POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TYPOLOGIES OF STATECRAFT: LOCATING TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE AKP

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Abstract

This article asks which political and economic typologies of statecraft best characterize Türkiye's foreign policy under Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule and how their applicability has changed since 2002. It tests the hypothesis that no single, time-invariant typology is adequate: Turkish foreign policy is hybrid, and its dominant profile has shifted from trading and developmental orientations toward illiberal, garrison, Machiavellian, civilizational, and revisionist traits, while middle- and regional-power characteristics persist. Methodologically, the study employs a theory-guided qualitative single-case design and deductive typological analysis. Fifteen categories drawn from International Relations, Foreign Policy Analysis, and comparative political economy are operationalized through their defining political, economic, security, and ideational indicators and assessed on a four-point interpretive scale. The analysis distinguishes four phases: Europeanization and commercial expansion (2002–2010), Arab Spring activism and ideological regionalism (2011–2015), securitized strategic autonomy (2016–2022), and selective normalization and constrained pragmatism (2023–2025). The findings support the hypothesis. Early AKP policy most closely resembled a trading and partially developmental state; later phases display stronger illiberal, garrison, intelligence, Machiavellian, civilizational, and revisionist features. Across all periods, Türkiye remains best understood as a middle power with contested regional-power ambitions. The article therefore treats typologies as combinable and temporally variable analytical dimensions rather than mutually exclusive labels.

Keywords: ***Foreign Policy Analysis, Economic Statecraft, Statecraft Typology, Turkish Foreign Policy, Justice and Development Party (AKP)***

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DEVLET YÖNETİMİNİN SİYASAL VE EKONOMİK TİPOLOJİLERİ: AK PARTİ DÖNEMİ TÜRK DIŞ POLİTİKASINI KONUMLANDIRMAK

ÖZ

Bu makale, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Parti) iktidarı döneminde Türkiye'nin dış politikasını hangi siyasal ve ekonomik devlet yönetimi tipolojilerinin en iyi açıkladığını ve bu tipolojilerin uygulanabilirliğinin 2002'den itibaren nasıl değiştiğini araştırmaktadır. Çalışma, tek ve zaman içinde değişmeyen hiçbir tipolojinin yeterli olmadığı; Türk dış politikasının melez bir nitelik taşıdığı ve baskın profilinin ticaret devleti ile kalkınmacı devlet yönelimlerinden illiberal, garnizon, Makyavelist, medeniyetçi ve revizyonist özelliklere doğru kaydığı, buna karşılık orta güç ve bölgesel güç özelliklerinin devam ettiği hipotezini sınamaktadır. Yöntemsel olarak teori güdümlü nitel tek-vaka tasarımı ve tümdengelimsel tipolojik analiz kullanılmaktadır. Uluslararası İlişkiler, Dış Politika Analizi ve karşılaştırmalı siyasal iktisat literatürlerinden türetilen on beş kategori; siyasal, ekonomik, güvenlik ve düşünsel göstergeleri üzerinden operasyonelleştirilmekte ve dört dereceli yorumlayıcı bir ölçekle değerlendirilmektedir. Analiz dört dönemi ayırmaktadır: Avrupalılaşma ve ticari açılım (2002–2010), Arap Baharı aktivizmi ve ideolojik bölgeselcilik (2011–2015), güvenlikleştirilmiş stratejik özerklik (2016–2022) ve seçici normalleşme ile sınırlı pragmatizm (2023–2025). Bulgular hipotezi desteklemektedir. İlk dönemde ticaret devleti ve kısmen kalkınmacı devlet özellikleri öne çıkarken, sonraki dönemlerde illiberal, garnizon, istihbarat, Makyavelist, medeniyetçi ve revizyonist nitelikler güçlenmiştir. Türkiye bütün dönemlerde, bölgesel güç iddiaları tartışmalı olan bir orta güç olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Makale böylece tipolojileri birbirini dışlayan etiketler yerine bir arada bulunabilen ve zaman içinde değişebilen analitik boyutlar olarak ele almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler*: Dış Politika Analizi, Ekonomik Devlet Yönetimi, Devlet Yönetimi Tipolojisi, Türk Dış Politikası, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Parti)*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Türkiye's foreign policy has increasingly captured the attention of scholars and practitioners of International Relations (IR) and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) (Kesgin, 2020; Kutlay & Öniş, 2021; Müftüler-Baç, 2013; Oğuzlu, 2020; Ovalı & Özdikmenli, 2019; Taş, 2022). The shift toward a more assertive, multifaceted and often controversial foreign policy under the AKP (Justice and Development Party) has raised critical questions about the motivations, strategic priorities and ideological drivers of contemporary Turkish foreign policy. These developments challenge existing frameworks in the field of FPA, which often categorize states based on broad typologies, such as "trading states," "illiberal states" or "garrison states" that reflect different motivations and strategic outlooks (Lasswell, 1941; Rosecrance, 1986; Zakaria, 2003). However, the case of contemporary Türkiye reveals the limitations of relying on any single typology, as its foreign policy behaviour incorporates multiple and often contradictory elements that do not fit neatly into one specific category.

This article addresses the need for a multidimensional framework capable of capturing the complexities of contemporary statecraft. By locating Türkiye's foreign policy under the AKP within such a framework, it seeks both to clarify Türkiye's evolving external behaviour and to contribute a more flexible analytical tool to FPA. The proposed typology table integrates insights from realism, liberalism, constructivism, comparative politics, and political economy, enabling analysts to assess several dimensions of state behaviour simultaneously rather than forcing cases into a single category. The central research question is: Which political and economic typologies of statecraft best characterize Türkiye's foreign policy under the AKP, and how has their relative applicability changed across distinct phases of AKP rule since 2002? This formulation directs attention both to the coexistence of different behavioural logics and to temporal change within the same governing-party era.

The article evaluates the following hypothesis: no single, time-invariant statecraft typology adequately explains Turkish foreign policy under the AKP; instead, Türkiye displays a hybrid configuration whose centre of gravity shifts from trading and developmental orientations in the early period toward illiberal, garrison, intelligence, Machiavellian, civilizational, and revisionist orientations in later periods, while its middle-power and regional-power characteristics remain comparatively persistent.

Methodologically, the article conducts a theory-guided qualitative single-case study using deductive typological analysis. It derives defining indicators for fifteen categories from the relevant IR, FPA, comparative politics, and political-economy literature; evaluates Türkiye against those indicators using scholarly secondary sources and illustrative foreign-policy decisions; and compares the resulting pattern across four periods between 2002 and the study's evidentiary cut-off in December 2025. A full account of the research design, scoring criteria, evidence base, and limitations is provided below.

This article offers several original contributions to the literature on FPA, Turkish foreign policy and IR theory. First, it responds to the limitations of existing FPA typologies, which often lack flexibility to account for states that display characteristics of multiple state types. This rigid classification is problematic when analysing countries like Türkiye, whose foreign policy has oscillated between pragmatic, economic-oriented approaches and ideologically driven, assertive actions that reflect domestic pressures and regional security concerns (Yavuz, 2022). By constructing an integrated typology table, this study aims to provide a versatile tool that can possibly accommodate complex, hybrid cases and offers a means for comparative analysis across diverse political and economic systems (see Table 1).

Second, the article puts forward an empirical contribution by systematically analysing Turkish foreign policy under the AKP through the lens of various statecraft types, including the trading state, illiberal state, intelligence state, garrison state, Machiavellian state and others. This framework enables an investigation of how the AKP's domestic ideological positioning and political agenda influence Türkiye's international strategy, with particular emphasis on how these motivations align with or deviate from existing typologies. Such an analysis is crucial for understanding the AKP's approach, which combines economic pragmatism with ideological imperatives. Third, the study introduces a typology table that can be expanded into a broader theoretical framework, potentially applicable to a global range of case studies. Such an endeavour would not only enhance our understanding of how different states navigate the complexities of the international system but also contribute to a more robust and adaptable FPA framework capable of accommodating an increasingly multipolar world.

The following section reviews political and economic typologies of statecraft and explains their theoretical foundations. The article then develops the multidimensional analytical tool and sets out the research design, indicator-based assessment scale, evidence base, and temporal boundaries. The empirical section first periodizes AKP foreign policy into four phases and then applies the typologies to Türkiye, using the phase-sensitive summary in Table 2 as a guide to the detailed discussion. The concluding section assesses the hypothesis, considers the framework's implications for FPA and IR theory, and identifies avenues for comparative and longitudinal research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TYPOLOGIES OF STATECRAFT AND FPA

Much of the scholarly literature on the connection between domestic political regimes and foreign policy-making focuses on the ways in which regime types and institutions shape a country's external behaviour (Fearon, 1998; Kaarbo, 2015; Kissinger, 1966). This relationship has been examined through several theoretical lenses, including Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, and studies derived from the sub-field of Comparative Politics. Classical Realists (e.g. Hans Morgenthau) and Neo-Realists (e.g. Kenneth Waltz) have long argued that domestic politics have little impact on foreign policy (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). According to Realists, democracies, autocracies and hybrid regimes behave similarly in their pursuit of security and survival in an anarchic world. Liberal theorists (e.g. Michael Doyle and Bruce Russett), by contrast, emphasize the significance of domestic factors, particularly the nature of a political regime, in shaping foreign policy (Doyle, 1986; Russet, 1993). The "Democratic Peace Theory" famously posits that democracies are less likely to go to war with one another due to shared norms, political accountability, and institutional constraints.

Constructivist scholars like Alexander Wendt argue that foreign policy is shaped not just by material forces but also by ideational factors, including national identity, political culture, and the social construction of regime legitimacy (Wendt, 1999). According to this view, domestic political regimes shape foreign policy by influencing how states perceive their role in the international system and their relationships with other states. For instance, a regime that defines itself as a defender of human rights may prioritize humanitarian interventions, while a regime that draws legitimacy

from nationalist rhetoric may pursue more aggressive territorial expansion. Comparative politics scholars also examine the variations in foreign policy behaviours between different types of regimes. For example, Barbara Geddes and Dan Slater argue that the structure of domestic political institutions, the level of political competition, and the nature of elite-mass relations significantly influence foreign policy decisions (Geddes, 1999; Slater, 2012). As such, authoritarian regimes with less accountability to the public may engage in riskier or more aggressive foreign policies because they do not face electoral consequences.

Military regimes may prioritize security and stability, while personalist regimes may be more prone to adventurism due to the personal ambitions of the leader. On the other hand, party-based authoritarian regimes, like China's Communist Party, tend to have more institutionalized foreign policy processes, which may lead to more calculated and less erratic behaviour. Scholars such as Andrew Nathan and Andrew Scobell have argued that China's foreign policy has been relatively stable due to its strong institutionalized governance structures, even though it remains authoritarian (Nathan & Scobell, 2012). Hybrid regimes, which blend democratic and authoritarian elements, exhibit more unpredictable foreign policy behaviour. Scholars like Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way have explored how the competitive authoritarian nature of hybrid regimes leads to foreign policy inconsistency (Levitsky & Way, 2010). Leaders of hybrid regimes may alternate between cooperative and aggressive foreign policies depending on their domestic political needs, such as rallying nationalist sentiments to maintain power.

The political economy of foreign policy-making is another sub-field that explores how economic interests, domestic political structures, and international economic systems shape a state's external behaviour. According to classical Realist thinkers like E. H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau, foreign economic policy is a pragmatist extension of the state's broader strategic objectives (Carr, 1939; Morgenthau, 1948). On the other hand, Liberal scholars such as Richard Rosecrance, Robert Keohane, and Joseph Nye argue that economic globalization and interdependence reduce the likelihood of conflict between states by raising the costs of war (Keohane, 2005; Nye, 2004; Rosecrance, 1986). Marxist and Neo-Marxist theories of foreign policy-making focus on the relationship between capitalism and imperialism. Scholars like Immanuel Wallerstein argue that foreign policy

is driven by the interests of the capitalist class and the need to expand markets, secure resources, and access cheap labour (Wallerstein, 1993).

Studies on FPA have used the aforementioned core theories of IR and Comparative Politics as a foundation to develop various domestic politics-based and economically-oriented typologies of statecraft. These typologies offer distinct perspectives on how states interact with each other, what drives their actions, and how internal and external factors shape their strategies. In this context, commonly used typologies such as the "trading state", "illiberal state", "garrison state", "middle power" and "developmental state" have long offered useful frameworks for simplifying and codifying a range of state behaviours in international politics. However, the increasingly complex nature of global politics and the fluidity of state motivations often challenge these fixed categories. The primary strength of FPA typologies is their ability to provide conceptual clarity and facilitate comparative analysis; however, they often lack the flexibility required to fully account for states that exhibit multiple or shifting behavioural characteristics. As such, this article has chosen fifteen widely used political and economic typological categories in the existing FPA literature to build a comprehensive typology table and assess state behaviour according to how well a given state's political, economic and social features fit into each category.

The "trading state" typology, based on Liberal internationalist thought, emphasizes the importance of economic expansion through international commerce (Kirişçi, 2009; Rosecrance, 1986) (see Table 1). Such countries want to maximize their economic interconnectedness with other countries, lower trade barriers, and utilize global markets to create national prosperity. Trading states usually use cooperative and multilateral approaches to foreign policy. They are more inclined to seek free trade agreements, join international economic organizations (such as the World Trade Organization), and advocate for globalization. These governments wish to avoid armed confrontations that may disrupt commerce and prefer negotiation to combat (Mansfield & Milner, 2012). Indicators of a trading state include robust trade agreements and a low priority on militarized foreign policy. Economic diplomacy, which includes negotiating advantageous trade conditions and encouraging exports, takes precedence in their foreign policy agenda. From World War II to the present, Singapore and Japan have constituted two of the archetypical trading states (Leifer,

2000; Solis, 2017). With limited natural resources, Singapore has aimed to become a worldwide hub for commerce, finance, and logistics. Its foreign policy has focused on maintaining stable ties with major powers such as China and the United States (US), safeguarding regional security, and promoting economic integration through ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and other trade agreements. Likewise, Japanese foreign policy has largely been a pacifist one that avoids military conflict, focusing instead on trade and economic partnerships alongside Tokyo's provision of development aid.

A "garrison state" is a country in which military-centric concerns dominate political and societal systems (Lasswell, 1941) (see Table 1). The state is extremely militarized, and the military-industrial complex has substantial influence over policymaking. National security takes precedence above civil freedoms and economic progress. Garrison states pursue foreign policies that focus on maximising national security and defence. They are more inclined to take aggressive postures, seek strategic alliances, and use deterrent techniques to retain their security. The militarization of foreign policy frequently includes increased defence budget, the use of coercive diplomacy, and a willingness to commit military action. Since the Korean War (1950-1953), the regime of North Korea has been a prime example of a garrison state (Winn, 1986). Its military-dominated governing system has a significant impact on its foreign policy. The leadership retains a major emphasis on building nuclear weapons as a deterrent, while utilizing its military might as leverage in international discussions.

Not unlike North Korea, Egyptian politics and foreign policy has also been examined in the literature as a garrison state case study (Khan et al., 2021). Since the Free Officers' Movement overthrew the monarchy in 1952, the Egyptian military has played a central role in governing the state. Key leaders such as Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, and Abdel Fattah el-Sisi have risen from military ranks, ensuring the armed forces remain deeply embedded in Egypt's political structure. The Egyptian military controls significant portions of the economy, from infrastructure and manufacturing to agriculture (Khan et al., 2021: 88–89). Military aid, particularly from the US, has long been a cornerstone of its foreign relations, enabling the regime to maintain its internal and external security apparatus (Khan et al., 2021: 91–95)

The "illiberal state" typology, drawn from scholarship on authoritarianism and populism, describes states with limited democratic practices that often leverage nationalist and populist rhetoric to consolidate domestic power (Zakaria, 2003). Illiberal states are distinguished by their authoritarian or semi-authoritarian political systems (see Table 1). These regimes frequently retain nominal features (e.g. regular elections) of democratic structure while restricting freedoms such as press independence, political pluralism, and civil rights (Boyle, 2016). Domestically, they consolidate control and silence criticism. Illiberal regimes conduct foreign policies that mirror their domestic political arrangements. They frequently stress sovereignty and oppose international rules that promote democracy or human rights. Their foreign policy may involve authoritarian solidarity, which is building relationships with other illiberal or authoritarian countries to fight Western democratic influence. Such regimes employ foreign policy to boost internal legitimacy, frequently citing nationalism or external dangers. Russia, under Vladimir Putin, is the prototypical illiberal state as its foreign policy includes support for other authoritarian governments (e.g. North Korea, Syria and Iran), antagonism to Western organizations such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), and a strong focus on sovereignty and non-intervention (Boyle, 2016: 37). Russia's use of hybrid warfare and anti-Western propaganda across the globe reflects its illiberal state mind-set.

An "intelligence state" emphasizes the importance of intelligence agencies in governance and foreign policy decision-making (see Table 1) (Andrew, 2018; Omand, 2010). In such countries, intelligence agencies are actively involved in both domestic and foreign activities, frequently wielding substantial power over political and socio-economic areas. Intelligence nations frequently take hidden and indirect ways to international policy. These might involve espionage, cyber operations, and systematic misinformation efforts. They rely extensively on intelligence networks to shape international outcomes, protect regime security, and retain strategic advantages. Foreign policy in such countries is frequently opaque, with intelligence services having a disproportionate role in decision-making. Israel's intelligence agencies, including the Mossad (external intelligence), Shin Bet (domestic security), and Aman (military intelligence), are renowned for their efficiency, innovation, and global reach (Pascovich, 2014). These organizations have developed cutting-edge capabilities in cyber warfare, surveillance, and counterterrorism. Given the crucial role

Mossad and Shin Bet play in Israel's foreign affairs, the country has long been considered an intelligence state. Israel's intelligence-driven foreign policy involves aggressive "counter-terrorism operations", espionage, and cyber actions to strengthen its national security and regional influence. Operations such as the capture of Adolf Eichmann in Argentina (1960), the destruction of Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor (1981), and targeted assassinations of numerous anti-Israeli leaders (e.g. Hassan Nasrallah) demonstrate its proactive use of intelligence (Nimmons, 2018).

Compared to other typologies included in this study, the so-called "Machiavellian state" is a more recent term that requires further refinement (Baccelli, 2025; Fischer, 1996; Göksel, 2023; Mindle, 1985; Örmeci, 2023). Nevertheless, it builds upon established ideas such as realpolitik and power maximisation within the Offensive Neo-Realist literature (see Table 1) (Kissinger, 1994; Krasner, 1999). A Machiavellian state consistently puts national interests and strategic objectives – as subjectively evaluated through the self-serving vision of the ruling elite – over any ethical or ideological grounds (Göksel, 2023: 77). They are willing to employ deceit, manipulation, and coercion to accomplish their goals. Machiavellian regimes are distinguished by their flexibility and opportunism in international affairs. They often easily change alliances, exploit power vacuums, and prioritise short-term advantages above long-term goals. This type of state focuses on retaining a competitive advantage and increasing relative strength in the international system while keeping regime survival and oligarchic consolidation – of the ruling party and/or leader – as top priorities of foreign policy. What distinguishes a Machiavellian state from an ordinary Neo-Realist state, however, is its utilitarian grasp of the significance of trade and soft power in global affairs. Machiavellian states approach foreign economic policy with a highly instrumental, opportunistic, and strategic mindset. Rather than being guided by consistent rules, long-term institutional commitments, or normative principles (such as fair trade, democracy promotion or global economic justice), these states treat economic relationships primarily as tools to strengthen regime survival and gain short to medium-term advantages.

Machiavellian states prioritize bilateral, deal-based economic interactions over multilateralism. They often view economic agreements not as frameworks for cooperation but as short-term bargains to extract maximum benefit. They use trade, investment, debt diplomacy, or access

to markets strategically—either to reward allies, punish adversaries, or shift alignments in their favour. Tools such as sanctions, subsidies, or selective market access are wielded not just economically but politically. Economic policies abroad are crafted primarily to ensure domestic regime stability—whether by securing foreign investment that reinforces elite interests, neutralizing external economic threats, or cultivating client states that depend on the regime's economic patronage. Such states often partner with weaker economies to establish dependency, extract concessions, or dominate key sectors—often through opaque deals or elite-level economic capture. An example would be using infrastructure investments abroad not only for economic gain but also to gain political leverage over recipient states—tying economics to long-term strategic positioning.

In our present time, China's foreign policy may be characterized as Machiavellian in many ways (Göksel, 2023: 87). For example, the Belt and Road Initiative seeks to systematically expand Chinese influence in Asia, Africa, and Europe while establishing dependencies through economic investment (Rolland, 2017). Beijing's leadership lacks democratic values but recognizes the importance of commerce in global affairs. The concept of Machiavellian state highlights a significant gap in the aforementioned liberal understanding of trading states. Ambitious illiberal regimes often use foreign economic policy to gain power and ensure regime survival. China and other illiberal regimes may disregard the perceived worth of democratization for their image, but nevertheless prioritize trade-oriented soft power, similar to democratic countries. As such, a Machiavellian state is an illiberal polity that can behave like a trading state in its commitment to using foreign policy for maximum economic benefit, but may lack some basic principles of a liberal democratic regime or, as in the case of China, be completely non-democratic.

The "developmental state" aims to achieve rapid economic growth through state-led programs (see Table 1) (Amsden, 1989; Öniş, 1991). These countries prioritize industrial policy, infrastructural development, and strategic resource allocation to drive economic modernization. Developmental countries frequently integrate their foreign policy with their economic objectives, seeking access to international markets, investment, and technology. They prioritize stable international relations in order to secure advantageous economic circumstances. Developmental governments may also engage in "economic diplomacy" by using foreign

aid and development initiatives to gain geopolitical clout (Öniş, 1991: 122–124). Since the 1960s, under leaders like Park Chung-hee, South Korea adopted export-oriented industrialization (EOI) strategies, using state-driven economic policies to foster key industries like electronics, shipbuilding, and automobiles (Amsden, 1989). Foreign policy was intricately linked to this agenda, prioritizing trade relations, foreign investment, and technology transfer from advanced economies such as the United States and Japan. Seoul has long used bilateral and multilateral trade agreements (e.g. with the US, China, and the EU) as tools of statecraft to reinforce its global economic position (Amsden, 1989: 11–20). South Korea views foreign policy through the lens of securing the resources and trade relationships necessary to sustain its export-oriented economy. For example, it actively engages in energy diplomacy with Middle Eastern nations to ensure stable supplies of oil and natural gas (Jeong, 2022). South Korea has leveraged its position in organizations like the WTO (World Trade Organisation) and G20 to advocate for policies that benefit open and rule-based trade systems, reflecting the priorities of a developmental state.

"Petrostates" – more accurately referred to as "resource-dependent states" as some such polities rely on non-oil natural resources – are countries whose economy and foreign policies are substantially impacted by their dependence on exports of natural resources such as oil and natural gas (see Table 1) (Karl, 1997; Ross, 2012). These countries often have a resource-driven economy, with oil, gas or diamond profits influencing domestic policies and foreign initiatives. Petro-states frequently utilize their energy resources as tools for foreign policy, leveraging oil and gas exports to achieve geopolitical clout. They may engage in "rentier state" behaviour, with resource money funding internal stability and foreign policy objectives (Ross, 2012). These countries are very vulnerable to global energy market swings, which affect their international alignments and agendas. Saudi Arabia is a widely studied major petro-state within the literature as its foreign strategy focuses on retaining its position as the leading energy provider, influencing OPEC decisions, and using oil as leverage in international affairs (Karl, 1997; Ross, 2012). Saudi Arabia's strategic links with the United States, as well as its regional actions in Yemen, are inextricably linked to its status as a petro-state.

In foreign policy, "normative states" prioritize the promotion of liberal global norms, values, and principles such as democracy, human rights,

environmental preservation, and peacebuilding (see Table 1) (Manners, 2002). These governments frequently see their international position as one of moral leadership. Normative states pursue a foreign policy that emphasizes multilateralism, international collaboration, and norm entrepreneurship. They take an active role in developing and implementing international accords, and they frequently employ soft power to influence global behaviour. Their policies seek to position themselves as models of ethical government and responsible global players. Sweden illustrates a normative state as its foreign policy prioritizes human rights, sustainable development, and gender equality (Brommeson, 2010). Sweden's overseas aid programs and strong participation in peacekeeping deployments demonstrate its adherence to normative ideals.

A "rogue state" opposes international conventions and frequently engages in practices that endanger global security, such as seeking weapons of mass destruction, funding terrorism, or systematically breaking international laws (see Table 1) (Chomsky, 2000). These states are frequently ostracized and sanctioned by the international community. Rogue states pursue confrontational and self-serving foreign policies, and they frequently employ harsh means to attain their objectives. They are distinguished by their disdain for international conventions and attempts to exploit geopolitical weaknesses. Such nations may take controversial steps to boost regime legitimacy at home. North Korea is commonly recognized as a textbook example of a rogue state because of its nuclear weapons program, human rights violations, and isolationist policies (Chomsky, 2000: 20). Its foreign policy focuses on regime/leader survival, using its nuclear weapons as a negotiating chip.

"Civilizational states" base their identity and foreign policy on perceived cultural, historical, or religious distinctions (see Table 1) (Coker, 2019). They highlight their status as defenders of a separate culture and frequently utilize this narrative to justify their domestic and foreign policies. Civilizational regimes frequently pursue soft power-based foreign policies, extending their cultural or ideological influence overseas. They strive to be leaders of their supposed "civilization" and may regularly defy global conventions that they consider as Western-centric. Their foreign policy discourse frequently emphasizes similar ideals and historical links with other governments or areas. Both India and China have been discussed in the literature as civilizational states in recent years (Jacques, 2009; Volodin,

2022). India's foreign policy is informed by its perception of itself as an ancient civilization with millennia of cultural and intellectual contributions to the world. Concepts like Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam ("the world is one family") and Ahimsa (non-violence) are drawn from its philosophical traditions and are often invoked in its diplomatic rhetoric (Volodin, 2022). India's contemporary foreign policy emphasizes its role as a successor to ancient Indian empires that engaged in extensive trade, cultural exchange, and knowledge transfer across Asia. Drawing on its civilizational ethos, India has long attempted to position itself as a moral and political leader of the Global South. Its role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Cold War and its advocacy for equity in global governance structures resonate with its perceived identity as a "civilization of tolerance and wisdom" (Volodin, 2022: 829).

In a recently published notable work, Amitav Acharya critically examines the concept of the "civilization state" as recently adopted by leaders of various rising powers such as China, India, Türkiye, and Russia (Acharya, 2020). Acharya argues that while these states emphasize their civilizational identities to legitimize domestic authority and assert international influence, the notion of a monolithic civilization state is misleading. He contends that civilizations are not uniform or static entities; instead, they are diverse, internally contested, and historically interconnected. The portrayal of a singular civilizational identity often serves political agendas, masking internal pluralism and suppressing dissent. Acharya warns that embracing the civilization state concept risks fostering exclusionary nationalism and undermining the pluralistic foundations of the international order. He advocates for a more inclusive and dialogical approach to global order, recognizing the multiplicity and hybridity of civilizations rather than framing them as distinct and competing entities.

A "failed state" is one in which central political authority has collapsed, resulting in substantial governance deficiencies, anarchy, and a failure to deliver fundamental services (see Table 1) (Rotberg, 2004). These countries frequently face internal conflicts, poor institutions, and outsider interference. Failed states' fractured governance prevents them from developing cohesive foreign policy frameworks. Their foreign acts are frequently impromptu, motivated by external actors or warring internal factions. Failed states can become hotbeds for proxy wars, smuggling networks, and terrorist operations, threatening regional security. They

are frequently targets of international humanitarian or military initiatives. Somalia is a prototypical failed state (Rotberg, 2004: 87). Since the fall of its government in 1991, Somalia has suffered persistent violence, piracy, and the impact of non-state entities such as al-Shabaab. Its foreign policy is heavily affected by external entities like as the African Union and the United Nations, who have interfered to help stabilize the nation.

"Revisionist states" aim to change the current international order to better line with their strategic objectives or ideological vision (see Table 1) (Mearsheimer, 2001: 334–346). These governments question the established status quo, frequently seeking to rebalance power within the global system or regional hierarchies. Revisionist states pursue forceful foreign policies aimed at undermining or reshaping existing institutions, alliances, and norms. They may seek territorial expansion, military modernization, or the establishment of alternative international frameworks in order to reduce the influence of major nations. Historically, Nazi Germany is well-known case of a revisionist power that aimed to entirely demolish the post-World War I global political order (Krickovic, 2022). Russia under Vladimir Putin in our time has similar revisionist tendencies, as seen by its annexation of Crimea, ongoing invasion of Ukraine, and efforts to destabilize Western institutions such as NATO and the European Union (Krickovic, 2022: 618). Its foreign policy aims to reaffirm its place as a global power and a bitter rival to the US-centric global order.

In contrast to revisionists, a "status quo" state is one that seeks to maintain the existing international order, including its own position within it (Carr, 1939). These states prioritize stability, resist major changes to the balance of power, and favour the preservation of established norms and institutions. Status quo states engage in diplomacy, multilateralism, and institutional participation to uphold the current system. Their foreign policy is often conservative, emphasizing conflict avoidance and the strengthening of alliances. These states may resist revolutionary or revisionist movements and are likely to oppose actors attempting to disrupt the global order. Germany is a classic example of a status quo state in the contemporary world as it champions EU integration, supports multilateral organizations like the United Nations, and seeks to sustain global economic stability. Its policies reflect a commitment to the rules-based international order.

"Buffer states" are strategically located between great powers or competing

blocs, frequently acting as geopolitical cushions (see Table 1) (Gear, 1941). These states may use their status to preserve neutrality or to align with a single power to provide protection. Buffer states frequently adopt foreign strategies centred on survival and neutrality in order to avoid becoming battlegrounds for greater powers. Some buffer states may seek to balance opposing interests, while others form strategic alliances with a dominating power to assure security. Their vulnerable situation often limits their ability to make foreign policy decisions. Afghanistan has long served as a buffer state between rival empires, such as the British and Russian Empires in the nineteenth century, and more recently between regional powers such as Pakistan and India. Its foreign policy has frequently been influenced by external forces and activities. Finland's location between Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) and Western Europe places it at the intersection of Eastern and Western geopolitical spheres. This unique position has shaped its foreign policy choices and domestic priorities for much of its modern history (Gear, 1941: 83–85).

The penultimate typology to be studied in this article is derived from the Neo-Realist IR understanding that a country's territorial size, economic resources and military capacity directly determine its level of power within the global system and that all states would have to act according to their position in an imaginary hierarchy or power pyramid (see Table 1) (Kennedy, 1987; Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). Accordingly, a given state could be a "small state" with very limited territory, population and economic and military resources. Because of their limited capacities, such countries rely on more powerful countries or international organizations for security and influence. Singapore, for instance, exhibits a tiny state that wields power through economic diplomacy, strategic neutrality, and active involvement in global commerce (Leifer, 2000). Yet, it has established itself as a regional economic centre and an advocate for multilateralism in Southeast Asia.

Above small states are placed the so-called "middle powers" with average to above average economic and military capabilities by global standards (Jordaan, 2003). Middle powers often play a significant role in regional or global politics through notable diplomatic, economic, or military influence. Middle powers are typically characterized by their ability to mediate conflicts, form alliances, and project influence beyond their immediate borders, even if they lack the comprehensive global reach of

larger powers. Iran can possibly be analysed as a middle power due to its substantial influence in the Middle East and its active engagement in shaping regional dynamics, despite its persistent economic challenges and international isolation (Jordaan, 2003).

"Great powers" are countries with substantial economic, military, and diplomatic clout, able to shape world affairs in their area and beyond (Kennedy, 1987). These countries frequently play leading roles in global governance and are critical participants in preserving or challenging the international order. Great powers may conduct aggressive and comprehensive foreign strategies, using hard and soft power to protect their interests. They frequently lead regional coalitions, serve in global organizations, and implement power-balancing tactics. While they may operate as status quo nations, some major powers engage in revisionist behaviour in order to increase their influence. The EU may be seen as a modern great power – with its influential member France possessing a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and another member Germany having one of the largest economies of the globe (Gehring et al., 2017). A "superpower" is an even more enhanced "great power" with unrivalled worldwide influence, superior military capabilities, and a strong economic position. Superpowers influence international conventions, institutions, and alliances, and they frequently act as arbiters of world order. Since the end of World War II, the US has been the world's leading superpower.

The final typology to be studied in this article is "regional power" – which is derived from Neo-Realist IR as well as the insights of the English School (see Table 1) (Cline et al., 2011). Accordingly, a state can be termed a regional power if it is widely seen as one of the dominant economic, military, technological and/or diplomatic forces within a specific geographic sub-system (e.g. Brazil in South America or Iran in the Persian Gulf) (Destradi, 2010; Nolte, 2010). To qualify as a regional power, a state typically possesses superior material capabilities—such as economic strength, military capacity, and demographic weight—compared to most of its neighbours. Additionally, it seeks and often attains recognition from other states within the region and sometimes from global powers as a leader or stabilizing actor. A regional power is also expected to show leadership in regional governance, mediate conflicts, and promote or shape regional norms. Importantly, regional powers often aim to shape

the strategic and institutional architecture of their surroundings and pursue policies of strategic autonomy that distinguish them from mere followers of global powers.

While middle powers and regional powers may overlap in some cases, they are not conceptually identical. Middle powers are defined less by geography and more by their moderate material capabilities. In contrast, regional powers concentrate their influence on a specific geographic area, often playing a leadership role in regional institutional building. For example, Brazil functions as a regional power in South America due to its overwhelming demographic size, economic clout, and diplomatic leadership in organizations such as MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) and UNASUR (Union of South American Nations). Brazil has historically promoted regional integration, asserted itself in regional conflicts (e.g. in Bolivia and Venezuela), and positioned itself as a representative of South American interests in global forums such as the G-20 and BRICS (Wehner, 2015). However, it also exhibits middle power characteristics globally—such as advocating for UN reform and multilateral diplomacy—thus showing that a state can simultaneously exhibit both roles depending on context.

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL TOOL TO COMPARATIVELY STUDY FOREIGN POLICY

The study of foreign policy behaviour has long been a cornerstone of IR and FPA as scholars and practitioners alike have sought to categorize states based on their actions, motivations, and systemic roles. Existing and most commonly used aforementioned typologies—such as the trading state, garrison state, or revisionist state—offer valuable insights into specific aspects of statecraft. However, these typologies often function in isolation, rooted in singular theoretical frameworks or narrowly defined behavioural patterns. This article argues for the creation of a comprehensive typology table that synthesizes these diverse classifications into a unified framework (see Table 1). Such a project is both necessary and original, providing scholars with a multidimensional tool to analyse state behaviour systematically. Given the hybrid, sometimes contradictory motives behind a country's foreign policy, a multidimensional framework allows for greater precision in categorizing states' behaviours, especially those that resist classification into a single typology.

The proposed typology table incorporates insights from Comparative Politics and IR theories—e.g. realism, liberalism, and constructivism—providing a structured, theoretically grounded model that accounts for the economic interests, security concerns, ideological commitments, and domestic political dynamics that drive a given country's foreign policy. Much of the existing FPA literature operates within distinct theoretical paradigms. Realism informs concepts such as the garrison state and the revisionist state, while liberalism underpins the trading state and normative state. Constructivism, on the other hand, explains classifications like the civilizational state or the normative state. While these paradigms provide valuable lenses, they often lead to fragmented analyses that fail to account for the interplay of economic, ideological, and security factors. A comprehensive typology table would transcend these theoretical silos, integrating insights into a holistic framework. It is important to note that the selected statecraft typologies on Table 1 refer to differing variables within a given country's foreign policy making mechanism. For example, "illiberal state" and "failed state" largely focus on institutional dynamics, whereas "buffer state", "regional power" and "petrostate" are shaped by geographic and structural factors. Typologies of "revisionist state", "normative state", "civilizational state" and "rogue state" derive from specific foreign policy directions, while "intelligence state", "garrison state", "trading state", "developmental state" and "Machiavellian state" categories are related to systemic objectives of an incumbent government.

Table 1. Typologies of Statecraft and Foreign Policy

	Inspiration (IR Theory)	Criteria	Country Examples
Trading State	Liberalism	Economic Diplomacy Avoids Conflict	Japan (Post-WW II)
Garrison State	Defensive Realism	Militarized Foreign Policy High Threat Perception	Egypt (Present)
Illiberal State	Realism & Constructivism	Unpredictable Behaviour Prioritizes Regime Survival	Russia (Present)
Intelligence State	Realism	Covert Operations Strategic Partnerships	Israel (Present)
Machiavellian State	Realism	Opportunistic Behaviour Temporary Allies for Gains	China (Present)
Developmental State	Dependency Theory (Marxism)	Economic Diplomacy Seeks Foreign Investment	South Korea (1960s to Present)
Resource-Dependent State (Petrostate)	Dependency Theory (Marxism)	Resource Exports Allying with Importers	Saudi Arabia (Present)
Normative State	Liberalism	Value-Based Rhetoric Abides International Law	Sweden (Present)
Rogue State	Constructivism	Aggressive Foreign Policy Defies International Law	North Korea (Present)
Civilizational State	Constructivism	Historical Vision Cultural Unity	India (Present)
Failed State	Realism	Weak Territorial Control Reliance on Foreign Aid	Somalia (Present)
Revisionist State	Offensive Realism	Challenging Status Quo Seeks Territorial Expansion	Nazi Germany (WW II)
Buffer State	Defensive Realism	Non-Aligned Behaviour Balancing Neighbours	Finland (Cold War)
Regional Power	Realism & English School	Notable Regional Actor Agenda Setter	Brazil (South America)
Small State / Middle Power / Great Power / Superpower	Realism	Foreign Policy Shaped by Economic Resources and Military Capabilities	Singapore / Iran / EU / USA (Present)

Source: Author.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study uses a theory-guided qualitative single-case design and deductive typological analysis to examine Türkiye under AKP rule. The unit of analysis is the dominant orientation of Turkish foreign policy within each period rather than isolated statements or events. The fifteen entries in Table 1 are treated as analytical dimensions that may coexist, not as mutually exclusive regime labels. For each dimension, the study identifies defining political-institutional, economic, security, and ideational indicators from the literature and asks how consistently those indicators appear in Türkiye's objectives, instruments, and observed foreign-policy conduct.

The assessment uses a four-point interpretive scale. "Not applicable" indicates that a typology's defining features are absent or substantially contradicted by the evidence; "slightly applicable" denotes isolated, episodic, or mainly rhetorical indicators; "moderately applicable" denotes recurrent indicators accompanied by important countervailing evidence; and "highly applicable" denotes sustained correspondence across several defining indicators. These ratings are based on triangulation across peer-reviewed scholarship, scholarly books and policy studies already cited in the article, together with illustrative decisions such as the zero-problems policy, responses to the Arab uprisings, cross-border military operations, the S-400 acquisition, energy diplomacy, and regional normalization initiatives. The ratings are therefore transparent analytical judgments rather than statistical measurements.

To avoid treating more than two decades of AKP rule as homogeneous, the analysis distinguishes four phases: (1) Europeanization and commercial expansion, 2002–2010; (2) Arab Spring activism and ideological regionalism, 2011–2015; (3) securitized strategic autonomy, 2016–2022; and (4) selective normalization and constrained pragmatism, 2023–2025. The breakpoints capture major changes in the regional environment, domestic regime dynamics, governing coalitions, and economic strategy. The cut-off of December 2025 makes the temporal scope explicit and prevents the open-ended use of "the present."

This design has two limitations. First, it relies primarily on qualitative secondary-source interpretation rather than an original event dataset or systematic coding of official documents. Second, some categories operate

at different levels of analysis: for example, middle-power status concerns material and relational position, whereas illiberal-state and Machiavellian-state categories concern domestic institutions and governing strategy. The framework addresses this problem by presenting a multidimensional profile and by comparing change within each category over time, rather than aggregating the ratings into a single numerical score.

MAKING SENSE OF THE AKP'S OSCILLATING FOREIGN POLICY

Since the AKP took office in 2002, Turkish foreign policy has experienced considerable changes. Over the last two decades, Türkiye has evolved from a relatively constrained, status quo-oriented operator within the Western alliance to an increasingly aggressive and independent player in regional and global affairs (Kutlay & Öniş, 2021; Oğuzlu, 2020; Ovalı & Özdikmenli, 2019). This transformation has been fuelled by ideological movements, structural changes in global politics, and the internal consolidation of the AKP's authority. One of the most distinguishing features of Turkish foreign policy under the AKP is its ideological basis. The AKP's foreign policy is largely inspired by a combination of political Islam, neo-Ottomanism, and pragmatism (Cinar, 2018). While political Islam has inspired sympathy with Muslim-majority states, neo-Ottomanism has shaped Ankara's goals to regain its dominance in former Ottoman regions in the Middle East, Balkans, and North Africa. However, pragmatism frequently takes precedence over ideology, especially in terms of economic and security concerns, resulting in a flexible and opportunistic attitude.

Under the AKP, Türkiye aimed to become a regional force capable of influencing the Middle East's political, economic, and security infrastructure. This aim is reflected in Ankara's active participation in crises in Syria, Iraq, and Libya, as well as its forceful postures in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus. These activities are frequently portrayed in the context of safeguarding regional stability, but they also indicate a desire to project Turkish influence. The AKP has steadily separated Türkiye from its longstanding alliance with the West. While Türkiye remains a NATO member, its acquisition of Russian S-400 missile systems, as well as its repeated disputes with the US and the EU, indicate a shift toward strategic autonomy. This movement is being pushed by a mix of perceived Western double standards, the growth of multi-polarity in the global system, and local political forces within Türkiye. Economic

concerns have also been crucial to influencing Turkish foreign policy under the AKP. Ankara has targeted trade diversification, positioned itself as an energy centre, and used economic links to increase diplomatic influence (Novikau & Muhasilović, 2023). However, economic issues like as currency crises and growing inflation have limited Türkiye's ability to pursue its aspirations.

In recent years, the AKP has become increasingly reliant on military strength to fulfil its supposed foreign policy goals (Mehmetcik & Çelik, 2022). Türkiye's militaristic approach reflects its garrison state inclinations, with cross-border operations in Syria and Iraq and drone deployments in Libya and Azerbaijan. This militarization is frequently justified in the name of battling terrorism and maintaining national security. Despite its military policies, however, Türkiye has also made significant investments in soft power under the AKP. Turkish TV dramas, humanitarian help, and institutions like the Yunus Emre Institute and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) attempt to strengthen Türkiye's cultural and ideological appeal overseas (Beşgül, 2024). This includes components from the normative and civilizational state typologies.

PERIODIZING AKP FOREIGN POLICY: FOUR PHASES

Phase I, Europeanization and commercial expansion (2002–2010), was marked by EU-oriented reforms, macroeconomic stabilization, expanding trade networks, and the "zero problems with neighbours" doctrine. Foreign policy relied heavily on diplomacy, market access, regional economic integration, and soft-power instruments. Although strategic and ideological motives were never absent, the trading-state and, to a lesser extent, developmental-state logics were most visible during this period, while revisionist, garrison, and intelligence-state characteristics remained limited (Kirişçi, 2009; Oğuzlu, 2020).

Phase II, Arab Spring activism and ideological regionalism (2011–2015), constituted a transitional rupture. Ankara's support for political change and Muslim Brotherhood-linked actors, the collapse of relations with Syria, tensions with Egypt and Israel, and growing civilizational rhetoric weakened the earlier trade-centred strategy. The government became more willing to accept diplomatic and economic costs in pursuit of regional influence. The Gezi protests in 2013, deepening domestic polarization, and regional insecurity accelerated the rise of illiberal, civilizational, and revisionist

tendencies, even though commercial pragmatism continued in selected relationships (Kardaş, 2021; Yavuz, 2022). Phase III, securitized strategic autonomy (2016–2022), followed the failed coup attempt, the AKP's governing alliance with the MHP, and the consolidation of presidential rule. Cross-border operations in Syria and Iraq, military involvement in Libya and support for Azerbaijan, the expanded role of the National Intelligence Organization, and the purchase of the Russian S-400 system reflected a more militarized and autonomy-seeking posture. Garrison, intelligence, illiberal, Machiavellian, and revisionist characteristics became particularly pronounced, while balancing between Russia and the Western alliance remained an instrument of strategic flexibility (Kutlay & Öniş, 2021; Mehmetcik & Çelik, 2022).

Phase IV, selective normalization and constrained pragmatism (2023–2025), combined continuity in strategic autonomy with attempts to repair regional relationships and stabilize the economy. The appointment of Mehmet Şimşek, normalization with several Middle Eastern actors, and a less confrontational tone toward some partners signalled a partial return of trading and developmental considerations. Yet this did not amount to restoration of the first phase: centralized and illiberal domestic institutions, security-driven regional policies, transactional bargaining within NATO, and balancing between Russia and Ukraine continued to shape foreign policy. The phase is therefore best understood as selective recalibration rather than a wholesale strategic reversal.

Table 2 summarizes the degree of fit between each typology and these four periods. Placing the table here provides a roadmap for the typology-by-typology analysis that follows and makes visible both continuity and change across AKP governments.

Table 2. Phase-Specific Applicability of Statecraft Typologies to Turkish Foreign Policy under the AKP

Typology	2002–2010 Phase I	2011–2015 Phase II	2016–2022 Phase III	2023–2025 Phase IV
Trading State	High	Moderate	Slight	Moderate
Garrison State	Slight	Moderate	High	High
Illiberal State	Slight	Moderate	High	High
Intelligence State	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate
Machiavellian State	Moderate	High	High	High

Typology	2002–2010 Phase I	2011–2015 Phase II	2016–2022 Phase III	2023–2025 Phase IV
Developmental State	High	Moderate	Slight	Moderate
Resource-Dependent State (Petrostate)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Normative State	Moderate	Moderate	Slight	Slight
Rogue State	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Civilizational State	Slight	High	High	Moderate
Failed State	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Revisionist / Status Quo State	Mainly status quo	Moderately revisionist	Highly revisionist	Moderately revisionist
Buffer State	Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate
Regional Power	Moderate	High	High	High
Power Tier	Middle power	Middle power	Middle power	Middle power

Source: Author.
Note: N/A = not applicable. Ratings indicate interpretive degree of fit based on the criteria explained in the methodology section.

The trading state typology stresses economic interdependence and prefers commerce to confrontation in foreign policy. Türkiye largely demonstrated characteristics of a liberal trading state especially during Phase I (2002–2010) as famously studied by Kemal Kirişçi – most notably in its pursuit of enhanced commercial relations with nations in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (Kirişçi, 2009). The AKP's "zero problems with neighbours" policy in particular was a liberal trading state initiative aimed at increasing economic integration with regional countries (Kirişçi, 2009: 36–38). Nevertheless, this classification is no longer accurate in terms of accounting for the transition in Phase II and especially the securitized posture of Phase III (see Table 2). Türkiye's post-Gezi democratic erosion, repeated militaristic acts and aggressive tactics (towards neighbours such as Syria and Greece) under the AKP have frequently contradicted its reputation as a primarily trade-driven liberal democratic entity during the later phases (Göksel, 2023: 88–99). Repeated diplomatic conflicts with countries like Syria, Israel, Armenia, Greece and Egypt continue to limit Türkiye's potential as a trading state during the 2023–2025 period.

Given Türkiye's authoritarian inclinations under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's personalist rule and their populist anti-Western expressions in foreign policy, the illiberal state typology is ideally suited to the AKP rule

(see Table 2) (Akser & Baybars, 2023; Özpek & Tanriverdi Yaşar, 2018). The AKP's emphasis on consolidating power, restricting liberties, and stifling criticism at home mirrors its frequently coercive stance overseas – which has involved using state-run media and diaspora networks to influence overseas audiences (Yilmaz & Demir, 2023). Türkiye's ongoing transformation towards an illiberal polity has shaped Turkish foreign policy, particularly in the post-2016 coup period. The government has become more resistant to Western criticism, especially regarding human rights, and it has cultivated closer ties with other illiberal/authoritarian regimes, such as Russia and Qatar. Ankara – President Erdoğan in particular – has adopted an often-confrontational anti-Western discourse towards the EU and the US over democratic governance and human rights issues (Göksel, 2019; Taş, 2022). It has been argued that the reluctance of the AKP administration to cut or reduce its close diplomatic and economic cooperation with illiberal Russia since the Ukraine War constitutes an illiberal solidarity linkage between two regimes (Kubicek, 2022).

The garrison state, defined by a strong emphasis on security and militarism, is increasingly consistent with Türkiye's national security and foreign policy strategies under the AKP administration – especially since the party closely allied with the ultra-nationalist and militarist MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) since 2016 (see Table 2). The AKP has overseen a significant militarization of Turkish foreign policy, particularly after the failed coup attempt in 2016. Under President Erdoğan, Türkiye has engaged in military operations in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Azerbaijan. The government's concentration on countering perceived internal and external dangers (e.g. the PKK,[1] FETÖ[2] and the autonomous Kurdish political entity in Syria) via cross-border military interventions has resulted in a highly "securitized foreign policy" (Mehmetcik & Çelik, 2022). As such, the increasing role of the military affairs in shaping Türkiye's international actions suggests a partial shift towards the garrison state model.

Türkiye fits to some extent within the intelligence state paradigm, with the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) playing an increasingly high-profile and active role in foreign affairs. Intelligence-gathering and covert operations have become a regular part of Türkiye's foreign policy

[1] Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is designated as a terrorist organisation by Türkiye.

[2] Türkiye has designated the Islamist fraternity – globally known as the Gülen Movement – formerly led by the recently deceased Fetullah Gülen as terrorists and refers to it as FETÖ (Fetullah Gülenist Terrorist Organisation).

toolkit, particularly after the 2016 coup attempt. The AKP administration has engaged in intelligence activities both within and beyond its borders, including crackdowns on dissidents abroad and espionage efforts related to Kurdish armed groups (Yegen, 2023). However, this typology alone cannot capture the whole scope of AKP's statecraft. While Türkiye's foreign policy have long incorporated intelligence operations since the pre-AKP era of the 1990s, particularly for internal security and counter-terrorism (e.g., against the PKK), it is not primarily an intelligence state like Israel. Intelligence plays a role, but other dimensions of power remain more central (see Table 2).

Türkiye's foreign policy under the AKP resembles a Machiavellian state – particularly in its pragmatism, opportunism and overall moral blindness. This is obvious in Ankara's fluctuating balancing act with the US and Russia, its use of refugees as leverage in EU discussions, and its tactical partnerships with various Middle Eastern powers such as Qatar (Kaya, 2020). The Machiavellian state focuses on pragmatism, power, and realpolitik, using any means necessary to achieve its objectives in terms of regime/leader survival. Türkiye's foreign policy under the AKP has shown clear Machiavellian characteristics, particularly through opportunistic cooperation with Russia, Libya and Qatar – seeking to reap maximum economic benefits possible (see Table 2) (Göksel, 2023). Türkiye initially maintained strong ties with Israel, but relations deteriorated after the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010. However, despite ongoing tensions, the AKP has intermittently sought normalization, driven by economic and strategic interests. During the Arab Spring, Türkiye supported Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to expand its influence. However, as these movements lost momentum, the AKP adapted by cautiously engaging with post-Morsi Egypt. The AKP has also used energy diplomacy opportunistically, pursuing gas exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean and fostering relationships with energy-rich states like Azerbaijan and Qatar. The AKP has often framed its foreign policy in ways that support its domestic political agenda and ensure regime survival. Domestically, the AKP has cultivated a nationalist and anti-Western narrative to consolidate its base, particularly following the failed coup attempt in 2016. This narrative has allowed the government to justify contentious foreign policy moves, such as strained relations with the US and EU (Özpek & Tanriverdi Yaşar, 2018).

As the AKP has consolidated its hegemony over Turkish politics over the years, the developmental state typology has become less and less relevant for Turkish foreign policy – not unlike the aforementioned trading state typology which its most closely resembles (see Table 2). While the AKP's early years in power during Phase I focused on economic growth, infrastructure development and concerted efforts to attract high levels of foreign direct investment from developed world in the manner of a developmental state such as South Korea, this emphasis has decreased as a result of economic mismanagement and political instability during the transition through Phase II and especially Phase III (Göksel, 2023: 90). Türkiye's foreign policy has not been consistently linked to economic and human development goals, the above garrison state foreign policy approach and an acute hyper-inflation overshadowing the validity of developmental state typology. The appointment of liberal economist Mehmet Şimşek as the Minister of Treasury and Finance in 4 June 2023 – with the daunting task of stabilising the Turkish economy – has raised the hopes of Turkish big businesses and some foreign observers that the AKP administration may be returning to the "economic orthodoxy" of a developmental state and that its foreign policy would be less-confrontation going forward (Sak, 2024). Time will tell if such hopes will be realised or if the AKP administration could pull off yet another dramatic economic and foreign policy shift during Phase IV (see Table 2).

The petrostate (resource-dependent) typology does not apply at all to Türkiye because its economy is not based on any notable natural resource (e.g. oil or gas) exports (see Table 2). Türkiye's pursuit of energy security or independence, such as explorations in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean, is a key focus, but it does not define Türkiye as a petro-state. Türkiye's ambition to become an energy centre, aided by its location and pipeline projects such as TANAP, suggests a potentially Machiavellian desire to use energy for geopolitical influence (Novikau & Muhasilović, 2023). Akin to the petrostate typology, the failed state paradigm does not apply to Türkiye under the AKP – which maintains functional governance and significant degree of independence in its domestic and foreign affairs (see Table 2). Despite chronic economic instability and occasional security troubles stemming from terrorist attacks (e.g. the PKK), Türkiye's governmental institutions and security forces remain strong when compared to failed states such as Somalia. The buffer state typology, on the other hand, is slightly applicable to Türkiye's unique

geographical placement between major contending powerhouses of the globe and the region (e.g. Russia versus the EU; Iran versus Israel, see Table 2). Historically, Ankara had a potential buffer position between the NATO and Warsaw Pact albeit it clearly aligned with the former during the Cold War. Resembling classical non-aligned buffer state behaviour, the AKP has pursued an active balancing act between the US-EU coalition and Russia in Eurasia as has become clear during the ongoing Ukraine War. The trajectory of Turkish foreign policy regarding the intensifying NATO-Russia rivalry and a potential Israel-Iran armed conflict is not clear at the present though signalling non-alignment overall.

The AKP foreign policy discourse of presenting Türkiye as a global protector of "downtrodden Muslims", as well as its much-publicised humanitarian aid initiatives in various economically less-developed countries such as Palestine and Sudan, are reminiscent of a self-styled normative state (see Table 2) (Yilmaz & Demir, 2023). However, Türkiye's normative claims to morality are frequently contradicted by militaristic and unilateral acts, reducing its legitimacy as a solely normative actor. The AKP foreign policy has gradually shifted away from normative ideals, such as promoting democracy or human rights to the Middle East. Instead, pragmatism and strategic interests have dominated Türkiye's approach, particularly as it has distanced itself from the EU. Hence, though the AKP foreign policy has an assertive normative state rhetoric, its actions fall short of such an idealist typology.

Türkiye under the AKP largely fits the civilizational state model since its foreign policy heavily draws on neo-Ottoman, Islamist and Turkish nationalist nostalgia (see Table 2) (Cinar, 2018; Yilmaz & Demir, 2023). President Erdoğan has repeatedly framed Türkiye as a leader in the Muslim world, frequently using historical and cultural links to legitimize its activities in the Middle East, Africa, Caucasia and the Balkans. Nevertheless, the civilizational state framework does not completely explain the entire nature of Turkish foreign policy, as pragmatic concerns remain dominant over such rhetorical devices.

The revisionist state typology is relevant to some extent to Turkish foreign policy under the AKP, which have occasionally been vocal about the supposed need to re-structure the regional and global status quo (see Table 2) (Kardaş, 2021). Ankara's military activities in Syria, Libya, and

the Eastern Mediterranean, its criticisms of Western global hegemony and continuous calls for reforms regarding the workings of UN Security Council – most notably with President Erdoğan's slogan of "the world is bigger than five" – in particular reflect AKP's revisionist foreign policy vision (Aral, 2019). Türkiye's interventions in Syria and Libya, its support for Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and its maritime claims in the Mediterranean all reflect revisionist tendencies and a readiness to use military power in this context. The AKP is a moderately revisionist actor in regional and global affairs indeed, but the administration and its leader Erdoğan cannot realistically be evaluated as a truly revolutionary actors in the manner of Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union or the present-day Islamic Republic of Iran. After all, Türkiye does not have any formal/official territorial ambitions against any of its neighbours.

Türkiye under the AKP-MHP alliance aspires to great power status as commonly found in the foreign policy discourses of both parties, but lacks the necessary economic, military, and diplomatic strength at the present (Kelkitli, 2024). As such, Türkiye is widely considered a middle power in terms of its military and economic capabilities, as well as its active participation in regional and international diplomacy (see Table 2) (Altunışık, 2023). It often acts as a regional mediator (e.g. Ukraine War), engages in multilateral forums, and plays a significant role in NATO. However, Türkiye's increasing assertiveness and independent foreign policy may push it beyond traditional middle-power behaviour. Türkiye's growing assertiveness in regional conflicts could suggest an evolution from middle power status to a more independent regional power. As such, it is important to note that Ankara's aforementioned revisionist inclinations and frequent unilateralism distinguish it from pacifist middle powers of the literature such as Canada – positioning it closer to interventionist middle powers such as contemporary Iran.

While Türkiye has become more assertive and defiant on the global stage, it is not classified in a strict sense as a rogue state (see Table 2). The AKP's foreign policy is not as destabilizing or antagonistic as rogue states like North Korea or Iran, though Türkiye's defiance of Western norms and its growing regional assertiveness have raised concerns among its allies within NATO (Parmeter, 2023). Ankara's unilateral assertions of maritime borders with Libya (i.e. the 2019 Türkiye-Libya maritime delimitation agreement) have been accused of breaking international law, notably the

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which Türkiye has not ratified (Özkan & Kırval, 2023). Türkiye's military forays into northern Syria (e.g. the Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch operations) and Iraq, to combat the PKK and its affiliates, have provoked charges of undermining the sovereignty of these countries (Kara, 2023). While Ankara claims that these acts are defensive in nature, they are frequently seen as infringement of international territorial integrity standards by Western governments. Nevertheless, while Ankara's unilateral actions (e.g. in Syria, Libya or the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War) have sparked controversy; Türkiye remains a nominal NATO ally and active participant in international diplomacy, separating it from rogue states.

Contemporary Türkiye exemplifies the characteristics of a regional power, particularly within the Middle East, the Eastern Mediterranean, the South Caucasus, and parts of the Balkans (Kardaş, 2021; Köstem, 2018; Parlar Dal, 2016). With its sizable economy, large and modernizing military, strategic geographic location, and active diplomatic initiatives, Türkiye has positioned itself as a key actor in regional politics. This is evidenced by Türkiye's intensifying regional power projection with military interventions in Syria, its role in Libya's civil conflict, its involvement in post-war reconstruction and mediation efforts in the Caucasus following the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, and its naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. Through these activities, Türkiye has sought to secure its national interests while simultaneously shaping the security and geopolitical landscape of its neighbourhood.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), Turkish Airlines, and government-affiliated educational and religious institutions have all played significant roles in projecting Turkish influence in the Balkans, Central Asia, and Africa (Ipek, 2015). Additionally, Türkiye's use of energy diplomacy, infrastructure investment, and cultural outreach, including television exports and humanitarian aid, bolsters its regional presence. Ankara has also positioned itself as a regional mediator in crises such as the Ukraine War, exemplified by its hosting of negotiations and balancing act between NATO commitments and its relations with Russia. However, Türkiye's bid for regional leadership has at times generated tensions with neighbours, especially in the Gulf, Egypt, and the EU, indicating that recognition of regional power status is often contested and fluctuating.

Türkiye's regional power strategy is underpinned by a civilizational and ideological narrative advanced by the AKP leadership. Drawing on Ottoman imperial memory and pan-Islamist and/or pan-Turkic rhetoric depending on the audience, Ankara seeks to project a vision of Türkiye as the natural leader of the Muslim world or the Turkic world—especially among Sunni populations and Turkic-speaking countries of Central Asia (Yilmaz & Demir, 2023). While this vision resonates with some domestic constituencies, it also creates frictions, particularly with rival claimants' regional leadership, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, or Iran. As such, Türkiye's regional power status is both enabled and constrained by its ideological vision, which can alienate partners even as it motivates strategic outreach.

Türkiye's regional power identity is further shaped by its ambiguous relationship with the West. As a NATO member with a historically close security partnership with the United States and the European Union, Türkiye remains institutionally embedded in the Western order. However, over the past decade, Ankara has increasingly distanced itself from Western normative expectations, particularly on issues of democracy, human rights, and multilateral consensus. This divergence has been accompanied by a foreign policy pivot toward strategic balancing, wherein Türkiye seeks to maximize its autonomy by engaging with non-Western powers such as Russia, China, and Iran—sometimes even in ways that contradict NATO's collective stance. In sum, Türkiye represents a complex and evolving case of regional power—a state with significant hard and soft power capabilities, a willingness to act assertively in its neighbourhood, and an ambition to shape the regional order in accordance with its own strategic and ideological preferences (see Table 2). Yet its regional leadership is not universally accepted and is often met with resistance. The Turkish case illustrates that regional power status is not solely determined by capabilities or self-perception but also depends on recognition by other states and the stability of regional institutions. Türkiye's assertive and sometimes unilateral behaviour enhances its regional clout in the short term, but over the long term, sustaining regional leadership may require recalibrating its approach toward greater consistency, cooperation, and legitimacy in the eyes of its neighbours.

As Table 2 demonstrates, Türkiye's foreign policy under the AKP is neither typologically uniform nor temporally static. Trading- and developmental-state characteristics were strongest in Phase I, weakened through Phases

II and III, and recovered only partially in Phase IV. Conversely, illiberal, garrison, intelligence, Machiavellian, civilizational, and revisionist characteristics became more pronounced after 2011 and especially after 2016. Middle-power status and regional-power ambition show the greatest continuity across the four phases. No single typology therefore captures the full trajectory; a periodized, multidimensional framework is necessary to explain both the coexistence of different logics and shifts in their relative importance.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE AVENUES

This article has sought to advance the academic literature on FPA by developing a comprehensive typology table of statecraft and foreign policy behaviour, while applying this framework to analyse Turkish foreign policy making under the AKP. The study argued that existing typologies, though insightful, often suffer from narrow theoretical foundations, oversimplification, and a lack of flexibility to account for hybrid or shifting foreign policy behaviours. By incorporating a wide range of typologies—spanning political, economic, and strategic dimensions—this article offers a multidimensional framework that enhances our ability to systematically and comparatively analyse the foreign policy behaviour of states. The proposed typology table encompasses both established categories, such as the trading state, developmental state, garrison state, civilizational state, normative state, rogue state, and emerging concepts such as the Machiavellian state, illiberal state and intelligence state. These typologies reflect a synthesis of insights from Comparative Politics and International Relations (IR) theories, including realism, liberalism, and constructivism, as well as practical observations of state behaviour in an increasingly complex international system.

Applying this typology to Türkiye under the AKP has revealed its hybrid and dynamic nature, which cannot be easily categorized. The AKP's foreign policy reflects a mix of pragmatism and ideology, blending realist power politics with neo-Ottoman and Islamic civilizational narratives. The study's findings underscore the limitations of applying rigid, singular typologies to states like Türkiye. A more nuanced approach is required to capture the complexity of its foreign policy, particularly in an era where the lines between domestic and international politics are increasingly blurred. The typology table presented here offers a valuable tool for understanding such hybrid behaviours, not only in Türkiye but also in other states with

similarly multifaceted foreign policy approaches. The periodized findings support the article's hypothesis. The early AKP era was closest to a trading-developmental configuration, the 2011–2015 period constituted an ideological and interventionist transition, the 2016–2022 period was dominated by securitized strategic autonomy, and the 2023–2025 period produced selective normalization without reversing the institutional and security orientations of the preceding phase. The persistence of middle-power status and regional-power ambition alongside these shifts further demonstrates why statecraft typologies should be used as temporal and combinable dimensions rather than exclusive labels.

While individual typologies—such as the intelligence state or the developmental state—are well-established, no study had so far systematically synthesized these classifications into a single framework. This article represents an original contribution by identifying commonalities and divergences across typologies, creating a unified table that accommodates a wide range of state behaviours. While this study focused on Türkiye, the typology table's design allows for its application to other states worldwide, paving the way for future research. New studies could build upon this article by enhancing and comparatively applying Table 1 to various countries and classifying complex foreign policy behaviours.

Firstly, scholars might explore how hybrid typologies manifest in non-Western states with shifting strategic identities, such as Brazil, South Africa, or Indonesia. Secondly, longitudinal studies can track how a single state transitions between typological categories over time, shedding light on the drivers of such transformations—be they regime change, economic shocks, or geopolitical shifts. Thirdly, the framework invites integration with quantitative methods by operationalizing typology indicators for use in large-N studies of foreign policy behaviour. In the specific context of Türkiye, future studies could develop an original observational dataset that categorizes each major foreign policy decision made by the Turkish state over time. Such an empirical foundation would allow scholars to systematically analyse the evolution of Turkish foreign policy behaviour across different political periods and leadership styles, offering a more granular understanding of typological shifts. This would also facilitate temporal comparisons with other states undergoing similar transitions.

Moreover, while this article has introduced a broad range of statecraft typologies, it is important to note that there are additional, notable

typologies emerging in the ever-expanding literatures of IR and FPA that could not be included here due to space limitations. Concepts such as the "cusp state", among others, offer further nuance and theoretical richness (Herzog & Robins, 2014). A future study could build upon the typology table developed here by expanding it with such additional classifications, ultimately contributing to the creation of an even more robust and flexible analytical tool for capturing the full diversity of foreign policy behaviours worldwide.

Finally, further research might investigate how different state typologies interact with global governance institutions, particularly how Machiavellian or revisionist states navigate normative frameworks dominated by status quo or normative powers. Another avenue includes examining how statecraft typologies correlate with leadership psychology, institutional constraints, and public opinion—offering a deeper understanding of the domestic sources that underpin strategic foreign policy variation. Together, these research directions would not only test the robustness of the proposed framework but also enhance its utility in both academic and policy-oriented settings for analysing the complex and evolving nature of state behaviour in international politics.

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