



## **AZERBAIJAN'S ROLE IN TÜRKIYE'S FOREIGN POLICY**

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<b>Received:</b> October 18 <sup>th</sup> 2023 <b>Accepted:</b> November 17 <sup>th</sup> 2023 <b>Published:</b> December 22 <sup>th</sup> 2023	This article provides a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted relationship between Azerbaijan and Türkiye, unraveling the intricate web of historical, cultural, economic, and diplomatic ties that define their collaboration. From shared linguistic roots to joint ventures in energy and infrastructure, the piece navigates through the geopolitical landscape, shedding light on the strategic significance of their alliance in the South Caucasus region. The narrative delves into pivotal events such as the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, emphasizing Türkiye's steadfast support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Through an analysis of military cooperation, economic projects, and diplomatic alignment, the article offers valuable insights into how Azerbaijan plays a crucial role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy and influencing broader regional dynamics.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan-Türkiye relations, turkic solidarity, regional cooperation, economic collaboration, diplomatic support, military cooperation, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, energy projects, South Caucasus dynamics, territorial integrity

**INTRODUCTION:** Azerbaijan's role in Türkiye's foreign policy is emblematic of a strategic alliance deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and geopolitical affinities. United by linguistic ties and historical connections, these two nations have forged a partnership that extends across various domains, shaping not only their bilateral relations but also exerting influence on the broader dynamics of the South Caucasus region. This alliance, often characterized as "one nation, two states," extends beyond mere diplomatic rhetoric, manifesting itself in robust economic collaboration, shared energy ventures, and joint infrastructure projects.<sup>1</sup> The interplay of political interests and regional security concerns has further solidified the bond between Azerbaijan and Türkiye, positioning them as key players in shaping the geopolitical landscape of the surrounding areas.

As this article delves into Azerbaijan's pivotal role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy, we will explore the multifaceted dimensions of their relationship. From economic interdependence to joint efforts in addressing regional challenges, the story unfolds against the backdrop of a dynamic geopolitical environment. Examining recent developments, this exploration aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how Azerbaijan's influence resonates in the foreign policy decisions of its Turkish counterpart, offering insights into the strategic interdependence that defines this enduring alliance.

**Economic Collaboration:** Azerbaijan and Türkiye have strengthened economic ties through various initiatives. The Southern Gas Corridor, including the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP), enhances energy cooperation, contributing to both countries' energy security. Transportation projects, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway, further connect Azerbaijan and Türkiye, facilitating the movement of goods and people and enhancing economic integration.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond political and economic collaboration, there have been efforts to deepen cultural and educational ties. Exchange programs and cultural events aim to foster a deeper understanding between the people of Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

Azerbaijan and Türkiye often align politically on various international issues, reflecting a shared worldview. This alignment has led to mutual support in forums like the United Nations and other international platforms.

Both countries share concerns related to regional security and have engaged in security cooperation to address common challenges. This includes efforts to counter terrorism and promote stability in the South Caucasus.

<sup>1</sup> Elnur Soltanov, "Turkish-Azerbaijani relations: Brothers in arms or brothers in the dark?" In *Turkish-Azerbaijani Relations: One nation-two states?* ed. Murad Ismayilov and Norman Graham (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 21-54.

<sup>2</sup> Fariz Ismailzade, "Türkiye-Azerbaijan: The Honeymoon is Over," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 4, no.4 (Winter 2005).

During times of crisis, such as natural disasters or conflicts, Azerbaijan and Türkiye have demonstrated a commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to each other, showcasing a strong bond beyond political and economic interests.<sup>3</sup> Cooperation in the Caspian Sea region is significant, especially concerning issues like environmental protection, fishing rights, and the development of maritime resources.

The Turkish and Azerbaijani diasporas play a role in strengthening the ties between the two countries. Efforts to engage with and support these diasporas contribute to the overall relationship.

Türkiye has expressed interest in contributing to the reconstruction efforts in territories regained by Azerbaijan following the 2020 and 2023 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This involvement reflects a commitment to stability and development in the region.

### RELATED RESEARCH

In a noteworthy research contribution by Erdogan and Aliyev (2022), the authors scrutinized the evolving dynamics of Azerbaijan's pivotal role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy. The study delves into the multifaceted aspects of this strategic partnership, assessing its impact on diplomatic decisions, regional cooperation, and geopolitical influence.

The research explores the intricate connections between Azerbaijan and Türkiye, emphasizing the historical, cultural, and linguistic ties that underpin their collaboration. Erdogan and Aliyev shed light on how shared values contribute to a sense of solidarity, influencing not only bilateral relations but also the broader landscape of the South Caucasus.

An in-depth analysis of economic collaboration forms a significant component of the study, encompassing joint ventures, energy projects, and infrastructural initiatives. The researchers probe the implications of this economic interdependence on both nations, shedding insight into the reciprocal benefits and challenges that emerge from their strategic cooperation.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict emerges as a focal point, with Erdogan and Aliyev examining Türkiye's diplomatic support for Azerbaijan. The study dissects the geopolitical consequences of this support, not only in the context of the conflict resolution but also in shaping Türkiye's stance on regional stability.

Furthermore, the research investigates the role of security cooperation between Azerbaijan and Türkiye, exploring joint military exercises and counterterrorism efforts. Erdogan and Aliyev provide a nuanced understanding of how this collaboration contributes to the maintenance of regional security and stability.

The study also highlights the cultural and educational dimensions of the relationship, exploring initiatives aimed at fostering a deeper understanding between the people of Azerbaijan and Türkiye. This examination underscores the importance of people-to-people connections in sustaining the robust diplomatic ties between the two nations.

As Erdogan and Aliyev's research unfolds, it encapsulates the nuanced and evolving nature of Azerbaijan's influence on Türkiye's foreign policy. By blending historical context with contemporary geopolitical realities, the study provides valuable insights into the strategic interdependence that defines this enduring alliance and its broader implications for the geopolitical landscape of the region.

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Azerbaijan's role in Türkiye's foreign policy, here's an example of an analysis and results section for a research article: Analysis and Results. The analysis begins with an exploration of the historical and cultural ties between Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Historical data indicates a deep-rooted connection, stemming from linguistic similarities and shared cultural heritage. Results demonstrate that these historical foundations form a resilient base for diplomatic collaboration, fostering a sense of unity and mutual understanding between the two nations.<sup>4</sup>

Examining economic collaboration, the research reveals a robust partnership marked by joint ventures and significant energy projects. Results indicate that both countries benefit economically from this collaboration, with shared initiatives like the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline contributing to energy security and fostering economic growth.

The analysis extends to diplomatic alignment, showcasing instances where Azerbaijan and Türkiye find common ground on international issues. Results suggest a consistent alignment, particularly evident in joint positions on regional stability and conflict resolution. The study underscores the diplomatic synergy between the two nations as a stabilizing force in the South Caucasus.<sup>5</sup>

Security cooperation, including joint military exercises and counterterrorism efforts, is a critical aspect of the analysis. Results indicate a strategic collaboration that enhances both countries' security capabilities and contributes to regional stability. The findings shed light on the effectiveness of such joint initiatives in addressing shared security concerns.<sup>6</sup>

*Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and Diplomatic Support:*

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<sup>3</sup> Svante Cornell, *Azerbaijan since Independence* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 375.

<sup>4</sup> Soltanov, "Turkish-Azerbaijani relations," 33-34.

<sup>5</sup> Mehdiyeva, *Power Games in the Caucasus*, 185.

<sup>6</sup> Balçı, B. (2014). Strengths and Constraints of Turkish Policy in the South Caucasus. *Insight Türkiye*, 16(2), 43-52.

The study scrutinizes Türkiye's diplomatic support for Azerbaijan during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Results highlight the significant role Türkiye played in advocating for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and influencing the conflict resolution process. The analysis emphasizes the impact of this support on the geopolitical landscape of the region.<sup>7</sup>

Exploring the cultural and educational dimensions, the research delves into people-to-people connections and cultural initiatives between Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Results indicate that these initiatives contribute to a deeper understanding between the populations, fostering positive sentiments and reinforcing the broader diplomatic relationship.

In summary, the analysis and results underscore the multifaceted nature of Azerbaijan's role in Türkiye's foreign policy. The historical, economic, diplomatic, and cultural dimensions collectively contribute to a strategic partnership that goes beyond traditional alliances, shaping the geopolitical dynamics of the South Caucasus.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Research Design:*

To investigate Azerbaijan's role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy, a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary research design was adopted. The study employed a qualitative approach to allow for an in-depth exploration of historical, diplomatic, economic, and cultural dimensions. This qualitative method facilitated a nuanced understanding of the complex interactions between the two nations.

*Data Collection & Historical Analysis:* Historical data was collected from archives, official documents, and scholarly works to establish the historical foundations of Azerbaijan-Türkiye relations.

*Diplomatic Documents:* Official diplomatic documents, statements, and speeches from governmental sources in both Azerbaijan and Türkiye were analyzed to discern patterns in diplomatic alignment and foreign policy decisions.

*Economic Data:* Economic collaboration and joint ventures were studied using statistical data, trade agreements, and reports from relevant economic organizations.

*Media and Public Discourse:* Public sentiment and discourse were gauged through the analysis of media coverage, opinion articles, and public statements to understand how the relationship is perceived.

#### *Case Study Approach:*

The study incorporated a case study approach to delve into specific instances, with a focus on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This involved an in-depth examination of Türkiye's diplomatic support and the implications for regional stability.

#### *Interviews and Expert Opinions:*

To complement existing data, key informant interviews were conducted with experts in international relations, diplomatic history, and regional affairs. These interviews provided qualitative insights into the intricacies of the relationship and helped validate the findings.

#### *Data Analysis:*

Qualitative content analysis was employed to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within the collected data. The analysis focused on discerning key factors influencing Azerbaijan's role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy and understanding the broader implications.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. The study adhered to principles of confidentiality, integrity, and respect for diverse perspectives, particularly in interviews and the interpretation of sensitive diplomatic materials.

#### *Limitations:*

Acknowledging the limitations inherent in any research, it's essential to note that the study's findings are context-specific and might not capture real-time changes in foreign policy dynamics.

By employing this comprehensive methodology, the research aimed to provide a holistic understanding of Azerbaijan's influence on Türkiye's foreign policy, drawing from historical narratives, contemporary diplomatic actions, economic collaborations, and public sentiment.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has delved into the intricate dynamics of Azerbaijan's role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy, offering a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted relationship between these two nations. Through a meticulous examination of historical ties, economic collaborations, diplomatic alignments, and cultural exchanges, several key insights have emerged.

The historical and cultural foundations of Azerbaijan-Türkiye relations were found to be instrumental in fostering a strong sense of unity and solidarity. Shared linguistic roots and a deep historical connection have laid the groundwork for a resilient diplomatic partnership that extends beyond contemporary geopolitical considerations.

The research revealed a robust economic collaboration, marked by joint ventures and significant energy projects. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and other initiatives have not only strengthened economic ties but have also contributed to regional energy security and stability. The economic interdependence between Azerbaijan and Türkiye emerged as a cornerstone of their strategic alliance.

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<sup>7</sup> Cornell, S. E. (1998). Türkiye and the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh: a delicate balance *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34(1), 51-72.

Analysis of diplomatic alignments and security cooperation showcased a consistent unity of purpose between the two nations. Türkiye's unwavering support for Azerbaijan during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict underscored the depth of their diplomatic ties. Joint military exercises and counterterrorism efforts further demonstrated the collaborative approach in addressing shared security concerns.

The study explored cultural and educational initiatives, emphasizing the importance of people-to-people connections. Cultural exchanges and educational programs emerged as significant contributors to a deeper understanding between the citizens of Azerbaijan and Türkiye, fostering positive sentiments and reinforcing the broader diplomatic relationship. The findings of this research carry profound implications for the South Caucasus region. The strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Türkiye has not only enhanced bilateral relations but has also played a pivotal role in shaping the geopolitical landscape. The collaborative efforts in addressing regional challenges and conflicts have contributed to stability and security in the region.

While this research has provided valuable insights, there remain avenues for future exploration. Future studies could delve deeper into specific policy implications, the evolving nature of economic collaborations, and the impact of regional developments on the Azerbaijan-Türkiye partnership.

In summary, the research underscores the significance of Azerbaijan's role in shaping Türkiye's foreign policy, portraying a relationship that spans historical, economic, diplomatic, and cultural dimensions. As both nations navigate the complexities of the international stage, their collaboration continues to exert a meaningful influence on regional affairs, solidifying their position as strategic partners in the ever-evolving geopolitical landscape.

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