

## Panel I: Contemporary Politics and Economics

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**Paper Title:** *Changes, Motivations, and Success in Turkey's Foreign Policy*

**Abstract:** Since the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002, much discussion has surrounded the continuity and change in Turkey's foreign policy. The AKP been elected several times with a majority vote, allowing them to make significant contributions to the foreign policy agenda. Developments in the Middle East and Turkey's subsequent responses seem to indicate that the AKP has made its neighbors a priority over the West. Many have argued, however, that the AKP continues to pursue European Union membership, specifically in terms of domestic policy. Perceiving itself to be a regional leader and often identified as a supposed "bridge" or "crossroads" between East and West, Turkey's relationship with the United States has undergone a transformation, as well.

This paper aims to understand where Turkish foreign policy has followed a line of continuity and where it has changed as a result of the AKP. It details the evolution of Turkey's policies since the post-Cold War period and seeks to examine what the underlying motivations of the AKP's foreign policy are. This pertains to religious and non-religious motivations. Finally, the study discusses how successful the AKP has been in consideration of its own policies and whether it has been considered successful both domestically and internationally. In order to better understand perceptions surrounding the AKP, surveys and interviews were conducted at Izmir University of Economics. It was then hypothesized that Turkish policy has shifted under the AKP as a result of the AKP's underlying Islamic motivations. These changes, however, have been viewed as successful. As Turkey is a key player in the Middle East, research surrounding its role in the region is becoming increasingly important and this study seeks to contribute to a greater understanding of the AKP's position and aspirations.