



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Pakistan Turkey Economic and Strategic Relations under Erdogan's Administration**

**<sup>1</sup>Dr. Muhammad Ahmad \* <sup>2</sup> Dr. Zoonia Naseeb**

1. Lecturer, Political Science Government Graduate College Township, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Visiting Lecturer University of Central Punjab (UCP) and University of Management and Technology (UMT), Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

**\*Corresponding Author:** ahmadsheikhlahore@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

Turkey is among the strong allies of Pakistan, which has supported Pakistan on international forums and both countries share strong defense, economic and strategic ties. These strong relations have gained new momentum under President Erdogan. With the changing world order and regional geopolitics, both States have realigned their foreign policies. The objective of this paper is to explore the strategic areas of cooperation between Turkey and Pakistan and assess that how Economic ties between Turkey and Pakistan grew under Erdogan. For this purpose, the study has adopted a qualitative methodology to comprehend the in-depth analysis. The past years have been embarked the increasing cooperation in all fields. Moreover, President Erdogan has been vocally supporting Pakistan's Kashmir stance. Both countries have similar stances on the Kashmir and Cyprus conflicts. This implies that the stronger collaboration and close ties can not only bring about tremendous benefits for both, but act as a strong voice for the Muslim World.

**KEYWORDS** Defense Cooperation, Economic and Strategic Relations, Pakistan, President Erdogan, Turkey

**Introduction**

Pakistan Turkey relations began in the Cold War period when both joined the American camp in its bid to defeat the Soviet Union. C Raja Mohan argued that "the Turkish establishment's uncritical embrace of Pakistan has been unchanging, irrespective of who dominated Ankara — the secular army or the current Islamist leadership" (Mohan, 2009). Historically strong relations between Pakistan and Turkey have gained new momentum under President Erdogan. Turkey is among the strong allies of Pakistan, which has supported Pakistan on international forums on issues as critical as Kashmir. Recently, through the uncritical support of both China and Turkey Pakistan succeeded to escape the blacklist of Financial Action Task Force in the recent past. Moreover, Turkey has also advocated for Pakistan's membership in the Nuclear Supplier Group. Changing geopolitical dynamics have brought Pakistan and Turkey closer than before. Pakistan has symbolized its importance in Turkey's changing strategic orientation by pursuing dual citizenship pact for citizens of both countries. This will create immense opportunities in terms of business, quality health care, and education. Another symbolization of strong bilateral ties is the opening of the Turkish largest consulate in Karachi. Such actions symbolize strengthening alliances between both states. In this paper, we will analyze evolving strategic and economic ties between both countries.

**Theoretical framework**

According to conventional International Relations Theory on foreign policies, the maximization of national interest is seen as any government's sole goal and is sought by statesmen with the maximum rationality, while engaging with the international world (Lumsdaine, 1996). The conventional method in contrast to the comparative viewpoint of foreign policy analysis makes the assumption that international political processes are a major driver in shaping every country's foreign policy (Kaarbo, Lantis, & Beasley, 2013).

The conventional theoretical knowledge of foreign policy, nevertheless, may not be sufficient to grasp the contextual underpinnings of Pakistan's foreign policy since some internal issues have played a significant influence in determining the country's diplomatic strategy. With a comparative perspective, this section aims to conceptually describe the backdrop that has hitherto formed the cornerstone of Pakistan's international strategy. Pakistan's approach to foreign affairs is an example of how internal considerations may successfully interact with the global political landscape. It has developed through time because of the interaction between the normative values held by the organisational elite and general populace of the nation and the nation's internal statist-level power capabilities (Siddiqi, 2020). Collectively, these two elements have assumed charge of the global political landscape and shaped Pakistan's foreign relations.

When it comes to internal influences, Pakistan's organisational elites' normative ideas and popular sentiment have both played a distinctive role in influencing the nation's foreign affairs (Asif, 2018). Long periods of authoritarian military control have historically existed in Pakistan, which has severely impeded the democratization of policymaking (Rizvi, 2015). During this time, Pakistan's military grew to be a powerful force that influenced politics (Ahmed, 2010). As a result, the civil-military disagreement over the concept of Pakistan's strategic interests has largely continued to control the country's foreign affairs (Jamal, 2017). Because of this, achieving hard power in relation to its neighbors to the west and east has been a constant goal (Ahmed, 2010). Additionally, the establishment of economic stability and internal and external sovereignty have always been the major goals (Khan, 2015). Pakistan's military and economic vulnerability particularly in relation to its eastern neighbor, has effectively led to a fork in the route, heavily influencing its foreign view to take a "security-oriented" track (Ahmed, 2010). The country would have had more autonomy in determining its foreign policy if the tangible power capability balance had been inverted. On the other side, the country's approach to foreign affairs has also been significantly influenced by the ideological leanings of the general populace (Rizvi, 1983). The Islamist identity has been most frequently used alternately by the general public and organizational leaders to influence the country's strategy in the direction that is wanted (Grove, 2007).

In the context of the shifting global dynamics, where the goals of the Arab countries are viewed to be drifting, from ideological influence to interests driven by politics and the economy countries like Turkey tend to be Pakistan's safest bet. Moreover, the Muslim Arab administrations appear to be losing control over the Muslim world because of their failure to adequately propose an essential resolution or make meaningful declarations to support the causes of Palestine or Kashmir. The non-Arab bloc is allegedly developing in the aftermath of such a void, with Turkey, Malaysia, and Iran, assuming the helm (Rana, 2020). Thus, emerging global politics as well as economic needs of Turkey and Pakistan favor strong diplomatic ties between the two.

During Erdogan's rule, Islam has become an increasingly important element of the Turkish political system. President Erdogan has been experimenting with the religion-based polity. His massive foreign policy goals in the Middle East and other Muslim countries explain consolidating military and strategic ties with Pakistan. Erdogan is keen to reinvigorate Turkish imperial culture and history and assert it as a regional power and the ideological flag bearer of the Ummah. He stated that "The Republic of Turkey... is also a continuation of the Ottomans... Of course, the borders have changed. Forms of government have changed... But the essence is the same, the soul is the same, and even many institutions are the same" (Bechev, 2022). Pakistan, on the other hand, also has a strong theological tilt. Its ideology was based on Islam and is called "hub of Islam". The strong penetration of Islamic ideology in its state architecture and historical aspiration to assume a leadership role in the Muslim world provide ground for Turkey-Pakistan's engagement. Political systems in the Muslim world are dominated by radical Islam and authoritarian rulers, at that time Erdogan projected himself as a "moderate" ruler. However, he has been gradually

tilting towards Islamism. Though the pace of this shift is not striking, he is determined to realize the glory of the Ottoman era. As Hanafi School is predominant in Turkey, Turkish culture has gained enormous acceptance in Pakistan. Popularity and appeal of Turkish soft power in recent years have been unprecedented. Due to a common religious ground, there is cross border communication among people and an increased urge to regain the glory of Ottoman Muslim rulers.

### **The strategic partnership between Turkey and Pakistan**

The strengthening bilateral relations between Turkey and Pakistan are well documented. There is increased military exchange, defense deals and political support vis-à-vis each other. The cooperation started growing at the start of the century but has gained unprecedented pace during last few years due to shift in geopolitical strategies and dynamics. Pakistan is tilting towards non-Arab block to secure its national interests and Erdogan is aiming to revitalize the power of Ottoman era for which he sees Pakistan as an ideological partner (Guo, Huang, & Wu, 2019). In following section, we will discuss different aspects of strategic partnership between both countries.

In recent years defense ties between both countries have expanded enormously. Pakistan has collaborated with a leading arm manufacturing Turkish firm for the US\$350 million Agosta 90B Submarine Modernization Project. This submarine project will consolidate bilateral military ties. In 2018, Pakistan Navy conducted a joint venture with Turkey for a fleet tanker. In 2017, Turkey gave a contract for Super Mushshak trainers, which is a modified variant of Saab MFI--17 Supporter, to an Aeronautical complex in Pakistan. Pakistan had become a major arms export market for Turkey (AWAN & TARIQ, 2023). President Erdogan has announced to increase defense sales to \$ 25 billion by this year. Currently, Pakistan is the second largest buyer of Turkey's arms. Turkey has also been helping Pakistan to upgrade its submarines and F-16 jets. In 2018, both countries made a deal, under which Pakistan bought four corvettes and thirty T129 helicopters from Turkey (Lalwani, 2023). However, the US imposed sanctions on Turkey due to which delivery of helicopters was delayed. To stop Turkey from using Russian S-400 missiles, the US Congress blocked the export of American manufactured engines of T 129 helicopters. The Turkish companies that manufacture T129 have domestically collaborated with an Italian British aerospace company, Agusta Westland, for manufacturing the helicopters (Kharal & Javaid, 2020). However, CT800 engines are used in these helicopters, these are manufactured by Light Helicopter Turbine Engine Company, which is a joint venture of UK based Rolls Royce and US based Honeywell. Turkish Tusas Engine Industry has a license for producing these engines. As these are originally US manufactured, Turkey needs an export license granted by the US government for selling T129 or its engines. Currently, Tusas Engine Industries (TEI) is aiming to develop an alternative for CT800 engine. Regarding the amiable ties with Turkey, Pakistan has agreed to extend the supply date, as Turkey could not attain the US export license to finalize the deal (khan Khan & Ozair, 2021).

Turkey and India share an uneasy bilateral relationship, ever since the independence. Successive Turkish governments have backed Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir issue. Despite the will and efforts to overcome differences based on mutual gains, ties between India and Turkey have apparently deteriorated during Erdogan's era. In 2017, before his visit to India, Erdogan mentioned a "multilateral dialogue" for resolving the Kashmir dispute (Anas, 2017). These remarks were not taken well by the Indian government. These remarks were contradictory to India's stance that Kashmir is a bilateral issue and India does not want a third-party intervention in the matter. Pakistan welcomed these remarks and termed it as "a sensible idea" (Ahmed, 2022). Previously, Indian governments were not much careful about Turkey's stance on the Kashmir conflict, but Modi led BJP government has made Kashmir a core of its policy and is unforgiving in this matter. India responded to these remarks in a rather strict manner, by overlooking the Turkish stance on its own territorial conflicts. Just before Erdogan's visit, Cyprus' President Nicos

Anastasiades visited India and asked India for its help in the reunification of Cyprus, this sent a clear message to Ankara. Not only this India's former Vice President Hamid Ansari visited Armenia, during the same time, to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the diplomatic ties (Pant & Mehta, 2019). During his visit, Erdogan condemned all forms of terrorism but did not remark on the Indian allegations of cross border terrorism from Pakistan. This signified Pakistan's relevance in Turkish geostrategic policies. In 2019, when the Indian government abrogated Article 370 and revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, Turkey strongly criticized India's move and promised Pakistan staunch support in this matter. In 2019, while addressing the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Erdogan again brought up the Kashmir issue and remarked that the international community had neglected the issue and despite the UNGA resolutions on the Kashmir issue, it is still a conflict with eight million people there (Sehgal, 2020). This further deteriorated Turkey's ties with India to the extent that the Indian government condemned Turkey's intervention in northern Syria.

In 2020, President Erdogan visited Pakistan and in his address to the joint session of Parliament, he reaffirmed his support for the Kashmir issue. He even mentioned Turkey's Gallipoli Campaign and compared it with the Kashmir situation. India responded to it by saying that these "remarks reflect neither an understanding of history nor of the conduct of diplomacy. They distort events of the past to advance a narrow-minded view of the present" (Laskar, 2020). One of the reasons behind Erdogan's vocal support of the Kashmir cause is his policy to reflect himself as the leader of the Muslim Ummah. He has also made efforts to attain leadership of the Muslim world by challenging Saudi Arabia's dominance. Against this background, he has also been opposing violence against Indian Muslims. Kashmiri separatist leaders have been appreciating Erdogan and his leadership style.

In return, Pakistan has also been supporting Turkey in its conflicts. Pakistan's ties with Turkey are closely associated with Armenia. Pakistan Turkey Azerbaijan axis has come into existence a Pakistan does not recognize Armenia and is the only country to do so. This is in the background of Pakistan's close ties with Turkey and Azerbaijan (Khan & Syed, 2021). Pakistan also supports Azerbaijan's claims over Nagorno Karabakh. This explains Armenia's support for India's stance on the Kashmir issue, while Azerbaijan supports Pakistan.

Pakistan has also been supporting Turkey on the Cyprus issue. In his visit to Turkey, President Alvi stated that though the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and Pakistan have different languages and cultures, but they are united in spirit. In 1974, the Island of Cyprus was divided when Greece tried to annex the island through a Cypriot coup. It led to violence against Turkish Cypriots and Turkey intervened as guarantor state. TRNC and Turkey carry out diplomatic endeavors to attain support for the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Countries like Pakistan and Azerbaijan recognize these efforts. Turkey has unanimously stated that Lefkosa and Ankara will only accept that peace plan which encompasses complete independence of TRNC with equal rights and status (Sabah, 2021).

Turkey's growing ties with Pakistan are majorly influenced by Saudi Arabia's relations with Pakistan and Turkey. Many Asian countries do not view Turkey, as the leader of Muslim Ummah, in the way they see Iran and Saudi Arabia. Many countries do not even see it as a Middle Eastern state. However, Turkey's evolving role in the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East, particularly after the Syrian Civil War has created a situation where Pakistan has to balance toes not only between Iran and Saudi Arabia but also between Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The increased intervention of Iran and Turkey in the internal issues of various Arab states has caused a drastic realignment of the geopolitics of the region, particularly an increased willingness to normalize ties with Israel (Kutlay & Öniş, 2021). Turkey supported Egypt, which is opposed to the leadership of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United, based on Muslim brotherhood, and also has differences with Saudi Arabia over Qatar and Libya. These issues have caused Turkey Saudi ties to deteriorate immensely. As

Pakistan has warm ties with Saudi Arabia, its increasing rift with Turkey has an impact on the strategic orientation of Pakistan. Historically, Pakistan has had friendly ties with UAE and Saudi Arabia, because of various factors including the presence of the large number of Pakistani expatriates in both the countries. Saudi Arabia's passive response toward Indian actions in Kashmir has adversely affected Pakistan's relations with Saudi Arabia (Balta, 2019).

Pakistan is upset about India's growing ties with the Arab countries, which is the reason behind blunted Arab support for Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir issue. Pakistan was strongly opposed to India's observer status in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Despite its strong opposition India was invited in the 2019 OIC meeting. India was also invited back in 1964 but at that time Pakistan successfully got the invitation withdrawn. Pakistan, Malaysia, and Turkey are the major non-Arab Sunni states which have sided with Iran for countering the so-called alliance of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and UAE and its dominance in the OIC. Moreover, China and Russia are also backing this non-Arab alliance. Recently, Russia's security and commercial interests in the Gulf have grown tremendously. As Russia is not in a position to counter the US either politically or economically, it exploits drawbacks in West's Middle East policies (Oğuzlu, 2020). Thus, Russia's emerging alliance align with its aim to weaken Western alliances in the region. Moreover, China has also highlighted that Pakistan, Iran and Turkey are the central corridor that will join sea routes and new land crucial for Chinese interests. It is important to note that the emerging alliance between China, Malaysia and Turkey has been critical of India's policies in Kashmir. Pakistan wants to increase engagement with geopolitical alliances dominated by Iran and Turkey so that it act as bridge between the Middle East and China, along with using it as a tool to gain Saudi Arabia's support in its Kashmir policies (Balta, 2019)

The 2019 Kuala Lumpur Summit was organized for this reason. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Erdogan were the driving forces of the summit, which was organized to counter the OIC. Saudi Arabia pressurized Pakistan to withdraw from the summit. However, Turkey was sympathetic and understood Pakistan's necessity to regard Saudi wishes due to its economic compulsions. In 2020, ex Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi criticized Saudi Arabia on its silence on Kashmir issue. Saudi Arabia expressed displeasure over these remarks due to which ex-Army Chief made unscheduled visit to repair ties with Saudi Arabia. As Erdogan raised Kashmir issue at UNGA, obliging Pakistan's wishes, it brought Pakistan even more close to Turkey. Turkey sensed Pakistan's increasing disengagement with the Arab countries and viewed it as an opportunity to expand ties and export its ideology of political Islam. As the Western countries have started to view India as the emerging regional power that can counter China's military and economic rise, Turkey's increasing ties with China are another source of rift between India and Turkey as well as between Turkey and Western democracies in the Indo Pacific region (Oğuzlu, 2020).

### **Economic ties**

Since gaining independence in 1947, Pakistan has maintained amicable ties with Turkey that were mostly centered on vital cultural and geopolitical aspects. Talking of economic dimension however, both nations are a part of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization. To improve their commercial and economic ties, they signed several agreements, including the Trade Agreement in 1965, the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement in 1976, the Double Taxation Prevention Agreement in 1988, and the Mutual Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement in 1997. The Turkey-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission Organization was created by both nations in accordance with the 1976 agreement (Abbasi et al., 2020). Ever since, officials from Turkey and Pakistan have met often to discuss the trade and economic ties.

As mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework, countries devise policies to maximize national interests. Economic growth has assumed frontline importance in

sovereignty of the state. The shift in Pakistan's economic policies is manifested through its unprecedented trade ties with Turkey. Evidently, both the countries have long-standing positive ties, which have been solidified further under Erdogan through the expansion of economic collaboration in areas including trade, communications, energy, infrastructure, textiles, food processing, agriculture, automobiles, information technology, oil, and gas (Haroon & Ozcan, 2021). By 2017, Turkey had invested more than \$1 billion in Pakistan, and it has since kept up its efforts there, including the export of its Metrobus fast transport system. The two nations' ongoing free trade agreement (FTA) proposal anticipates an increase in bilateral commerce from nine hundred million dollars to ten billion dollars. Pakistanis are traveling on Turkish Airlines more frequently and staying in Turkey on their way to the West because of the airline's continuing growth and Istanbul's development as a regional aviation gateway. While a visa is required at present for Pakistanis entry into Turkey, an FTA would allow for greater freedom of travel between the two nations. Turkey stands to gain greatly from possible mass tourism from Pakistan as it seeks to increase tourism from Islamic nations to make up for a decline in Western European visitors over the past few years (Kowalski, 2019). Trade between both countries was \$377 million in 2022. In addition, Pakistan invested \$80 million in Turkey (Ismail & Kasim, 2023). Turkish direct investment in Pakistan has exceeded \$300 million since 2009. Several independent renewable energy projects have been built by a Turkish firm called Zorlu Energy. Arçelik, the home appliance business of the Turkish conglomerate Koç Holding, gave 258 million USD for the Pakistani company Dawlance in 2016 (Rafiq, 2021).

Moreover, it is significant that the ties remained continuously evolved under two premiers in both the countries, Imran Khan in Pakistan, and Tayyab Erdogan in Turkey. Although defense partnership and diplomatic backing for territorial issues enhance Pakistan's regional security situation, but they do not assist the country's main problem—a faltering economy. Thus, the various domestic and international factors were driven by Pakistan's economic problems, which have been made worse by the COVID-19 outbreak. Imran Khan's economic objectives and policies had many detractors and demands for reform continue to grow louder. As a result, Khan's efforts to strengthen Pakistan's economy included a focus on the country's neighbors and regional allies. Turkey was considered an important player under this strategy.

Following a conversation with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu in January 2021, Khan issued a statement outlining both nations' dedication to commercial cooperation and highlighting the fact that Turkish firms' investments in Pakistan had risen by more than one billion dollars. In February 2021, during President Erdogan's visit to Islamabad (Haroon & Ozcan, 2021), highlighted that thirteen Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were inked by the leaders of both countries to issue a joint declaration following the session of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC). This was done with the goal to improve the economic strength of both Turkey and Pakistan. An associated action plan, the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF), was established at this conference with the goal of boosting economic stability by bringing bilateral trade to five billion dollars by 2023 (Haroon & Ozcan, 2021). The SEF encompassed a wide range of joint ventures in science and technology, military, education, tourism, and health. At the signing ceremony with the then Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that this seventy-one-point plan of action is a guideline for advancing economic relations (Haroon & Ozcan, 2021). Even though the Pakistan-Turkey Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was still being negotiated, the Pakistan-Iran-Turkey cargo train service was just brought back to help carry products between these countries. However, there were questions regarding how each country would pay for this project (Khan, 2020). Both nations also negotiated on citizenship agreement, and Pakistan opened an e-visa service subsequently, to ease the movement of visitors and businesspeople (Khan, 2020).

Despite recent economic moves, Pakistan must go farther to give this crucial part of the bilateral relationship a higher priority. Pakistan's connection with Western Asia and

Europe might be further enhanced by the effective completion of ongoing initiatives with Turkey, including CASA-1000, the Trans-Afghan Railway Project, and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline. The bilateral commerce of \$800 million in value, according to the Turkish foreign minister, should be increased to reach its full potential (Khan, 2020).

Turkish firms ought to be involved in CPEC initiatives, particularly those involving power and transit infrastructure. Even if this may aggravate Saudi Arabia's already tense ties with Turkey following the murder of writer Jamal Khashoggi, KSA would try to avoid inflaming Pakistan considering its own interests in the CPEC. Furthermore, a free trade agreement (FTA) that encourages international investment and infrastructure initiatives which benefit both nations should be reached shortly. Both nations should develop more people-to-people connections, like programs for student exchange, conferences centered on public-private partnerships, and seminars geared at supporting entrepreneurs, as they are keen for their people to become closer (Khan, 2020).

According to PBC (2020), Pakistan is a far more populous and geographically bigger country than Turkey, with a population of 212.2 million in 2018, compared to 82.3 million for Turkey. However, Pakistan is still categorized as a lower-middle-income nation while Turkey has far greater industrialization, stable economy, and industry's part of 29.5% of GDP, as opposed to former's eighteen percent market share of GDP (PBC, 2020). Islamabad is advancing toward expanding its international commerce because of Turkey's growing trade. Pakistan's imports are balanced by Turkey's exports, and this trend has been accelerating since 2016 (Haroon & Ozcan, 2021).

Additionally, it has been determined that a permanent exhibition of Turkish and Pakistani goods in each other's countries is required to promote trade (Hussain, 2008). There is a huge potential for expanding the two nations' collaboration in commerce, tourism, the economy, research, and education. It has been found that both countries stand with strong links due to their vast natural resources and reservoirs of trained and scientific labor, which is essential for increasing monetary strength, especially for Pakistan (Ali, 2017). A new degree of partnership in commerce and trade of goods including cotton, rice, leather, and textiles is also developed by the two nations' parallel economies (PBC, 2016).

Figure 1 shows the increasing pattern in Pakistan's exports to Turkey during 2014. However, just in a few specific regions did the ratio of Pakistani exports increase. Figure 2 illustrates how Turkey's exports to Pakistan have continued to diversify. In fact, Pakistani businessmen must adopt a new paradigm and progressively shift their focus toward finding more export markets in Turkey by adding value (Gul, 2014). According to estimated figures for the years 2009 to 2016, socioeconomic indicators fluctuated between 71.3 and 79.5 in Turkey and 167.1 and 193.2 million people in Pakistan, respectively. The trade share of GDP dropped from 32.1% to 25.1% in Pakistan over that time, whereas it increased from 45.9% to 46.8% in Turkey. Similarly, as of 2016, Pakistan possessed total foreign exchange reserves of 19.7 billion dollars, far less than Turkey's 92.1 billion dollars. As a result of its ongoing decline, Pakistani rupee has been significantly weaker than Turkish currency (Shahzad, 2019).

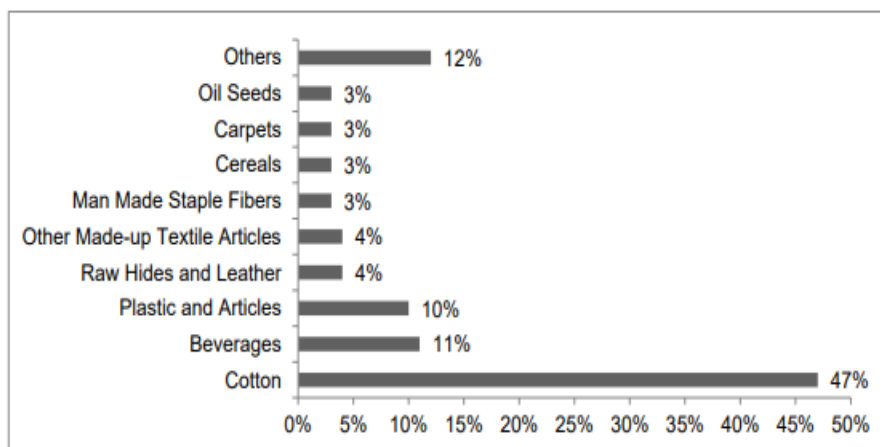


Figure-1. Pakistan Exports to Turkey – 2014 (Source: Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Research (2014) as cited in Shahzad, 2019)

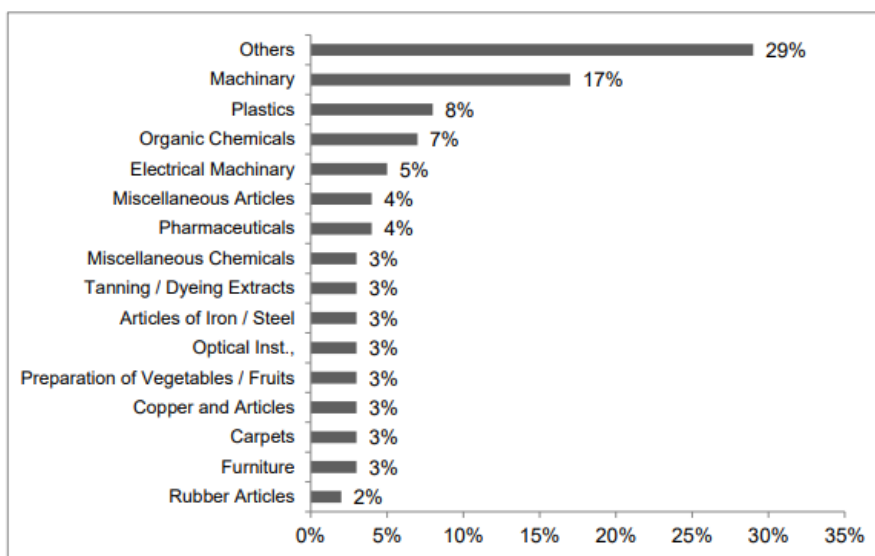


Figure 2. Pakistan Imports from Turkey – 2014( Source: Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Research (2014) as cited in Shahzad, 2019)

Despite the internal unrest caused by the Kurdish dispute and the strained civil-military ties in Turkey, strong and devoted government under Erdogan could maintain both economic and political success (Açıklan, 2020). The Sharif family in Pakistan, in contrast, was under pressure because of the Panama papers conspiracy. Nawaz Sharif was ousted from office in 2017 by the Supreme Court (Khan, Shami, & Ashfaq, 2019). Starting from 2014 The widespread public protests, rallies, and wave of political sit-ins created an unpredictable and confusing environment for commerce and investment (Nawaz, Anwar, & Aquil, 2021).

Trade imbalances increased because of volatile internal situations. While exports declined, imports rose. Statistics on bilateral commerce between Turkey and Pakistan supported the status quo because Pakistan's exports showed no signs of improvement owing to flaws in the market and ineffectiveness on behalf of Pakistani businessmen. Turkey's exports to Pakistan increased from 287 million dollars to 347 million dollars during 2015 and 2016 (Shahzad, 2019).

Due to a shortage of investment and contemporary technology, even the country's key manufacturing sector, textile, underperformed and seen its share of the global market



decrease from 2.2% to 1.7% over the past several years. In regard to the value, it brings to the world market, Pakistan lags behind South Asian and South East Asian nations. There is an urgent requirement for greater research, innovation, and innovative manufacturing processes to help the textile industry (Haq, 2017). Turkish consumers might be prospective customers for Pakistani traders' products such dried fruits, refined and milled grains like rice, surgical equipment, and other commodities (PBC, 2020).

From 2017 to 2018, Turkey imported polished rice valued 0.077 million dollars from the global market, while Pakistan only exported rice worth 5,628 million dollars to Turkey. Like dry fruit exports, there is more room for chemical exports since Turkey imports chemicals worth around 167,927 million dollars yearly from other countries, whereas Pakistan only exports chemicals worth 0.479 million dollars to Turkey (Shahzad, 2019). In addition, according to data research, India, China, and Thailand contributed 10,720 million dollars, 8,552 million dollars, and 1,758 million dollars in rice exports to Turkey in 2017, whereas Pakistan contributed just 1,211 million dollars (Shahzad, 2019).

Additionally, Pakistan continues to fall short in terms of clothing exports to Turkey. Bangladesh was the top exporter of cotton goods to Turkey in 2017. Bangladesh led all South Asian countries in trade in the goods with a value of 40,111 million dollars, followed by Pakistan with a value of 9,106 million dollars (Shahzad, 2019). Due to Turkey's powerful strategic trading ties in the Asian market, Pakistani traders are contending with a challenging competitive climate. To overcome the problems of globalization, greater value addition, more sophisticated products, and worldwide standardization are required (PBC, 2020).

### **Future Prospects**

Even though the two nations have had excellent political connections for a long time, it is strange that their close relations have not resulted in more trade and economic cooperation. A combined freight line and regular charter vessel service connecting Istanbul and Karachi is deemed necessary because there are insufficient options for transportation between both countries. There is a great need for advancements in finance, commerce, tourism, technology, and scientific collaboration. Turkey also needs a public exhibition space for Pakistani companies (Ismail & Kasim, 2023).

Although there is great potential for strategic collaboration between both countries, there is little chance of it happening in terms of bilateral commerce and investment. The long-term viability of these bilateral relationships is dependent on improving economic ties. Pakistan might investigate the possibility that Turkey might serve as a port for China, the Indian Ocean, and the Far East while Pakistan serves as an access point to Europe. Particularly in the commercial worlds of Asia and Europe, they can protect one another's interests. They also have a lot of potential and enthusiasm in working together with Central Asia and the rest of the area. This is feasible if Ankara adopts more aggressive measures and makes a greater contribution to its transformation from a purely European power to an Asian one.

Forging connections between structures, whether they're economic, political, or cultural is crucial. Turkey's development in the building sector seems to be coming to an end, and the nation may be convinced to turn its focus to Pakistan, particularly in the field of cheap housing. Pakistan may gain from Turkish agricultural activities, such as milk processing. They can contribute by exporting to Turkey. Despite being the 4th-largest milk producer globally, Pakistan continues to import cheese from European Union countries for affluent consumers. Pakistan could be able to satisfy this demand also by collaborating with turkey (Ismail & Kasim, 2023).

**Conclusion**

Due to historical ties and a brotherly connection, Turkey appears to be Pakistan's natural ally in the fields of economics and defense. The two countries' strategic and economic connections have been deepening. Arms trade and defense-related cooperation between the two nations have grown in recent years. However, there is room for improvement in economic cooperation. The economic problems in Pakistan are now a foreign policy dilemma and not simply a domestic concern. Some people might find it counterproductive and perhaps irresponsible to prioritize Pakistan's economic objectives over its security objectives. While Pakistan undoubtedly exists in a hostile region that necessitates ongoing defense partnerships, Pakistan's persistently poor economy necessitates its economic interests take precedence. Moreover, it would not be required for Pakistan to compromise on its security objectives or deteriorate its defense ties to prioritize economic cooperation. Rather, along with defense cooperation Pakistan and Turkey should simultaneously focus on financial collaborations, trade, development initiatives, and tourism. In a nutshell this strong and profound relationship between the two nations has the potential to strengthen, produce remarkable advantages for themselves, and serve as a powerful advocate for the concerns of the Muslim World.

## References

- Abbasi, I. A., Khatwani, M. K., & Kolachi, M. R. (2020). Pakistan-Turkey Relations: Political And Economic Dimensions. *Grassroots (17260396)*, 54(1). 69-80
- Açıklan, Ş. N. (2020). *Foreign policy and political leadership: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Angela Merkel* [Thesis (Ph.D.) -- Graduate School of Social Sciences. International Relations.]. Middle East Technical University.
- Ahmed, N. (2010). Military and the foreign policy of Pakistan. *South Asian Survey*, 17(2), 313-330.
- Ahmed, S. (2022). Turkey's Foreign Policy in Asian Media Opinions. In *Turkey's Asia Relations* (pp. 85-110): Springer.
- Ali, A. (2017). *A CGE Analysis of Pakistan-Turkey Free Trade Agreement*. Munich Personal RePEc Archive MPRA
- Anas, O. (2017). *Modi-Erdogan meeting: Convergence between India and Turkey*. Indian Council of World Affairs ICWA, 1-7.
- Asif, F. (2018, August 13). Pakistan's foreign policy: Transition, prospects and perspectives. *The NEWS*
- Bechev, D. (2022). *Turkey Under Erdoğan*: Yale University Press.
- Grove, A. (2007). *Political leadership in foreign policy: Manipulating support across borders*. Springer.
- Gul, A. (2014). Analyzing Pakistan's Trade Opportunity with Turkey. *The Lahore Journal of Economics*, 19, 349.
- Guo, F.-f., Huang, C.-f., & Wu, X.-l. (2019). Strategic analysis on the construction of new energy corridor China–Pakistan–Iran–Turkey. *Energy Reports*, 5, 828-841.
- Haroon, A., & Ozcan, Y. (2021). Economic Relationship Between Turkey and Pakistan. *İşletme*, 2(2), 1-13.
- Haq, S. (2017, August 6). Domestic textile sales outpace exports. *Tribune*.
- Hussain, M. (2008). Pak-Turkey relations: On the common ties. *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 7(2&3), 67-85.
- Ismail, M., & Kasim, M. (2023). Pakistan-Turkey Bilateral Relations: Challenges and Opportunities. *Central European Management Journal*, 31(2), 1306-1312.
- Jamal, U. (2017, December 19). Can Pakistan Pursue an Independent Foreign Policy? *The Diplomat*
- Kaarbo, J., Lantis, J. S., & Beasley, R. K. (2013). The analysis of foreign policy in comparative perspective. *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective–Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior*. CQpress: Sage Publications, 1-21.
- Khan Khan, I., & Ozair, M. (2021). Pak-Turkish Relations from Geo-Politics Toward Geo-Economics. *Global Media and Social Sciences Research Journal (GMSSRJ)*, 2(4), 42-59.

- Khan, I., & Syed, K. H. (2021). Pakistan Relations with Azerbaijan in 21st Century. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 5(1), 667-679.
- Khan, R. M. (2015). Foreign Policy of Pakistan in the Changing Regional and Global Settings. *Journal of Contemporary Studies*, 4(1), 14-30.
- Khan, S. (2020, April 20). *The Untapped Economic Potential of the Pakistan-Turkey Relationship*. CATO Institute
- Khan, S. N., Shami, S., & Ashfaq, A. (2019). Coverage of Panama Cases Trial in Pakistan by International Media; Disqualification of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 56(1), 83.
- Kowalski, P. (2019). *Turkish-Pakistani relations: a burgeoning alliance*. Middle East Institute
- Lalwani, S. P. (2023). A Threshold Alliance: The China-Pakistan Military Relationship. *USIP*.
- Laskar, R. H. (2020, September 23). India says Turkish President's remarks on Kashmir amount to 'gross interference' in internal matters. *The Hindustan Times*
- Lumsdaine, D. (1996). The intertwining of international and domestic politics. *Polity*, 29(2), 299-306.
- Mohan, C. R. (2009). How obama can get south asia right. *The Washington Quarterly*, 32(2), 173-189.
- Nawaz, A. R., Anwar, U., & Aquil, F. (2021). An economic impact of political instability: evidence from Pakistan. *Journal of Economic Impact*, 3(1), 47-54.
- Oğuzlu, H. T. (2020). Turkish foreign policy in a changing world order. *All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace*, 9(1), 127-139.
- Pakistan Business Council (PBC), (2016), *Second Review of the Feasibility of a Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Turkey*, The Pakistan Business Council
- Pakistan Business Council (PBC), (2020). *Potential for a Pakistan – Turkey Free Trade Agreement*. The Pakistan Business Council
- Pakistan pledges solidarity with Turkish Cyprus*. (2021). Daily Sabah
- Pant, H. V., & Mehta, K. (2019). 10 Turkey and India. *Turkey's Pivot to Eurasia: Geopolitics and Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order*, Routledge
- Rafiq, A. (2021). *The Turkey-Pakistan entente: Muslim middle powers align in Eurasia*. Middle East Institute Website.
- Rana, M. A. (2020, February 9). *Muslim world politics*. The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre
- Rizvi, H. A. (1983). Pakistan: ideology and foreign policy. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 10(1), 48-59.
- Rizvi, H. A. (2015). The military and Pakistan's political and security disposition. *Asia Policy*, 19(1), 147-151.
- Sehgal, I. (2020). Welcome to Pakistan, Erdogan! *Defence Journal*, 23(7), 08.

Shahzad, A. (2019). Economic Relations between Pakistan and Turkey in a Globalized World. *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(3), 30-40.

Siddiqi, F. H. (2020, October 8). Exploring the Impulses in Pakistan's Foreign Policy. *South Asian Voices*