

# MODERATOR VARIABLES IN TÜRKİYE-CHINA RELATIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NEO-CLASSICAL REALISM<sup>1</sup>

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In light of the information obtained from the literature and research findings, it is seen that the economic, military, and political relations between the two countries are below their potential due to the physical distance between them and the fact that they are members of different ideological blocs. It is noteworthy that some moderator variables affect the course of bilateral relations. From this point of view, it is understood that the relations between Türkiye and China can be modeled in the figure.

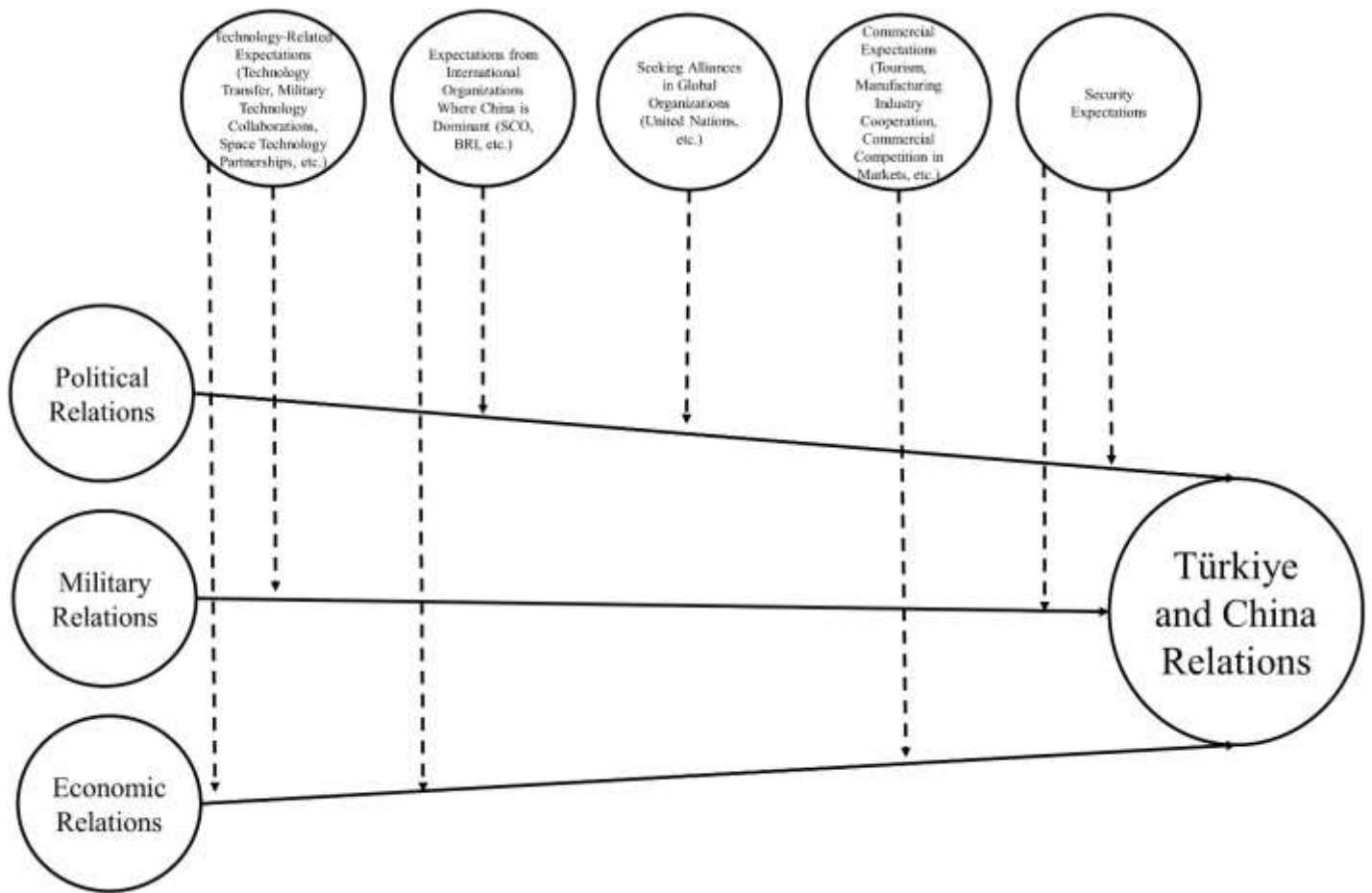


Figure 10 Türkiye-China Relations: Research Model

As can be seen from the model, it can be said that five moderators affect the emergence of relations between Turkey and China. The fact that moderators represent various expectations means that they can be evaluated based on a certain level. It is understood from the literature and research findings that relationships emerge or stop at different levels of these moderators. It is also likely that there will be a different threshold

<sup>1</sup> Derived and translated from pages 84 and 85 of the Master's thesis titled [2003'ten 2022'ye Türkiye ve Çin İlişkileri: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Resmî Gazetesinde Yayımlanan Belgeler Işığında Ekonomik Güvenlik Çerçevesinde Stratejik Bir Değerlendirme](#), Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Institute for International Relations and Strategic Research, August 2023.

value and valence for each moderator, depending on the conjuncture. Moderator variables are expected to affect relationships only if they are above the threshold value, and this effect may not always affect the relationship positively, depending on expectations.

The impact of sub-state actors expressed in the understanding of Neo-Classical Realism on the relations between countries can be clearly seen in the model. In addition to the high-level state administration, many components such as commercial enterprises in the country, the army, and global organizations appear to impact Türkiye-China relations. The research's findings show that considering these variables as moderator variables in terms of Türkiye-China relations, rather than the mediating variable approach in the understanding of Neo-Classical Realism, can provide a better perspective. Therefore, when considering two countries that are geographically far apart, members of different blocks, and whose relationship does not have continuity at a certain level and sometimes even breaks, we believe that it would be appropriate to question the moderator variables and determining what the element that initiates the relationship is and what level of this is the threshold value is a critical issue.

In order to lay the foundations of long-term success in mutual relations between the two countries, it would be appropriate for the country's administrations to take initiatives to establish the necessary institutions, determine the authorities and responsibilities, establish the coordination mechanism between these institutions, define the expectations and concerns of the two countries from each other, and reach an agreement on a least common denominator.

Civilian stakeholders of the institutions to be established regarding the relations between the two countries also need to be organized. These stakeholders may consist of a wide variety of elements such as universities, non-governmental organizations, commercial enterprises, and opinion leaders. Civilian stakeholders can be involved in the process through areas such as cultural, commercial, technological, or educational. It can be said that it would be beneficial to continue civil stakeholder participation in a planned manner with the coordination of the public administration.