

Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj- Napoca

Faculty of European Studies

“The European Paradigm” Doctoral School

**COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE GEOPOLITICAL STATUTE OF
IRAN AND TURKEY IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA
FOCUS ON THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA**

Doctoral Thesis

SUMMARY

Scientific Advisor: Prof. Vasile PUŞCAŞ, Ph.D.

Ph.D. Candidate: Andreea – Paula IBĂNESCU

Cluj-Napoca

2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Maps.....	7
Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	8
Introduction.....	9
Motivation and Objective of the Theme.....	9
Methodology, Theoretical Framework and Bibliography.....	13
The Structure of the Thesis.....	19
Limitations.....	21

CHAPTER 1

The International System, International Relations Paradigms and Power Approaches....	23
1.1 Theoretical Approaches to the Current International System.....	24
1.2 Power Approaches and International Relations Paradigms.....	29
1.3 Managing Trends – Transnationalism, the New regionalism and Spatiality.....	42
1.4 Considerations on Foreign Policy, Diplomacy and Nation Branding.....	49
1.5 Geopolitics <i>Redivivus</i>	52

CHAPTER 2

Emphasizing Global and Regional Power in the Post-1990 Era.....	55
2.1 Crossroads 1: Iran and Turkey – Power Games and Security Challenges in the Caucasus... 56	
2.1.1 Selective Chronology Throughout the History of the Caucasus and the New Regionalism.....	57
New Regionalism in the Caucasus.....	61

2.1.2 Turkey's Spectrum in the Caucasus.....	63
2.1.3 Iranian Influence and Interests in the Caucasus.....	67
2.2 Crossroads 2: Iran and Turkey – the New Great Game and the Quest for Power Balance in Central Asia.....	71
2.2.1 An Overview on Central Asia in the 20 th and 21 st Centuries.....	71
New Regionalism in Central Asia and Critique over the Pattern.....	75
2.2.2 Turkey's Re-Quest for Central Asia and Geopolitical Playoff.....	79
2.2.3 Iran's Impact in Central Asia and Geopolitical Plays.....	86
2.3 Relevant International and Regional Organizations. Impact on Iran and Turkey.....	92
2.3.1 Limited-impact Organizations in Sketch.....	92
2.3.2 The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).....	95
2.3.3 The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).....	99
Connecting Two Strategic Regions – the Northern Distribution Network (NDR) and the New Silk Road (NSR).....	103
2.3.4 The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).....	104
2.3.5 The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).....	106
2.3.6 The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).....	107

CHAPTER 3

A Geopolitical Duet and Foreign Policy Approaches - Iran and Turkey 110

3.1 Iran – Inferring Domestic Features and Foreign Policy Within International Relations

Paradigms..... 111

3.1.1 Key-moments Throughout Iran's History..... 112

3.1.2 The Shape of Iran's Foreign Policy After the Cold War114

3.1.3 Iran’s Foreign Policy Approach and the Arab Revolutions.....	130
3.1.4 Iran in International Relations Approaches.....	136
3.2 Turkey – Shaping Foreign Policy Proclivities.....	147
3.2.1 Analysis on Turkey’s Current Foreign Policy and the EU Candidatship.....	148
3.2.2 Turkey’s Foreign Policy – a Historical Overview and the Premises of a New Start.....	153
Vision of Interdependence – the ‘Arab Schengen’ Scheme.....	160
3.2.3 New Challenges Following the Arab Spring.....	164
3.2.4 Turkish Foreign Policy in International Relations Paradigms.....	166

CHAPTER 4

Strategic Regions, Country Profiles and Geopolitical Perspectives. Relations with Iran and Turkey and Implications..... 176

4.1 The Caucasus – <i>Perpetuum Mobile</i> in Frozen Conflicts, <i>Bona Fide</i> in Trans-continental Projects.....	177
4.1.1 Armenia.....	178
4.1.2 Azerbaijan.....	181
4.1.3 Georgia.....	185
4.2 Central Asia – on the Grounds of Cultural Re-evaluation, Between Domestic Convulsions, Security Concerns and Economic Development.....	188
4.2.1 Kazakhstan.....	190
4.2.2 Kyrgyzstan.....	192
4.2.3 Tajikistan.....	194
4.2.4 Turkmenistan.....	197
4.2.5 Uzbekistan.....	198

4.3 Longitudinal and Transversal Overview – the Caucasus and Central Asia.....	202
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER 5

Inter-connections Around Iran and Turkey and Geopolitical Challenges in the 21st Century.....	207
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

5.1 Energy Security Routes and Political Calculus.....	208
--------------------------------------------------------	-----

5.1.1 Competing for Azerbaijan.....	209
-------------------------------------	-----

5.1.2 Turkey’s Contribution to the Gas and Oil Transportation and Impact on the European Energy Security.....	211
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

5.1.3 Energy Interplay in Central Asia.....	215
---------------------------------------------	-----

5.2 EU in Reluctance Towards the Strategic Asian Regions.....	218
---------------------------------------------------------------	-----

5.3 Interfering with ‘Geo’ Elements: Geo-economy, Geo-culture, Geo-religion, Geo-history.	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Comparative Analysis on Iran and Turkey.....	220
----------------------------------------------	-----

5.3.1 A Smooth Pathway from Geopolitics to Geo-economy.....	220
-------------------------------------------------------------	-----

5.3.2 No <i>Terra Incognita</i> - Geo-culture, Geo-history, Geo-religion.....	223
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

5.4 Reviving Pathways – Between the Old and the New Silk Road.....	230
--------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER 6

Great Players Around the Caucasus and Central Asia’s New Great Game. Implications for Iran and Turkey.....	236
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

6.1 China – the Rise of the Dragon in ‘Silk’ Power.....	238
---------------------------------------------------------	-----

6.2 Russia – Relics of a Great Power Behaviour	242
------------------------------------------------------	-----

6.3 The US – Between Interests and Concerns.....	244
--------------------------------------------------	-----

6.4 Middle Powers Within the Equation.....	247
--------------------------------------------	-----

6.4.1 India.....	247
6.4.2 Japan.....	249
6.4.3 South Korea.....	250

CHAPTER 7

Comparative Perspective on Iran and Turkey. Foreign Policy, Diplomacy and Geopolitics..... 254

7.1 Bilateralism Under the Pressures of Geopolitical Blocs.....	255
7.2 Comparative Diplomacy Patterns. Infusing Cultural Diplomacy to Manoeuvre Geopolitical Arguments.....	258
Special Focus – Iran and Turkey’s Cultural Diplomacy	261
7.3 Geopolitical Comparatism Between Iran and Turkey in the Caucasus and Central Asia....	269

CHAPTER 8

Explorative Scenarios and Prospective Analysis.....274

8.1 The Central Asia - Pacific Stream.....	275
Geopolitical Implications for Iran and Turkey.....	279
8.2 The Increasing Geopolitical Relevance of the Arctic Ocean.....	280
Geopolitical Impact and Conceivable Scenarios.....	285

Final Considerations..... 287

Bibliography..... 297

Annexes 333

Key-words

Iran, Turkey, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the International System, geopolitics, foreign policy, Transnationalism, New Regionalism, nation building, spatiality, power approaches, diplomacy, Realism, Neorealism, Liberal Institutionalism, Social Constructivism, geostrategy, geo-economy, geo-culture, geo-history, geo-religion, Islamism, energy corridors, competition, regional players, Neo-ottomanism, Islamic Revolution, the Silk Road.

Summary

The thesis aims to approach the duet Iran-Turkey in a cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary manner, whilst shifting with historical support and data analysis from the perspectives of the IR theories and geopolitics. In addition, the purpose of the research is to attempt conceiving valid predictions on potential proclivities of the international system (IS), the balance of power and the alternatives to Iran and Turkey's stances in this framework. By following the foreign policy propensities of the last two decades, the two states' approach to global politics and their recent statute within the IS, the research aims to assess the validity of the main research questions – to establish which is Iran and Turkey's current resource-capability impetus at international level, to assess Iran and Turkey's current contribution to the Caucasus and Central Asia, then to appraise whether Iran and Turkey's capacity to impact the regional/global power balance is valid. *Recte*, in François Thual's inspired interrogations - who and what does it want? With whom? How? Why?

The first chapter presents the theoretical concepts that the thesis employs and establishes the analysis instruments for answering the main research questions. It advances the theoretical and methodological support, it carries forth the IR paradigms which are exploited along the subject of the research. Theories on Realism, the Idealist School, Social Constructivism and approaches to Power are outlined through the works of the core thinkers of the IR; bibliographic incursions are made on Transnationalism, New Regionalism and the more abstract approaches to Spatiality, as a forerunner for “geo” concepts like geo-economy, geo-culture, geo-history, geo-religion. Necessary for examining the Iranian and Turkish realities, another subchapter explains how

Foreign Policy is conceived, how it intermingles with Diplomacy, whereas the literature investigating the value of Nation Branding is significant for how can one internationally promote a state. The Chapter ends the conceptualizing inroads by presenting the essential theories which hallmarked the birth and the revival of geopolitics, and which can be applicable to the current Eurasian space.

Chapter 2 encompasses a journey throughout the history of the Caucasus and Central Asia after the collapse of the USSR, the significance of the current strategic interplays and the quest for (re)gaining influence in these spaces. Hitherto, a dual-track pattern is envisioned - the “power triangle” around the Caucasus and New Great Game in Central Asia. The analysis follows a regard over international and trans-continental organizations, as tools for preserving political stability, ceasing conflicts and entrenching influence of major players in the region. The subchapters comprise a gradual comparative reference to Iran and Turkey and their post-1991 political, economic and cultural rapprochement to these regions, overlapped with their geopolitical ambitions. A subchapter apart engages the direct or indirect impact of various regional or trans-regional organizations meant to seize integration in/between the Caucasus and Central Asia, and aims to assess the level of interference and effectiveness of Iran and Turkey in these respects. The bibliography resorts to primary and secondary sources, it emphasizes the theoretical framework of the IS to explain systemic pressures and it employs specialized materials on the geopolitical re-evaluation of these two spaces.

Chapter 3 explicitly focuses on the two players acting as *gateways* for the Caucasus and Central Asia, namely Iran and Turkey, on the East-West axis and vice-versa. The subchapters pursue an extended regard over the two countries’ approaches to foreign policy, the relation between the domestic affairs and the pressures released from a restructured IS, from Ankara’s resurrected geopolitical awareness to Tehran’s struggle for an independent nuclear program, by regaining old spheres of influence while avoiding international isolation. The analysis follows an “in-out” and “out-in” vector, from the systemic hampering or galvanizing factors to domestic affairs, from the internal convolutions to how they are reflected in foreign policy, and also to the contribution of idiosyncracies. The theoretical concepts exposed in Chapter 1, such as the bibliography on the IS and IR paradigms, are transposed onto Iran and Turkey’s foreign patterns,

and sequential application of notions like public/cultural diplomacy or nation branding are instrumented along the chapter.

Furthermore, Chapter 4 considers each country of the Caucasus and Central Asia in particular, and embodies their domestic concerns, security issues and nation-building efforts, along with the geopolitical prospectus. The level of interconnection and the efforts to consolidate interdependence between the two regions are assessed, under the framework of various regional forms of cooperation. The implications for Turkey and Iran are closely pursued with South Caucasus, where direct linkages have been more compelling than the incremental ones with the Central Asian republics. Studies on the geopolitical interplay around the Caucasus, statistics and scholars' analyses on the level of interdependence between the Caucasus and Central Asia prove highly lucrative.

The fifth part assumes a more specific insight over the manifold bonds of Iran and Turkey in the two envisioned regions. It offers a broad look over the energy security projects, the gas and oil pipelines, the political relevance for regional and global players, the alternative corridors crossing Central Asia and the Caucasus on the East-West vector, obviating thus the North-South stream, and also over the position of the European Union in these matters. Further aspects are considered, such as the revival of the Old Silk Road and the various "geo" concepts it implies – geo-economy, geo-culture, geo-history, geo-religion, all being related to a comparative display between Turkey and Iran. Statistics on the energy sector, political analyses, press releases and theories on spatiality are developed along the chapter. Studies on the significance of culture on community and state interrelations prove valuable in establishing Iran and Turkey's multi-faceted ascendancy over the Caucasus and Central Asia, fact which can further impact the geopolitical plays.

Chapter 6 conspicuously shifts with the objectives that major players like China, Russia, US, India, Japan, South Korea sedulously pursue within the Eurasian landmass, which reminds of the transition from the 19th century Great Game to the current New Great Game of the 21st century. The subsequent implications are evaluated, fostering geopolitical formulas and axes which directly or implicitly impact Iran and Turkey, on a comparative basis.

The following chapter is a synthetic one, based on the information amassed in the previous parts, that looms the outcome of the general-to-specific vector of the overall analysis. Due to the cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary profile of the research, this part envisions several streams which were theoretically pre-announced in Chapter 1 and then approached to analysis in Chapter 3 – elements of foreign policy, diplomacy patterns and subdivisions like cultural diplomacy as *quid pro quo* tactics, which are intended to sustain geopolitical aspirations. An enhanced comparative demarche on Iran and Turkey straddle between their dichotomous diplomacy profiles and adamant historical discrepancies, under the corollary of high-profile regional initiatives.

The eighth part vacillates between an empirically sustained prospective analysis and a conceivable quixotic exercise of imagination for scenarios on the middle and long term. They concern a potential evolution of the Central Asia-Pacific stream based on projects like the New Silk Road or TAPI, but also varieties, overlapped with strategic and geo-economic functions. Reflections are laid also on the increasing geopolitical and geo-economic relevance of the Arctic, which discloses hydrocarbon deposits and transportation alternatives, thus able to impact the relevance of Central Asia - whether it may share encumbrances or opportunities for this space, it remains to be assessed. The research subsequently interposes the influence it may exert on the geopolitical relevance of Iran and Turkey in connection with the Caucasus and Central Asia, once the global geopolitical map can be redrawn. The analysis regards a platform of press releases of the Arctic Council, studies of the USGS, Stratfor and media reports.

On balance, the research validates the research questions concerning the capacity of Iran and Turkey to galvanize or model the regional power balance in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Albeit they do not possess the weight or the size of major players like Russia, China or the US, they are immutable factors to be considered in geopolitical calculus and unremitting by their key-geographic and unique proximity to the regions.