

TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY DILEMMA: BALANCING ZERO PROBLEMS WITH NEIGHBORS AND HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION IN THE CASE OF SYRIAN CRISIS

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Turkish Foreign Policy was challenged first by the Arab Spring and then by the Syrian crisis. This thesis examined how the Syrian Crisis affected the Turkish Foreign Policy through its humanitarian and human rights dimensions. It aimed to analyze the Zero Problem With Neighbors – ZPWN and its compatibility with the exigencies of the Syrian Crisis through the humanitarian intervention lenses. The theories of liberalism and realism were used to critically study the “humanitarian intervention” in the Turkish Foreign Policy through documentary research as well as interviews with humanitarian workers and the policy makers identified, whilst applying an analytic and interpretative approach in data analysis. This thesis only covered the period between 2011, when the Syrian Crisis began until 2013. With the background study of Turkish foreign policy during the Arab Spring, it was revealed that even though “ZPWN” was based on non-interventionism, crises like Libya and then Syria demanded that Turkey should have intervened and protected its self-interests. It was clear that finally, the political and economic interests and the realist perspective of the Turkish Foreign policy triumphed. The “ZPWN” policy introduced as the one and only foreign policy of the Turkish state had failed to answer all the needs and demands of Turkish foreign policy agenda when challenged by the crisis. The ZPWN policy was volatile as realist and liberal aspects challenged each other. Turkish foreign policy makers shifted from one to another in different circumstances. It was also found that whilst humanitarianism and human rights seemed to be high in the Turkish foreign policy agenda, they were not the determining factors of interventions. This thesis argued that self-interests were still pre-dominant in the Turkish Foreign Policy and that interests prevented the Turkish state to play a constructive role in the Syrian crisis. The Turkish self-interests, the failure of the international community to properly intervene, the competition between major powers such as USA and Russia resulted in continuing Syrian Crisis until today. Therefore it could be concluded that the over-responsiveness of Turkey and the non-responsiveness of the international community gave way to groups like ISIS to rise in the power-vacuum and created a major devastation and long-term future impacts in Syria.

KEY WORDS: SYRIAN CRISIS/ HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION/ TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY/ ZPWN

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