caucasus. Veliyev, drawing from the European policy center and King Baudouin Foundation,

notes that all these actors aimed at helping resolve the conflicts.

Similarly, Kirişci and Moffatt added that the presence of Ukraine and Russia added to the conflicts, and Russia seeming not to back down anytime soon. The authors note that these conflicts exacerbated the inflow of migrants and refugees from the Caucasus region into Turkey. The Russia-Ukraine tension has led to a growing risk of igniting a full-fledged war. The tension also risks the region not having the required economic integration policy to promote stability and peace (Kirişci 70). The author suggests that the South Caucasus is a less integrated region that lacks formal institutions to support intraregional development. Therefore, Caucasus relations with Turkey are important because Turkey is the region's largest economy and can improve the state's economic and political stability. Russia's sanctions on Turkey have created an opportunity for Turkey to consider South Caucasus due to its relative stability. If the relations thrive, then 'soft regionalism' would advance and be embraced by other regions to benefit the states that are viewed as less important in creating regional policies.

5.3 Mending Turkey-Georgian Relations

Although Turkey's presence in the region contributes to the unending South Caucasus conflicts, Ekinci provides insights that during the 1990s, there was a need for Turkey and Georgia to become partners due to the need for an effective transfer of Caspian oil and gas. Ekinci notes that although the energy issue was a baseline for the new partnership, other reasons emerged, including the need to solve ethnic disputes, military assistance, and the prospective implications that the move would have on the regional dynamics; these would shape the region's politics (Ekinci 45). Moreover, the article provides insights into the need for regional security to foster Turkey and Georgia relations based on a common policy.

The need for a Turkish Georgian partnership led to a good relationship based on politics, economics, and geo-strategic positioning. Ter-Matevosyan explores the dynamics of Turkish-Georgian relations emphasizing the post-United National Movement era. Drawing on political and religious leaders, Ivanov also discusses the determinants which shaped and defined the essence of the deepening relations between Turkey and Georgia. He notes the importance of the Georgia-Turkey partnership after Georgia's independence (Ivanov 80). Most importantly, the article by Cecire, Gogolashvili, and Sichinava discussed the Georgia-Turkey relations, which have been strengthened by the trade partnership between the two parties, the ability of Turkey to defend and train Georgia and Turkey's advocacy for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Ter-Matevosyan argues that the two countries incorporated the pro-west policies in their foreign policy against the Russian factor (Ter-Matevosyan 110). The paper also looks at how Turkey has defined its "power" politics in Georgia and the various humanitarian, cultural, and educational spheres. However, the author notes that mutual discontent arose during the bilateral relations and the growing opposition against Turkey in Georgia, which was catalyzed by the political and religious influences of the Georgian Orthodox Church (Ter-matevosyan 125). The article is an eye-opener on the issues that affect international relations. Still, it provides additional information on the advantages and disadvantages of projects between Georgia and Turkey and how they would affect these countries' achieving much at their global level in the future.

The article by Cecire, Gogolashvili, and Sichinava utilizes historical information from Caucasus Research Resource Center to discuss how the Georgia-Turkey relations evolved under the Rose regime (United National Movement) and how the rise of the Georgian Dream Coalition to power threatened the relations. The research focuses on the Foreign Policy Preferences of the Georgian population, citizens' opinions on Georgia's Membership in NATO, identifying Georgia's allies, and the role of Russia in Georgia. The article is helpful because, as the authors identify, states' relations are affected by stressors such as increased immigration, the introduction of foreign, illegal practices, cultural biases, and Russian influence (Cecire et al. 3). The main limitation of the article is that it does not delve deep into how Russian domination, the main threat in Georgia-Turkey relations, has affected Turkey-Georgia relations. The authors note that stressors do not have a long-term effect on state relations and that policymakers are working to ensure that Georgia-Turkey relations develop. The article is therefore important for research because it gives insights into what Georgia should focus on when diversifying its foreign policies to include Russia and the role of geopolitics.

5.4 Turkey Reorganization after the Soviet Union

However, Göksel points out the tension between Georgia and Turkey regarding sites of worship, Turko-skepticism in some segments of the Georgian society, and the economic dominance of Turkey in Georgia exacerbated their conflicts. Vladimir notes that Turkey's policy affected Georgia's religious dimensions that were used to achieve political influence in the South Caucasus. Atheism during the Soviet times prevented people from using religion for political reasons (Vladimir 80). The politicization of politics is still evident, as discussed by Sanikidze and Walker, who say there is the politicization of Islam, particularly the Islamicization of the Chechen resistance movement to Georgia's north.

However, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Turkey, among other countries, took the opportunity to pressure the post-Soviet expanse. Turkey established its domination in the neighboring post-Soviet regions. Since the neighboring states embraced this move, Turkey could be involved in the political and economic issues of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Therefore, the religious factor was as important as the political and economic factors. For decades, Turkish-Georgian relations have not been good. Turkey had conflicts with Georgia over its inability to recognize Ajaria as an Islamic. The author notes that even after the Soviet Union's disintegration, Georgia has only paid attention to the Christian Orthodox church in Ajaria despite its large Muslim population, which has been treated as a political issue. In conclusion, the conflict creates the need for the orthodox Christians and Muslims to maintain the religious balance in the country while wielding a lot of external political and other influence. However, the religious issues in the Georgia is improved and Georgia has its unique approach to deal with multicultural society. Turkey outreach with the religious community, mostly Sunni population in Georgia through outreaching and lobbying activities to mitigate Iran, and Saudi Arabia Influence. (Alkan, 2023)

Göksel notes that mending this relationship requires an intellectual engagement of the Turks, Georgians, and EU counterparts. The two countries have been strategic partners, as Turkey has been the leading investor in Georgia. The deeper their economic and strategic relations go, the more they need to find intellectual dimensions involving civil societies. Abkhazia has been at the forefront of ensuring Turkey and Georgia coexist peacefully. Eissler notes that although Abkhazia has been a significant player, the author does not provide much information about Abkhazia's role in bringing peace between Turkey and Georgia; an act that makes it seem like Abkhazia is not an independent state (Eissler 128). Although Turkey and Abkhazia have been involved in trade relations before, their hostility towards each other, which also involves Georgia (Eissler176), may not allow Turkey to impact Abkhazia-Georgia relations positively. The efforts to ensure that the conflict between Turkey and Abkhazia recedes have not succeeded due to political and cultural barriers. Therefore, it would be necessary for international relations experts to create policies to ensure that the countries reach an agreement driven by political will and creativity.

6 DISCUSSION

Galichian's article is insightful since it tries to determine the length of the period of the cultures' existence in the region and tries to answer the historical, cultural, and geographic questions arising between Armenia's eastern and western neighbors. The limitation of the article is that it needs to demonstrate how policymakers and historians can research and develop effective policies to ensure peaceful coexistence in the region. The author highlights that policymakers need to come up with policies that ensure that these states coexist peacefully. This article is a good resource for information on the South Caucasus region when conducting research. Fotiou analyzes Turkey's foreign policies and how they would affect the cooperation and also analyzes the position, intentions, and perceptions of South Caucasus stakeholders, Georgia included (Fotiou 10). He concluded that Turkey had been an important player in the region, and its relationship with Russia and other South Caucasus states determined its stability.

Valiyev enables a reader to understand the importance of intra-regional cooperation and how it helps offer regional cooperation opportunities and solve regional problems (Valiyev 27). The author's article is a fascinating read for philosophers since it gives more insights into how regional cooperation can bring about the clash of realism and liberalism. According to Valiyev, regional cooperation has allowed the pooling of efforts in energy, research and development, and knowledge generation, which have been necessary when developing successful development strategies (Valiyev 40). The author allows a reader to understand that the success of this intra-regional cooperation can be attributed to the creation of a strategic axis. In addition, he wants the reader to brainstorm on whether the success of the cooperation is a realistic attitude or whether it can be attributed to relative mutual gains. The author has also focused on the importance of regional differences in enhancing intra- regional unity. This comprehensive text shows that regional ties, characterized by mutual independence, should remain the same and that institutionalizing and formalizing diplomatic relations is crucial in sustaining regional cooperation in the future.

Efe and Akyurt focused on capturing the attention of Turkey's policymakers on the need for a new applicable, feasible and realistic action plan to ensure that the policy considers the region's realities. In addition, the article points out the importance of having necessary structural and institutional conditions informed by organizations such as the Turkic Council, TIKA, and the Eurasian Economic Council as the institutional basis for regional cooperation efforts (Akyurt 47). Goksel's article is also a good read for civil societies since it provides information regarding internal dynamics, historical sensitivities, public sentiments, and interests that can act as a foundation when creating policies. In conclusion, civil societies should research Turkish-Georgian bilateral relations to ensure economic and strategic integration. There is also a need to tighten the ties between opinion shapers and median communities.

6.1 Table 1: Level of Literature Analysis

Author and Year	Type of article	Level of analysis	Theoretical References	Regional Implication
Mustafa Aydin, 2000	Original	Security	Realism Securitization	Political
Mustafa Aydin, 2004	Original	Security	Realism	Political
Kengerly, Ziia, 2004	Original	Hard Power	Constructivism	Increase in Turkey's regional influence
Baran, Zeyno, 2004	Edition	Regional Stability	Realism	Social
Sanikidze, George and Walker, Edward W, 2004	Original	Religion	Realism	Existence of Religious Policies
Balci, Bayram and Motika, Raoul, 2007	Original	Soft Power	Constructivism	Religion and Politics
CelikPala, Mitat, 2007	Original	Regional Politics	Realism	Economic, Political and Cultural
Fotiou, Eleni, 2009	Policy Brief	Soft Power	Critical Theory	Politics
Vindimian, Marianna, 2010	Report	Regional Politics	Realism	Politics
Aras, Bülent, n.d				
Aras, Bülent and Akpınar, Pınar, 2011	Original	Mixed theories	Constructivism	Regional Politics
Mustafa Aydin, 2011	Original	Security	Realism	Politics
Ekinci Dinem, 2011	Compilation	Security	Securitization	Legislative and Institutional
Çaman, M. Efe and Akyurt, M. Ali, 2011	Original	Soft Power	Constructivism	Economic, Political and Cultural
Ivanov Vladimir, 2011	Original	Religion	Liberalism	Existence of Religious Policies
Kardas, Saban, 2011	Original	Soft Power	Realism	Politics
Oskanian, Kevork, 2011	Report	Regional Development	Constructivism	Trade and Infrastructure
Chkhikvadze, Ivane, 2011	Original	Soft Power	Constructivism	Politics
Görgülü, Aybars and Krikorian, Onnik, 2012	Original	Regional Development	Constructivism	Politics
Eissler Eric R., 2013	Original (Reflection)	Trade	Constructivism	Economic
Göksel, Diba, 2013	Compilation	Regional Stability	Liberalization	Cooperation and Stability
Cecire, Michael, Gogolashvili, Kakha and Sichinava, David, 2013	Editorial	Economic Development	Constructivism	Economic and Political
Reus-Smit, Christian, 2013	Original	Soft Power	Constructivism	Politics
Ter-Matevosyan Vahram, 2014	Original	Soft power	Realism	Economic and Political
Hill, Fiona, Kirişci, Kemal and Moffatt, Andrew, 2014	Review	Regional Stability	Critical Theory and Securitization	Security
Kapanadze, Sergi, 2014	Original	Economic Development	Liberalism	Economic and Political cooperation
Valiyev Javid, 2015	Review	Conflict Resolution	Securitization	Regional Cooperation
Garfali, Orkhan, 2015	Original	Natives resistance of the foreigners	Liberalism	Regional Cooperation
Zhiltsov, Sergey S, 2015	Original (Review)	Regional Development	Post Modernism	Infrastructural Development
Kirişci Kemal and Moffat Andrew, 2015	Original (Report)	Soft Power	Securitization	Security Stability
Abbasov, İlham, Delihuseyinoglu, Hulya, Pipia, Mariam, Romyansev, Sergey and Sanamyan, 2016	Original	Security	Realism and Securitization	Politics
Aleksanyan Larisa, 2017	Original	Foreign policy	Realism	Securitization
Frahm, Ole, Katharina Hoffmann, and Dirk Lehmkuhl, 2018	Review	Foreign Policy	Realism	Existence of new policies
Galichian Rouben, 2019	Original	Culture, Geography	Realism	Strategic Objectives

Balci, Bayram, and Thomas Liles, 2020	Edition	and History Historical, ethno-linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and political complexities of the Caucasus	Realism	Turkish Foreign Policies
Grassi Fabio, 2020	Original	Historical and Cultural	Realism, Constructivism	Regional Stability
Mamusa, Tsereteli, 2020	Original	Soft Power	Realism	Politics
Kamrava, Mehran, 2021	Original	Regional Policy	Constructivism	Diplomacy, Politics and Economics
Kutlay, Mustafa, and Ziya Öniş, 2021	Original	Hard Power	Constructivism	Diplomacy and Militarization
Zürcher, Erik J, 2022	Review	Historical	Constructivism	Politics
Ryabov, Andrey, n.d	Original	Geo-strategy	Critical Theory	Politics
Abbasbeyli, Agalar, n.d	Original	Foreigner Invasion	Realism and Post Modernism	Politics
Aras, Bülent, n.d	Original	Mixed theories	Constructivism	Regional Policy

Turkish authors mostly concentrate on security concerns as a result of the securitization view held by Turkish elites. Specifically, publications by Turkish authors emphasize the tangible reasons influencing Turkey's stance and reconciliation with South Caucasus, particularly Georgia. From their viewpoint, Turkey is actively working towards developing a peacekeeping strategy in the region in response to the ethnic nationalist disagreements. Additionally, Turkish authors are utilizing cautionary writing when it comes to balancing and readjusting Turkey's foreign policy towards Russia. They draw upon evidence from the competitive dynamics between the Ottoman Empire and the Soviet Union era. Mustafa Aydin is a very influential author whose publications on Turkey and the South Caucasus consistently use a structural realist perspective. This approach argues that Turkey's geopolitical imperative has negative consequences. In this scenario, Turkey should optimize its strength in order to provide a counterweight.

Armenians are examining Turkey's plans in the area, while Georgian writers primarily emphasize the pragmatic approach of Georgian administrations in maintaining a consistent and sustainable foreign policy. Armenian author's works center on Turkey's influential position and precarious equilibrium in the area, characterized by an ambitious and confrontational demeanor. Additionally, they discuss Turkey's religious aspirations in the area, particularly during the Justice and Development Party (JDP) era, as Turkey actively exercises religious influence in Azerbaijan and Georgia via various state and non-states programs. Western academics assess the connection between Turkey and Georgia by analyzing the available resources, such as the strategically positioned geographical and historical locations, as well as the Black Sea region, which have attracted influential neighboring nations and provided them with advantages.

The researchers choose the realism theory concepts as the primary framework for this study, since it facilitated a comprehensive understanding of many issues in international politics. The text offered a profound analysis from a philosophical standpoint, detailing the impact of politics in the South Caucasus and the evolving nature of its political landscape. Consequently, we were able to interpret politics in relation to global affairs. The primary writers used in this study are those from 2011 and 2015, since they have extensively examined the subject of objective politics, which is the focal point of this research. Their writing demonstrates a heightened focus on power and the international community. Nevertheless, the collective efforts of all writers have mostly concentrated on the ambitions of the distinct nations and showcased the independent nature of the political arena in the South Caucasus. Recently, Turkey's J.D.P has been influential in the area, leading to the prominence of religion, soft power, and ideational conceptions via increased transnational operations. Constructivism theory has been indirectly applied and analyzed in the studies in recent years due to the Turkey political and ideological discourse. It is also because of the Davutoglu impact on foreign policy.

7 CONCLUSION

The research has focused on the articles that provide insights into Turkey's presence in the South Caucasus. The research shows that most of the literature available focuses more on Turkey-Georgia-relationship with emphasis on Abkhazia relations. Most authors have focused on the Soviet Union of 1991 which no longer exists and so their arguments of the relationship between Turkey and Georgia may not be plausible. The efforts to ensure that the relationship between Turkey and Abkhazia thrives have not

succeeded due to political and cultural barriers and as annexed, used to be part of Georgia it will play a discussion point oscillating between regional actors. Therefore, it would be necessary for international relations experts to create policies to ensure that the countries reach an agreement driven by political will and creativity. There is also a need to ensure that Abkhazia can access countries other than Russia and Turkey to be thrived politically and economically.

The success of the cooperation between Turkey and Georgia is a realistic attitude or whether it can be attributed to relative mutual gains. The authors have also focused on the importance of regional differences in enhancing intra- regional unity. The comprehensive texts show that regional ties, characterized by mutual independence, should not be changed and that institutionalizing and formalizing diplomatic relations is crucial in sustaining regional cooperation in the future. The articles are an eye opener that highlight the issues that affect international relations but maybe additional information on the advantages and disadvantages of projects between Georgia and Turkey and how they would affect these countries achieving much at their global level in the future. Generally, the articles provide insights into regional policymakers as they present the limitations of Turkey's initiatives and some opportunities that may emerge if alternative frameworks are considered for regional cooperation. There is a need for the South Caucasus states to open their borders and embrace diplomatic relations between themselves. The paper concluded that foreign policies are important in protecting a country's or region's interests, ensuring political stability and economic prosperity, and achieving ideological goals.

REFERENCE LIST

- Adu, Joseph, et al. "A discussion of Some Controversies in Mixed Methods Research for Emerging Researchers." *Methodological Innovations*, 2022, <https://doi.org/20597991221123398>.
- Abbasbeyli, Agalar. "Caucasus in the World Politics. Akademik Bakış Uluslararası Hakemli Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi," (64), 48-56. <https://doi.org/10.47525/ulasbid.837873>.
- Abbasov, İlham, Delihuseyinoglu, Hulya, Pipia, Mariam, Rumyansev, Sergey and Sanamyan "Ethnic Groups and Conflicts in the South Caucasus and Turkey. "The Caucasus Edition: *Journal of Conflict Transformation*. 2016, <caucasusedition.net/old/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Download-PDF.pdf>
- Alkan, Abdumelik. Turkey Foreign Policy on Kin, Relative, Religious and Diaspora Communities in Georgia in 2002-2023 (unpublished dissertation)
- Aleksanyan, Larisa M. "Turkish-Georgian Relations in the Context of Turkey's Regional Policy at the Current Stage." *Post-Soviet Issues*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2017, pp. 307-320. doi.org/10.24975/2313-8920-2017-4-4-307-320.
- Aras, Bülent. "Turkey's policy in the former Soviet south: Assets and options." *Turkish Studies*.
- Aras, Bülent and Akpınar, Pinar. "The relations between Turkey and the Caucasus." *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2011, pp. 53-68.
- Aras, Bülent; "The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Insight Turkey*, Vol.11 No.3, 2009, p.129.
- Areshev, Andrei. "Turkey's policies in the Southern Caucasus and regional security mechanisms. Turkish-Russian academics: A Historical Study on the Caucasus." 2016, vol. 4, 2016, pp 7-22.
- Aydin, Mustafa. "Foucault's pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus. *Turkish studies*, 2004, vol. 5, no. 2, pp.1-22.
- Aydin, Mustafa. "New Geopolitics of Central Asia and the Caucasus; Causes of Instability and Predicament." Ankara: *Center for Strategic Research*. 2000.
- Aydin, Mustafa. "Turkey's Caucasus policies." In M. Aydin (Ed.), *Non-traditional security threats and regional cooperation in the southern Caucasus*. IOS Press, 2011. 139-150.
- Brzezinski, Z. (2016). *The grand chessboard: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives*. Basic books.
- Balci, Bayram, and Thomas Liles. "Turkey and the Caucasus: Mutual interests and influences in the post-Soviet era." *Routledge Handbook of the Caucasus*. Routledge, 2020. 331-346

- Balci, Bayram and Motika, Raoul. "Islam in Post-Soviet Georgia. Central Asian Survey," 2007, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 335-353. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/02634930701702399>>
- Baran, Zeyno. "Turkey and the Caucasus." In *Turkish Foreign Policy in Cold War Era*, edited by Idris Bal, 270. Brown Walker Press, 2004.
- Çaman Efe M. and Akyurt Ali M. "Caucasus and Central Asia in Turkish Foreign policy: The time has come for a new regional policy." *Alternatives. Turkish Journal of International Relations*, vol. 2-3, no. 10, 2011, pp. 45-64.
- Cecire, Michael, Gogolashvili, Kakha and Sichinava, David. "Foreign Policy Changes in Georgia. Caucasus Analytical Digest (CAD)," 48, 2013, Doi.org/10.3929/ethz-a-009915300.
- Çelikpala, Mitat. "Turkey as a Regional Power and the Caucasus." *Insight Turkey*, 2007, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 25-30.
- Chkhikvadze, Ivane. "Zero problems with neighbors: The case of Georgia." *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 2011, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 1-9.
- Davutoglu, Ahmet. "Turkey's Zero-Problems Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy*, May 10, 2010. Accessed
- Davutoglu, Ahmet (2008). Turkey's Top Foreign Policy Aide Worries about False Optimism in Iraq, Council on Foreign Relations, September 19, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/17291/html>. December 12, 2019. <http://jft-newspaper.aub.edu.lb/reserve/data/s11244/s11244.pdf>
- Dawadi, Saraswati, Sagun Shrestha, and Ram A. Giri. "Mixed-Methods Research: A Discussion on its Types, Challenges, and Criticisms." *Online Submission*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2021, pp. 25-36.
- Eissler, Eric R. "Can Turkey De-Isolate Abkhazia." *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 12(3), 2013, pp. 125-135.
- Ekinci, Dinem. "Partnership in the Making since 1991: Black Sea and Caspian Concerns of Turkey and Georgia. Tbilisi-Batumi: Globalization and Security in Black and Caspian Seas regions." 2011, pp. 43-56.
- Ekinci, Dinem. "Partnership in the Making since 1991: Black Sea and Caspian Security Concerns of Turkey and Georgia. In 6th Silk Road International Conference Globalization and Security in Black and Caspian Seas Regions." 2011.
- Frahm, Ole, Katharina Hoffmann, and Dirk Lehmkuhl. "Turkey and the Eastern partnership: Turkey's Foreign Policy towards Its post-Soviet Black Sea neighborhood." (2018).
- Fotiou, Eleni. "Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform: What is at Stake for Regional Cooperation." ICBSS Policy Brief, 16, 2009, pp. 1-22.
- Gafarli, Orkhan. "The Role of North Caucasus Diaspora Groups in Turkey-Russian Relations." *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2014, pp. 172-182.
- Galichian, Rouben. "Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey: Addressing Paradoxes of Culture, Geography and History." 2019, pp. 7-89.
- Grassi, Fabio L. "The Cultural and Political Claims of the Caucasian Minorities in Turkey." 2020. DOI:<10.30687/978-88-6969-453-0/011>
- Göksel, Diba N. "Turkey and Georgia: Zero-Problems?" *German Marshall Fund of the United States*. 2013. Doi: <<https://lib.ugent.be/catalog/ebk01:410000007701051>>
- Göksel, Diba. "Turkey and Georgia, Zero Problems?" Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation. 2013, pp. 6-8.
- Göksel, Diba. "Caucasus Policy of Turkey. The Caucasus Neighborhood, Turkey and the South Caucasus, Yerevan: Dasan; 2008, pp. 15-29. https://c-i.am/wp-content/uploads/Caucasus_Eng3.pdf.
- Göksel, Nigar. "Turkish policy towards the Caucasus: A Balance Sheet of the Balancing Act. Center for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies." 2011.
- Görgülü, Aybars and Krikorian, Onnik. "Turkey's South Caucasus Agenda: The Role of State and Non-State Actors. Eurasia Partnership Foundation" (TESEV Foreign Policy Program), 2012, pp. 49-59.
- H Mackinder, H. J. (1904). The geographical pivot of history. Royal Geographical Society
- Haushofer, K. (1928). Bausteine zur Geopolitik. Kurt Vowincke

- Hill, Fiona, Kirişci, Kemal and Moffatt, Andrew. "Armenia and Turkey: From Normalization to Reconciliation." *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2014, pp. 127- 138.
- Ivanov, Vladimir. "Religious Dimension of Turkey's Policy in Ajaria and the Georgian Orthodox Church. Central Asia and the Caucasus," vol. 12, no. 3, 2011, pp. 79-90.
- Joshua Kuchara (2017) Georgians Wary of Turkey's Rising Influence in Batumi Eurasianet. Accessed 4.2.2021. <https://eurasianet.org/georgians-wary-of-turkeys-rising-influence-in-batumi>
- Kamrava, Mehran. "The China model and the Middle East." *Routledge Handbook ON China Middle East Relations*. Routledge, 2021. 338-354.
- Kapanadze, Sergi. "Turkish trade with Abkhazia: An apple of discord for Georgia." *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 2014, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 55-68.
- Kardas, Saban. "Turkish–Azerbaijani Energy Cooperation and Nabucco: Testing the Limits of the New Turkish Foreign Policy Rhetoric." *Turkish studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2011, pp. 55-77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2011.563503>
- Kengerly, Zia. "Turkey's Geopolitical Interests in Caucasus. Central Asia and Caucasus", vol. 6, 2004, pp. 34-65.
- Kirişci Kemal and Moffat Andrew. "Turkey and the South Caucasus: An Opportunity for Soft Regionalism." *Regional Security Issues*. Vol. 1, 2015, pp. 67-89.
- Kraus, Sascha, et al. "Literature Reviews as Independent Studies: Guidelines for Academic Practice." *Review of Managerial Science* vol. 16, no. 8, 2022, pp. 2577-2595.
- Kutlay, Mustafa, and Ziya Öniş. "Understanding oscillations in Turkish foreign policy: pathways to unusual middle power activism." *Third World Quarterly* 42.12 (2021): 3051-3069. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1985449>
- Levitt, Heidi M., et al. "The Methodological Integrity of Critical Qualitative Research: Principles to Support Design and Research Review." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 68.3 (2021): 357.
- Lochmiller, Chad R. "Conducting Thematic Analysis with Qualitative Data." *Qualitative Report*, 26.6 (2021).
- Mamusa, Tsereteli. "Turkey and the Evolving Black Sea-Caspian Region; Potential for a New Positive Agenda." *Panorama*, 2020, April 26.
- Mikhelidze, Nona. "Turkey's Policy in the Black Sea Region: Oscillating between Pragmatism and Opportunism," 2017.
- Oskanian, Kevork. "Turkey's Global Strategy: Turkey and the Caucasus." 2011 <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43497/>
- Reus-Smit, Christian. "Constructivism." *Theories of International Relations*, 2013, pp. 217-240.
- Ryabov, Andrey. "Russian Interests and Strategies in the South Caucasus." *South Caucasus – 20 Years of Independence*, p. 259.
- Sanikidze, George and Walker, Edward W. "Islam and Islamic practices in Georgia." 2004 <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7149d486>.
- Soysal, M. (2004). The future of Turkish foreign policy. The future of Turkish foreign policy, 37-46.
- Spykman, N. J., & Nicholl, H. R. (1944). *Geography of the Peace*.
- Ter-Matevosyan, Vahram. "Cooperation Paradigms in the South Caucasus." *Études arméniennes contemporaines*, no. 4, 2014, pp. 103-125. <https://doi.org/10.4000/eac.689>
- Valiyev, Javid. "Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey Triangle: The Main Features of Cooperation". *Caucasus International*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2015, pp. 27-44.
- Vindimian, Marianna. "Evolution of Turkish Foreign Policy towards Georgia." *Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt*, 2010.
- Zhiltsov, Sergey S. "Pipeline Architecture in the Caspian region: Results and Prospects." *Politbook*, 2, 2015, pp. 114-132.
- Zürcher, Erik J., ed. *Turkey in the Twentieth Century*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2022.pp. 549-609.