



ANALYSIS OF TURKEY'S HEDGING POLICY  
TOWARDS CHINA: 2002-2015

BY

MUHAMMET ALI GULER

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the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Political Science)

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International Islamic University Malaysia

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research examines Turkey's hedging policy towards China; 2002-2015. It argued that two issues (1) the Uighur issue and Turkey's pro-American Policy from 2002-2015 dominated Turkey's China policy. The study has employed hedging theory as its theoretical framework and used content analysis technique of qualitative research method. The data collected is discussed in chapters two, three and four with useful findings and recommendations discussed in chapter five. The study has concluded that the after the year 2000 political and economic relations between Turkey and China have improved steadily. Both countries have sincerely worked to improve bilateral relations. The study has also found that Uighur issue is not a real hurdle between Turkey and China while the Turkey's pro-American Policy has remained unchanged to date. The study highly recommends among others that Turkey should pursue a multi-dimensional policies and benefitting equally from its relations with China and the US.

## خلاصة البحث

يتناول هذا البحث سياسة التحوط لتركيا تجاه الصين؛ ٢٠٠٢-٢٠١٥م. واحتجّ هذا البحث بأن قضية الإيغور وقضية سياسة تركيا الموالية للولايات المتحدة هيمنتا سياسة تركيا للصين. وقد استخدمت الدراسة نظرية التحوط كإطارها النظري واستخدمت تقنية تحليل المحتوى من منهج البحث النوعي كمنهج الدراسة. ونوقشت البيانات التي تمّ جمعها في الفصول من الثانية، والثالثة، والرابعة مع بيان أهمّ النتائج والتوصيات للدراسة في الفصل الخامس. وخلصت الدراسة بأنّ بعد عام ٢٠٠٠م تحسّنت علاقات السياسة والإقتصادية بين تركيا والصين بشكل مطّرد. ولقد عملت كلا البلدين لتحسين العلاقات الثنائية بإخلاص. وقد وجدت الدراسة أيضا بأن قضية الإيغور ليست عقبة حقيقية بين تركيا والصين وبينما سياسة تركيا الموالية للولايات المتحدة لم تتغير بعد. وتوصى الدراسة بشدّة بين الآخرين بأن تنتهج تركيا سياسات متعددة الأبعاد مستفيدة من علاقاتها مع الصين والولايات المتحدة على حد سواء.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Political Science).

.....  
El Fatih Abdullahi Abdelsalam  
Supervisor

.....  
Norhaslinda Bt. Jamaudin  
Co-Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Political Science).

.....  
Wahabuddin Ra'ees  
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Political Science and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Political Science).

.....  
Tunku Mohar Tunku Mohd.  
Mokhtar  
Head, Department of Political  
Science

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Political Science).

.....  
Rahmah Bt. Ahmad H. Osman  
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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Turkey and China established bilateral relations in the middle of 1971, which has been significantly transformed since the Cold War (Turan, 2013). This progress is noteworthy for the fact that both countries particularly remained in opposite sides across the main part of their modern history (Colakoglu, 2013b; Kumar, 2013). Turkey formed an alliance with Western bloc led by The United States of America (USA) against socialist regimes. Moreover, as a prominent member of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Turkey has frequently supported NATO's military operations by contributing troops which resulted into its restriction in having a proper alliance and involvement with China (Kumar, 2013). The operations include military deployment in countries such as Korea, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Kosovo. During the Korean War in 1950, Turkish military personnel were deployed in Korea to help the Americans. While China regarded Turkey as a subordinate of the imperialist and counter-revolutionary authorities, as well as a marginal player in her foreign policy, Turkey saw China as the evil Communist enemy (Kaya K., 2013). Thus, China declined from forming any connection with Turkey over two decades after 1949. Despite that, an inducement among both states emerged in 1971 that helped to forge diplomatic relations between Turkey and China. This was due to the tilt in the American foreign policy towards China (Zan, Uncertainty and ambiguity: Turkey's perception on the rise of China, 2009).

However, one of the reasons that prevented this bilateral relationship was the powerful western inclinations of Turkey, and including the chaos from internal

political scene in China (Dellios & Yilmaz, 2008). Throughout the ages, Turkey has developed the awareness of her vital geopolitical position, aside from the geo-cultural one and has attempted to fix or amend any of the problems that may have existed between itself and the West or China (Yuvaci & Dogan, 2012). Ahmet Davutoglu, who is a professor of international relations and also has been minister of foreign affairs and prime minister of Turkey, describes Turkey's position as "Afro-Eurasian (Colakoglu, 2012a). This can be associated especially from the earlier tendency of the Turks in identifying their country as a European power. The tendency of which has been fading away due to quite a number of problems that occurred in its association with the European Union (EU) and some disagreement with the USA (Colakoglu, 2010).

Consequently, momentous course-corrections have been introduced by the present Turkish management in the Turkish foreign policy towards the recovery of the equilibrium. Other than being a major logistical access to Central Asia, Europe and Middle East, the crucial position of Turkey in its foreign policy, energy, trade, along with other interests, have been gradually acknowledged by China (Weitz, 2011; Colakoglu, 2013a). Hence, the two-sided bond has risen between both countries over main landmarks in political matters.

Over the past 10 years since the Justice and Development Party gained power in Turkey, and with joint efforts from both Turkish and Chinese governments and people, great achievements have been reached in bilateral relations (Cektir, 2013). The mutual visits of Turkish and Chinese leaders have set a new direction for the development of China-Turkey relationship. Mutually beneficial cooperation and common development have become the common goal. During the visits, many agreements have been signed, with a total value of billions of US dollars. The visits

have paved the way for bilateral cooperation. In 2005, China became the biggest importer for Turkey. According to reports, the volumes of the annual average export and import between the two countries are 885 million USD and 7 billion USD, respectively. Besides, the total trade volume in 2015 reached 28 USD billion (Tunaa & Ozcan, 2015).

However, despite this growing economic cooperation between Turkey and China there are some political and economic issues that have undermined the relationship between the two countries (Ekrem, 2010). The political issues in this sense include; The Uighur issue and Turkey's pro American policy. The observed increasing bilateral relationship between the two countries based on above discussion, has triggered an interest to embark on an analytical study to assess this relationship in terms of its durability. The study also intends to explain why both sides are cautiously approaching each other, and what are the problematic issues, and how these issues should be resolved.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

For the last decade, political and economic relations have increased between Turkey and China. Numerous agreements were initiated to furnish political and economic relationship between Turkey and China. However, the relationship is plagued with the Uighur issue and Turkey's pro-American policy. Turkey has historical, cultural, ethnic and linguistic ties with the Uighur society living in China. However, China's oppression and violation of Uighur's rights have impaired the bilateral relationship between Turkey and China (Kaya K., 2013). On second issue, China is concerned with Turkey's pro-American policy. According to Zanotti (2014), there is compatibility between some of the Turkish and American foreign and domestic

policies. The author also points that Turkey still needs the US support both politically and strategically especially with its growing military capacity. This situation has influenced Turkey-China relations hence this prevents both countries from better political and economic relationship (Aksu, 2013).

Many scholars have conducted research about the bilateral relationship between Turkey and China, yet most of these works have not presented a comprehensive analysis on Turkish-China political relations. This study therefore will provide thorough political analysis on bilateral relationship between Turkey-China from year 2002 until 2015.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. How political relations have evolved between Turkey and China during the period of 2002-2015?
2. How the Uighur issue and Turkish Pro-American policies are affecting the realization of the full potential bilateral relations between Turkey and China.
3. How can Turkey and China improve their political relations for their mutual benefits?

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The followings are the objectives of the study:

- 1- To analyse the development and evolution of political relations between Turkey and China during the period of 2002-2015.

- 2- To analyse the Uighur issue and Turkish Pro-American policy as reference to factors that hinder the realization of the full potential of bilateral relations between Turkey and China.
- 3- To find out the ways to improve the political relations between Turkey and China with reference to above issues

### **1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY**

The new world order has started to get shaped in the post-Cold War era. China has been one of the most influential emerging countries in the world. In turn, various key states have adopted new strategies with the end of Cold War. It is thus significant to figure out how Turkey has striven to establish and maintain, relationship with China, since this relationship may help Turkey nurture its economic growth as well as speeding up her technological advancements.

This research has a number of reasons that make it worthwhile; the first one being, the intent of documenting and analyzing political evolution of relations between Turkey and China with related benefits. Secondly, the examination of the related problems mentioned above that hinders the common and continual growth of political and economic relations between the two countries. The rationale is not only providing a study related to the problems, but also exploring different alternative solutions in order to pave the way for a better and conducive relationship between Turkey and China. Thirdly, most of the studies on relationship between Turkey and China have focused on the Uighur issue as a drawback, whereas the attempt of this study is to focus more on the positive aspects of this issue in benefitting both sides. This study focuses more on how to utilize the Uighur issue so as to bring positive benefits politically to Turkey and China.

## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literatures are backbone of any research. In this research, literature belongs to a number of subjects; the Uighur issue and pro-American policy of Turkey. Based on subjects, literatures are divided into two sections accordingly. There are a large number of literatures about issues mentioned above, hence it is hard for a researcher to examine all of them and there are some which considered significant but they are beyond the reach of the researcher.

### **1.6.1 Uighur Issue:**

The Uighur issue has a historical significance for Turkey. Uighurs are a Turkic-speaking nation (Rayila, 2011). So that, in Turkey the public has always worked to push successive Turkish governments to support national Uighur demands. However, the official stance of Turkey on Uighurs in China is perceived as an intervention in internal Chinese affairs by Turkey which may affect the political relations with China (Colakoglu, 2010). Karaca (2007) argues that China uses the Uighur issue as a problem for Turkey at every turn. So that, China forces Turkey to produce policies over this issue to improve her relations with China. According to him, the problem is because of China, since China tries to control even Uighur society living in Turkey, who deported Turkey from East Turkestan. In addition to this, Karaca (2007) criticizes that Turkey has very weak policy over the issue of Uighur. Furthermore, Ogutcu (1996) argues that Turkey and China have different perspective on the Uighur issue. Turkey sees the Uighur issue from ethnic and humanitarian perspective whereas China considers this approach as support for the independence of East Turkestan.

In 2009, the outbreak of riots in Urumqi had been taken attention around the world particularly in Turkey. Colakoglu (2013b) and Mackerras (2015) argue that

Turkey's reaction was very harsh over the incidents erupted in Urumqi in 2009. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was a prime minister of Turkey at the time, described incidents occurred in Urumqi as a kind of genocide. Consequently, reaction of Turkey caused damaged to Turkish-Chinese relations (Colakoglu, 2013b). Honghui (2016) argues that this is a challenge facing Turkish-Sino relations. According to her, Turkey can use her psychological linkage to the locals to increase the investment in Uighur region while China can recognize Uighur identification by enhancing the local economy and living standards. On the other hand, some scholars and writers believe that this issue may be solved by cooperation (Ogutcu, 1996; Sichor, 2009)

However, most of the current research works on the Uighur issue focus mainly in highlighting the existing issue from different perspectives and some asserted to use cooperative methods to overcome on this but these are not well-defined and not making both sides happy. Thus, this research will try to resolve the issue by taking appropriate policies suitable for both countries mutual benefits.

### **1.6.2 Pro American Policy of Turkey**

There is no permanent friend and foe in international relations. However, it is also true that friend of an enemy is considered enemy. According to many scholars, US-China relation is based on rivalry and interest to compete each other and lower influences on global levels (Nathan & Scobell, 2012; Eikenberry, 2015; White, H. & Magistad K. M. & Daojiong, Z., 2015; Mohan, C.R. & Medcalf R., 2014; Breslin S., 2009; Xuetong, 2010). Amid this, Turkey-US relations are friendly and very strong, which gives a sense that China-Turkey relations are very tactical that does not allow to realize full potential political relations between the two countries. Altunisik (2011) and Davutoglu (2007) argued that foreign policy in 21<sup>st</sup> century is multi-dimensional.

Therefore, it is the aim of Turkey to form new alliances in Africa and Asia including China, while not damaging its old alliances, most importantly with the US. Babacan (2010) states that Turkey's multi-dimensional policy has helped Turkey to boost its economic ties with Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries without damaging its relations with the West. As a result, according to Babacan (2010), Turkey has become a key factor in the globe with its regional capability. However, at large, since the end of Cold War, Turkey's policies have been coinciding with American' policies in the Middle East, Central Asia, Caucasus and Balkans with the aim of preventing the expansion of Russia in Central Asia, Caucasus and Balkans despite Turkish-American relations has few ups and downs over regional and international issues (Demir, 2016). Zanotti (2014) discusses that there are several Turkish domestic and foreign policy issues are compatible with the American interests. He talks further that the increase of Turkey' capacity militarily and economically, Turkey still need US for its political and strategic support. It can be concluded that Turkey stands firmly with the USA and NATO allies, an attitude that alienates China. As a result, political relations between two countries suffer mutual distrust.

The question of political and power alliances between the East and the West plays a crucial role in the relationship between the two countries. On one hand there is the United States of America while on the other hand there is Russia, which are the two most powerful and influential countries in the world. Any other country has the choice of either supporting the USA or Russia. The choice of forming an alliance with one country over the other by a third country may influence its relationship with yet another country. Consequently, this has an impact to both Turkey and China as they do not support the same country. Turkey has formed a good alliance with the USA over the last forty years and their relationship grew stronger as well. Not only in terms

of trade and economy but also via military connections as well as various international issues and policies. In turn, the Turkey-USA relationship may be considered as a threat to the Turkey-China relationship. This can be explained in various existing case scenarios as follows; first is the connection between China and Russia where, China has already formed an alliance and in good relations with Russia. Secondly, pressure from either the USA or Russia may influence the decisions of either Turkey or China in their dealings whether politically, militarily, or trade wise. Thirdly, the relations between Turkey or China and other nations may as well be influenced by the connection of both Turkey-China to USA-Russia. A good example of this influence is upon both countries' dealings with the conflict stricken Syria. In this case, Turkey has taken the side of USA while China is supporting Russia (Yan, 2013; Heras, 2016).

Even though there is a good relation between Turkey and USA yet, this affects mainly the relationship between Turkey and China. This issue has not been given enough attention from the aspect of research studies. Turkey has the ability to revise and review its foreign policy towards the USA so that it does not find itself restricted only to the demands of the Americans. In doing so, this will allow Turkey to be in a position that it can maneuver between the two sides and deal with both while attaining mutual benefits for all involved.

## **1.7 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study will be using the 'Hedging Theory' as a framework to analyze the political relations between Turkey and China, and issues that have impacts on their political relations. Kuik Cheng-Chwee (2008, p. 163) has defined 'Hedging' as a "behavior in which a country seeks to offset risks by pursuing multiple policy options that are intended to produce mutual counteracting effects, under a situation of high

uncertainties and high stakes”. ‘Hedging’ in practice is gaining ground all over the world although it has not been comprehended by many. It is commonly defined as techniques of diversification to be insured against unforeseen eventualities by adopting a middle position (though, when states pursue hedging in most cases they do not consider middle position, but rather take opposite sides) of preventing or not taking position in favor of one party at the expense of the other (Salman, M. & Geeraerts, G., 2013). Hedging enables dealing with threat through multiple approaches by the help of a number of tools and techniques. It is a common strategy to both super powers and less powerful alike (Kuik, 2008a). A clear example is in the energy security, where supply can be diversified to overcome vulnerability and over reliance on the security realm it could be through balancing of the military by devising economic means to deal with the issue of power might (Salman, M. & Geeraerts, G., 2013). Hence, this is more discerning than other means within the international relations that are usually centered on both conflict and cooperation instantaneously. But, hedging is regarded as more lucid than most other approaches, as this approach entails both preventive as well as positive stimuli (Kuik, 2008b).

Table 1.1 The Instruments of Hedging Theory

Country	Balancing Strategy (Pure Form)	Hedging Strategy					Bandwagoning Strategy (Pure Form)
		Risk-Contingency Options		Return-Maximizing			
		Indirect Balancing	Dominance Denial	Economic Pragmatism	Binding Engagement	Limited Bandwagoning	
Turkey							
	To reject China's power	To counter veil it (Militarily)	To neutralize it (Politically)	To make economic profit	To accommodate it (Diplomatically)	To draw strength from it	To accept China's power

Source 1: The Essence of Hedging: Malaysia and Singapore's Response to a Rising China, Kuik, 2008 Contemporary Southeast Asia Journal of International and Strategic Affairs, 166

To reduce taking risks resulting from eventualities and maximize benefits, state actors often adopting hedging instrumentalities employ both risk contingency options which include indirect balancing and dominance denial, and return maximizing options which consist of economic pragmatism, binding engagement and limited bandwagoning: **indirect balancing** is to gain present or future rewards from a big power by ; **dominance denial** is to reject and prevent the rise of a dominant country who might force smaller states to accept hegemonic terms; **economic pragmatism** is to make the most economic benefits from its direct trade and investment links with the big power without consideration of political differences; **binding-engagement** is to bind a big power in institutions and to socialize the power

with the established norms, with the ultimate goal of encouraging it to behave in a responsible and controlled way; and **limited bandwagoning** is to have present and future foreign gains from a big power (Dexian, 2013). In short, hedging theory urges a state to create neither a balancing strategy nor bandwagon strategy of international relation with an emerging power.

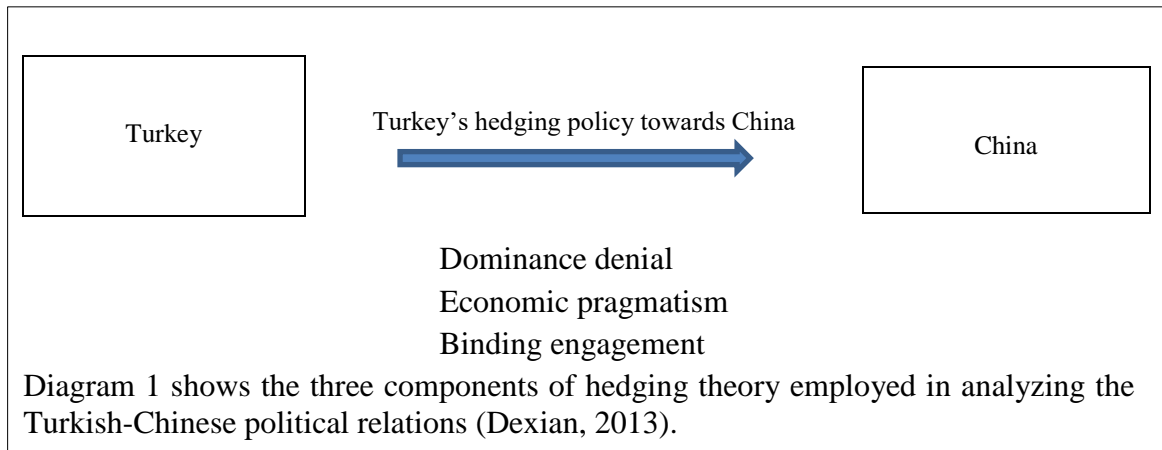


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

## 1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Hedging theory:** This refers to pursuing multiple policy options to reduce taking risks resulting from eventualities and maximize benefits in uncertainties (Kuik, 2008a).

**The New Silk Road:** This refers to the land trade route linking Europe, Central Asia and Middle East (Ergenc, 2015).

**Pro American Policy of Turkey:** This refers to pro American policy of Turkey concerning international issues (Colakoglu, 2013c).

**Uighurs:** This refers to a Turkic nation that lives in Xinjian which is in the northwest of China (Karaca, 2007).

## **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.9.1 Data Collection**

The research will employ qualitative technique for data collection. According to Bryman (2012), the advantage of using a qualitative method in a research is that the method takes into consideration the overall picture of context. A qualitative method is seen as very relevant to achieve the main goal of this research, as this dissertation focuses on political relationship between Turkey and China as well as all factors that hinders the relationship between Turkey and China.

The study will collect data from two sources: primary and secondary. As for primary source, this study will consult with Turkish government's white paper on her relations with China such as foreign ministry reports and foreign trade agency documents. The data from secondary sources will come from published articles, from e-commerce journals, theses, newspaper articles, magazines, the internet, books, research-center reports and related studies on bilateral relations between Turkey and China.

### **1.9.2 Data Analysis**

Data analysis technique that will be used in this study is content analysis. That is, the available data will be analyzed using content analysis technique. Content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff, 1980; Weber, 1990). It seeks to formulate ideas through subjective and interpretative reading of documents with the aim of creating a body of clear as well as hidden components of those documents, taking into account the context out of which they are produced (Kohlbacher, 2006). This method allows data reduction that makes a volume of