



Analyzing the Political and Social Dimensions in Turkish-Israeli Relations After 2014

Lecturer Dr. Maha Shukr Mahmoud Hassan
University of Baghdad/ College of Political Science
Maha.Shukr@copolicy.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Abstract:

. This study examines the political and social dimensions of Turkish-Israeli relations in the period following 2014, a time characterized by profound regional and international transformations that significantly altered the dynamics between Ankara and Tel Aviv. Throughout this period, bilateral relations followed an unstable path, marked by alternating phases of tension and rapprochement. These fluctuations were largely driven by regional developments such as the Syrian civil war, the emergence of the Islamic State, the wave of Arab normalization with Israel, as well as critical events like the relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, escalations in Gaza, and disputes over Eastern Mediterranean gas resources. The research aims to unpack these complexities by analyzing how domestic political shifts in both Turkey and Israel intersect with broader regional dynamics. It further explores the reciprocal influence between political actions and social perceptions particularly through official rhetoric, public opinion, media narratives, and cultural interactions. Employing an interpretive analytical framework supported by historical and descriptive methodologies, the study dissects key milestones in the evolution of Turkish-Israeli political and social relations since 2014. Case studies including "Operation Protective Edge," the 2016 Normalization Agreement, and the 2018 Jerusalem Crisis serve as focal points for understanding the structure of bilateral ties in both internal and external contexts. Moreover, the research investigates how these events have shaped societal attitudes, mutual perceptions, and the future trajectory of relations, with a specific emphasis on the dialectical relationship between state-level and grassroots, political and societal forces within this complex and dynamic relationship.

Keywords: Political Dimensions, Social Dimensions, International Relations, Turkey, Israel.

Received: 7 /1/2025

Accepted: 12/4/2025

Published: 1/6/2025



Introduction:

Since their inception, Turkish-Israeli relations have experienced cycles of fluctuation, ranging from close cooperation to diplomatic rupture. These shifts have been influenced by changes in the regional and international environment, as well as domestic political developments within both countries. The last decade particularly the period following 2014 marked a critical and sensitive phase in the trajectory of this bilateral relationship. This period coincided with major geopolitical transformations in the Middle East, such as the Syrian crisis, the emergence of the Islamic State (ISIS), the Arab normalization agreements with Israel, and the evolving U.S. policies toward the region. Additionally, recurring crises including the relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, rising tensions over the Gaza Strip, and the East Mediterranean gas dispute have further complicated bilateral relations and reshaped the dynamics between Ankara and Tel Aviv, not only at the political level but also at the social one.

Significance of the Study:

This study is significant as it sheds light on one of the most sensitive and complex regional relationships one that intertwines political, religious, social, and economic dimensions. The research reveals how domestic politics in both Turkey and Israel interact with regional dynamics and how this interaction shapes the trajectory of bilateral relations. Academically and analytically, the study is of particular importance, as it goes beyond a descriptive narrative of events to deconstruct the key factors influencing decision-making and shifts in the relationship. This approach benefits policymakers and researchers in the fields of international relations, political science, and sociology.

Research Problem:

This study revolves around the following central question "What are the political and social factors that have influenced the development of Turkish-Israeli relations since 2014, and how have these dimensions interacted to shape the overall trajectory of the relationship?" .A set of sub-questions stem from the central question:

1. How have political relations between Turkey and Israel evolved since 2014, and what were the key turning points?
2. What role have regional variables (such as the Syrian crisis, the Palestinian issue, and the Eastern Mediterranean file) played in reshaping the relationship?



3. How have domestic policies and official rhetoric in both Turkey and Israel contributed to either the deterioration or improvement of bilateral relations?
4. To what extent have these relations been reflected on the social level, in terms of public opinion, media, and societal exchange?
5. How can the interaction between political and social dimensions be understood in explaining the developments in these relations?

Research Hypothesis:

This study assumes that Turkish–Israeli relations after 2014 are no longer determined solely by traditional foreign policy considerations or bilateral and regional strategic interests. Rather, they have become the result of a complex interplay between a range of domestic and external political factors, alongside clear influences from social, cultural, and media dimensions in both countries. The relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv during this period were significantly affected by changes in the regional environment, such as the Syrian crisis, the Gaza issue, the status of Jerusalem, the Eastern Mediterranean energy race, as well as shifts in U.S. policies toward the region. What adds further complexity to this picture is the rising role of domestic political discourse and identity-related political rivalries, especially amid the growing nationalist and religious currents in Turkey, the conflict between secular and conservative orientations, and the nature of the political system in Israel with its fluctuating government coalitions?

Moreover, this study starts from the hypothesis that public opinion, the media, and the stances of social elites have played a pivotal role in influencing foreign policy decisions—either through popular pressure during times of tension or through limited social normalization during periods of détente—reflecting a clear interconnection between the political and social spheres in the trajectory of these relations. This makes the analysis of such interaction essential to understanding the nature of bilateral relations and their future prospects, as official policies do not operate in isolation from social contexts but are continuously nourished by and interact with them. This hypothesis thus serves as a fundamental entry point for understanding the nuanced transformations experienced by Turkish–Israeli relations over the past decade.

Research Objectives:

1. To analyze the main political transformations in Turkish-Israeli relations after 2014.
2. To examine the impact of domestic policies and regional variables in both countries on the shape of bilateral relations.



3. To uncover the social interactions accompanying the political trajectory of the relationship, particularly in the areas of media, public opinion, and cultural exchange.
4. To understand the reciprocal relationship between official and popular positions in shaping the ties between the two states.
5. To provide an analytical and forward-looking reading of the future prospects of these relations in light of the complex interplay between political and social factors.

Research Methodology:

This study adopts an analytical–interpretive approach in examining and analyzing the political and social developments in Turkish-Israeli relations since 2014. It also employs the historical method to trace the critical turning points in the evolution of this relationship and the descriptive method to classify and analyze each party's positions. Additionally, the case study approach will be utilized to analyze specific significant events, such as Operation Protective Edge, the 2016 normalization agreement, and the 2018 U.S. Embassy crisis in Jerusalem.

The First Topic

General Framework and Political Developments in Turkish-Israeli Relations After 2014

Turkish-Israeli relations since the beginning of the 21st century have undergone substantial changes in their political and diplomatic trajectory, particularly following the (Mavi Marmara incident) in 2010, which represented a major turning point and led to a severe deterioration in bilateral relations. Since then, the relationship has fluctuated between rhetorical escalation and diplomatic rupture on one hand, and cautious efforts at normalization on the other within a highly volatile and complex regional context.

The post-2014 period, in particular, revealed clear indications of further change not only due to bilateral events but also as a result of internal developments in both Turkey and Israel, in addition to deep transformations in the regional and global environment, such as: The rise of Iranian influence, Armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq, Competition over Eastern Mediterranean gas resources, The Abraham Accords between Israel and several Arab states.

This chapter seeks to analyze the major political developments that have shaped Turkish-Israeli relations since 2014 through two main sections:



Section 1: The Status of Relations on the Eve of 2014 and Key Political Turning Points (2014–2018)

1. Legacy of Tension (Post-Mavi Marmara, 2010) and Diplomatic Status at the Start of 2014

The Marmara incident in 2010 marked a major turning point in Turkish-Israeli relations, directly impacting the trajectory of cooperation between the two countries. On May 31, 2010, the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara was attacked by Israeli forces while attempting to break the blockade on Gaza, resulting in the death of nine Turkish activists. The attack sparked a wave of anger in Turkey and the Arab world and led to a significant deterioration in bilateral relations. In response to the incident, Turkey withdrew its ambassador from Israel, expelled the Israeli ambassador, and suspended several military agreements between the two sides. The Turkish government also adopted a sharply critical stance toward Israel, particularly concerning the Palestinian issue, which negatively affected bilateral cooperation throughout the post-incident period (Al-Sarhan and Khaled 2018, 147).

2. Impact of Operation Protective Edge (Summer 2014) on Bilateral Relations

In the summer of 2014, Israel launched Operation "Protective Edge" in Gaza, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of Palestinians. The attack was widely condemned, especially by Turkey. President "Recep Tayyip Erdoğan" labeled it a war crime. Turkey increasingly viewed Israel as a violator of human rights, further escalating Ankara's rhetoric and contributing to Tel Aviv's isolation, particularly in the Islamic world. This period became one of the tensest in the bilateral relationship, as disputes over Israel's actions in Gaza intensified (Hamid 2016, 23–24).

3. Fragile Reconciliation: The 2016 Normalization Agreement—Motives and Challenges

In June 2016, after years of estrangement, Turkey and Israel reached an agreement to normalize relations. Despite Turkish reservations about Israel's policies in Palestine, economic and security incentives motivated both parties to pursue rapprochement. Turkey sought cooperation in energy and security, while Israel aimed to rebuild ties in light of regional instability and the Syrian conflict. The agreement included compensation from Israel for the Mavi Marmara victims and the restoration of diplomatic and military cooperation. However, mutual distrust persisted due to ongoing disputes over Palestine and regional geopolitics.

4. Renewed Deterioration: The U.S. Embassy Move to Jerusalem (2018) and Diplomatic Fallout

In 2018, the U.S. decision to relocate its embassy to Jerusalem further strained Turkish-Israeli relations. Turkey considered the move a blatant violation of



Palestinian rights and a grave injustice. President Erdoğan fiercely criticized Israel, while Israeli officials condemned Turkey's interference. The Jerusalem issue reignited political and popular tensions between Ankara and Tel Aviv, reaffirming the volatile nature of their relationship amidst unresolved regional conflicts (Qudra 2021, 47).

Section 2: Contemporary Political Dynamics and the Impact of Regional Variables (2018–Present)

1. Ongoing Diplomatic Coldness and Persistent Disputes (Palestinian Issue, Eastern Mediterranean)

Despite the 2016 normalization agreement, bilateral relations remained cool due to lingering disputes particularly over Palestine. Turkey has consistently defended Palestinian rights and opposed Israeli settlement policies and military actions in Gaza and the West Bank. The U.S. embassy move to Jerusalem became a major source of division (Hasem 2019, 34). In addition, escalating tensions over natural gas exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean further complicated ties. Turkey viewed Israeli cooperation with Greece and Cyprus as a threat to its strategic interests, fueling geopolitical competition (Al-Zaatari 2017, 42).

2. Impact of New Regional Developments: The Abraham Accords and Strategic Divergence

The signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020 normalizing Israeli ties with the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan redefined the regional landscape. While Israel expanded its influence, Turkey found itself strategically constrained. Although Ankara did not outright reject these agreements, it remained committed to defending the Palestinian cause, reinforcing its divergence from the Arab states normalizing relations with Israel. Turkey also clashed with these states over Iran, viewing it as a stabilizing regional actor, while they considered it a threat (Qadura 2021, 47).

3. Recent Attempts at Rapprochement: Economic, Security, and Political Drivers

Despite the ongoing contentious issues, recent years have witnessed attempts at rapprochement between Turkey and Israel, driven by economic, security, and political motivations. Economically, Turkey sought to strengthen its ties with Israel amid its internal economic crises, while Israel aimed to enhance trade cooperation with Turkey, particularly in the fields of energy and technology. On the security front, there was a mutual desire to boost cooperation in facing shared regional threats, such as the conflicts in Syria. Opportunities also emerged for increased military and intelligence collaboration in response to growing terrorist threats in the region (Khamash 2010, 76). Politically, both Turkey and Israel needed to manage their relationship carefully in the face of mounting challenges from regional powers



such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. Their ties with the United States and Russia also played a significant role in shaping each country's stance, particularly in light of the ongoing tensions in the Middle East.

4. The Role of International Powers (U.S. and Russia) in Shaping Bilateral Relations

United States and Russia cannot be overlooked. The United States is a key ally of both Turkey and Israel and has played a pivotal role in shaping the relationship between the two countries. The decision to relocate the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem in 2018 had significant negative repercussions on Turkish-Israeli relations, even though the U.S. had been encouraging greater military cooperation between the two states (Hasem 2019, 34).

Russia, on the other hand, has played an increasingly influential role in shaping the course of Turkish-Israeli relations, especially in light of shifting dynamics in the Middle East. While Russian-Turkish relations have been characterized by both competition and cooperation on various issues, Russia has facilitated dialogue between Turkey and Israel on matters such as the Syrian crisis. This mediation has contributed to Turkey's growing willingness to expand cooperation with Israel in areas such as security and energy (Ladmi 2016, 4).

The Second Topic

Analysis of Internal and External Political Factors Influencing the Relationship

Understanding the trajectory of Turkish-Israeli relations after 2014 requires an in-depth examination of both domestic and regional political contexts. Internal political dynamics in Ankara and Tel Aviv have significantly shaped foreign policy decisions, with bilateral ties often used as tools in domestic political agendas. Meanwhile, a rapidly shifting regional environment marked by armed conflicts, changing alliances, and increasing competition over energy and influence has played a critical role in redefining the relationship.

This chapter explores both the internal and external political drivers through two main sections:

Section One: The Role of Domestic Political Factors in the Conflict

1. The Influence of Turkish Domestic Politics

Domestic politics in Turkey, particularly under the leadership of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, have been instrumental in shaping tensions with Israel. The AKP has adopted a nationalist-



Islamist discourse, placing strong emphasis on the Palestinian cause as a central moral and political issue. Erdoğan has used his foreign policy positions especially criticism of Israel to consolidate political support among conservative and religious segments of Turkish society (Ahmed 2014, 94). The Palestinian issue has been consistently leveraged in election campaigns and public speeches, reinforcing negative public sentiment toward Israel. Nationalist currents, despite occasionally clashing with Islamist views, have also contributed to a domestic climate that is unfavorable toward normalization with Israel (Abdel-Ati 2009, 114).

2. The Influence of Israeli Domestic Politics

On the other hand, security considerations constitute the core of Israeli policy, making its relationship with Turkey highly influenced by security calculations. The military establishment plays a central role in decision-making and often seeks to maintain a level of coordination with Turkey, especially in intelligence matters. However, this military-oriented approach sometimes clashes with the political orientations of certain Israeli governments, particularly those that adopt hardline stances toward the Palestinians (Abd al-Tahir 2005, 73).

Moreover, the composition of ruling coalitions in Israel directly affects the nature of its foreign relations. When the government is formed by far-right parties, the likelihood of escalation with Turkey increases, especially if Ankara continues to criticize Israeli policies toward Gaza or Jerusalem. In addition, Israeli public opinion fluctuates between a desire to restore normal relations with Turkey and suspicion about its political intentions, reflecting how foreign policy is influenced by the volatile domestic atmosphere (Al-Habashneh 2011, 778–800).

3. The Intersection of Domestic Agendas with Foreign Policy

In both countries, foreign policy toward each other often reflects domestic political agendas. In Turkey, hostility toward Israel is sometimes used to rally public support, while in Israel, national security rhetoric justifies a cautious stance toward Ankara. This interplay between domestic pressures and foreign policy has made the bilateral relationship highly volatile and sensitive to internal political shifts (Khorshid 2007, 121).

Section Two: The Impact of the Regional Environment on Turkish-Israeli Relations

First: Regional Rivalries and Strategic Competition

1. The Syrian Crisis:

The Syrian war marked a radical shift in the positions of regional powers, including Turkey and Israel. Since 2011, Turkey has taken a clear stance in support of the Syrian opposition, seeking regime change for reasons tied to its national security and the expansion of its regional influence. In contrast, Israel



adopted a more cautious position, focusing primarily on preventing the entrenchment of Iranian or Hezbollah forces in southern Syria, which would pose a direct threat to its security. This divergence in perspectives and objectives led to a degree of distancing between Ankara and Tel Aviv regarding the Syrian file, despite their implicit agreement on rejecting Iranian influence in Syria (Ajil 2013, 79).

2. Iranian Influence:

The growing Iranian influence in the Middle East especially in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq presents a shared challenge for both Turkey and Israel, despite differing approaches in confronting it. For Israel, Iran is a strategic adversary threatening its national security. For Turkey, Iran is a regional competitor attempting to fill the political vacuum in neighboring states. This rivalry occasionally leads to overlapping interests, yet it falls short of effective cooperation due to the complexity of Turkey's relations with factions supported by Iran, such as Hamas, which Israel classifies as a terrorist organization (Al-Sarhan and Khaled 2018, 181).

3. Relations with the Gulf States and Egypt:

Shifts in Turkey's relations with the Gulf States and Egypt have had varying effects on its relationship with Israel. The rapprochement between Israel and countries such as the UAE and Bahrain—within the framework of the Abraham Accords—occurred during a period of strained Turkish-Gulf relations. Similarly, the deterioration of ties between Ankara and Cairo after 2013 resonated with Israel, given its close alliance with Egypt. However, Turkey's recent efforts to mend ties with these countries have opened the door for potential positive shifts in its regional relations, including with Israel, within the framework of new alliance dynamics (Al-Rahahleh 2014, 80).

Second: Energy Issues in the Eastern Mediterranean

The discovery of natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean constitutes one of the strategic axes influencing Turkish-Israeli relations. Israel has signed bilateral agreements with both Cyprus and Greece to develop energy projects and export gas, which provoked Turkey, as it considers these areas part of its maritime sphere of influence. This led to a state of intense geopolitical competition, culminating in the establishment of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, to which Ankara was not invited (Al-Sarhan & Khalid 2018, 181). Nevertheless, discussions surrounding the potential export of Israeli gas to Turkey open the door to possible economic



cooperation, provided there is mutual political will and the ability to overcome geopolitical disputes conditions that have yet to be realized in a tangible manner.

Third: The Role of the Palestinian Issue as a Central and Persistent Factor in Shaping Relations

Undoubtedly, the Palestinian issue remains one of the central factors dominating Turkish-Israeli relations. Since the beginning of their diplomatic ties, Turkey has consistently been one of the staunchest supporters of the Palestinian cause, expressing strong advocacy for Palestinian rights in various international forums. This support has been reflected in the official positions of the Turkish government, especially during the Erdoğan era, which witnessed outspoken criticism of Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories (Abdel Hai 2015, 652).

1. The Transformation of Relations Due to the Palestinian Issue:

Despite periods of cooperation between Turkey and Israel in certain fields, the Palestinian issue has remained a major source of tension between the two sides. This was particularly evident after the 2010 Mavi Marmara flotilla incident, which led to a severe deterioration in bilateral relations. President Erdoğan continued to criticize Israeli policies in the Palestinian territories, prompting sharp responses from the Israeli government.

2. The Influence of the Palestinian Issue on Turkish Policy:

Turkey views the Palestinian issue as an integral part of its political and religious identity. Support for Palestine serves as a fundamental tool in enhancing Turkish influence across the region. Accordingly, Turkey has remained committed to maintaining a firm stance toward Israel regarding the Palestinian question, a position that has contributed to the growing popularity of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) domestically and across the Arab and Islamic worlds (İşler 2010, 9).

Fourth: The Impact of Major Powers' Policies—Particularly the United States—and Their Shifts

Major Powers, particularly the United States, play a significant role in shaping the trajectory of Turkish-Israeli relations. For most of the time, the U.S. has been a strategic ally to both countries. However, shifts in American foreign policy have affected the nature of this relationship (Faris 2009, 21):

1. U.S. Policy under Trump:

During the presidency of Donald Trump, certain regional dynamics changed, with the U.S. administration providing more overt support for Israel. One of the most controversial decisions was the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem in 2018, which triggered strong negative reactions from the



Turkish government and sharp criticism from Erdoğan toward American policy.

2. U.S. Policy under Biden:

Under President Joe Biden, the United States has sought to improve its relationship with Turkey in the context of addressing shared challenges, such as the conflict in Syria and Iranian influence. However, ongoing issues such as human rights and democracy in Turkey remain points of contention, continuing to affect the shape of bilateral relations.

The Third Topic

Social Dimensions and Interactions with the Political Trajectory of Relations

At their core, Turkish-Israeli relations extend beyond the political and diplomatic dimensions, as the social dimension plays a significant role in shaping and crystallizing these relations. Societies in both countries are increasingly influenced by political developments, and each serves as an important social reference point in interpreting the positions of the other. Political orientations are, at times, driven by social perceptions and national identity, which creates a continuous interaction between the political and social dimensions in the bilateral relationship between Turkey and Israel.

This section focuses on analyzing the social dimensions in the relations between the two countries and the role these dimensions play in shaping the political trajectory. It also examines the interaction between politics and society in influencing the positions and perceptions that may shape the bilateral relationship.

Section one: The Representation of Turkish-Israeli Relations in the Social Sphere

1. Public Opinion Trends in Turkey and Israel and Their Transformations After 2014

Turkish-Israeli relations within the social sphere represent one of the most prominent aspects of interaction between politics and society. Public opinion in both countries is influenced by diplomatic events and official rhetoric. In Turkey, public opinion has traditionally shown broad sympathy for the Palestinian cause, which has been reflected in negative attitudes toward Israel particularly following the “Mavi Marmara” flotilla incident in 2010, which led to an unprecedented surge in public hostility toward Israel. This trend persisted after 2014; however, the 2016 normalization agreement led to a relative calming of public sentiments, although it did not significantly improve Israel’s image among Turks due to the continuation of pro-Palestinian political discourse (Al-Obaidi 2018, 39).



In contrast, Israeli public opinion previously viewed Turkey positively, owing to strategic alliances and shared security and economic interests. However, the rise of anti-Israel rhetoric from Turkish political leadership especially from President Erdoğan led to a shift in popular attitudes. Turkey began to be perceived not as a potential partner, but as a regional adversary. With renewed regional crises, such as the U.S. embassy move to Jerusalem in 2018, Israeli public attitudes returned to being marked by suspicion and hostility toward Turkey.

2. The Role of Media in Shaping Stereotypes and Coverage of Bilateral Relations

Media in both Turkey and Israel plays a decisive role in forming and reinforcing stereotypes about the other party, reflecting political orientations and influencing public opinion. In Turkey, government-aligned and pro-government media have contributed to deepening negative perceptions of Israel by focusing on Israeli violations in Palestine and occupation practices, reinforcing an adversarial image among Turkish society. In Israel, the media has depicted Turkey as an ideologically Islamist state that poses a threat to regional stability particularly through its focus on Erdoğan's anti-Israel positions (Güllü 2016, 105).

3. The Impact of Relations on Societal Exchanges

Political tensions have negatively impacted societal exchanges between Turkey and Israel, especially in tourism, culture, and education. Israeli tourism to Turkey declined during times of crisis, while many Turks boycotted visits to Israel. Academic and cultural exchanges also diminished and were limited to periods of relative calm. Although civil society actors in both countries attempted to keep dialogue channels open, these efforts were often hindered by political obstacles and inflammatory rhetoric (Al-Obaidi 2018, 39).

4. The Religious Dimension in Political Discourse

The religious dimension is employed in the political rhetoric of both parties to reinforce official political positions. In Turkey, the discourse adopts an Islamic-nationalist tone that links Turkish identity to the defense of the Palestinian cause, using religion as a tool for mobilizing popular support. Conversely, Israel relies on religious discourse grounded in Zionism and Jewish historical narratives to justify its political stances, particularly concerning Jerusalem further deepening the divide between the two sides (Güllü 2016, 105).

Section Two: Interaction between Political and Social Dimensions

The interaction between political and social dimensions is one of the most influential factors in understanding the nature of relations between states—especially in the case of Turkish-Israeli relations, which are characterized by a complex intertwining of strategic interests and historical and cultural sensitivities.



This interaction is manifested in four key axes: official political discourse, the influence of public opinion, the role of memory and identity, and the future of the relationship in light of these determinants.

1. The Impact of Official Political Discourse on Public Opinion and Social Attitudes

Official political discourse serves as a central tool in shaping public opinion and constructing social attitudes. In Turkey, decision-makers use political rhetoric to emphasize nationalistic and religious positions, foremost among them support for the Palestinian cause. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, for example, utilizes his official discourse to highlight solidarity with the Palestinians—an approach that generates widespread social and popular reactions marked by hostility toward Israeli policies. This effect became particularly pronounced following the “Mavi Marmara” incident, which intensified both public and political tensions (Efron 2018, 15–16).

Conversely, Israeli political discourse has been employed to shape domestic public opinion in ways that preserve the state’s security interests. After the Marmara incident, Turkey was portrayed in Israeli official rhetoric as a hostile actor seeking to undermine Israel’s security. This portrayal deepened public suspicion toward Turkey. Thus, it becomes evident that official discourse is not merely a reflection of political reality but also a powerful mechanism for shaping collective perceptions in both countries.

2. The Influence of Public Opinion and Social Pressure on Political Decision-Making

Public opinion plays a pivotal role in directing the course of foreign relations. In Turkey, where the Palestinian cause is deeply rooted in the national consciousness, public opinion continuously pressures policymakers to adopt firm positions toward Israel. Any retreat from such rhetoric is likely to be met with popular rejection, compelling Turkish leadership to maintain its pro-Palestinian stance (Al-Khaj 2018, 32).

In Israel, public opinion is directly influenced by security-related concerns. Challenges such as regional threats or military operations tend to foster a more cautious and hardline public attitude toward Turkey, especially when the latter continues to criticize Israeli policies. Nonetheless, in certain contexts, Israeli public sentiment may lean toward a calculated normalization with Turkey if it serves strategic interests such as security or energy.

3. The Role of Historical Memory and National Identity

Historical memory is a crucial element in shaping social and political positions. In Turkey, the Palestinian issue has been embedded in national identity for decades



and is regarded as a moral and historical obligation. This cultural foundation nourishes anti-Israel attitudes and adds an emotional dimension to Turkish foreign policy (Güllü 2016, 107).

In Israel, collective memory particularly that associated with the Holocaust and the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict—plays a significant role in forging an identity that centers on rejecting external threats. Within this framework, relations with Turkey are often decontextualized, especially when Turkey is perceived as part of an adversarial regional axis.

4. Overseeing the Future of Relations in Light of Political and Social Determinants

The interaction between political and social dimensions is likely to continue shaping Turkish-Israeli relations in the future. Regional developments such as the Abraham Accords and the evolving dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean—are pushing both parties to reconsider the framework of their relationship. In Turkey, political discourse is expected to remain grounded in public support for the Palestinian cause, limiting prospects for overt rapprochement, despite shared economic and security interests.

In Israel, security imperatives and regional interests will continue to drive cautious openness toward Turkey, especially in light of shared challenges in areas such as natural gas and energy. However, public opinion and historical memory are expected to remain obstacles to comprehensive normalization (Güllü 2016, 106–107).

Conclusion

This study has examined the political and social dimensions that have shaped and governed Turkish-Israeli relations since 2014, with a focus on the interactions between political and social determinants and their impact on the trajectory of bilateral ties. The analysis addressed the role of political discourse, the influence of the regional environment, and the impact of public opinion in shaping attitudes toward the other side. Additionally, it reviewed the effect of historical memory and national identity on the political and social perceptions in both countries.

First: Key Findings

Through an in-depth analysis of the political and social dimensions of Turkish-Israeli relations, several significant conclusions were reached:

1. The political tensions between Turkey and Israel following the “Mavi Marmara” incident in 2010 played a substantial role in shaping mutual political hostility. This event, along with positions related to the Palestinian cause, was a major factor contributing to the deterioration of relations.



2. Social influences such as public opinion in both Turkey and Israel—have had a strong impact on bilateral ties. In Turkey, public sentiment toward the Palestinian issue remains central to shaping negative attitudes toward Israel. In Israel, security concerns and external threats exert pressure on the government to approach Turkey with caution.
3. Historical memory plays a pivotal role in shaping the perceptions of both states. In Turkey, the stance on Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is a component of national identity. In Israel, security threats constitute an essential element of collective memory.
4. The interaction between politics and the social environment demonstrates that political discourse in both Turkey and Israel is not only a tool for guiding public opinion but also reflects the prevailing ideologies in each country, which in turn significantly influence political decision-making.

Second: Addressing the Research Problem

Based on the preceding analysis, the research problem concerning the interactions between politics and society in Turkish-Israeli relations can be addressed as follows: there is a continuous overlap between political and social factors in shaping the course of bilateral relations. On the one hand, political discourse plays a role in shaping public opinion and thus influences governmental decision-making. On the other hand, the social environment—including national identity and historical memory—shapes public attitudes toward the other party.

Third: Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following recommendations may be beneficial for future research and decision-making in international relations:

1. **Study the impact of media:** Future research should explore the influence of modern media on inter-state relations, particularly in light of the dominance of social media and its substantial impact on public opinion.
2. **Deepen the study of regional dynamics:** It is essential to examine regional transformations and their interactions with Turkish-Israeli relations, especially in the context of recent developments such as the Abraham Accords.
3. **Expand social research:** Greater focus should be placed on the role of civil society in both Turkey and Israel in shaping political decisions.

Fourth: Future Prospects

Despite current tensions, there are future prospects for Turkish-Israeli relations. A gradual improvement in ties is possible, especially in light of shared interests in areas such as security and energy. Although challenges remain, regional developments and shifts in global politics may lead to positive transformations. For



example, developments in the Eastern Mediterranean may push both countries toward increased cooperation on energy and security issues. Likewise, changes in the regional political environment—such as Turkey’s rapprochement with some Gulf states and Israel’s normalization with Arab countries—may open the door to new and more balanced relations.

Based on these political and social dimensions, Turkish-Israeli relations may witness a transformation from tension to constructive interaction, driven by responses to regional and international developments.

References

1. Abd al-Ati, Mohammad. 2009. *Turkey Between Internal and External Challenges*. Doha: Al Jazeera Center for Studies.
2. Abd al-Hayy, Walid. 2015. *The Palestinian National Authority: A Study of Experience and Performance 1994–2013*. Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations.
3. Abd al-Tahir, Mahmoud Said. 2005. “Turkish–Israeli Strategic Cooperation in Light of Challenges and Strategy.” Cairo: Center for Political Studies and Research.
4. Ajeel, Abdul Karim Kadhim. 2013. *Turkish–Israeli Relations: In Light of the New Turkish Strategy*. 1st ed. Amman: Majdalawi Publishing and Distribution.
5. Al-Habashneh, Sadah Ahmad. 2011. “Turkish-Israeli Relations Since the Rise of the Justice and Development Party to Power (2002–2010).” *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, vol. 38, no. 3.
6. Al-Hajj, Saeed. 2018. “Future Prospects of the Turkish Role in the Palestinian Cause.” Paper presented at the symposium: *Arab–Regional Relations: Reality and Prospects*, December 2017. Published February 26. Amman: Middle East Studies Center.
7. Al-Humaid, Mohammad Talib. 2016. *Turkish Foreign Policy and Its Impact on Arab Security*. Cairo: Al-Arabi Publishing and Distribution.
8. Al-Obaidi, Ameera Ismail. 2018. “Turkey and Israel: A Study of Political and Economic Relations 2009–2017.” *Center for Regional Studies*, no. 55, December. Mosul: University of Mosul.



9. Al-Rahahleh, Ahmad Suleiman Salem. 2014. *The New Turkish Role in the Middle East: Opportunities and Challenges*. Published Master's thesis. Amman: Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Middle East University.
10. Al-Rahahleh, Suleiman Ahmad. 2014. *The New Turkish Role in the Middle East: Opportunities and Challenges*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Amman: Graduate School, Middle East University.
11. Al-Sarhan, Sayel Falah, and Khalid Salman Khalid. 2018. "The Political and Security Variables of Turkish–Israeli Relations and Their Impact on Turkish–Arab Relations: 2002–2014." *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, vol. 45, no. 4. Amman: University of Jordan – Deanship of Academic Research.
12. Efron, Shira. 2018. *The Future of Israeli-Turkish Relations*, Santa Monica, California : the RAND Corporation.
13. Faris, Awni. 2009. "Turkey and the Palestinian Cause: Public Aspirations and Political Constraints." Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, December 2.
14. Güllü, İlhan . 2016. "Describing Turkey Israel Relationships with Its Trade Dimension", *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, United Kingdom, Vol. IV, Issue 10, October.
15. İşler, Amrullah. 2010. "Turkey, Israel, and the Gaza Siege." *Middle East*, no. 14. Amman: Middle East Studies Center.
16. Khammash, Rana. 2010. *Turkish–Israeli Relations and Their Impact on the Arab Region*. Amman: Middle East Studies Center.
17. Khurshid, Hussein Dalli. 2007. *Turkey and Foreign Policy Issues*. Damascus: Al-Assad Library.
18. Ladmi, Mohammad Arabi. 2016. "Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Arab Mashreq after the Cold War: Determinants and Dimensions." Berlin: Arab Democratic Center, December 21.
19. Mohammad, Jasim Hasim. 2019. "The Role of Political Leadership in Foreign Policy: Ahmet Davutoğlu as a Model." *Journal of Jil for Political Studies and International Relations*, no. 22, May 2.



-
20. Qaddoura, Imad. 2021. *Turkish Foreign Policy: Trends, Flexible Alliances, and Power Politics*. 1st ed. Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.