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***Between Capability and Foreign Policy:
Comparing Turkey's Small Power and Middle
Power Status***

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Between Capability and Foreign Policy: Comparing Turkey's Small Power and Middle Power Status

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ABSTRACT

IR literature has proposed tangible and intangible criteria for defining and differentiating rankings of countries, albeit without much success. The literature's limited success is primarily due to the subjective, unclear and immeasurable qualities of these criteria. The differentiation between small powers and middle powers is particularly ambiguous. This article proposes an amalgamated method, which combines foreign policy behavior capabilities to characterize and separate small powers and middle powers. There is a relationship between capabilities and a country's global status ranking that also determines foreign policy behavior. This also underlines a complementarity between national capabilities and foreign policy objectives. Lower capabilities means a low-key/restrained foreign policy but do higher capabilities mean a more proactive/highly strung foreign policy? Increased capabilities boost the position of a country from a small power to a middle power but do not completely eliminate constraints imposed by great powers. This article examines Turkey's experiences since the 1930s as an empirical narrative of the complementarity between power and level of influence.

Keywords: Turkey, Small Powers, Middle Powers, Vulnerabilities, Restrictions.

Kabiliyetler ve Dış Politika: Türkiye'nin Küçük ve Orta Düzeyde Güç Statüsünün Karşılaştırılması

ÖZET

Uluslararası İlişkiler literatürü ülkelerin uluslararası sistemdeki konumlarını saptamak için, çok da başarılı olmayan, somut ve soyut ölçütler sunmaktadır. Literatürdeki bu sınırlı başarı, büyük ölçüde kriterlerin öznel, muğlak ve ölçülemez nitelikte olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu durum özellikle küçük ve orta ölçekte devletlerin farklılaştırılmasında muğlaklıkları beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu çalışmada, küçük ve orta ölçekteki güçleri nitelendirmek ve ayırtmak amacıyla, onların kabiliyetlerinin dış politika davranışları ile birleştirildiği (harmanlandığı) bir metot sunulmaktadır. Ülkelerin kabiliyetleri sadece uluslararası sistemdeki konumlarını değil aynı zamanda dış politika davranışlarını da belirlemektedir. Bu da bir ülkenin milli kabiliyetleri ve dış politika amaçları arasında bir tamamlayıcılığın/bütünlüçülüğün olduğunu altını çizmektedir. Bu durumda, düşük kabiliyetler ılımlı dış politika hedefleri demekken yüksek kabiliyetler daha iddialı dış politika anlamına mı gelmektedir? Bir ülke artan kabiliyetleri neticesinde konumunu küçükten orta ölçüğe yükseltirken, bu durum onun kısıtlamalarını tamamen ortadan kaldırmamaktadır. Bu makale, söz konusu bütünlüçülüğünün başarı/etki derecesini göstermek amacıyla, Türkiye'nin 1930'lardan bu yana deneyimlerini ampirik bir anlatım yoluyla incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye, Küçük Ölçekli Güçler, Orta Ölçekli Güçler, Hassasiyetler, Kısıtlamalar.

Introduction

An unresolved problem in international relations (IR) literature has been ranking countries in terms of their power projection capabilities. Broadly speaking, the literature offers the three categories of small powers, middle powers and great powers. IR researchers use mostly the same criteria, tangible and intangible, to define, compare and differentiate them. Tangible criteria are usually capabilities, a combination of GNP, population size, land area, military spending and level of trade. Intangible criteria focus on how members of the international system accept the status of a particular country.

This article provides an amalgamated approach, combining capabilities with foreign policy behavior, to compare and differentiate small powers and middle powers. Capabilities determine both ranking/status and foreign policy insight. There is a complementarity between national capabilities and foreign policy objectives. The article examines Turkey's position since the 1930s as an empirical case to illustrate the extent of this complementarity.

This complementarity highlights two issues: the vulnerabilities of small powers and the constraints on middle powers. Small powers are more vulnerable against various threats than middle powers. Although small powers can become middle powers with an increase in capabilities, they are still constrained by great powers' perceptions, outlook and interests. Such constraints are more apparent in the political and security spheres. Increased capabilities complement foreign policy objectives more successfully in the economic domain. Turkey's experiences since the 1930s illustrate this.

This article first underlines the difficulties in defining small powers and middle powers, then analyzes the influence of vulnerabilities and constraints on the foreign policies of such powers. Afterwards, the analysis turns more specifically to how these vulnerabilities and constraints influence Turkey's foreign policy as both a small power and a middle power. Turkey's empirical narrative begs the question of whether an increase in national capabilities alleviates foreign policy vulnerabilities and constraints. In other words, do improved national capabilities complement more assertive foreign policy aims?

The IR literature has examined small power and middle powers separately, particularly *vis-à-vis* their foreign policy attitudes. This article aims to fill a gap by comparing the theoretical differences between small power and middle power foreign policy attitudes, and by matching these attitudes with episodes in Turkey's foreign policy since the 1930s. Since Turkey has clearly experienced a shift in its international status and role, such comparative analysis will provide a more coherent illustration of the theoretical premise.

Regarding small power status, the cases presented illustrate that Turkey's bilateral foreign policy actions were directed at balancing its vulnerabilities with resilience. Since such balancing efforts are common among small powers, Ankara's attempts to counterbalance the expectation and interests of great powers are this article's major concern. Accordingly, the case of counterbalancing Russia with Britain in Montreux is presented, but Turkey's almost bilateral conflict with France on the Hatay issue is not. On the other hand, the case studies on Turkey's middle power status, mostly show Ankara taking foreign policy action via multilateral schemes, bridging alignments, go-between actions, and generally exhibiting pro-status quo tendencies.

Given its dual history and international relations approach, this article uses an exploratory and explanatory case study analysis. This method helps to investigate a limited number of real-life events/phenomena in context, taking into consideration developments, conditions and interactions. A comparison of Turkey's foreign policy as a small power and as a middle power focuses on a specific time period and engages a wide variety of international actors. The exploratory side aims to

answer to what extent Turkey's foreign policy attitudes changed with the shift from a small power to a middle power. The explanatory side focuses on the reasons behind these changes through an integrated analysis of theoretical and empirical data. Empirical data were examined via qualitative content analysis. The underlying themes are analyzed in order to assess changes in Turkey's regional and international approaches over time, and their repercussions.

Small and Middle Powers: Complications in the Quest for Definition

The ranking of countries as small powers, middle powers and great powers is a lingering problem in IR literature, particularly due to the lack of a well-defined and widely accepted list of criteria.¹

For small powers, the major disagreement is on "the nature and the impact of smallness".² There are three major strands examining "being small". One of them underlines the economic and military vulnerabilities of small powers,³ which restrict their impact on the international system unless they act in a group.⁴ Regarding the ambiguity in describing the impacts such group(ing)s have, this strand of the literature cannot provide a clear definition of a small power. The second strand examines the capabilities of small powers.⁵ The objective (material/quantifiable) capabilities are tangible (size of GNP, population, military spending), and the subjective capabilities are intangible (how other governments perceive these objective capabilities).⁶ Since measuring and comparing these capabilities is complicated, this strand cannot clearly define small powers either. The third strand claims that the size of a state is a contextual construction rather than an objective fact.⁷ If the context were trade negotiations then the economic indicators could differentiate small from big;⁸ if it were security then it would be military capabilities.⁹ Population, usable land area and the GNP could be other tangible criteria.¹⁰ Yet these numerical indications still do not result in a clear definition.

- 1 For a detailed analysis of small power definition see Niels Amstrup, "The Perennial Problem of Small States: A Survey of Research Efforts", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol.11, No.2, 1976, p.163-182; Tom Crowards, "Defining the Category of Small States", *Journal of International Development*, Vol.14, 2002, p.143-179. For the criteria of definition see also Maurice East, "Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour: A Test of Two Models", *World Politics*, Vol.25, No.4, p.556-576. For the middle powers, see David Mitrany, *The Progress of International Government*, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1933; George D. Glazebrook, "The Middle Powers in the United Nations System", *International Organization*, Vol.1, No.2, 1947, p.307-315.
- 2 Donna Lee and Nicola J. Smith, "Small State Discourses in the International Political Economy", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.31, No.7, 2008, p.201-203; Harvey W. Armstrong and Robert Read, "The Determinants of Economic Growth in Small States", *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, No.368, 2003, p.100.
- 3 Annette Baker Fox, *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1959.
- 4 Robert O. Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics", *International Organization*, Vol.23, No.2, 1969, p.296.
- 5 Baldur Thorhallsson and Anders Wivel, "Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol.19, No.4, 2006, p.651-668.
- 6 Clive Archer and Neill Nugent, "Small States and the European Union", *Current Politics and Economics of Europe*, Vol.11, No.1, 2005, p.2-3.
- 7 Iver B. Neumann and Sieglinde Gstöehl, "Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver's World?" Christine Ingebritsen *et al.* (eds.) *Small States in International Relations*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2004, p.3-36; Lee and Smith, "Small States in the International Political Economy", p. 201-203.
- 8 Jaqueline Braveboy-Wagner, "The English-Speaking Caribbean States: a Triad of Foreign Policy", Jeanne A.K. Hey (ed.) *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior*, Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner, 2003, p.31-51; Peter J. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1985; Richard H. Steinberg, "In the Shadow of Law or Power? Consensus-based bargaining and outcomes in the GATT/WTO", *International Organization*, Vol.56, 2002, p.339-374.
- 9 Jean-Marc Rickli, "European Small States' Military Policies after the Cold War: From Territorial to Niche Strategies", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol.21, 2008, p.307-325.
- 10 For the details of these numerical indicators see Simon Kuznets, "Economic Growth of Small Nations", E. A. G. Robinson (ed.), *The Economic Consequences of the Size of Nations*, London, Macmillan, 1960, p.14-32.

The definition of middle powers is similarly vague: the literature focuses not only on capabilities but also foreign policy behavior. As in the case of small powers, there are three strands of analysis:¹¹ the functional, the behavioral and the hierarchical. The functional strand acknowledges that middle powers can have a peculiar influence on areas of strong interest.¹² This influence is “conditional on the circumstances and can even seem disconnected from the middle powers’ political and economic capabilities”.¹³ The behavioral strand¹⁴ the mediation capabilities of middle powers in international disputes via multilateral diplomacy. Middle powers “direct their foreign policy efforts at the international level, for which multilateral arrangements are ideally suited.”¹⁵ They need to form or be a part of these multilateral arrangements with like-minded powers in order to increase their influence. The hierarchical strand examines objective capabilities of these middle powers, as well as their self-claimed positions, and recognized status.¹⁶ Yet, it is still difficult to measure these capabilities and their recognition. Holbraad¹⁷ and Wood¹⁸ used GNP, Neack¹⁹ used five national indicators, and Ravenhill²⁰ used “the five Cs (capacity, concentration, creativity, coalition building, and credibility)” to identify these capabilities, but without objective results. An additional capability of middle powers, which the literature has not thoroughly examined, is the high number, great diversity and wide scope of their international agreements.

The ambiguity in definition underlines one clear commonality: the categories of small powers and middle powers are not necessarily objective labels. The domestic government and the international community each conceptualize a country as a small power or a middle power. Therefore neither small powers nor middle powers have a “special standing in international law that could serve as a guide to their identity.”²¹ Labeling countries as small powers or middle powers is complicated and “highlight[s] baffling omissions that defy any conceivable standard of consistency”.²² Therefore capabilities alone are not an adequate measurement to distinguish these two categories.

11 Adam Chapnick, “The Middle Power”, *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, Vol.7, No.2, 1999, p.73–82.

12 Hume Wrong was a Canadian diplomat who used the term “middle power” to distinguish Canada’s functional influence in the Second World War from other minor powers.

13 Gürol Baba and Taylan Özgür Kaya, “Testing the Creativity of Kevin Rudd’s Middle Power Diplomacy: EU–Australia Partnership Framework Versus the Asia-Pacific Community”, *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol.14 No.2, 2014, p.239–269.

14 See John Ravenhill, “Cycles of Middle Power Activism: Constraint and Choice in Australian and Canadian Foreign Policies”, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.52, No.3, p.309–327; Carl Ungerer, “The Middle Power Concept in Australian Foreign Policy”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol.53, No.4, 2007, p.538–551.

15 Louis Belanger and Gordon Mace, “Middle Powers and Regionalism: The Cases of Argentina and Mexico”, Andrew F. Cooper (eds.), *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers after the Cold War* New York, Macmillan, 1997, p.166; Eduard Jordaan, “The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers”, *Politikon*, Vol.30, No.1, 2003, p.169.

16 Mitrany, *The Progress of International Government*, p.107.

17 Carsten Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics*, London, Macmillan, 1984.

18 Bernard Wood, “Towards North-South Middle Power Coalitions”, Cranford Pratt (ed.), *Middle Power Internationalism: The North South Dimension*, Kingston & Montreal, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990, p.69–107.

19 Laura Neack, “Empirical Observations on Middle State Behavior at the Start of a New International System”, *Pacific Focus*, Vol.7, No.1, 1992, p.5–21.

20 See Ravenhill, “Cycles of Middle Power Activism”.

21 Holbraad, *Middle Powers in International Politics*.

22 David A. Cooper, “Challenging Contemporary Notions of Middle Power Influence: Implications of the Proliferation Security Initiative for Middle Power Theory”, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol.7, No.3, 2011, p.320.

Foreign Policy Behavior of Small Powers and Middle Powers

Foreign policy behavior can be used as an additional comparative factor. Although it is one of the strands in the definition of a middle power, the literature does not combine foreign policy attitudes with capabilities to differentiate small powers and middle powers.

Small powers have a low level of overall participation in world affairs, with a narrow functional and geographical range of concern but a high level of activity in international organizations. They do not use force as a technique of statecraft, but instead utilize international legal norms, moral and normative positions.²³ This highlights the two decisive characteristics of small powers: vulnerabilities and resilience.

Payne claims that “vulnerabilities rather than opportunities are the most striking consequence of smallness”.²⁴ These vulnerabilities cause greater powers to see “strategic relevance in interfering with” the domestic and foreign policies of small powers,²⁵ which creates an asymmetry in small-great power relations. Small powers respond to this asymmetry with a “defensive life”²⁶ by avoiding, mitigating or postponing conflicts.²⁷ Instead, they mostly focus on financial or economic issues, commanding “the moral ground” and “drumming up sympathy” from other actors.²⁸ Small powers prefer acting through international organizations, due to the organizations’ potential to “restrain” great powers.²⁹ In other words, these vulnerabilities limit small powers in their “level of participation in world affairs”.³⁰ They either follow “a passive strategy of renunciation” or “a defensive strategy attempting to preserve the status quo”.³¹

Resilience expands the policy options for small powers. It allows small powers to move between various alliances.³² Resilient small powers “ought to prefer mixed, multilateral alliances”³³ that enable them to be on the winning side of a conflict. This is also called “bandwagoning”.³⁴ Resilient small powers might respond to changes in their surroundings with radical “shifts in foreign policy

23 East, “Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour”, p.557.

24 Anthony Payne, “Small States in the Global Politics of Development”, *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, No.376, 2004, p.623, 634; Paul Sutton, “The Concept of Small States in the International Political Economy”, *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, Vol.100, No.413, 2011, p.141-153; Lino Briguglio, “Small Island Developing States and their Economic Vulnerabilities”, *World Development*, Vol.23, No.9, 1995, p.1615-1632.

25 Andrew F. Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw, “The Diplomacies of Small States at the Start of the Twenty-first Century: How Vulnerable? How Resilient?”, Andrew F. Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw (eds.), *The Diplomacies of Small States Between Vulnerability and Resilience*, Houndmills, Palgrave, 2009, p.3.

26 David Vital, *Inequality of States: A Study of Small Power in International Relations*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1967, p.87.

27 Ibid, p.149.

28 Godfrey Baldacchino, “Thucydides or Kissinger? A Critical Review of Smaller State Diplomacy” Andrew F. Cooper and Timothy M. Shaw (eds.), *The Diplomacies of Small States Between Vulnerability and Resilience*, Houndmills, Palgrave, 2009, p.35.

29 Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, New York, London, Columbia University Press, 1968, p.294.

30 See John Henderson, “New Zealand and the Foreign Policy of Small States” Richard Kennaway and John Henderson (eds.), *Beyond New Zealand II: Foreign Policy into the 1990s*, Auckland, Longman Paul, 1991, p.6.

31 Neumann and Gstöehl, “Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver’s”, p.8.

32 Baldur Thorhallsson, “The Role of Small States in the European Union”, Christine Ingebritsen *et.al.*(eds.), *Small States in International Relations*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2006, p.218-227.

33 Rothstein, *Alliances and Small Powers*, p.177.

34 For the details of bandwagoning see Jeremy W. Lamoreaux, “Acting Small in a Large State’s World: Russia and the Baltic States”, *European Security*, Vol.23, No.4, 2014, p.565-582; Randall. L. Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In”, *International Security*, Vol.19, No.1, 1994, p.88-98.

orientations”, i.e. breaking diplomatic ties.³⁵ The resilience of their economies might depend on a specialization in supplying certain products and in the diversification of trading partners.³⁶ They can increase their resilience by remaining neutral and “very hesitant to make agreements which potentially prevent them from making similar agreements with other states”.³⁷ In neutrality, they remain “passive in the hope that the threat will diminish or disappear”.³⁸

Middle powers are not vulnerable to the same extent. Unlike small powers, they can start and manage initiatives, i.e. acting as “go-betweens” for international coalition building, and creating regional bridging alignments with similar-minded middle powers or great powers. Although they prefer to distance themselves from the tutelage of great powers, their achievements still rely on how close their foreign policy aims are to the aspirations of great powers.

Middle powers have pro-status quo tendencies, not only because they are labeled as “good international citizens”,³⁹ but also because they do not have the necessary capabilities to manage tensions. Instead they act as international mediators and “go-betweens” within conflict management and resolution activities.⁴⁰ Although they are not the final decision makers, they have more influence than small powers. This influence is more visible within international organizations whose decision-making is decided through voting.⁴¹

As “go-betweens”, middle powers could ease the security dilemmas of great powers through bridging alignments,⁴² which have the potential to bridge the gap between various actors by encouraging cooperation.⁴³ Middle power bridging depends on cooperative policies, not competitive ones, which best serve the security goals of adversaries.⁴⁴ These linkages rely on moral values and epistemic notions rather than ambition and aggression.

These policy options are not theoretically lucid. Middle power “is not a fixed universal but something that has to be rethought continually in the context of the changing state of the international system”.⁴⁵ This means these policy options should be constantly re-examined and re-evaluated,⁴⁶ and makes the policy options for middle powers unforeseeable since they depend on a complicated dynamic of perceptions, reactions, and interests.

35 Susan Aurelia Gitelson, “Why do Small States Break Diplomatic Relations with Outside Powers?: Lessons from the African Experience”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.18, No.4, 1974, p.453-454.

36 Daniel Frei, “Kleinstaatliche Außenpolitik als Umgang mit Abhängigkeit”, Karl Zemanek, et.al. (eds.), *Die Schweiz in einer sich wandelnden Welt*, Zürich, Schulthess Polygraphischer Verlag, 1977, p.201-225.

37 Lamoreaux, “Acting Small in a Large State’s World”, p.568; Ivan C. Mikuz, *Influence Small State Force Design*, Carlisle, PA, United States Army War College, 2012.

38 John Rogers, “The Foreign Policy of Small States: Sweden and Mosul Crisis, 1924-1925”, *Contemporary European History*, Vol.16, No.3, 2007, p.356.

39 Andrew F. Cooper, “Niche Diplomacy: A Conceptual Overview” Andrew F. Cooper (ed.), *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers after the Cold War*, London, Macmillan, 1997, p.7.

40 Neack, “Linking State Type with Foreign Policy Behaviour”, p.225.

41 Glazerbrook, “The Middle Powers in the United Nations System”, p.307-318.

42 Joshua B. Spero, “Great Power Security Dilemmas for Pivotal Middle Power Bridging”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol.30, No.1, 2009, p.148, 152, 153, 155.

43 Ravenhill, “Cycles of Middle Power Activism”, p.312.

44 Charles L. Glaser, “Realists as Optimists: Cooperation as Self-help”, Benjamin Frankel (ed.), *Realism: Restatements and Renewal*, London, Frank Cass, 1996, p.123.

45 Robert W. Cox, “Middlepowermanship, Japan and the Future World Order”, *International Journal: Canada’s Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, Vol.44, 1989, p.825.

46 Michael K. Hawes, *Principal Power, Middle Power, or Satellite? Competing Perspectives in the Study of Canadian Foreign Policy*, Toronto, York Research Programme in Strategic Studies, York University, 1984.

Interactions between middle powers and greater powers are less asymmetrical than those of small powers and greater powers. Through multilateral diplomacy they counterbalance and mediate international issues of great powers. Small powers mostly utilize passivity and neutrality to avoid problems; middle powers can act proactively as mediators with the support of like-minded countries. Middle powers also shift between alliances, not always to maximize benefits, but also in the interest of formulating cooperative schemes.

Turkey from Small Power to a Middle Power: An Empirical Narrative from the 1930s to 2000s

Turkey has boosted its international position since the 1930s. This process hides two major aspects of the small power and middle power comparison: a clear increase in capabilities (GNP, population, military expenditure, number/content/focus of international agreements), and related examples of foreign policy behavior. Turkey’s boost illustrates to what extent and under which circumstances the increase in capabilities complements foreign policy objectives.

The increase in Turkey’s tangible capabilities can be seen in Tables below:

Table 1. Selected General Population Census results since 1927

Years	Population Size
1927	13,648,270
1935	16,158,018
1940	17,820,950
1945	18,790,174
1950	20,947,188
1955	24,064,763
1960	27,754,820
1965	31,391,421
1970	35,605,176
1975	40,347,719
1980	44,736,957
1985	50,664,458
1990	56,473,035
2000	67,803,927
2007	70,586,256
2010	73,722,988
2015	78,741,053

Table 2. Turkey’s GNP since 1923

Years	Million US \$
1923	570
1929	1,001
1930	742
1935	1,039
1940	1,741
1945	4,207
1950	3,462
1955	6,827
1960	9,865
1965	8,450
1970	19,030
1975	47,452
1980	68,390
1985	68,032
1990	152,387
1995	171,858
2000	201,977
2005	485,058
2010	1,098(GDP)
2015	1,589 (GDP)

Table 3. Turkey’s Estimated Military Spending

Years	Million US \$
1923	25.2
1930	49.3
1935	52.5
1938	88.4
1940	147.3
1945	149.5
1950	236.6
1955	490
1960	1,093
1965	302
1970	693
1975	2,013
1980	2,080
1985	2,173
1990	4,830
1995	5,090
2000	9,994
2005	10,031

One indicator of Turkey's boost can be seen in its international agreements. During the 1930s, Turkey's international agreements related to friendship, neutrality, mutual security, cooperation, maintaining a good neighborhood and joining sanctions regimes. With the end of the Second World War, the agreements increased in their number and diversity. This illustrates Turkey's success in engaging in international politics. In this period, several bilateral and multilateral agreements/conventions were concluded with neighboring and non-neighboring countries within the framework of the UN and its subordinate organizations, as well as the OECD, the EU, NATO, Council of Europe, the OSCE, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), etc.⁴⁷

Turkey's capabilities and attitudes towards foreign policy during the 1930s fall into the small power category. The small powers of the 1930s faced a "dangerous combination of an increasing war threat ... the emergence of new and costly military technology, and overall offensive military doctrines."⁴⁸ Within this dangerous combination of circumstances, Ankara successfully balanced its vulnerabilities with resilience, which made Turkey a non-negligible element in the strategic calculations of great powers. Turkey's relations with great powers clearly illustrate this point.

Through its relations with Germany, Ankara managed to counterbalance threat perceptions with economic opportunities. Turkey increased its trade volume with Germany until the German threat outweighed the economic benefits. With the "clearing" agreement in 1933,⁴⁹ Germany became a major exporter of manufactured goods and an importer of raw materials and agricultural products from Turkey.⁵⁰ Until 1936, this relationship served as a panacea for Turkey's decreasing export incomes.⁵¹ By 1936, Germany made up half of Turkey's imports and exports, and as Hitler intensified war preparations, Ankara moved to reduce the German influence on the economy by diversifying its trading partners.⁵² For example, Turkey made an accord with the British construction company Brassert for the construction of the first steel factory in Karabük even though the German company Krupps had offered a better deal.⁵³

Turkey's pivot towards Britain exemplified a "defensive life". This also changed Britain's outlook towards Turkey, which involved no commitment until 1936. Britain first supported Turkey's claims as the basis of discussions in Montreux. A clearing agreement was signed in September 1936 to increase the trade volume, which distanced Turkey from Germany.⁵⁴ The shift increased the value of Turkish imports from Great Britain from 6 to 7 million Turkish Lira (TL) and exports from 6 to 9.7 million TL. Meanwhile the German share in Turkish trade decreased in value for the first time from 60,042,000 TL (51%) to 50,412,000 TL (36.5%).⁵⁵

47 For the details of Turkey's bilateral/multilateral agreements see İsmail Soysal, *Türkiye'nin Siyasal Antlaşmaları (Cilt I,II)*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1983, p.1991.

48 Herman Amersfoort and Wim Klinkert, "Introduction: Small States in a Big World", Herman Amersfoort and Wim Klinkert (eds.), *Small Powers in the Age of Total War, 1900–1940*, Leiden, Brill, 2011, p.2.

49 Dilek Barlas, *Etatism and Diplomacy in Turkey: Economic and Foreign Strategies in an Uncertain World, 1929-1939*, Leiden and New York, E.J. Brill, 1998.

50 Hans-Joachim Braun, *The German Economy in the Twentieth Century*, New York, Routledge, 1990, p.101; Christian Leitz, *Sympathy for the Devil: Neutral Europe and Nazi Germany in World War II*, New York, New York University Press, 2001, p.87-88.

51 Cemil Koçak, *Türk-Alman İlişkileri (1923-1939) İki Dünya Savaşı Arasındaki Dönemde Siyasal, Kültürel Askeri ve Ekonomik İlişkiler*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Press, 1991, p.201.

52 Elwyn Jones, *Hitler's Drive to the East*, New York, E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1937, p.41.

53 Edward Reginald Vere-Hodge, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1918-1948*, Geneva, Thèse, Université de Genève, 1950, p.112.

54 Brock Millman, *The Ill Made Alliance: Anglo-Turkish Relations, 1934-1940*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1998, p.20.

55 *Harici Ticaret Aylık, Statistique Mensuelle du Commerce Exterieur*, Ankara, T.C. Başvekalet, January 1940, p.4.

Turkey's move to keep its alliances mixed highlights the focus on resilience. Although its relations with Britain deepened in 1938, Turkey did not completely detach from Germany. Turkey-Britain trade did not reach the volume of that with Germany, from which it also received 150 million Reichsmarks (RM) of credit.⁵⁶

The decision to specialize in certain products is another indicator. Turkey, as the second largest producer of chrome ore in the world, became a major supplier of German industry.⁵⁷ The chrome trade with Germany rose from a value of 35 thousand RM to 3.5 million RM from 1929 to 1939, which covered almost 60% of Germany's total demand.⁵⁸ Chrome sales contributed to Turkey's budget substantially, and gradually made Germany dependent on Turkey's supply of chrome.

In the same era, Turkey followed "a passive strategy of renunciation" and stayed in the non-revisionist camp.⁵⁹ Turkey increased its defense expenditures (see Table 2) but its defenses were still only effective for limited regional warfare. Turkey could not face a major threat, such as the Italian or German Air Force.⁶⁰ Ankara remained passive in the hope that the threat would disappear.

Turkey also used international regimes, particularly when the revision of the Lausanne Straits Convention started with Turkey's application to the League of Nations in April 1936. During the process, Turkey had pro-status quo tendencies carried out via multilateral diplomacy and international law.⁶¹ It managed to win the support of greater powers, i.e. Britain, to reshape other parties' demands. Turkey invoked the *rebus sic stantibus* principle to terminate the Straits Convention.⁶² With these maneuvers, Turkey, through the Montreux Convention (1936), managed to offset Russia, and to achieve control over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles as regulatory authority on the transit of naval warships.

Turkey then started shifting between varying alliance structures against Italian expansionism in the Eastern Mediterranean, which increased its value as a counterweight between antagonistic alliances.⁶³ Against Italian armaments in the Dodecanese islands and Mussolini's *Mare Nostrum* rhetoric, Turkey successfully cooperated with the British within the League to impose sanctions on Italy after the invasion of Abyssinia and the signing of the Balkan Entente of 1934. Once the Abyssinia Crisis cooled down, Italy tried to reharmonize relations with Turkey by revoking its claims over Turkish lands.⁶⁴

In its relations with the Soviets, Ankara glossed over its anticommunist tendencies⁶⁵ to test the opportunities for economic and security partnerships. Moscow contributed 8 million USD towards

56 Koçak, *Türk-Alman İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, p.200-230.

57 Ferdinand Friedensburg, *Die Rohstoffe und Energiequellen im neuen Europa*, Berlin, Oldenburg, Gerhard StallingVerlagsbuchhandlung, 1943, p.16; "Inloit to Ministry of Economic Warfare on 15th October 1939", FO/8371003.

58 Koçak, *Türk-Alman İlişkileri (1923-1939)*, p.224.

59 Lord Kinross, *Atatürk: The Rebirth of a Nation*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1993, p.458.

60 Brock Millman, "Turkish Foreign and Strategic Policy 1934-42", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.31, No.3, 1995, p.493-495.

61 Simon V. Mayall, *Turkey: Thwarted Ambition*, Washington, DC, Mc Nair Papers 56, January 1997, p.38-41.

62 Franklin B. Weinstein, "The Concept of a Commitment in International Relations", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.13, No.1, 1969, p.39-56. In public international law, *rebus sic stantibus* (Latin for "things thus standing") is the legal doctrine allowing for treaties to become inapplicable because of a fundamental change of circumstances.

63 Dilek Barlas, "Friends or Foes? Diplomatic Relations between Italy and Turkey, 1923-36", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.36, No.2, 2004, p.247-248.

64 Millman, "Turkish Foreign and Strategic Policy", p.485; Vere-Hodge, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, p.109-111.

65 Bülent Gökay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey, 1920-1991: Soviet Foreign Policy, Turkey and Communism*, New York, Routledge, 2006, p.10.

Turkey's first five-year economic development plan after the Great Depression of 1929.⁶⁶ Turkey, with Russia, proclaimed its opposition to Western dominance in the international economy but at the same time became a League member, which it considered to be of Western design.⁶⁷ Turkey also rejected Stalin's quest for security against Hitler via the joint Turkish-Soviet defense system on the Straits.⁶⁸

Turkey managed to accomplish these relations while maintaining the framework of neutrality. In the 1930s, Ankara made a special effort to not be on either side of the polarizing international system, but did not completely detach itself either. Turkey did not conclude agreements with any one side, which could potentially have restricted its revenues from the other. Two clear examples were Ankara's rejection of Stalin's offer for a joint defense system of the Turkish straits against Germany and its non-conclusion of an agreement with the Germans for chrome, which could cut down on sales to the Allies.

After the Second World War, Turkey significantly advanced its tangible (as seen in Tables 1-3) and intangible capabilities. During this period Turkey's *modus operandi* was clearly different from the 1930s. Two definitive examples of Turkey's middle power attitude have been selected for elaboration. These are the Cyprus issue and the March 2003 memorandum.

In the first example, Turkey objected to the Greek Cypriot threats to the status quo on the island after the British withdrawal in 1960. Turkey believed its legal rights to be acknowledged by the Treaty of Guarantee and unilaterally intervened to rebuild the status quo disrupted by the Greek Cypriots throughout the 1960s and early 1970s.⁶⁹ In the second example, Turkey's rejection of the March 2003 memorandum granting American troops access to Iraq through Turkish territory was another significant pro-status quo move.⁷⁰ In both cases, Turkey acted to influence the final outcome of an issue, in the process endangering its position within a Western alliance. It was motivated by regional stability but did not avoid conflict, asserting its position as an autonomous middle power.⁷¹

Turkey, as a middle power, also believed in using multilateral schemes to deal with international issues. On the Cyprus Question, particularly during the 1960s, Turkey consistently brought the issue to the guarantor powers⁷² for consultation, and to the US as well. Yet in the post-Cold War era, it no longer expected help from multilateral schemes, aiming instead to use them to improve its international position. A clear example is Turkey's role in peacekeeping, observer missions and police operations in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Middle East including Afghanistan,⁷³ and particularly in

66 *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I-III (1906-1938)*, Ankara, Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, Vol.I, p.381.

67 William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000*, London and Portland, OR, Frank Cass, 2000, p.59.

68 US Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*, Washington, 1948, p.217-259.

69 For the details see Monteagle Stearns, *Entangled Allies: US Policy toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus*, New York, Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992; Nancy Crawshaw, *The Cyprus Revolt: An Account of the Struggle for Union with Greece*, Boston, G. Allen & Unwin, 1978; James A. McHenry, *The Uneasy Partnership on Cyprus 1919-1939: The Political and Diplomatic Interaction between Great Britain, Turkey, and the Turkish Cypriot Community*, University of Kansas, PhD, 1981.

70 Gürol Baba and Soner Karagül, "Türk Dış Politikasında Çok Taraflılığa Geçiş Çabaları: 1965 Çok Uluslu Güç Projesi ve 1 Mart 2003 Tezkeresi", *LAÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol.3, No.1, p.18-42.

71 Hasan Basri Yalçın, "The Concept of Middle Power and the Recent Turkish Foreign Policy Activism", *Afro Eurasian Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, 2012, p.209.

72 For the details of the correspondence between Turkey, the US and the guarantor power see "Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1961-63", Vol.16; FRUS, 1964-68, Vol.16.

73 George E. Gruen, "Turkey's Role in Peacekeeping Missions", *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy*, Vol.28, No.6, 2006, p.435-449.

the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFL).⁷⁴ In all these operations and missions Turkey strived to increase its individual significance and esteem. As a clear example, Turkey employed the OIC to increase its foreign policy outreach and amplify its voice.

Turkey, with the new millennium, began to take more direct roles via creating multilateral schemes in its neighboring regions. The Caucasus Peace and Stability Pact proposal in 2000 – covering Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Azerbaijan, and relying on the 1997 Balkan Stability Pact's main principles – is a clear example.⁷⁵ Turkey attempted to strengthen the common interests of the Pact's prospective members in order to foster cooperation for security and development, as well as to cultivate regional and multilateral cooperation projects.

Turkey worked with local middle powers to construct bridging alignments. In the mid-1950s, Turkey's efforts to create a defense pact – as a “requirement” of its leading role in the implementation of Northern Tier strategy with Iraq, Iran and Pakistan – is one example. The efforts were initiated as the Baghdad Pact in 1955 and died as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1979.⁷⁶ Although CENTO did not really deliver what it originally aimed to do, it provided a foundation for Turkey to build a bridge between its members and NATO.⁷⁷ In 1985 Turkey, along with Iran and Pakistan, founded the Economic Cooperation Organization, which was later expanded to include Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Ankara aimed to create a synergy to provide sustainable development by making full use of available resources in the region.⁷⁸ In 1992, Turkey was the key actor in the formation and the implementation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Scheme for regional economic cooperation and development.⁷⁹ The Scheme's integration model was looser and more flexible than that of the EU, which would open up “a formerly closed or semiclosed market of more than 350 million people” to Turkey.⁸⁰ All these efforts exemplify Turkey's go-between attitude towards international economic coalition building.

Turkey was also a go-between for political/security disputes, although not very successfully. It aimed to play a major role in the dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. The political constraints exerted by the West – i.e. Turkey's reliance upon US military aid to fight the PKK in the 1990s, its need to de-escalate the situation with the EU and its priority of maintaining good relations with Moscow regarding private business interests in Russia – constrained Turkey from involving itself too deeply in Karabakh.⁸¹ Turkey was also one of the founding members of

74 Bill Park, *Modern Turkey: People, State, and Foreign Policy in a Globalised World*, Routledge, Oxon, 2012, p.141-142.

75 Michael Radu, *Dangerous Neighbourhood: Contemporary Issues in Turkey's Foreign Relations*, New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A., Transaction Publishers, 2003, p.112-113

76 Behçet Kemal Yeşilbursa, *The Baghdad Pact: Anglo-American Defence Policies in the Middle East, 1950-59*, London, Frank Cass, 2005, p.215.

77 Gökhan Çetinsaya, “A Tale of Two Centuries: Continuities in Turkish Foreign and Security Policy”, Nursin Atesoğlu Güney (ed.), *Contentious Issues of Security and the future of Turkey*, Aldershot, Ashgate, p.12.

78 Richard Pomfret, “The Economic Cooperation Organization: Current Status and Future Prospects”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.49, No.4, p.657-667.

79 Ercan Özer, “The Black Sea Economic Cooperation and Regional Security”, Vedat Yücel and Salomon Ruysdael (eds.) *New Trends in Turkish Foreign Affairs: Bridges and Boundaries*, New York, Writers Club Press, 2002, p.149-171; Oktay Özüye, “Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, *Mediterranean Quarterly*, No.3, 1992, p.48-54.

80 Ziya Öniş, “Turkey in the Post-Cold War Era: In Search of Identity”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol.49, No.1, p.58.

81 Svante E. Cornell, “Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh: A Delicate Balance”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.34, No.1, 1998, p.51-72.

the non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative in 2010,⁸² where it came together with similar-sized and like-minded states to advance the nuclear disarmament agenda, as well as greater transparency in the fulfilment of disarmament commitments among nuclear states. How helpful that initiative will be remains to be seen.

These examples show the complementarity between capabilities and the foreign policy limits of middle powers. In the economic domain, middle powers have more maneuvering space to take the initiative on collaboration/cooperation. In the political and security domains, they are still restricted by alliance networks and the perceptions and interests of great powers.

Therefore, the less their foreign policies conflict with those of the great powers, the more effective the middle state can be – or, in other words, the less ambitious, the more successful. In early 2007, Turkey's sincere efforts to prevent Iraq from descending into chaos, and from being divided into Shia and Sunni groups,⁸³ is an example of good international citizenship and its pursuit of stability and balance. Another recent example of this is the MIKTA collaboration, an acronym for Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia, established in 2013. The five members' major aim has been to amplify their voice on various platforms, especially the G20, with the particular aim of achieving regional and global peace and stability.⁸⁴ This also shows that good international citizenship by middle powers is better received and results in greater leverage than adventurist political moves that cause conflict with great powers.

Conclusion

The ambiguity in IR literature between small powers and middle powers has been the *terminus a quo* of this article. By focusing on ambiguities in definition and differentiation, the article offers an amalgamated methodology of combining capabilities with foreign policy behavior. This combination assumes not only that there is a relationship, but also a complementarity between capabilities and foreign policy.

The rise in national capabilities not only lifts a country's status but also opens up foreign policy maneuverability. Yet this is not so straightforward. Since national capabilities have intangible elements, i.e. how various countries perceive and value the capabilities of other nation-states, this complementarity may have unexpected results. A small power could be seen as a very valuable asset, which amplifies its own foreign policy outreach, while a middle power might not be able to achieve a seemingly basic objective due to restrictions imposed by great powers.

Turkey's experience since the 1930s exemplifies both straightforward and non-straightforward cases. In the 1930s, Turkey counterbalanced its vulnerabilities with resilience and constantly recalibrated its self-image, and in doing so, Ankara reconciled multiple identities depending on the major power it was tilting towards. A Russia-friendly foreign policy went hand-in-hand with an anti-Communist domestic

82 For the details see <http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/non-proliferation-and-disarmament-initiative-ncdi/> (Accessed on 8 May 2016); Wayne Mclean and James Dwyer, "Nuclear Deterrence, Missile Systems and the Security of Turkey in the New Middle East", *Insight Turkey*, Vol.17, No.3, 2015, p.155.

83 Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", *Insight Turkey*, Vol.10, No.1, 2008, p.85.

84 Belma Engin and Gürol Baba, "MIKTA: A Functioning Product of New Middle Power-ism?", *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika*, Vol.11, No.42, 2015, p.1-40; Press Release Regarding the MIKTA Initiative, No.254, 26 September 2013, available at http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-254_-26-september-2013_-press-release-regarding-the-mikta-initiative.en.mfa (Accessed on 9 May 2016).

policy; similarly, a non-pro-Western foreign policy was not an obstacle to a close partnership with Britain, and an anti-fascist stance did not hinder an economic partnership with Germany and Italy. Turkey's foreign policy "pivots" show that a resilient small power is able to manage the strategic calculations of great powers. Its national capabilities determine its status and its foreign policy outreach, but intangible elements in its capabilities could complement resilient foreign policy objectives.

Since the end of the Second World War, Turkey has increased its tangible national capabilities drastically. This has not only elevated its status internationally but has also given it a much larger arena in which to conduct foreign policy. Yet this has not removed all of its constraints, particularly in the security and political spheres. Turkey is still limited by great powers. Therefore even boosted national capabilities do not always complement the ability of middle powers to attain political and security-related objectives, especially if they skirmish with great powers.

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